FROM GHETTO TO CRUSADE

A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT
OF CATHOLIC OPINION-MAKERS IN SYDNEY DURING THE 1930S

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SYNOPSIS

FROM GHETTO TO CRUSADE

A Study of the Social and Political Thought
of Catholic Opinion-Makers in Sydney during the 1930s

The central proposition of this thesis is that the thinking of many Sydney Catholic opinion-makers on society and politics underwent a major shift during the 1930s, from supporting a strategy of social and religious cohesion to preaching a new crusade against communism. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a combination of outside and internal factors had forced the Catholic community into a position of isolation from the dominant Protestant culture, and of defiance against this hostile environment. The Catholic hierarchy had deliberately fostered this policy of building a strong sub-culture to preserve the faith and social cohesion of Catholics. While the policy - which can be termed a strategy of ghetto cohesion - was remarkably successful in maintaining the allegiance of many Catholics, it had severe limits which became clearer with the onset of the Depression: it was authoritarian, intellectually narrow and divorced from the wider world of industry and politics; and there was little thinking on Catholic social philosophy to guide Catholics in politics.

The Depression reinforced Catholic fears that the Church was faced with an assault from modern paganism and capitalism. The Irish-Australian faith in democracy was badly shaken, and some Catholic opinion-makers during the decade looked to corporatism, and even to Fascism for alternatives. The Spanish Civil War proved to be the turning point in Catholic attitudes, for it was interpreted as demonstrating that the forces of modern paganism were about to intensify their attack against the Church, only now communism had emerged to lead the charge. Anticipating the same combat in Australia as in Spain, many Church opinion-makers decided that the old strategy of ghetto-defence would be no protection against this new and more determined enemy. Only if Catholics tightened their cohesion and organised to fight communism on its own ground, in the unions and industry, could Catholics effectively resist. Hence during the latter 1930s, the leading clergy and opinion-makers were almost unanimous in preaching a new crusade to resist communism. The older Catholic organisations proved to be unsuitable for this new task, and so the Church embraced the new forms of Catholic Action. Till the Second World War, however, there was little response from the mass of Catholics to the urgings of their leaders, but the decisive shift in the thinking of Catholic leaders had been made. No longer could Catholics remain isolated in their strategy of ghetto-defence; they had to adopt a policy of "forward-defence", by taking the battle into the enemy's field of operations and defeating communism in industrial and political arenas. For the Catholic ghetto to undertake such a crusade would require more than preaching; Catholic attitudes and organisations would have be adapted and new thinking on society and politics developed. This would be the task of Catholic Action.
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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACR</th>
<th>Australasian Catholic Record</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACTS</td>
<td>Australian Catholic Truth Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>AE</td>
<td>Action Francaise</td>
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<tr>
<td>AHCG</td>
<td>Australasian Holy Catholic Guild of St Mary and St Joseph</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANSCA</td>
<td>Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMA</td>
<td>British Medical Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Catholic Action file, St Mary's Cathedral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CM</td>
<td>Congregation of the Mission (Vincentian Fathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Congregation of the Passion (Passionist Fathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Clergy Review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSM</td>
<td>Catholic Social Studies Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSR</td>
<td>Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Redemptorist Fathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CUSA</td>
<td>Catholic United Services Auxiliary</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWA</td>
<td>Catholic Women's Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWSG</td>
<td>Catholic Women's Social Guild</td>
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<tr>
<td>CYMS</td>
<td>Catholic Young Men's Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>CYO</td>
<td>Catholic Youth Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>JACHS</td>
<td>Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRelHist</td>
<td>Journal of Religious History</td>
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<tr>
<td>KSC</td>
<td>Knights of the Southern Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Lay Apostolate file, St Mary's Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>MMM</td>
<td>Militant Minority Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSC</td>
<td>Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (Sacred Heart Fathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OBU</td>
<td>One Big Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFM</td>
<td>Order of Friars Minor (Franciscans)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPI</td>
<td>Partito Popolare Italiano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAHS</td>
<td>Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJ</td>
<td>Society of Jesus (Jesuit Fathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SJCA</td>
<td>St John's College Archives, University of Stydny.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SM</td>
<td>Society of Mary (Marist Fathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMA</td>
<td>St Mary's (Cathedral) Archives, Sydney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAP</td>
<td>United Australia Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>UWM</td>
<td>Unemployed Workers' Movement</td>
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**A Note on Spelling**

In general, this thesis follows the spelling of the Concise Oxford Dictionary: thus socialist, communist, syndicalist, collectivist; but Fascist, Marxist, Bolshevism and Nazism. For clarity also, I have used Modernism, State and Church (where it refers to the Roman Catholic Church). Secretariat follows the modern spelling, except for the Secretariat of the Lay Apostolate which used an "e"; Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action (ANSCA) did not.
FROM GHETTO TO CRUSADE:

A STUDY OF THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT
OF CATHOLIC OPINION-MAKERS IN SYDNEY DURING THE 1930S

CHAPTER ONE

One of the most significant events in Australia's political history this century was the Split in the Labor Party in 1954 after Dr H.V. Evatt accused anti-communist Catholics in the Movement of trying to take over the ALP. The attention of writers and scholars has concentrated on the Melbourne history to explain the origins of this Catholic anti-communism; the origins of Catholic Action and anti-communism in Sydney have received scant attention even from Church historians, revealing a major lacuna in attempting to explain Catholic ideas on society and politics in the inter-war period.

This omission is all the more notable when one considers that relations between the Sydney and Melbourne Catholic hierarchies had been quite strained at times, and that the Sydney clergy and sections of Catholic Action had been dissenting from the Melbourne direction of the national movement even before the Evatt announcement. The refusal of the Sydney hierarchy to follow the Victorians against the Evatt forces played a major part in the defeat of the Melbourne Movement. Had the Sydney hierarchy followed Melbourne, Australian political history may well have taken a decidedly different course. The views of the decision- and opinion-makers in Sydney Catholicism were critical at this moment, and hence are an important topic for investigation.

After reviewing the development of Sydney Catholicism before 1930, this thesis examines the formative period of Catholic Action in Sydney during the
1930s, especially the Catholic reaction to the Depression, the collapse of the Labor Party and the response to communist and socialist influence in the trade unions and Labor Party. It will argue that the critical event for Australian Catholic opinion-leaders during the 1930s was the Spanish Civil War; Catholic leaders attempted to mobilise Catholics from their defensive "state of siege" into a militant anti-communist frame of mind and the beginnings of quasi-political organisation. This shift in the thinking of the Catholic elite to alarm about communism does not seem to have mobilised many Catholic lay people before the Second World War, but it was the beginning of a process which was to end in more intensive mobilisation under B.A. Santamaria's Movement. The early Catholic rhetoric and efforts at organisation have been partly overshadowed by the Second World War; but as far as attitudes to communism were concerned, the War was an interruption in a longer-term mobilisation and political transformation of many Catholics, a process in which the Spanish Civil War was a catalyst but not the sole cause.

How then are we to explain the distinctive attitudes of the Sydney hierarchy and Church to social and political questions before 1930? What had the Sydney Church inherited from overseas Catholic cultures? What ideas and movements during the 1930s were picked up from overseas? What shape did they take in Sydney and why? How did they differ from those in Melbourne?

To answer these questions, I have adopted a chronological approach in which it is first necessary to identify briefly the dominant pre-1930 ideas which had given the Sydney Catholic Church a distinctive social and ideological stance, and affected its relationship with other groups and movements, particularly the Labor Party. Secondly, I trace throughout the decade the development of Catholic ideology in Sydney, and especially ideas on society and politics, noting the influence of political and social events and movements overseas. And thirdly, I examine how new ideas and the threat from communism undermined the older pattern of cultural isolation, and led to a reorganisation and mobilisation of Catholics under Catholic Action.
1. Before 1930

Prior to the 1930s, a distinctive mentality and worldview developed among many Sydney Catholic opinion-leaders; it is reflected in Patrick O'Farrell's *The Irish in Australia* which examined the fundamental but often subtle changes in the culture and social movements among Irish-Australians. It is clear that the views of Church opinion-leaders were not always those of large groups of Catholics who were often caught up in social movements outside the control or influence of the Church. But what were the views of these official or accepted Catholic leaders, and how did they perceive the world? A series of major set-backs to the Church in Europe followed by outbursts of sectarian conflict in Australia had forced the Church back to a stance of defence through tight social cohesion and discipline. I have termed this a policy of ghetto defence, a not irrational approach when, as many Catholic leaders believed, the Church was surrounded by enemies. It is in terms of this worldview that these Catholics interpreted overseas events and ideas and hence is a key explanatory factor in understanding why they developed their ideas as they did. This worldview has many similarities with forms of collective paranoia and, in the final chapter, I will draw on some of the literature on social movements to evaluate this. However, I use the term, paranoia, sparingly throughout the thesis, partly because it has a negative overtone - it can easily be confused with paranoid mental illness - and partly because premature use of the word could prejudice this investigation.

2. The development of Catholic ideology and movements throughout the 1930s

Tracing the influence of ideas from overseas and their interpretation in Australia is not a simple task and raises some difficulties in methodology. As a general guide to what Sydney Catholic opinion-leaders borrowed from European movements, I have relied mainly on an analysis of Catholic media and archives, supplemented by selective interviews. While such a method does not allow precise and exact results, it offers a general guide to the various interpretations of
Catholic social movements and ideas during the decade and is sufficiently informative to suggest an explanation of why Catholic opinion-makers took the courses they did. There are few ready indexes by which to judge the influence of ideas on Catholic social thinking; very little documentary evidence remains of the relevant seminary courses; and reading lists of the few groups which attempted to pursue such thinking often simply listed some books available without indicating their significance.

The main articulators of Catholic thought here considered are the members of the Sydney hierarchy, some leading clergy and social activists, the Catholic media, and the main Catholic organisations which had some public role in the wider society. Though it has been necessary to rely heavily on the evidence recorded in the Catholic media, it should not be automatically assumed that they reflected the views of the hierarchy, the clergy or of many Catholics. This raises the question: whom were these opinion-makers able to influence among Catholics? If they were unable to convince many Catholics of their views, can they correctly be called "opinion-makers"? I take the position that even if Catholic commentators seemed to reach only a small group among Catholics, they were essential in helping develop the intellectual worldview of the Sydney Catholic decision-makers and their collaborators. They can accurately be termed "opinion-makers" within this context.

3. Restructuring Catholic organisations

A major indicator of how influential various ideas were is provided by the shape of and changes in the main Catholic organisations, particularly in their response to the call to Catholic Action and mobilisation against communism. Restructuring of Catholic organisations would demonstrate that clergy and leading lay people took such ideas seriously and not simply as clerical rhetoric. So I examine the effect of new ideas on the older ghetto social structure, the increasing dissatisfaction with Catholic organisations from the early 1930s, the mobilisation against communism and the restructuring of Catholic organisations and strategy in Sydney, especially from the time of the Spanish Civil War.
The thesis, then, focuses on small groups in the Catholic elite who were closely associated with the Church and its opinion-makers. It is much more difficult to establish the views of the broader Catholic community, especially those not closely connected with the Church. Partly because of the involvement of many Catholics with the Labor Party, generalisations about Catholic attitudes to society and politics are hazardous. As we shall see, there was no monolithic Catholic view on such issues, and so as far as possible I have tried to identify which person or group held which views, distinguishing them from the views of others as they competed for acceptance and legitimisation.

Research for this work has been done within several constraints. First, it was decided to concentrate primary research on the Sydney material, and for comparison with Melbourne to rely mainly on its more ample secondary literature. Secondly, the Sydney Archdiocesan Archives have only in recent years begun to be a satisfactory and safe preserve, and records, particularly for the early 1930s, are at times skimpy. In addition, Archbishop Sheehan took his documents overseas in 1937 and it has not been possible to examine his activities in more detail. Thirdly, the records connected with the Sacred Heart Fathers Paddy Ryan, Leo Dalton and Leslie Rumble were not made available because the Sacred Heart Fathers were themselves producing a history of their order and did not wish to release material which could duplicate their work. Nor could more thorough research be done on Fr Celsus Kelly OFM and the Crusader magazine; the Franciscan Friary at Waverley was in process of demolition and the records, which had been boxed away, could not be located. A further constraint on research arose from the destruction of the entire records of the Catholic Press and Freeman's Journal when the Catholic Weekly moved offices in 1972. Finally the records of the Apostolic Delegation are still subject to the 75-year holding rule and were consequently not accessible.

However, enough remains to provide solid grounds for an interpretation of Catholic thought on society and politics in Sydney during the 1930s.
CHAPTER TWO

A CHURCH UNDER SIEGE:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CATHOLIC THOUGHT ON SOCIETY AND POLITICS

AND OF ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES IN SYDNEY BEFORE 1930

Introduction:

A "Church under siege" was how Frank Sheed, borrowing a phrase from Wilfrid Ward, described the Church he had known in Sydney in the 1920s, suggesting a worldview of encirclement by hostile forces. Though general throughout much of the Catholic world at that time, it was promoted in Australia by the new Irish bishops from 1860 and strongly reinforced by a long series of sectarian conflicts and political disputes. By 1930 the Irish-Catholic community had experienced half a century of hostility from its perceived enemies: secularist liberals, Protestants, Freemasons, British imperialists and capitalists. The response of members of the hierarchy had been to tighten defences and establish clear social and religious boundaries to their community: first, they defied the "Protestant Ascendancy" by building and maintaining a Catholic school system; secondly, they took a hard line against "mixed marriages", thus adopting a policy of endogamy; and they tried to reinforce the social and religious cohesion of Catholics by a wide range of organisations. Some authors have referred to this sub-culture as a "ghetto", not a

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1 cf. Frank Sheed, The Church and I, 27.
geographical one but a cultural one;\(^3\) not one physically and directly forced on Catholics, but one partly the result of social conflict and pressure and partly of deliberate policy by the bishops to maintain Catholic cohesion. The term is used here to describe this sub-culture, including both its distinctive mentality and the social and organisational structures.

The origins of this mentality among Irish-Australians lie in the Irish-Catholic sense of crisis, embattlement with and alienation from British and Protestant enemies. "Their history in Ireland and Australia demanded the continued existence of an Enemy, an exploiter, an oppressor, and, of course the British, and their colonial lackeys in Australia, filled that role."\(^4\) Despite the trend to social integration in following years, "They made Catholicism a crusade against the status quo, a cause in which many aggrieved Irish were delighted to enlist - while incidentally resuming the practice of religion."\(^5\) Part of the accompanying change in worldview was a reinterpretation of convict origins into a "triumphalist apologia for Irish Catholicism", ever faithful under persecution.\(^6\) This Irish-Catholic belligerence did not lead to civil unrest or violence, partly because the Irish believed in the political avenues open to them in a democracy. Nor was there in Australia a repetition of the agonised struggles to reconcile democracy and Catholicism as in Europe.\(^7\) This democratic preference was in no way linked to ecclesiastical control. In 1859, the results of elections showed that "Irish-Catholic

\(^3\) O'Farrell argues that there was no geographic ghetto in Australia because of social, economic and geographic mobility: "Little wonder there was no desperate Irish assault on the whole fabric of society, or growth of a ghetto mentality". Cf. The Irish in Australia, 15; cf. also 156-7. However, I consider the term "ghetto mentality" a good indicator of the cultural and religious alienation felt by many Catholics. To my mind, it seems a preferable term to "siege mentality" which is suggestive of more overt conflict.

\(^4\) P. O'Farrell, The Irish in Australia, 8; cf. also P. O'Farrell, England and Ireland Since 1800.

\(^5\) O'Farrell, The Irish, 40.

\(^6\) ibid, 51.

\(^7\) For a brief history of the struggles between the left and right wings of Social Catholicism, cf. R. Aubert, "The Beginnings of Social Catholicism" in The Christian Centuries, V. 5, 144-64; Alec Vidler, A Century of Social Catholicism 1820-1920.
solidarity was but a myth" when it came to politics. Religion played only a minor part in how Catholics voted, despite the sectarian weapon which was already being wielded by some politicians. Hence a tradition of democratic participation independent of the Church had begun before the development of the tight sub-culture of the ghetto.

The Catholic sense of separateness and alienation was reinforced by the first Irish bishops in Australia, who attempted to arrest the weakening of Catholic consciousness in the predominantly Protestant, and threateningly secular, Australia. The architect behind this refashioning of Australian Catholicism was Cardinal Cullen (1803-78) in Ireland; it was his nominees, often his relatives or close friends, who filled the bishoprics till his death. Cullen had strongly resisted Protestantising influences, introduced Roman practices and discipline and tightened Catholic cohesion by banning mixed marriages. He was convinced from his Roman experience that the Church was battling for survival against its enemies, notably Freemasons, Liberals, Italian nationalists, secularists and anti-clericals.

The appointees of Cullen tended to be men of like mind, acting as champions of the papacy in the fight against liberalism, secularism and the forces of anti-Catholicism. With these attitudes it was inevitable, as Sydney's Archbishop Polding lamented, that they would exacerbate sectarianism. In fact, the Irish bishops welcomed sectarianism as a way to reinforce social boundaries for the Catholic sub-culture. They further delineated boundaries by banning mixed marriages and maintaining a Catholic system of education independent of the State. The sense of threat was dramatised in the conflict over education: secularist enemies were near at hand, trying to destroy the Catholic allegiance of the young.

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8 J. Waldensee, Catholic Society in New South Wales, 1788-1860, 252. O'Farrell notes that many feared or believed in a Catholic bloc vote from the 1840s (cf. The Irish, 73).
10 cf. Desmond Bowen, Paul Cardinal Cullen and the Shaping of Modern Irish Catholicism, 278.
12 cf. ibid, 151.
13 cf. ibid, 153.
through State schools, which the bishops condemned in extravagant terms in 1879 as "seedplots of immorality". This whipped up a further round of sectarian conflict. As O'Farrell says, the "Irish subculture in Australia was a phenomenon imposed by the clergy from above, rather than a growth from below".

The outcome of these events was twofold: firstly, Catholic social and religious cohesion was strengthened; the Church became "their social centre, their defiant profession of separate identity, their claim to recognition and status, and their avenue to self-esteem - in this world". But secondly, the Catholic community was distanced from the normal affairs of society and politics, and the cleavage between their religious world and the secular was deepened. While many of the laity followed the bishops' policy on schools and mixed marriages, they tolerated clerical direction "only in strictly religious matters", not in politics. With the sectarian animosity aroused by the education debates, Catholic politicians realised that Catholics could rarely be represented in parliament if they embarked on a "hopeless anti-secular crusade". The politics of Catholics and the political interests of the Church had to be clearly distinguished and separated.

By the time Archbishop Moran arrived in Sydney in 1884, Catholics, as far as religion was concerned, were already "under siege". The mutual arousing of fears of Catholics and non-Catholics reinforced the polarisation and drove deeper the cleavage between them. Both sides were "caught in a self-fulfilling prophecy" of threat, fear and struggle. The Church withdrew from the affairs of the secular world, and the politics of Catholics tended to follow paths independent of Catholic guidance.

\[14 \text{ ibid., 184.} \]
\[15 \text{ O'Farrell, The Irish in Australia, 112.} \]
\[16 \text{ ibid., 111.} \]
\[17 \text{ cf. G. Haines, Lay Catholics and the Education Question in Nineteenth Century New South Wales, 103.} \]
\[18 \text{ ibid., 80.} \]
\[19 \text{ ibid., 180.} \]
\[20 \text{ cf. ibid., 192.} \]
\[21 \text{ O'Farrell, The Irish, 8.} \]
Patrick Francis Moran (1830-1911) followed similar policies on Catholic schools and mixed marriages as his uncle, Cardinal Cullen, but he tried to overcome the negative effects of the ghetto strategy in the hope of winning political legitimacy for Catholics. His social thinking was influenced by the Catholic social movements in Germany, which supported an attitude to political activity which invites a comparison with what Michael Fogarty termed "Christian Democracy". Fogarty defined it as:

that aspect of the ecumenical or catholic movement of modern Christianity [sic] which is concerned with the application of Christian principles in the areas of political, economic, and social life for which the Christian laity has independent responsibility.\(^{22}\)

Though Moran did not use the term "Christian Democracy" till 1897 (when he contrasted it with the programme of "anarchy"),\(^{23}\) and though he later seemed chary of using the term at all because Leo XIII in his 1901 encyclical Christian Democracy had denied the term any political significance, Moran's thinking was essentially in agreement with Fogarty's definition. Moran saw the role of the Church in social affairs as offering basic principles from which lay people could develop their own programmes of social reform; lay people were to act on their own responsibility and not under the control of the hierarchy. He advocated social reform on Christian principles through constitutional means, while at the same time being critical of socialist elements incompatible with Christianity. He supported unionism, programmes of social reform, the eight-hour day, arbitration and a family wage adequate for workers to be able to own their own homes.\(^{24}\) Nor did he conceive his support for social reform in terms of Catholic sectional interests; he said he would rather see good Protestants in parliament than bad Catholics, and urged people to vote for candidates on the grounds of their moral integrity, not creed.\(^{25}\) After Leo XIII's encyclical Rerum Novarum\(^{26}\) in 1891, he offered a public


\(^{24}\) cf. ibid., 78.

\(^{25}\) cf. ibid., 154.
lecture at which most of the newly elected Labor members were present. He outlined Leo's support for the concept of the just wage, for reasonable working conditions and trade unions, and, strikingly against Leo's thinking (though there seemed to be no awareness of this difference at the time), he blessed the right to strike. He also called on capitalists to share their profits with the workers, but did not suggest a mechanism for doing this.

Despite being the main channels of communication in the Sydney Catholic community, the Catholic papers assumed a relative independence of the hierarchy. A clerical ideal for Catholic papers outlined at the 1909 Catholic Congress implied that the Sydney Church wanted loyalty but not control to the point where it implied responsibility in social or political affairs.

The Significance of the Debate on Socialism

The developing Catholic alignment with Labor rested on a subtle understanding that Catholics acted independently and there was no clerical entanglement or control of the laity. Class interest, sectarian pressure from the non-Labor parties and the social teaching of the papacy all inclined Catholics towards the Labor Party. However, should the Church condemn socialism in the Labor Party, Catholic Laborites would be forced to choose between their loyalty to the Party and their allegiance to the Church. If they chose to abandon Labor after

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27 Eris O'Brien said the encyclical fell "like a bombshell upon the capitalist-controlled world, which had come to believe that the Church was disinclined to disturb the status quo of Liberalist [sic] economic thought and practice". Cf. "Cardinal Moran's Place in Public Affairs", in RAHS XXVIII (1942), Part 1, 21.


29 The Freeman's Journal (founded 1850) was partly owned by the Hibernians and was Protectionist in sympathy. The Catholic Press was founded in 1895 to promote intellectual debate, and explore European Catholic social thought while opposing extreme versions of socialism: "We are socialists within the doctrine of the Catholic Church" (Cf Ford, op. cit., 186).

30 Fr John O'Gorman, "How to Promote a Catholic Press", in Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress held at St. Mary's Cathedral, 1909, 656.
a Church condemnation of socialism, they would be left without the most promising vehicle for their political aspirations. It seems likely that many Catholics would accept the ghetto strategy of the bishops only so long as it did not isolate them politically as well; if so, the opening to Labor must have been doubly important to the hierarchy.

Moran's interventions in the debate on socialism criticised extreme versions anathema to the Church while allowing for an interpretation which Catholics could support. He did not regard "Christian socialism" as impious; what he opposed were extremes: "I mean that socialism which corresponds to Communism in France and Nihilism in Russia, and is known by other names in different parts of Spain and Germany". This distinction allowed moderate Catholic elements to remain in good conscience within Labor even though Australian Labor traditions required them to use the rhetoric of mild socialism.

While Moran was able to debate the meaning of the term socialism in a way helpful to Catholics in Labor, Catholic thought and movements overseas did not supply models which could be readily emulated in the Antipodes. In 1900 Moran supervised the first Australasian Catholic Congress in Sydney, in the vein of the great German Catholic congresses. However the German pattern was not judged suitable for Australia; the Congress rejected a proposal to form a Catholic political party along the lines of the German Centre Party. The Congress indicated that the Church was in sympathy with labour movements, acknowledged the independence of Catholics in party politics and blessed the use of the term socialism when it meant gradual social reform.

The 1901 elections returned nine Catholics among 24 MPs, a result which the Cardinal regarded as a triumph for the ideas of Rerum Novarum. The triumph, however, was short-lived, for a sectarian reaction set in, partly provoked by

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31 P. O'Farrell, Documents, 104.
32 cf. Ford, op. cit., 239.
33 cf. Rev. P. Slattery, "Papal Encyclicals in the Nineteenth Century", in Proceedings (1900), 127.
Moran's own triumphalist attitudes and an attack on Protestant missions in Samoa. His candidature for the Federal Convention, which was meant to demonstrate the loyalty of Catholics, had aroused the ire of the Loyal Orange Lodge. Protestants reacted by forming the Protestant Defence Association which grew to 22,000 by 1903. The outcome was the election of the Carruthers Government in 1904 with only one Catholic in it. Catholics felt threatened and in response formed the Australian Catholic Truth Society which in the next year sold 100,000 pamphlets.

The question of socialism was revived in 1905 after the NSW State Labor Council removed the 1897 plank and proposed a Socialisation Objective as:

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 the Municipality.

The Catholic Press wrongly interpreted this as a victory for the extreme socialist element; the Press ran a letter from H. E. Kelly as a one-page article headed "Labour Party now Undisguised Socialists". Such an attack threatened the Catholic-Labor alignment and would have major consequences if upheld by the hierarchy. Moran intervened immediately to defend the Party:

There are some gentlemen who call themselves Socialists. Well I don't like the name of Socialism but, then, what's in a name? For my part I do not like it, for the reason that in the English-speaking world to-day Communism and Socialism are partially convertible terms, and no one in his senses should look to its maxims as a source of blessing and peace to society at the present hour. But if men in the advancement of their political interests choose the name Socialists, I say again what's in a name if the false maxims of Communism are not adopted by those men?

It is by their principles and maxims that one must judge them. It would be unfair and unjust to assign to the leaders of the Labor Party those false maxims that imply the name of Communism... I have no hesitation in saying that there is not the slightest danger of our Australian people ever being

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37 cf. ibid., 285.
38 ibid., 280.
contaminated by the extreme views of Socialism, and other dangerous associations.40

Moran's intervention here was very significant and defended Catholic involvement in Labor; it was not rhetoric or names which were so important, but what they meant in practice. Vatican statements did not so clearly support Moran's position, and when Pope Pius X in 1905 issued Il Fermo Proposito, which included a hostile reference to socialism, ex-Prime Minister George Reid used it, in Eris O'Brien's words, "to organize a great national campaign against Labour, on the plea that it was socialist." They "created this bogey of 'socialism' - for much of it was in Australia in 1905".41 Reid had lost the support of the Protectionists and been forced to resign; he was now looking for a weapon against Labor, and supported by the Loyal Orange Lodge, campaigned against the Socialisation Objective. In a national "duel" with Reid,42 Moran said that the Continental socialism condemned by the Pope was not that type prevalent in the social reform parties in Australia.43 In O'Brien's judgement, "the Cardinal usefully intervened on behalf of the Australian Labour Party at a moment that was fateful in its destiny".44 Moran's stand was reinforced by the Plenary Council of Australian Bishops in September 1905 which reiterated the distinction between Continental socialism aimed at overthrowing existing society, and those who used the name socialist in an acceptable sense: "to redress the wrongs and alleviate the miseries of the labouring poor". "Of Socialism taken in this sense, it is well known that the papal encyclical just cited is the most luminous and authoritative exposition in existence."45

In contrast with the dramatic events in Europe and elsewhere, the severe anti-Modernist campaigns launched with the approval of Pope Pius X (1903-1914) seemed to have little immediate effect in Australia. In Europe the anti-Modernists

40 P. Ford, op. cit., 268.
42 ibid., 23.
44 Eris O'Brien, op. cit., 23.
45 P. O'Farrell, Documents, 162.
denounced practically all the leading Catholic scholars; they also severely inhibited the growth of Catholic social movements and affected the interpretation of socialism. The emergent Christian Democratic movement of Le Sillon in France was condemned in 1910.\textsuperscript{46} In Italy, too, Catholic social movements were severely proscribed,\textsuperscript{47} and the Christian Democrats in Germany narrowly avoided condemnation after a determined resistance.\textsuperscript{48} In England, Mgr Parkinson in 1914 defended the Catholic Social Guild against the charge of socialism.\textsuperscript{49} Though the Guild survived, John Wheatley's socialist society in Glasgow and Henry Somerville's group in Leeds were closed.\textsuperscript{50} The Guild's founder, Fr Charles Plater SJ, greatly admired Le Sillon, and had borrowed elements from it; he opposed any crusade against socialism at this time. Vincent McNabb in England and John A. Ryan in the United States also argued that the Church had not condemned all forms of socialism. Ryan wrote to McNabb that the "papal condemnation had not extended to Guild Socialism, Christian Socialism, Revisionist Socialism or any other mild form of the theory."\textsuperscript{51}

Nothing equivalent happened in Sydney. Moran, though old and shortly to die, must have strongly disagreed with the anti-socialist campaigns of the anti-Modernists whose zealots, should they reach Australia, could destroy the fragile alignment with Labor. What was at issue in Europe was the independence of laity from clerical control and the pursuit of the values of Christian Democracy. These were precisely the values of the Labor Party in Australia which Moran had himself made so much of. Any ham-fisted campaign against socialism in the style of the anti-Modernists may have condemned loyal Catholics to political oblivion. It was a prospect which Moran must have found intolerable. Though some literalists among

\textsuperscript{46} Alec Vidler, \textit{A Century of Social Catholicism 1820-1920}, 117.
\textsuperscript{48} R. Lill, "German Catholicism between Kulturkampf and World War I", Ch. 35 in H. Jedin, \textit{History}, IX, 501 ff.
\textsuperscript{50} cf. ibid., 49.
the clergy and laity would question the Australian bishops' approach to socialism by drawing attention to the Roman documents, the bishops did not change their policy. Indirectly, however, the anti-Modernist scare was to have a great effect on the political and social thought of Catholics in Australia, because the overseas sources of Catholic ideas were severely constrained. Christian Democracy did not have the seminal effect it may otherwise have had.

In general, as indicated by the Archbishop of Hobart's talk at the 1909 Congress, the Australian Church supported the Christian Democratic thought of Professor Giuseppe Toniolo (1845-1918), one of the main proponents in Italy of early Christian Democracy, and Leo XIII about an expanded role for the State to prevent the exploitation of the poor and to limit the property rights of the rich.52 The Australians parted company with Leo XIII over the question of the confessional State and his strictures on Christian Democracy. At the same 1909 Congress, Rev Dr J. MacCaffrey said that the Irish in various countries "have not wasted their time in striving after a union of Church and State. They recognised that in the present circumstances such a combination would only prove detrimental. But they insisted that religion should not be divorced from education".53 In such circumstances, an appeal to pragmatism neatly side-stepped the unwanted and unpleasant consequences of the Vatican directives. But it also seems to have meant abandoning explicit allegiance to the Christian Democratic movements in Europe. It is perhaps for this reason that there is so little reference in Australia in later years to the ideas of European Christian Democracy.

Moran strove to maintain the cohesion of the Catholic community but at the same time to win greater political acceptability for Catholics; however he was unable to overcome a basic contradiction in the way he pursued these goals. By his political role he aroused sectarian conflict, so reinforcing the tendency to cultural

53 Rev Dr J. MacCaffrey, "The Catholic Church at the Opening of the Twentieth Century", in ibid., p.429.
and social isolation. While Catholics made gains in the political field, they did so as individuals and not as representatives of the Catholic community. Catholic politicians were agreed that there could be no extension of clerical authoritarianism from the religious ghetto to politics. Sectarian reaction convinced them that there could be no success for a Catholic party; the main avenue for Catholics acting independently of the Church seemed through Labor. The question of socialism, then, was very important. Should the Church be forced to condemn the Labor Party, Catholics could be denied a major avenue of political representation. Should that happen, the strategy of religious cohesion through the ghetto strategy might be threatened by Catholic disillusionment, with possible disaffection from the policies of the hierarchy and the collapse of support for Catholic schools. In other words, the question of socialism affected the accommodation between Catholic political and religious interests, and thus the whole pastoral strategy of the Cullenite bishops.

The result of this attempt to blend an authoritarian ghetto Church with a policy of political integration was termed by Patrick O'Farrell as "mindless pragmatism".54 Pragmatism it was, but arguably not mindless; rather, it rested on a basic strategy of ghetto cohesion which had some unfortunate side-effects. Intellectual activity was not encouraged, and could have offered little to social and political thought even if there had not been such a disjunction between religion and politics. The extent of Church interest in politics tended to resolve into three issues: preservation of the religious freedom of the Church; criticism of extreme forms of socialism; and eventually the restoration of State funding to Catholic schools. On the last point Moran was prepared to wait till non-Catholics could see the justice of the Catholic case. The longer other Australians refused to concede the issue to Catholics, however, the deeper grew the feeling among many Catholics that they were unfairly victimised.

54 P. O'Farrell, The Catholic Church, 296.
Archbishop Michael Kelly

The ghetto pattern in Sydney Catholicism was strongly reinforced during the episcopacy of Moran's successor, Michael Kelly (1850-1940), who was appointed coadjutor archbishop of Sydney in 1901 and succeeded Moran in 1911. His reign of three decades was to greatly affect the style and development of the Sydney Church. A much less gifted man than Moran, Kelly was given to piety and was more authoritarian; he always used the episcopal plural in speech. His range of interests was narrow and he had little awareness of intellectual issues. He emphasised popular devotions as the religious bond of the Catholic community, and denounced the evils of drink and mixed marriages in the pattern of the Cullenite bishops. Kelly adhered firmly to the pastoral strategy of maintaining ghetto cohesion under tight clerical control, and of separating it from the political activity of Catholics.\(^{55}\) Though he advised the clergy to be non-partisan in their politics, this did not mean a complete withdrawal from politics, for "should necessity... arise, the priest will be found even on the hustings, even in Parliament, for the defence of right".\(^{56}\) This disavowal of political activity clearly rested on his judgement whether an issue was a moral or religious one. Kelly placed little hope in Labor advancing Catholic interests; in 1911 he said: "I am afraid the Labour Party as such will not do much to relieve us of our disabilities".\(^{57}\) The clergy in general also took little part in politics.

Kelly's attitudes to politics contrasted strongly with those of Archbishop Daniel Mannix who arrived in Melbourne in 1913. Mannix claimed an explicit role for priests in politics: "Is it or not a fact that we want priests in politics?"\(^{58}\) In 1915 he expressed surprise that not more Australian priests were so involved.\(^{59}\)

\(^{56}\) cf. O'Farrell, *Documents*, 152.
\(^{58}\) C. Kiernan, *Daniel Mannix and Ireland*, 109.
Even for him, however, it seems that politics had no place in the pulpit, though he used other official Catholic occasions for political speeches.  

**P.S. Cleary: an Exponent of Catholic Social Thought**

The most significant attempt to develop Catholic social thought in Sydney during the early decades of the century came from Patrick Scott Cleary (1861-1941). In 1915 he had been made sub-editor of the *Catholic Press* and editor from 1922 till his death. His interest in the Church and social reform was of long standing. He had contributed a paper to the 1909 Congress, "The Church and the Worker", and later wrote for the *Australasian Catholic Record*. His two booklets remain among the most significant Catholic statements on social questions at this time: the first, *The One Big Union: Will It Emancipate the Worker?* (1919), argued against syndicalist and OBU proposals for industrial reform; the second, *Social Solidarity: The Principles, Platform and Objective of the Democratic Party* (1920), attempted a more positive view of Catholic proposals for reform, arguing particularly for the introduction of industrial democracy and for the extension of private property so that workers could share in the ownership of the means of production.

In his critique of the OBU, Cleary outlined a programme of social reform, drawing on the US writers, Fr Joseph Husslein SJ and Fr John A. Ryan (1869-1945), the US bishops 1919 Statement on Social Reconstruction (also written by Ryan), as well as the Englishman Hilaire Belloc. Cleary looked to Ryan for his emphasis on extending the democratic principle to industry and overcoming the capitalist system by introducing worker control and industrial democracy; and to Belloc for a critique of the tendency to State capitalism and collectivism, a tendency which could be offset by promoting widespread property ownership. Cleary

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60 cf. Kevin Kelly, Interview 5 July 1986, Tape 1A.
argued against the OBU for its confused blend of syndicalist and collectivist thinking: the syndicalist views without State supervision would lead to industrial exploitation of consumers; State control without industrial democracy was State capitalism which would lead to bureaucratic tyranny and exploitation of workers in the interests of consumers, the State or the bureaucracy. So he favoured ownership or regulation of industries by the State with the workers assuming control under State supervision; class conflict would be eliminated by giving workers "an equal voice in the direction of production".62 He was not concerned about the "fads" of Continental socialists, saying that in Australia the "so-called socialism was mostly of a practical kind";63 and hoped that the Labor Party would be able to introduce reforms and establish self-government in industry.64 This social thinking was clearly of the Left, trying to take the best features out of various socialist proposals and evaluating them against Catholic theories of the State. It was far from being a defence of existing capitalism or a Rightist polemic against socialism.

The Democratic Party

Cleary in 1913 became first and only president of the NSW Catholic Federation which attempted to change public opinion about funding for Catholic schools, initially without encroaching on political territory or arousing sectarian animosity. The Federation failed to effect the change in political attitudes it wanted, and after a rebuff from Labor, on the grounds that it would "injure the movement";65 the Federation formed the Democratic Party in 1919 for the 1920 elections, which were based on proportional representation for the first time. This was a major turn-around from Cleary's opposition to the formation of a Catholic party in 1909, when he said: "There is no party so inimical to social justice as to prevent a Catholic from joining it, and no party so favourable to Catholic ideals as to merit collective support"; he thought the Labor Party closer

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62 P.S. Cleary, The One Big Union: Will It Emancipate the Worker?, 4.  
63 ibid, 8.  
64 ibid, 9.  
65 O'Farrell, Documents, 314.
to Catholic ideals of "corporate representation".\textsuperscript{66} Cleary regarded the Democratic Party as a genuine labour party, "based on the writings of Pope Leo XIII, Very Rev. Dr. Ryan, Father Husselsin, and the American War Council [of bishops]. We shall be true Labour members."\textsuperscript{67}

Cleary sketched an ideal of social reform in the party platform, Social Solidarity. He admitted that the education issue was "one of the most immediate motives for starting the Party, but called for a non-sectarian party aimed at the reform of capitalism on Christian Democratic lines. Control by party machines had made parliamentary democracy a "failure"; so he advocated frequent elections and an end to cabinet solidarity.\textsuperscript{68} The Party aimed to spread private property as widely as possible: "The proposition that 'the workers can own the works', can be solved equitably and peaceably."\textsuperscript{69} Both unrestricted capitalism and State management had failed: "Small ownership and nothing else, is the logical contradiction of capitalism."\textsuperscript{70}

Cleary's hopes were not to be realised; the Party was seen as a Catholic one, and even among Catholics it won only 16,000 votes of a possible 115,000. "The rest voted Labor, and Labor was returned with more than half its members Catholics."\textsuperscript{71} In the 1922 elections the Party fared little better, returning only one successful candidate, Dr Cyril Fallon. Worse still, the Party, in O'Farrell's words, provoked "a spectacular eruption of Protestant bigotry."\textsuperscript{72} Militant Protestants gained control of the NSW Fuller Government, and tried to legislate against the Catholic Ne Temere decree which said that Catholics could only be sacramentally married before a Catholic priest. Kelly averred that he would rather go to gaol than not observe the

\textsuperscript{66} P. S. Cleary, "The Church and the Workers", in Proceedings of the Third Australasian Catholic Congress, 1909, 268.
\textsuperscript{67} ibid., 316.
\textsuperscript{68} P. S. Cleary, Social Solidarity: The Principles, Platform and Objective of the Democratic Party, 9.
\textsuperscript{69} ibid., 14.
\textsuperscript{70} ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{71} O'Farrell, The Catholic Church, 347.
\textsuperscript{72} ibid.
Roman decree. This round of bitter sectarian conflict ended with the fall of the
government to Labor in 1925.

The sectarian outburst and government hostility had forced Catholics back
into their defensive positions. The failure of Catholic mobilisation first through the
Catholic Federation, and then in the Democratic Party, as well as the rebuff from
Labor, meant that Catholics in Sydney would be very slow to mount such
campaigns again. Their efforts had produced the very worst outcome in sectarian
opposition and further alienation of Catholics from the wider community. One thing
had become clear: the value of a friendly Labor Party; it may not budge on
education, but neither would it play host to anti-Catholic sectarianism.
Paradoxically, the outcome proved the Labor politicians right against their clerical
critics: nothing could be done on education until public opinion had changed.
Catholic efforts turned to strengthening internal cohesion and building up defence
organisations.73

The Significance of Irish Politics

To further inflame feelings between Irish-Australians and others came the
Easter Rebellion in Ireland in 1916. It eventually led to bitter disagreements among
the Australian bishops, notably between Kelly and Mannix, and resulted in a legacy
of suspicion and mistrust between the Sydney and Melbourne hierarchies.

Like many others, Kelly believed that Home Rule for Ireland was inevitable,
and saw no conflict between his Irish nationalism and the Empire; at the outbreak
of the War, he took a strong pro-Allied stand. This accorded with clerical opinion
in Ireland itself, even for some six months after the 1916 Rebellion.74 This attitude
to the War, especially with the threat of conscription in Australia, was to change
dramatically when the consequences of the Easter Rising made themselves felt. At
first even Mannix regarded the Rising as "criminal folly",75 but the speedy

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73 cf. ibid, 352.
75 cf. C. Kiernan, op. cit., 97.
execution of the Irish rebel leaders, despite Australian appeals for clemency, outraged Irish-Australian opinion. Moreover, the "British reaction seemed to show that government to be ruthlessly and vindictively alienated from the Irish".76 In Sydney, too, sympathy for the rebels increased, especially in the Irish National Association which Kelly opposed for its Sinn Fein links. Some of his clergy and the Irish working class resisted Kelly on this. The tension surfaced in near riot at the St Patrick's Day sports in March 1917 when an anti-conscription crowd drowned out the Premier. The conflict opened a bitter class division in Sydney Catholicism. Mannix became the spokesman for this reaction, and under pressure, Kelly was forced to shift his position closer to that of Mannix. O'Farrell argues that Mannix gained wide working-class support, not because of the Irishism of many Catholics, but because he articulated Catholic, Labor and tribal feelings; he "satisfied the need for grand symbols and heroes on the one hand, and bogeys and scapegoats on the other".77 Particularly with the conscription issue, he led "a crusade against the dominant forces, a crusade whose supporters saw conscription as a summation and symbol of a history of manifold oppression".78 It embodied a style of religious populism.

Relations between Mannix and Kelly came under strain when the British prevented Mannix landing in Ireland in July 1920.79 Kelly objected to Mannix's political involvement. Still their relations remained cordial, O'Farrell argues, until December 1921 when Kelly welcomed him home; however this changed when Mannix supported the Republicans in the Irish Civil War.80 But B.A. Santamaria claims that Kelly was unhappy with Mannix before that; Kelly refused to sign a telegram protesting the British action preventing Mannix landing in Ireland, saying that the Melbourne Archbishop should throw himself at the feet of the Pope and beg

76 O'Farrell, The Irish in Australia, 263.
77 ibid., 270.
78 ibid., 271.
80 cf. ibid., 11-12.
forgiveness. Kelly was hardly likely to approve of Mannix's fund-raising tour through the United States. Mannix had said in Plattsburg:

No, England never was a friend of the United States. When your fathers fought it was against England. Ireland has the same grievance against the same enemy only ten times greater. I hope Ireland will make a fight equally successful. England was your enemy; she is your enemy today; she will be your enemy for all time. England is the greatest hypocrite in the world. She pretended to be your friend in the war. Now the war is over she tells you to mind your own business. Mannix was asking Americans to help finance a war against Britain and inflaming public opinion against Britain. Were Mannix to repeat such sentiments in Australia he would place in question the civil loyalty of Catholics. The consequences of Mannix's speech must have greatly alarmed Kelly. In this light, it seems likely that Kelly's friendly gestures towards Mannix may have been to moderate the younger Archbishop; Mannix was not to be so moderated.

Kelly defended his disapproval of Mannix to Archbishop William Barry of Hobart on the grounds that clerics should avoid political controversy.

According to Kelly, the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda had expressly denied, as inadmissible, the argument of "dual personality", that is, the contention that Mannix was an archbishop in church and a private citizen on the public platform. He also claimed that another Propaganda official had stated that only in the case of a public issue affecting religion ought an archbishop make political speeches—merely political issues should be left to secular politicians.

Kelly said that the Pope himself had complained about Mannix's behaviour. Barry warned that if the Vatican removed Mannix there could be schism in Australia and disaffection in Ireland. Kelly supported the Republican cause at this time, but did not justify violence which he thought the clergy must condemn.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in December 1921, but de Valera and his Republicans refused to accept it; the outcome was civil war in Ireland. Mannix, almost alone among the Irish bishops throughout the world, supported de Valera and the Republicans, even after all 28 bishops of Ireland in October 1922 condemned the violence against the Nationalist Government.

81 B.A. Santamaria, Archbishop Mannix, 119.
82 C. Kiernan, op. cit., 148.
[The Republicans] carry on what they call a war, but which in the absence of legitimate authority to justify it, is morally only a system of murder and assassination... killing in an unjust war is as much murder before God as if there were no war. 

The bishops forbade the sacraments to lay people disobeying them and suspended ipso facto priests supporting the Republicans. To the outrage of Kelly and the bishops of Ireland and Australia, however, Mannix continued to support the Republicans; the Australian bishops "bitterly resented" Mannix's welcoming Sinn Fein delegates to Australia in 1923. The Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Cattaneo, tried to silence Mannix, and Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane wrote that welcoming the delegates was "against my views and the views of nineteen out of twenty bishops in Australia". Kelly wrote to Mannix in March 1923 outlining on behalf of "some fellow members of the Hierarchy" "a few principles of ecclesiastical discipline by which peace, order and respect for legitimate authority in Church and State may be preserved":

a. Silence on purely political topics affecting Ireland as the only way of obviating disturbing rejoinders and dissension;

b. The deputation to Australia of a priest and a layman who uphold the views and the methods of De Valera in Ireland ought not be favoured by us while these methods stand condemned by the unanimous pronouncement of the Irish Episcopate;

c. The appeal to the Holy See by De Valera is not suspensive of the force of the Bishops' condemnation;

This was a very strong letter against Mannix, and though little appeared in public, indicated a depth of feeling on the question among the Australian bishops. Kiernan says that some of the responsibility for the Irish Civil War must lie with Mannix since he helped undermine the credibility of a constitutional settlement: "there is no evidence that Mannix objected to the Irish Republicans using his name to justify their rebellion and defiance of the Irish bishops.

84 Kiernan, op. cit., 188-9.
85 Tom Boland, James Duhig, 163.
86 ibid, 164.
87 Draft copy of a letter by Archbishop Kelly to Mannix, 26 March 1923, in Archbishop Mannix file, SMA.
88 C. Kiernan, op. cit., 162.
The outcome of the fierce controversies over conscription and the Irish "troubles" was to reinforce Catholics yet again in their isolation and increase their suspicion of British politicians and their counterparts in Australia, the Protestant Ascendancy. By 1922, most Catholics in Australia had abandoned Ireland's cause as hopelessly intractable and embarrassing; this was no longer the old Ireland of myth and memory, but a land of senseless murder and violence. Irishism in Australia had lost its romance. But the controversies had the effect of throwing into question the civil loyalty of Catholics, and for some it reopened old Irish antipathy to the British. This attitude was reflected in the Catholic press in both Sydney and Melbourne, which was deeply suspicious of the press cables, the Australian press and British capital.

Archbishop Michael Sheehan

Despite Archbishop Kelly's disdain for politics, Michael Sheehan (1870-1945) as his coadjutor archbishop from 1922 was able to play a significant role in maintaining the Catholic-Labor alignment. Reputedly appointed on the recommendation of Mannix against the wishes of the Manly Union which wanted an Australian, Sheehan had been vice-president of Maynooth, was a distinguished scholar and had written a standard text on apologetics which was highly regarded. But though only 52 years old, he suffered from poor health and personality difficulties which led to a prolonged conflict with Archbishop Kelly. He was an extremely shy and retiring scholar who dreaded public occasions. When he arrived in Australia, he suffered a prolonged illness, and was unable to help Kelly in pastoral duties. He appealed to Kelly to allow him to move from Broadway to

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89 Dan Gold said that Catholics were seen as virtually disloyal (Interview 2 July 1986, Tape 1A); Jim Lang confirmed that Catholics were often viewed with suspicion (Interview 2 July 1986, Tape 2A).
90 Gold said that many Catholics who felt no love for Britain were quite defiant; his mother would refuse to stand for "God Save the Queen". Interview 2 July 1986, Tape 1B.
92 He had MA and PhD degrees from Bonn University, and had done postgraduate work at Oxford and the theological school at Griefswald, Germany. Cf. Catholic Press, 3 June 1937, 16.
Homebush for better air, which located him on the periphery of Sydney. As Kelly aged, he looked to Sheehan for more assistance, which was not readily forthcoming. By 1929, relations between the two archbishops were at breaking point. The conflict had already been referred to Cardinal Cerretti in Rome, who recommended conferences between the two men; Sheehan refused to attend. The dispute was to bedevil hierarchical leadership till Archbishop Gilroy replaced Sheehan in 1937.

The Church and the Labor Party

D. Whittington wrote that "no single organisation has exerted such a potent, though indirect, influence on Australian politics as the Roman Catholic Church." This would seem to be especially true of the Labor Party in which Catholics were strongly represented after the split over the conscription debates in 1917. J.F. Mason says that more than half the parliamentary members were Catholic from 1917 till 1927; the figure then dropped but increased again to 50% in 1930, rose to about 60% in 1932 and remained at that percentage till 1937. Catholic success in Labor politics was epitomised in James Scullin becoming prime minister in 1929. His ministry contained eight Catholics, though as he stressed later, "they did not adopt a sectarian approach towards political problems." Many of the outstanding Labor leaders of the time were Catholics, though not all were equally committed. Jack Lang and John Curtin were not practising; "Ted" Theodore was held in good standing; and Joseph Lyons was regarded as an excellent Catholic. But there was no common Catholic social philosophy or ideology on which these men drew, nor did they form Catholic blocs. Though sectarianism was very strong within the

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92 cf. Kelly to Sheehan, 12 January 1929, in Archbishop Kelly and Archbishop Sheehan file, SMA.
95 J. Robertson, J.H. Scullin: A Political Biography, 177.
97 Ibid, 27.
non-Labor parties during these early decades of the century,\footnote{cf. ibid., 76.} it was frowned upon within Labor: "so much so, that unscrupulous partisans... could see advantages in making unsubstantiated charges that their opponents were indulging in it."\footnote{ibid., 49.} Sectarianism had cost the Labor Party seats in the 1922 elections, and the Welshman, Albert Willis, then general secretary of the Miners’ Federation, determined to undercut the appeal of the Protestant Labor Party on the coalfields. In October 1923 he formed the Industrial Christian Fellowship, which included the Catholic C. C. Lazzarini as vice-president, and Cyril Fallon, the only elected representative of the Democratic Party.\footnote{cf. ibid., 64.} It helped defuse sectarianism during the 1924 disputes. Anti-sectarianism was also one of Lang’s most important political principles:

> I have endeavoured all my life to keep clear of anything that ever in the slightest way touched on sectarianism or religion. I have always held... that religious questions should never be discussed in Parliament.\footnote{ibid., 79.}

The result of the 1925 elections also disabused the conservative parties of the use of the sectarian weapon.\footnote{cf. ibid., 83.} In Nairn’s view, "The rejection of sectarianism [by the electorate] was the most important of several reasons for the defeat of the conservative coalition."\footnote{ibid., 92.}

Catholic fears about radical socialism focussed on communists and the "Trades Hall Reds", a group around J.S. ("Jock") Garden\footnote{J.S. ("Jock") Garden (1882-1968): assistant secretary NSW Labor Council 1916; secretary, 1918; expelled from Labor Party, 1919; rejoined Labor to "whitewash" it in 1923; expelled again, November 1924; resigned Communist Party, 1926; "More than anyone else, he was responsible for the foundation of the Australasian (Australian) Council of Trade Unions in Melbourne in 1927". Bede Nairn, "Garden, John Smith", in B. Nairn and G. Serle (eds), Australian Dictionary of Biography, 1891-1939, Cl - Gib, 615.} and Albert Willis.\footnote{A.C. Willis, General secretary of the coal miners' union (Australian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation), 1913; general secretary of the Miners' Federation, 1915-25; vice-president of the NSW Labor Party, 1916.} Garden and Willis had been expelled from the Labor Party in 1918, and founded the Industrial
Labor Party. Garden, a religious fundamentalist, had been a preacher in the Church of Christ till 1922 but was also a great admirer of Lenin. He had been a founder of the Communist Party in Australia in 1920; and in 1922 he represented Australia at the second Profintern and sixth Comintern congresses in Moscow, where he was elected to the Comintern executive; he claimed that Australian communists could "direct the policy of the Labor Party". Willis and Garden had tried to combine their syndicalist and collectivist ideas in their campaign for the One Big Union (OBU), but when these were rejected by the Labor Party in 1919, Garden had abandoned the Party. He remained active at Trades Hall, and both he and Willis were among those appointed by the April 1923 Congress to revise the Party Constitution. This committee was to be the source of what later became known as the "Red Rules" adopted by the Party to Lang's advantage in 1927. Willis had never been a communist, but a syndicalist; as Nairn says:

"his insight and religiosity enabled him to perceive the destructive futility of Communism. He was a committed non-conformist Christian, and his radicalism was inspired by a firm belief that members of the labour movement should be God-fearing."

The influence of communists in Labor exposed it to sometimes quite irrational attacks from the conservative parties, and Lang and many of his parliamentary colleagues were aware of the difficulty of winning elections while communists were seen to have influence. In October 1923, the NSW Party, following Lang who was by then working with Willis and other anti-Garden groups, banned members of the Communist Party from the NSW ALP. Willis, as president of State Labor, had increasing influence in the Labor Party; indeed, in 1924 he took control of the Daily Mail which was renamed the Labor Daily. In the same year, Federal Labor

109 cf. ibid., 56.
110 cf. ibid.
111 ibid., 58.
112 cf. ibid., 59-60.
113 cf. ibid., 62.
114 The Daily Mail had been financed by P.J. Minahan in 1922, but was unsuccessful. Cf. ibid., 65.
also forbade communist membership or affiliation with the ALP.\textsuperscript{115} However, practising Catholics, notably J.J. Graves and J. Beasley, had been closely associated with Garden and the communist group. Nairn says that they and others agreed with "some of the social and political aspirations of the Communists, and were prepared to discount their Russian connections and ignore their atheism and ultimate aims of total power through violence."\textsuperscript{116}

International communism did not appear to present an immediate threat to Australia. Fr M.J. O'Reilly CM in 1924 wrote that there "is no doubt as to the utter collapse of Russian Communism"; it had been tried but "failed monumentally."\textsuperscript{117} Because of its savage persecution of Orthodoxy, he also saw it as a new Anti-Christ: "There is here question of the very Spirit of Evil."\textsuperscript{118} He anticipated severe persecution for Catholics: "Close observers, who are no alarmists, consider that they see the cloud on the horizon, though, for the moment, it be no bigger than a man's hand."\textsuperscript{119}

Garden in 1925 ran as a candidate for the Communist Party which failed to take a single seat; it won a tiny 0.09 per cent of the vote,\textsuperscript{120} while Garden won 0.9 per cent of the vote for the seat of Sydney;\textsuperscript{121} the communists had done so badly that there was talk of disbanding the Party. In running for the Communist Party, Garden had disqualified himself from the Labor Party for four years, and was not readmitted to membership till 1929, but he remained secretary of the Labor Council and an important power broker in Sydney. Nairn's assessment of the danger of a communist take-over at this time was that it was wildly exaggerated: "to proclaim it as a serious problem was to yield to political paranoia."\textsuperscript{122} It was a reaction which was endemic in the anti-Labor parties: "The temptation for

\textsuperscript{116} Nairn, \textit{op. cit.}, 64.
\textsuperscript{117} Fr M.J. O'Reilly CM, in \textit{ACR}, 1, 3 (July 1924), 97.
\textsuperscript{118} \textit{ibid.}, 104.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{ibid.}, 105.
\textsuperscript{120} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 92.
\textsuperscript{121} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 93.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{ibid.}, 136.
indulging in paranoia by Nationalists as well as Laborites was irresistible.\textsuperscript{123} Undoubtedly communists were trying to infiltrate the Party, but Lang was determined to maintain the ban on them. The Red bogey had become a weapon in Labor faction-fighting as well as for use against Labor by the conservatives.\textsuperscript{124} The Communist Party was also deluding itself about its influence.\textsuperscript{125} The outcome of the factional struggle was that Lang's opponents, Loughlin, Goodin and Gillies were expelled by the 1927 conference, and the "Red Rules" were adopted, but with a tightened ban on the communists. The tag, the "Red Rules", was clearly propagandist:

But too many individuals and groups, inside and out of the Labor Party, had a vested interest in retaining the label "Red Rules". Nothing that Lang could do or say would ever restrain their irrational and mischievous propaganda.\textsuperscript{126}

"Only the AWU and obsessive anti-Communists had resisted the need to modernize the rules", Nairn says.\textsuperscript{127} The propagandists unfairly persisted in calling Willis a "red-ragger", defying "both logic and insight".\textsuperscript{128} Garden was a different case, since his fierce rhetoric alarmed even many of his Labor colleagues, but he was not even a secret communist after 1926. Nevertheless, Lang never trusted him; it was an alliance of convenience.\textsuperscript{129}

Thus shifting patterns of factional alignment within New South Wales Labor made possible the unlikely alliance between the strongly anti-communist Lang with Willis and Garden. By 1926 Trades Hall could no longer be considered "Red",\textsuperscript{130} and in 1929, the leading communists lost all major positions in Trades Hall.\textsuperscript{131} Lang needed to broaden his base of support and developed a populist style which rallied radical elements of Labor to him. He claimed credit for introducing many social reforms, including child endowments, pensions for widows and a 44-hour week, but

\textsuperscript{123} ibid., 120.
\textsuperscript{124} cf. ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{125} ibid., 144.
\textsuperscript{126} ibid., 147.
\textsuperscript{127} ibid., 154.
\textsuperscript{128} ibid., 167.
\textsuperscript{129} cf. ibid., 129.
\textsuperscript{130} cf. Young, Conflict Within the N.S.W. Labour Party 1919-1932 (1961), 192.
\textsuperscript{131} cf. ibid., 273.
Nairn argues that his real contribution was small; these reforms mainly resulted from the work of others. J. F. Mason notes the "virtual absence of any organised action by Catholics towards combatting" communist influence at this period; Catholics operated on their own initiative, not as specifically Catholic groups.

**Labor and the Socialisation Objective**

The Labor Socialisation Objective may seem at first sight to be in conflict with Catholic social thought, but a closer examination indicates that this need not be so. Especially given Scullin's role in supporting the Socialisation Objective, Crisp noted that it seemed odd that "in a period of hitherto unparalleled Irish-Australian ascendancy", the 1921 Objectives should have "at least some overtones of Sovietism (though more, perhaps, of contemporary Webbism) about them". Nairn says that Scullin "had been diverted by the socialist dream, but by 1928 his Catholic piety and political intelligence had triumphed; he was now as anti-'red' as Lang."

These judgments overlook the extent to which some socialist-style ideas, particularly guild socialist ones, were part of Catholic social thinking in England and the United States. The Webbs had influenced the leading US Catholic thinker, Fr John A. Ryan, who often used their term "economic democracy" for his own proposals and strongly supported guild socialist ideas. Ryan, as we have seen, had a major influence on P.S. Cleary, and most likely Scullin knew of him too, even if he had little direct influence as Kevin Kelly said. Certainly Scullin knew the guild socialist ideas current among Catholic writers in England. The Distributists were radically anti-capitalist and wanted workers to share ownership in industry. The difficulty was to sort out which proposals best avoided the evils of collectivism and the alienation of capitalism. It seems that Scullin saw his

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133 J. F. Mason, *op. cit.*, 68.
134 Crisp, *op. cit.*, 282.
135 B. Nairn, *op. cit.*, 175.
137 Kevin Kelly, Interview 5 July 1986, Tape 1A.
socialisation proposals as entirely compatible with Catholic thought and as opposed to versions of socialism condemned by the Church. Though some Catholics certainly opposed him for his advocacy of socialism, Mannix did not.\textsuperscript{138} Kevin Kelly said that no bishops condemned socialism, nor any priest of any standing till 1930. "There was massive silence on the part of the clergy and the bishops". For Kelly's father, it was liberalism which was condemned by the Church, and his father applied this to the small 'I' liberal parties. Only later did the term socialism take on a similar opprobrium.\textsuperscript{139}

Scullin's attitude to religion and politics was most probably shared by other Catholic Labor politicians of the time. He never adopted religiously partisan views, and claimed that Catholic activists in politics were likely to do more harm than good.\textsuperscript{140} Scullin in 1915 voted against adopting the principle of State funding for Catholic schools into the Labor Party platform.

He affirmed his strong belief in religious education, but asserted that he would not be a party to the inclusion of a plank which "would entirely disrupt the Labor movement", and that without bringing the Catholic objective any nearer realization. Catholic aims, he said, if pressed within the Labor Party, would "divide men and women who are otherwise agreed on economic principles which have been a greater financial gain to Catholic workers than twenty such grants as is being asked would be."\textsuperscript{141}

Despite the grumblings of Catholic clergy, Scullin insisted that the role of Catholic politicians was to look first to the broader picture of what was possible, not to Catholic sectional interests, no matter how just they may be.

\textbf{Structures within the Catholic sub-culture}

Far more important than any of the lay organisations in the Church were the religious sisters and brothers whose cheap and dedicated labour carried the school system and much of Catholic welfare in the orphanages, hospitals and so on. The whole pastoral strategy of ghetto cohesion rested on their shoulders. The numbers of religious men and women teaching grew steadily after the education crisis of

\textsuperscript{138} cf. \textit{ibid}.
\textsuperscript{139} Kevin Kelly, Interview of 5 July 1986, Tape 1B.
\textsuperscript{140} cf. Robertson, \textit{op. cit.}, 21.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{ibid.}, 40.
the 1880s: men religious increased from less than 600 in 1920 to nearly 800 in 1930, reaching 827 in 1935, while women religious teachers increased steadily by about 200 a year between 1925 and 1930, reaching 8470 in 1935. The Catholic population itself grew from 950,000 in 1920 by more than 200,000 a decade later. By 1938 there were 9,617 sisters, 909 religious brothers and 1864 priests in Australia; the sisters provided about 70% of Church personnel. There were 395 secondary schools and 1055 primary, almost all staffed by religious orders, serving a Catholic population of 1,225,514. Without them the schools could not have been maintained and the ghetto strategy would have collapsed. Though they were not politically active, their importance in the Catholic community can hardly be underestimated.

Each parish tried to be a total social unit, centred around the school; the school supplied a Catholic identity because its pupils stood apart from the State system. So strict was the insistence on Catholics attending their own schools that the clergy were forbidden to enter State schools at all, and they were supposed to refuse absolution to parents who sent their children to State schools without permission which required a grave cause. This prohibition fell out in practice in time, as it was difficult to enforce without considerable harshness. The purpose of this whole school campaign was to ensure that "Catholics stood together".

The seminary training of the time was one of the worst accompaniments of the Church’s ghetto strategy; it was misguided and inadequate, though Manly and Springwood were not untypical of seminaries of the period up till the Second Vatican Council. Fr H. W. Slattery, who began his studies at Springwood in 1925

143 cf. ibid, 278.
144 cf. ibid, 292.
145 ibid, 278.
146 ibid, 296.
147 cf. "The Apostolic Delegate is Welcomed to Newcastle", in Regional Missionary and Eucharistic Congress, Newcastle 1938, 47.
148 Fr H.W. ("Mick") Slattery, interviewed 29 May 1986, Tape 1B.
and was ordained in 1932, said that the textbooks and much of the lectures were in Latin and most students could barely follow them. In philosophy they used the Latin textbooks of Liberatore, of Albers in history, Tanquerey and Aquinas’ *Summa* in theology. Slattery said he "learnt no Scripture at all" because of the use of Latin. Moreover, the library was locked and students had little access to it. Socially the students were completely isolated and regimented. There were no newspapers, even Catholic ones, no radio and little contact with the outside world.\[^{149}\] The Manly students went for outings to the beach in full black (including hats), marching two by two, to the astonishment of onlookers. Even in the area of spirituality there was little awareness of guidance or formation.\[^{150}\] Though such discipline and isolation seem counter-productive to learning and maturity, they were functional in terms of the logic of ghetto isolation.

The mental attitudes of Catholics locked into the narrow confines of the ghetto, were termed by Frank Sheed "the siege mentality". "In a siege the one virtue is discipline, and the one consideration is the defense of the walls", which led to intellectual narrowness.\[^{151}\] He noted the Church's absence from Sydney University. The Church "did not make very much impact on the life of society as a whole. And this was not by chance. There was real withdrawal.\[^{152}\]\] The siting of Manly Seminary starkly illustrated this.

Sheed was to do much to help stimulate Catholic thought in Australia. In 1926 he returned to England and married Maisie Ward, with whom he founded the publishing firm, Sheed and Ward. This placed him at the heart of the Catholic Literary Revival, and he was to publish cheap editions of many Catholic books during following decades. Sheed's intellectual attitudes were in striking contrast to those prevalent at the time. He rejected a propagandist style in apologetics, in the sense of presenting only the good side of the Church. "Upon the failing of popes

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\[^{149}\] Confirmed by Fr John Madden; phone interview, 1 July 1987.

\[^{150}\] cf Fr Slattery, *op. cit.*

\[^{151}\] Sheed, *op. cit.*, 27.

\[^{152}\] ibid.
and bishops, as I hope I have shown, we of the Guild were the best-instructed
body of laymen in the Church’s history.\textsuperscript{153}

The principal fact of life I did not know when I began is that one must
never talk for victory - to show oneself right and the other man wrong. An
immediate reason is that, if you talk for victory, sooner or later you will
cheat. All polemic, religious or other, is stained with cheating.\textsuperscript{154}

Sheed’s memory of the Catholic Church in Sydney during the 1920s was that of a
religious and cultural ghetto, part of the Counter-Reformation general throughout
the Roman Catholic Church, intellectually uninspired and very much on the
defensive; the history of the Sydney Church reinforced this pattern.

Among the clergy, the struggle between the Australian and Irish priests was
reaching a climax. Archbishop Kelly was resisting the Australian pressure and
continuing to promote the Irish to the top positions and parishes. Since only parish
priests had a consultative vote for the \textit{terna} (the nomination list for candidates
for bishoprics), it looked as if Sydney would see another Irish archbishop after
Kelly. In 1929, there was a major upset in these calculations. Archbishop Kelly
went to Rome expecting recognition for the successful 1928 Congress; instead he
was reprimanded for deteriorating relations between Irish and Australian clergy in
his diocese. He returned to Sydney in a rage, saying "That Manly Union is a snake
in the grass". The undercurrent of conflict between some of the Irish and
Australian clergy remained constant throughout the 1930s.\textsuperscript{155}

Conclusion

By the end of the 1920s, the costs and benefits of the pastoral strategy of
ghetto cohesion were readily apparent. Catholics had rallied to the defence of their
schools and tightened ranks against the enemies surrounding them. However, the
strategy achieved its major goal of maintaining Catholics in the practice of their
faith. On the negative side, the ghetto strategy tended to isolate Catholics from
the rest of Australian society, socially and politically. The authoritarian clericalism

\textsuperscript{153} ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{154} ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{155} Fr H.W. Slattery, Interview 29 May 1986, Tape 1B.
did little to encourage substantial Catholic thinking, even in areas of traditional Catholic scholarship such as theology or philosophy, much less in social philosophy. Without the guidance of scholarship, Catholics were prone to interpret the world in terms of the Counter-Reformation struggle, as surrounded by Protestants and their anti-Catholic progeny. Many of the opinion-makers and leading clerics, crucial agents of legitimation for many Catholics, led the way with the rhetoric of conspiracy theories. This supported the ghetto strategy, of course, since it needed enemies to maintain its cohesion. This conspiratorial worldview was not simply an artificial creation, since the experience of Sydney Catholics was more than enough to confirm it; indeed it was reinforced with each new attack on Catholics. Key elements in this Sydney Catholic worldview can be summed up under several headings:

**On Capitalism**

Capitalism was seen as resulting from the Reformation. Leaning heavily on Hilaire Belloc’s histories, the origins of capitalism were traced to the Reformation confiscation of the monasteries, which established a ‘new monied class able to dominate English society politically and economically. Without the moral constraints which the Church provided, they were able to develop the ruthless exploitation of the capitalist system. This same immoral and anti-Catholic system still dominated the world, and was reflected in the Protestant Establishment in Australia. The system was wrong because it concentrated capital in the hands of the few and left the many destitute. The way to reform was seen to lie in the rich recognising their obligations to the poor, especially by giving them just wages, enough to acquire modest property and security for themselves. The State would have to stop acting as the agent of the rich and step in to defend the rights of the poor. In this way, Irish hostility to British Imperialism was transformed into an argument
against British-Protestant capitalism everywhere. It also had much in common with working-class conspiracy theories about the Money Power.\textsuperscript{156}

On Socialism

Socialism, syndicalism and communism were all seen as extreme reactions against the injustices of capitalism. Though the Australian bishops allowed the use of the word "socialist" in a moderate sense, extreme socialist proposals were rejected because they abolished the right to private property including that of the worker, were connected with anti-religious excesses and would concentrate political power in the hands of the new rulers rather than distributing it more widely. The threat from syndicalism had been contained in New South Wales with the defeat of the One Big Union proposals, but socialist groups remained active. There seemed to be little sense of immediate threat from communism, which was regarded as an extreme form of socialism.

On the Labor Party

Moran had fostered Catholic involvement with the Labor Party for both pragmatic and ideological reasons in as much as Labor was a party of social reform compatible with Catholic principles. But despite the number of practising Catholics in high positions in Labor, the Church could make little progress on its main grievance of State Aid to schools. In New South Wales, Jack Lang kept communists out of the Party, but his rule was based on his Party machine and an alliance with the industrialists in Trades Hall. While Lang was in power, there would be no extremist moves against the Church, a real consideration after the sectarianism of the 1920s, but neither was there much hope of settling the education question.

On Political Activity

Officially the Church kept its distance from party politics, and firmly insisted that its organisations be non-political in a party sense. The failure of the

\textsuperscript{156} cf. Peter Love, \textit{Labour and the Money Power}. 
Democratic Party had demonstrated that even the great majority of Catholics would not switch their allegiance from Labor which represented their natural class interest. However, some Church organisations, such as the debating and benefit societies, groomed young people for a political career, and a few of the clergy hoped to educate Catholics in the Church's social principles, against both the evils of capitalism and extreme socialism.

Reform proposals

There were very few serious proposals for reform based on Catholic principles, and these drew heavily from overseas thinkers. P.S. Cleary formulated his proposals around the theme of industrial democracy, of distributing power as well as property to the workers. He called for the overthrow of the existing capitalist system by eliminating monopolies, extending the power of the State to regulate business, to break up capital holdings and to extend property rights to the workers. Cleary was not so preoccupied with the Money Power or control of credit in these years that he ignored questions of ownership or control of industry. The extension of industrial democracy would, in Cleary's eyes, provide the basis for a new form of political representation, based on industrial groups rather than single-seat electorates. It foreshadowed corporatism.

Australian Catholics were able to pursue very little of the Christian Democratic thinking from overseas. Though a few were familiar with some of the literature and borrowed certain elements, Australian pragmatism and aversion for systematic thought, plus the lingering effects of the anti-Modernist campaign, militated against a substantial investigation of Christian Democratic ideas and their possible application in Australia. Thus the basic contradiction between Moran's desire for social integration and the strategy of ghetto cohesion remained unresolved. Sectarian outbursts, a sense of increased threat, of alienation or persecution, reinforced the ghetto pattern. Catholic social and political advancement, social peace and good will, favoured integration.
How would the Catholic Church help in the construction of Australian society and culture by clarifying and making relevant its social philosophy and teaching? What would this require of the Church itself, in its thinking, the attitudes of the clergy and the shape of its lay organisations? Without the authoritarian discipline and social cohesion generated by a hostile environment, would the Church be able to maintain the adherence of its members? As in other western societies, the Church in Australia was confronting an increasingly secular society and was having to find appropriate ways to act in the social and political arenas. The ghetto structure and a sometimes enlightened pragmatism had helped in the past. Would the initiatives and perspectives opened up by the Catholic social movements in Europe and the United States provide a new vision for the Australian Church, and with what impact on the older Church thought and structures? These were some of the questions which faced the Sydney Catholic Church as it moved into the 1930s.
CHAPTER THREE

THE DEPRESSION:
INITIAL CATHOLIC REACTIONS TO THE CRISIS IN CAPITALISM AND THE
ALTERNATIVES OF SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

The 1930s opened with the deepening of the Depression. As unemployment soared, it gradually became evident that this Depression was more severe and longer-lasting than earlier ones. Its causes were keenly debated. Who was to blame: greedy banks or financiers, international capitalism, inept politicians? The economic crisis coincided with the election of the Labor Party to power in Canberra in October 1929 and in New South Wales in October 1930. But disputes over the handling of the Depression were to rend Labor into opposing Federal and State (NSW) Labor parties, bringing down the Scullin Government in December 1931 and leading to the dismissal in May 1931 of the Lang Government which was not returned to office in the June elections.

The economic and political crises presented Catholic clergy and laity with questions which could not be avoided: was capitalism collapsing? What alternatives were there to capitalism, and were they morally acceptable to the Church? Would the social distress lead to communism or forms of socialism opposed by the Church? What policies should be adopted to promote social reform? These questions exposed the shallowness of a tradition of pragmatism in politics. Something more was needed, and many Catholic voters, unionists and politicians urgently looked to the Church for guidance.
The Depression

C.B. Schedvin, in his classic *Australia and the Great Depression*, argued that the Depression had not been caused by excessive credit, but resulted from a number of factors reinforcing one another: the fall in overseas prices for Australia's primary products; the closure of the long-term London money market; the loss of confidence following the growing deficits and the Wall St crash; excessive speculation, especially by upper income groups; inappropriate responses from monetary authorities; gradual erosion in living standards; inadequate economics; and political instability. Australia was already in recession in 1927; the economy had stagnated and living standards were threatened.\(^1\) Australian institutions were unable to service the debt on loans; in 1929-30, the net debit was 72 million pounds, "a colossal figure for a population of little more than six millions". Governments were forced to cut back on public works, resulting in higher unemployment, which rose to 18.5% in the second quarter of 1930. By mid-1931, national income had dropped nearly 30% in two years.\(^2\) Wool prices dropped sharply in 1929 and wheat in 1930, so that export income fell by one-third between 1928-29 and 1930-31.\(^3\) Imports would have to be reduced by two-thirds to produce a trade balance and with the aid of high tariffs, this was in fact achieved by mid-1931. The main burden of the Depression fell not on wage-earners, but on the unemployed; despite the reductions in nominal wage rates, for those in full employment the real wage remained constant.\(^4\)

The attitude of the banks was that "governments alone were responsible for the disarray of public finance which was a legacy of over-borrowing and lax financial methods, and it was not a banking duty to rescue them".\(^5\) Bank policy assumed that an increase in government spending would lessen expenditure in the


\(^3\) cf. Schedvin, op. cit., 8.

\(^4\) cf. ibid., 350.

\(^5\) ibid., 81.
private sector; only later did the bankers realise the extent to which government spending could stimulate the private sector. The determination of the Commonwealth Bank to stick to rigid economic doctrine made the Depression worse than it could have been. An exception among economists was Professor R. F. Irvine, who favoured a mild inflationary policy based on his underconsumptionist theories. He had taught at Sydney University before becoming an advisor to Theodore in mid-1930 and also had an influence on A. C. Paddison, who helped develop the Lang Plan.

The Labor Party and the Depression

The Federal Labor Party thus came to office at a particularly difficult time. To make matters worse, the Senate was hostile, with only seven Labor members facing 29 non-Labor. When the Senate refused to pass cautiously reflationary Government legislation, the Scullin Government could not act; it began its decline in August 1930 over debates about how to handle the Depression. The Australian Government had been talked into inviting an official from the Bank of England, Sir Otto Niemeyer, to advise it on economic policy. He called for deflationary policies by cutting wages, salaries and government spending. Most public service salaries were cut by 10%, but this did little to balance the budget. Trade union leaders reacted angrily to Niemeyer and the Melbourne Agreement of the Premiers. At this crucial time, Scullin felt obliged to go to England to negotiate better terms for loans, and in his absence deep disagreements in policy split the Government.

Lang, facing an election, denounced Niemeyer's advice as a plot by overseas bondholders, rejected the Melbourne Agreement and promised to restore the 44-hour week and State civil service salaries which had been cut by the Nationalist Premier Bavin; this had the effect of deftly balancing opposed Labor factions, and appeared to supply an answer to the Depression. Neglecting economic realities, he

6 cf. ibid, 87.
7 cf. ibid, 225.
8 cf. L.J. Louis and Ian Turner, op. cit, 3.
said he would fund unemployment programmes by mobilising credit within Australia.

"Lang was embracing the populist comforter that there was an international ring of malevolent 'money-lenders' whose grip on New South Wales had to be broken". He "began to nourish the conviction that the conservatives had organised the Depression for their private benefit"; his mission now was to topple the mighty and exalt the lowly. Lang was here drawing on the long tradition of labour populism which projected the evils of capitalism on to the Money Power. Peter Love in Labour and the Money Power argued that the utopianism of earlier novels like Bellamy's Looking Backwards had encouraged a millenarian approach:

Such was Labor's most dangerous enemy. This not only drew together the elements of populist demonology that had been established in the 1890s, but also introduced a new aspect to the theory - that the Money Power was both the supreme monopoly within capitalism and the ultimate source of its vitality as a social system.

This labour conspiracy theory linked British capitalists and bankers with "scheming Jews", the Empire, the arms manufacturers and the press. Lang denounced Niemeyer's appointment as "the result of a conspiracy between 'London Jews' and 'traitors within our gate', the object being to reduce Australian living standards" to enrich British bond-holders. Anti-Semitism was a prominent ingredient in this conspiracy theory, and Lang did not hesitate to depict Niemeyer, wrongly, as a Jew: "These lounge lizards - Jew lizards, if you like - seem to have the power to mesmerize our leaders of public thought". Jack Lang posed as the heroic charismatic figure battling for the people against the Money Power. He was able to exploit this populist sentiment and provide a simplistic explanation for the crisis, avoiding the complexities of economics and politics. Apart from the religious factor, as we shall see, it shared much with the conspiratorial worldview held by many Catholic opinion-leaders.

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10 ibid., 191.
12 ibid., 106.
13 ibid., 107.
14 cf. ibid., 190.
Even though he drew on labour populism, Lang firmly opposed Garden’s call for repudiation and instead called for lower interest rates on war debts. The Treasurer, Joseph Lyons, followed more conservative advice and wanted to cut pensions, while Scullin too favoured “balancing the budget”. Theodore was firmly opposed to repudiation, but favoured a controlled expansion of credit, arguing against deflationary policies. Probably “the most able holder of the Treasury portfolio in Commonwealth history”, Theodore found himself “in the unique position of having a firmer theoretical and practical grasp of the situation than his senior Treasury officials”. But his career was about to be cut short, greatly helped by Lang’s personal vendetta against him.

The New South Wales Labor Party in 1930 was under the firm control of the Party leader, Jack Lang, who had built up his standing as a populist leader allied with Garden and Willis who dominated the NSW Trades and Labor Council. This group was still known as the “Trades Hall Reds”. Lang swept into office in October 1930 with over 55% of the vote, carried to victory on his populist rhetoric, but without economic policies to end the Depression. Moreover, Lang was obsessed with the threat to his leadership from Theodore.

To the alarm of some Catholics, the question of socialism had been revived within the New South Wales Party; the Metropolitan Conference in February 1930 had forced both Theodore and Lang to give support to the socialisation moves lest either lose support in their factional struggle. The Annual Conference unanimously approved a motion to appoint job committees and work to get control of industry for the workers. A Socialisation Committee was set up to establish Socialisation Units in all ALP branches and unions, organise debates, lectures and public

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17 Schedvin, *op. cit*, 119.
18 The Communist Party won only 0.79% of the vote. Cf. Nairn, *op. cit*, 207.
meetings and produce propaganda material. The Catholic clergy knew that Lang himself was anti-communist, but the question of socialism demanded fresh attention from the Church in the changed and threatening circumstances.

**The Development of Catholic Responses**

Catholics were confronted with three major concerns at the opening of the 1930s: the social catastrophe of the Depression; the hardening of Catholic attitudes to Bolshevism following the renewed persecution of the Stalinist terror; and the problems confronting Catholics in the Labor movement, which included communist and socialist groups opposed to Catholic thought.

The Sydney Catholic papers found the Depression as perplexing as the rest of the community, and their remedies echoed the standard views of economists and commentators. The *Catholic Press* blamed the "orgy of borrowing" and advocated increased taxation: "Work; export more, import less". The *Press* attacked monopolies but tended to follow a conservative remedy, supporting the reintroduction of a 48-hour week and piecework as an alternative to wages. It also blamed Australia's experiments with socialism.

Little leadership came from Archbishop Kelly who never seemed to grasp the scale of the Depression. Kelly was 80 years old in 1930, gradually losing his sight with cataracts, overweight and unwell; he was to slide into a decline of almost complete dotage before his death in 1940. He was popularly known as the "old Tory" and "would never have promoted the Catholic social movement in the slightest degree". On his departure for Rome in early 1930, he "considered mixed marriages the worst and most lamentable subject on which to report to the Pope."

In general, for a Catholic young man who would deliberately take for his partner, and as the mother of his children, a woman of different faith, it

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21 cf. *ibid.*, 335.
23 *ibid.*, 27 March 1930, 27.
24 *ibid.*, 26.
25 Brian Doyle, interviewed 22 January 1985, Tape 2A.
were better that a millstone were tied around his neck, and he be cast into the sea."26

After his return from Rome, Kelly waxed enthusiastic in October 1930 about the merits of Italian Fascism:

If we had in Australia a Mussolini, who knew how to give effect to his conclusions, we would have no unemployment, we would have land made available, and every man would be required to fulfil his duties, whether workman or employer.

The communist *Workers' Weekly* attacked him as an apostle of Fascism.27

Repying to a speech by Fr Maurice O'Reilly who was calling for the unemployed in the cities to be settled on the land where they could "exist securely", Kelly again expressed his admiration for Mussolini; perhaps "Dr O'Reilly will some day find a Mussolini who will see that all are producing for the prosperity of this country:"28 This opinion was not unique; some of the business and social establishment in Sydney also favoured authoritarian government in Australia.29 Kelly's views did not appear to receive support from others in the Catholic community, but neither did they provoke public opposition. Mussolini had ended the threat from communism and restored order in Italy, resolved the Roman Question and appeared to have reasonable working relations with the Vatican. As for the distress of the Depression, Kelly did no more than repeat a few platitudes.

In his Advent Pastoral of 1930 he said:

> Our State of Unemployment need not afright [sic] us; but duty to ourselves and to all dictates corresponding foresight and co-operation. We believe in God the Father Almighty, Who will give us food, clothing, and shelter day by day, on condition of earnest labour and of mutual consideration, and goodwill between employer and employee.30

In general, Catholic attitudes reflected by the media and clerical leaders tended to blend conservative economic prescriptions; a sense that early industrialisation in Australia had failed and that recovery lay in a return to the

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26 *Press*, 13 March 1930, 27.
28 *Press*, 18 December 1930, 23.
29 cf. K. Amos, *The New Guard Movement*, 12; cf also Chapter Five below.
30 *Press*, 4 December 1930, 23.
land; and disillusionment with political parties. The wish for a return to the land and for authoritarian rule were strong themes in some overseas Catholic thinking also. The Distributists, notably G.K. Chesterton, Hilaire Belloc, Vincent McNabb and Eric Gill, favoured back-to-the-land thinking.

On the local level, the social cohesion of the parishes meant a great deal of mutual support and cooperation in needy times. Mgr James McCosker, curate at Rozelle from 1931, said there was a general adjustment of living standards by everyone: "All were equally poor". Nuns in the schools did their best to help clothe children, others helped feed the hungry. There was much Church communal activity, especially to raise money to maintain the schools and other works; but the basic idea was "to keep Catholics together". As soon as the worst of the Depression passed, the parishes continued expanding their schools, especially to extend secondary education.

As for the Church engaging in politics, there was a general attitude that the clergy didn't dabble in politics. Mgr McCosker claimed that there were very few "radical" priests, and it would have been highly unusual for a priest to use the pulpit for political purposes. Still, Catholics remained overwhelmingly pro-Labor. McCosker said that many homes had two pictures, one of the Sacred Heart and one of Lang. As far as Catholics in Rozelle were concerned, "it was all Lang".

The main Catholic figure in NSW to begin to address the Depression issues was Kelly's coadjutor, Archbishop Michael Sheehan, who was to offer important leadership on social questions, particularly on that of socialism. His efforts were constrained by poor relations with Kelly, but when the latter went to Rome, Sheehan called in July 1930 for a "limited moratorium" on debt. Mr J. Ryan MLC, the one Catholic minister in the Coalition Government, promised the suggestion "serious consideration", but thought finding work for the unemployed was the best policy. Sheehan's call indicated some support for elements in Lang's proposals.

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31 Mgr James McCosker in interview, 4 July 1986, Tape 1A.
32 ibid.
33 cf. O'Farrell, Documents II, 427.
The Threat from communism

Just as the Depression took hold, the Vatican was hardening its stand against communism; with increasing Stalinist persecution, it abandoned its attempts to find an accommodation with the Soviet regime. This reinforced the concern of some Sydney Catholics about the revival of communist influence within the NSW Labor Party and the propaganda of the Socialisation Units, and led to a shift in Catholic attitudes in Australia. The Press had a relaxed attitude to communists in NSW in January 1930 when it thought they were contained by the Labor Party: “Trade unionists will have nothing to do with them”. But by the following Easter Conference of the Party its views had changed to considerable alarm about the “white-anting tactics” of the “violent iconoclasts” trying to take control “on the lines of Soviet Russia, investing all power in a clique.”

For both friend and foe, the model for communism was found in Soviet Russia, and Australian Catholic commentators had noted the pattern of religious persecution since the Russian Revolution, observing similar patterns in Mexico and Spain. Even before the hardening of the Vatican position, the Catholic papers were strongly opposed to communism. The Press wrote:

The conditions in present-day Russia are infinitely worse than ever they were in the most tyrannical times of the despotic Czarist regime... Its people are harassed, submitted to a despicable espionage, made slaves of the State under a type of Caesarianism that almost makes colourless the tyranny of ancient Rome... The vulgar Stalin, who is at the head of the anti-God crusade, glories in the wholesale destruction of everything savouring of religious worship.

The Press claimed that 26 archbishops and bishops and 6775 priests, mostly of the Orthodox Church, had been martyred between 1918 and 1929. The Freeman’s Journal added that if we are to believe Soviet denials, “we must believe that the

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36 Ibid, 2 January 1930, 26. The Catholic Church was struck by a second wave of persecution after trying to re-establish a hierarchy in 1926. By 1934, all that remained of the seven Catholic dioceses and 912 priests and monks were three churches and ten clergy serving foreign diplomats in Moscow. The Russian Orthodox Church was also well on the way to being eliminated. Cf. Trevor Beeson, Discretion & Valour: Religious Conditions in Russia and Eastern Europe, 122ff.
massacre of a thousand priests within a single year was part of a political and not a religious campaign. The Freeman’s contrasted Christian and communist ethics when it reported on the Young Pioneers in the USA. This communist group said:

We hate Christians; even the best of them must be regarded as our worst enemies. Christian love is a hindrance to the Revolution. All religions are one and the same poison; a fight without quarter must be declared against them. Our task is not to reform but to destroy every kind of religion, every kind of morals. that is moral which is of use to the Communist party.

The Soviet Government was "sending forth emissaries to prepare populations to attack civilised government and organised religion in other countries" and it called on the Scullin Government to watch for Soviet agents. The paper shortly after objected to Scullin inviting the Soviet regime to send a consul to Australia.

The New Vatican Attitude to Communism

This initial opposition to communism was reinforced by the Vatican's despair over alleviating religious persecution in Russia. Despite long efforts to reach some sort of working accommodation with the Soviet regime, the Vatican in 1930 signalled that its attempts had been in vain. The Pope dramatised the apparent irreconcilability of communism and Catholicism when he offered a public Mass of Expiation at the Tomb of the Apostle in Rome. As Mass began, every church in Italy tolled its bells. The Press reported that the president of the Godless League, Yaroslavsky, boasted that he had caused six large churches to be demolished in response to the Pope's plea for toleration. The League threatened that "The day will come when the Godless workmen of the world will turn the Vatican into a museum, and erect the Pope's effigy beside that of the Siberian witch doctor Shaman". These events brought the anti-religious nature of communism powerfully before Australian Catholics. Further information about the

38 ibid., 13 March 1930, 25.
39 ibid., 6 March 1930, 24.
40 ibid., 3 April 1930, 24. No Soviet consul was appointed in Scullin's time as prime minister. Cf Robertson, op cit., 218.
42 Press, 27 March 1930, 5.
expropriation of the kulaks confirmed Catholic opinion in seeing Soviet communism as denying basic human rights as well as religious ones. "The plan displays all the ruthlessness of Communism... A million of these [kulaks] have been chosen and marked down for destruction under the Five Year Plan."43 In view of such anti-religious militancy, there appeared little possibility of compromise: "The solid phalanx of militant Atheism is going to create the need for a type of Christianity equally dogmatic, equally disciplined, and equally militant".44

Australian Catholic views about Russia were also being linked with attitudes to Britain, which was seen by many Catholics in terms inherited from Ireland as being Protestant, capitalist and imperialist, cynically pursuing its own financial advantage and often with an anti-Catholic bias. The Press criticised Britain because it refused to follow up its stated opposition to persecution in Russia with trade embargoes.45

Communism and the Labor Party

From 1929, the aims of the Communist Party in Australia, in line with Stalin's policy of the "United Front from below", were to attack the Labor Party men as "Social Fascists" and expose it as inadequate. L.L. Sharkey and J.B. Miles, unquestioning adherents of the now dominant Stalin, won control of the Party.46 In 1930 the communists organised the Militant Minority Movement (MMM) and the Unemployed Workers' Movement (UWM); and in the Labor Council they attacked Lang and advocated a general strike to bring down capitalism.47 However the Labor Party repeatedly backed Lang in 1932 and favoured parliamentary methods.

Despite the communists' loss of power at Trades Hall, the Catholic papers continued to attack the "Garden gang" as communist. They did not attack Lang by

43 ibid., 24 April 1930, 27.
44 Freeman's, 26 June 1930, 36.
45 Press, 20 March 1930, 27.
name but pressured him by implication. The paper insisted on seeing Garden as a
Soviet agent; when he stood for the Federal seat of Flinders in 1930, it wrote:

Garden is out to win a seat so that he can inform Kalinin, Soviet Minister
and President of the Moscow Executive, who signed Garden's credentials, that
Sydney has been captured by the Communists. Local branches should
nominate good men, and spoil the game.

The Press urged voters to declare against the "small, but crafty, self-seeking
clique" which was "openly inspired by the Moscow International". "Unless the
Labour Party breaks up the Garden gang, the electors of this State will never
trust it with office."

In general, Catholic writers definitely supported the ideals of the labour
movement when not distorted by extremist views. Fr Aubrey Goodman MSC, who
figured in the debate about Catholic Action later in the decade, said it was not
the Church's role to dictate political, social or industrial systems but to witness to
the moral foundations of all systems. He supported workers in "(1) A right to a
living wage; (2) Security against unemployment; (3) A larger control in the
management of industry; (4) A greater liberty for the worker, in the ordering of
his own life." A living wage was not to be mere subsistence, but be "generous
enough to enable the worker to live comfortably and to acquire a home of his
own." He also supported workers in arguing for a "voice, even an equal voice" in
the daily management of their work, "and the justice of this was recognised by
Leo XIII."

What role had the Church to play in all this? The Press reported Fr L.
O'Head SJ, Principal of the Catholic Workers' College at Oxford, saying that
Catholics did not need to form their own unions, but to form study circles so they
would be able to influence their unions for the common good. This reflected the
Christian Democratic thinking of the Catholic Social Guild at Oxford which wanted

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48 Press, 24 April 1930, 27.
49 ibid, 15 May 1930, 29.
50 ibid, 12 June 1930, 27.
51 ibid, 24 April 1930, 17.
52 cf. ibid, 22 May 1930, 7.
the Church to help train laity in the moral foundations for social and political activity, but which left the application of moral principles to the initiative of lay people themselves.

Developing Official Catholic Responses: the Academics

The most significant attempt to detail the Church's views on the Depression, communism and social questions at this time was initiated by Archbishop Sheehan. The Catholic Evidence Guild organised a series of lectures by the Manly professors, and Sheehan added his comments after the lectures. The talks were printed in both of Sydney's Catholic papers and later published as *The Catholic Church and the Industrial Problems*; they were the most significant resumes of Catholic social thinking in Sydney prior to *Quadragesimo Anno* (May 15, 1931).

The first lecture, on "The Right to Private property" by theologian and Scripture scholar, Rev W. Leonard DD, PhD, LSS, was "little more than a popular development" of *Rerum Novarum*.\(^53\) Leonard defined socialism as the "Assumption by the State of all competence in the economic sphere".

True, State-socialism is set down as only one species of a generic scheme for the socialisation of property; but it seems that, apart from the absurd system of communistic anarchism, socialism of whatever kind means the holding of all productive goods by corporations which, if not State appointments or departments, at least represent the collective will which is supposed to be embodied in the State.

If socialism is true to its name, it means "político-social interference with the economic freedom of the individual and the family". He rejected both Marxism and socialism for "simply deceiving the workman to tell him that he is going to find a terrestrial paradise under a system of collective ownership".\(^54\)

Leonard based the right to property on Leo's philosophy of work in which the worker (the "paterfamilias") leaves an "impress of his personality" on the material he works. Neither capitalism nor communism as systems respected this right to property, argued Leonard: "the great Pontiff was no apologist of the existing forms

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\(^53\) *ibid.*, 10 July 1930, 28.
\(^54\) *ibid.*
of capitalism; both Church and State must end the abuse of riches accumulating in the hands of the rich. Leonard insisted that just because individuals were not bound out of justice did not mean they were not seriously bound out of charity to share their goods: "it is a stringent law of charity according to which every man, who has received in abundance, will be severely judged at God's tribunal." In the context of the Depression, the State was "justified in taking very strong measures, if necessary, to smash iron-handed and iron-hearted monopolies". The solution lay in extending partnership to eliminate the class cleavage and modifying the wage system. "The law, therefore, should favour ownership, and its policy should be to induce as many as possible of the humbler class to become owners."

Thus Leonard reiterated the main points of Leo XIII's encyclical, indicting both the extremes of capitalism and socialism, and indicating reform by extending property rights to the workers. Ironically he linked socialism with "corporations", and appeared to reject the solution which Pius XI was about to propose in *Quadragesimo Anno*. Leonard was hardly in a position to show how reforms could be put into practice. His thinking was in terms of Leo's Europe, which did not lend itself to ready application in Australia.

Archbishop Sheehan spoke at the end of this talk, as was to be his practice during the series: "the remedy for existing evils will not be found in the abolition of the present system but in its reform". Thus he implied Catholic support for social reforms through main-stream Labor reformism. But he avoided extreme conclusions and drew on Fr Cathrein to defend inequality of wealth as conducive to economic growth and patronage of the arts and culture. This seemed to qualify Leonard's rejection of capitalist abuses of wealth, but was in line with the Church's practice in Europe.

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55 Ibid., 29.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
The next talk, by the Vice-President of St Patrick's College, Manly, Rev W. O'Flynn BA, recalled Rerum Novarum's support for trade unions and quoted a Vatican decree of 1929 that they were "morally necessary". To avoid being taken over by radical elements, O'Flynn urged workers to be sure to attend union meetings and achieve fair representation on their executives. He insisted that Catholics stand for office as good unionists and not as Catholics, but recommended they form study circles under Church influence. Thus he supported activity of a Christian Democratic type, with the Church helping form and train leaders who would then act independently in their unions.

Given the industrial unrest in preceding years, especially the timberworkers' strike and the lockout on the northern coalfields, his defence of the right to strike was of more than academic interest. He argued that for a strike to be just, there had to be just cause, due proportion between the initial injury to be remedied by the strike and any harmful consequences likely; and there had to be a good chance of success. He firmly ruled out violence. While allowing for the "sympathetic strike" when employers abet an injustice to workers, O'Flynn ruled out a general strike as "almost never lawful", a reference to the syndicalist tactics of the OBU and its successors. The more extreme type of strike was that advocated by communists to inaugurate the dictatorship of the proletariat. O'Flynn indicated what this had meant in Russia: "They have put to death, I fancy, in the 13 years of their regime as many of their fellow-citizens as the old Government would in due course of law in 100 years."  

Drawing on the writings of Leo XIII and Fr John A Ryan's The Church and Socialism, O'Flynn said that the State had the duty to protect the workers and the weak. He endorsed greater State intervention in the interests of the poorer classes, as the Harvester Judgment had helped to maintain a just wage. He singled out larger families as being in need of particular help, thus supporting arguments for

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59 ibid., 17 July 1930, 22.
60 ibid.
child endowments. At a time when employers and economists were pressing for wage reductions and cuts in public spending, O'Flynn argued against cuts in living standards for workers. Thus O'Flynn's lecture defended unionism as well as supporting Labor reformism against more radical elements.

Archbishop Sheehan also defended unions: "If labour had not organised, its condition to-day would be deplorable. This, however, is not a condemnation of the employing class, but rather of the system of unlimited competition". Sheehan did not attack employers personally and avoided any suggestion of class hatred or sectarianism; it was the system at fault, not necessarily individuals. He may have been concerned not to open up a class cleavage in Sydney Catholicism as had occurred during the conscription debates over a decade before. He next commented on the conditions for a just strike, adding that a peaceful settlement attempt must have ended in failure. He warned against agitators using strikes to prepare "the way for revolution" but conceded that "In the case of the strike, as in many other complicated moral cases, it is obviously extremely difficult to determine when all the justifying conditions have been realised".61 Thus, staying above purely factional matters, Sheehan supported social reform through trade unionism.

As an instance of the unevenness of Catholic thought at this time, the next lecture on "Industrial Problems and the Church" fell back on a romantic medievalism in its approach to class conflict. Rev Dr JJ. Nevin, DD, DCL, President of St Patrick's Seminary, said that "in the ages of faith... there was no labor problem".

The interests of employers and employees were identical. They usually lived together; they belonged to the same guild; and the relations savoured of family life... there is no evidence of any conflict worth mentioning, between masters and workmen of the same craft... Thus workmen were contented, wages unchallenged, strikes unknown.62 Nevin argued that the industrial problem arose when the Reformation rejected the authority of the Church and religious individualism paved the way for economic

61 ibid.
62 ibid., 24 July 1930, 16.
individualism. The Manchester School of economics proclaimed self-interest the ruling power in economics which, when enlightened, would automatically work for the common good. The function of the State in this context was to enforce contracts. Nevin repeated the teaching of Leo XIII that there could be no true contract between a workman in dire need and without any material security and an employer with capital behind him: "In most cases the workman had to take what was given him or starve".63

After tracing the views of prominent socialists from Owen in England to Marx, Nevin said that much social legislation was not socialist in a sense condemned by the Church. Moreover, the moderate socialists or labour parties differed only slightly from what he called "Social Reformers".64

Archbishop Sheehan clearly defended the Church's support for the just demands of labour; the Church "would be false to her office if she ceased to teach that defrauding the labourer of his hire is a sin that cries to heaven for vengeance".65 He ended on a plea for justice to Catholic schools, but he did not gainsay Nevin's romanticism.

This strong romantic stream can also be found in other writers of the period; it served well for polemical purposes against Protestants and radicals:

Slowly but surely historians, Protestants as well as Catholics, are revealing the truth that all our social class-injustices sprang from the "Reformation". The Catholic Church for 16 centuries, as it does now, stood for justice and charity to the poor and lowly. Those Encyclical letters of Pope Leo XIII which have evoked such admiration from countless hosts who are outside the fold, contain nothing new for Catholics. They merely recapitulate the teaching of St. Augustine in the fourth century and St. Thomas in the thirteenth.66

Such historical generalisations over-simplified or distorted complex processes of social change over many centuries; they drew on the fact that the Church had worked out a sophisticated code of economic behaviour during parts of the Middle Ages, but completely overlooked problems and failures.

63 ibid.
64 ibid., 17.
65 ibid.
In another lecture, "Marx's Principles of Communism", Dr C. Roberts, also of Manly Seminary, offered a Catholic critique of communism.\(^{67}\) He denied Marx's claim to have made socialism a science, and argued against the doctrines of historical materialism and surplus value.\(^{68}\)

In so far as Marx denounced the miserable conditions under which workers then laboured, so different from those now obtaining, especially in Australia, we have no quarrel with him whatever, but wish to give him all due credit. The pity of it is that he regarded them as necessary consequences of the system of ownership, while they were in reality not essential to it, but abuses or misuses of it.\(^{69}\)

Archbishop Sheehan commented that the Church allowed voluntary communism in the religious orders, but not compulsory communism as advocated by Marx. Still the Church denounced extreme inequality of wealth as a great social evil, and would welcome any lawful proposal that would tend to reduce or remove it.\(^{70}\)

**Sheehan on Socialism**

The following week Sheehan himself interpreted the Church's position on socialism. He began by insisting that socialism had various meanings: "We must accept the fact that, in English usage, the term Socialism covers as many varieties of principles, aims, methods and policies as there are colours in the rainbow". Bolshevism was unique because "it is the first attempt ever made in the history of the world to teach millions of children, the entire population of a vast country, to despise, hate, and persecute religion." Even then, Sheehan did not completely reject Russian communism, but urged a careful evaluation of the Soviet system, especially its "control of banks and the regulation of foreign exchange".\(^{71}\) This reflected the current preoccupation with credit control as the key issue in the Depression.

The Archbishop pinpointed issues on which Catholics opposed some types of socialism: firstly, the Church rejected the claim that there was no God and that an earthly paradise could be established; secondly, the Church rejected the omnipotent

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\(^{67}\) ibid., 31 July 1930, 16.  
\(^{68}\) ibid.  
\(^{69}\) ibid.  
\(^{70}\) ibid.  
\(^{71}\) ibid., 7 August 1930, 24.
State claiming "the right to abolish private property, suppress religious worship, dissolve marriages and break up family life"; thirdly, the Church condemned compulsory communism. He agreed that local circumstances may demand nationalisation, but insisted that it was a matter of prudence to decide the best practical solution. In his view, the State would be wiser to increase the number of private owners. Thus he legitimated the debate among Catholics about the desirability of nationalisation and its extent.

Sheehan also criticised capitalism: "The inequality of wealth in Australia, though not so great [as Fr Ryan said it was in America], is serious enough to cause envy and discontent". The wealth of millionaires gave them great power, even over public opinion, "and quite unsuspected, exercises the powers of a dictator. Labour papers are ridiculed for speaking of the 'octopus of Capitalism', but the metaphor, if anything, falls short of the reality".72 He criticised Catholic writers who condemned socialism without distinguishing the various meanings of the term; this was a conservative technique to frighten people against socialist proposals even of a mild nature.

I think it should be evident to any Catholic worker that there is nothing in the teaching or attitude of the Church to which he could take exception. He is sometimes misled by hearing that the Church condemns Socialism; but the Socialism which she condemns is Socialism mixed up with errors philosophical and humanitarian. Catholic writers endeavour to conjure the word Socialism to the extreme type, but it is vain to contend against usage. Usage has given the term a very wide meaning, so that it is applicable to mild and harmless policies as well as to Bolshevism. Without any strain on his religious principles, the Catholic worker in Australia may safely continue his struggle for the improvement of his condition, for the removal of the economic evils in the State. I do not think he is in any danger of succumbing to the attractions of Marxism or of any of the condemned forms of Socialism: Marxism is simply not on the horizon of practical politics in this country.73

The Archbishop toned down any sense of immediate threat from communism. He also distanced himself from Archbishop Kelly's views on Italian Fascism:

Nor will Australians follow the example of Italy with its thousands of prisoners and exiles, though possibly they may discover some points in Mussolini's finances worth examining.74

72 ibid.
73 ibid., 15.
74 ibid.
Sheehan concluded the series of talks saying that most recent strikes had not been just because they had no chance of success. He recommended impartial arbitration, while acknowledging the difficulty of finding suitable people for the job. He further recommended schemes of profit-sharing and co-partnership: "Unfortunately, the former is regarded with suspicion by labour men, and the latter is anathema to capitalists". He quoted Fr John A. Ryan that profit-sharing schemes had to be completely open and honest to succeed; he had himself encouraged such a scheme which worked well. He also considered co-operative ownership and management, but noted, among some successes, that the world was "littered with co-partnership failures. Still I am inclined to think that the proposal should not be regarded as dead and buried".  

Thus Sheehan gave an authoritative interpretation of socialism at a critical time for the Labor Party; he legitimated Catholics working within Labor for social reform, even if they wore a socialist label, and more clearly identified the types of socialism to which the Church objected.

Sheehan received support from Fr W. Keane SJ who at a talk to the Newman Society at the University said "the Church has not condemned the socialistic State in every form."

Do not be frightened of the word "Socialism". But the Church has condemned the doctrine that the holding of private property is immoral. But that private property is an unrestrained right it does not teach. Keane also discussed the Webbs' plan of industrial representation (one not unlike that advocated by Scullin in 1921): "The Webbs are social Democrats utterly removed from Marxist Socialism", and proposed a double parliament, a social and a political one. While distinguishing this from communism, he still wondered where the authority of the State would lie. In the light of the earlier socialisation debates, he indicated that these proposals were debatable propositions, and did not fall under the condemnation against communism.

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75 ibid.
76 ibid., 27 November 1930, 14.
Continuing Concern about Communism

The Catholic papers kept a steady focus on what was happening in communist movements overseas. A lecture by a Dominican priest, Fr Roche, highlighted the savage conflict between religion and communism in Russia. "No one dares mention the name of God to children under 18 years. Immorality is deliberately taught to children. There have been 2,000,000 executions in Russia". Roche wondered "whether the Soviet was not the beginning of anti-Christ and whether or not - before long - there would not have to be a 'show-down' between Bolshevism and Christianity". This was a hint of things to come, but it did not reflect the general mood in the Press. Indeed the Press commended Fr John La Farge SJ for his balanced treatment of "The Menace of Communism. A Reasoned Critique". "He does not rave against it", and considered the main problem for democratic countries would be to foment labour troubles. Regular reports on persecution in Russia were to appear in the Catholic papers in following years.

The Catholic papers kept up their attack on Garden's Trades Hall activities, and appeared to adopt a more suspicious interpretation of these activities than Sheehan. However, the Catholic papers did not attack Lang directly. Criticism of the alliance between Lang and Trades Hall was generally more oblique.

Aborigines

Very little attention was given to the continuing plight of Aborigines during the 1930s, in contrast with the Catholic bishops' denunciations of injustices against them in the previous century. What articles appeared in the Catholic media were generally related to missionary activity. An exception to this pattern was Fr John Healy, parish priest of Norman Park in Brisbane, who wrote a series of articles for the annual seminary publication, Manly. In 1930 he lamented that the situation of

77 ibid, 18 September 1930, 15.
78 ibid, 25 September 1930, 41.
79 cf. ibid, 4 September 1930, 24.
60,000 Aborigines "is not even noticed. Indeed it is true to say it is so completely out of sight that most Australians have never heard of it. 81 This was certainly true of the Sydney Catholic papers, but in Manly Healy was addressing a national audience: most Australian diocesan priests had studied at Manly, Mannix not deciding to establish his own seminary at Werribee till 1922.

Healy in subsequent years continued to pursue the issue of justice for Aborigines, and since it comes into this history only marginally, it is well to consider it here. In 1932 Healy argued that the land had been taken from Aborigines unjustly, and quoted a study by Archibald Meston that whites must atone for their injustice against Aborigines. 82 Meston denied that Aborigines were a "doomed race", saying that this was a subterfuge to avoid responsibility. 83 The Australian colonies were repeating the practice of extermination like Tasmania. Healy castigated white leaders for viewing "with indifference the extinction of the aboriginal race", whose title deeds of occupation were older than those of the British. 84 He continued to argue in 1933 that whites had committed a "national wrong", a crime which cried to heaven in "violation of the rights of the Aboriginal race, and our remedy for that first and greatest sin is to restore their rights". 85 He said that only now were newspapers alerting public opinion to the situation of Aborigines, 86 but little had been done. He insisted that Aborigines should be given back land. He had never heard of a grant of land in fee simple being made to one Aboriginal, but he had heard of it being refused to one. 87

I would say that the aboriginal question is the first and the greatest [question] for Australians, because it is national in character and it affects not merely the rights of a considerable number of people, but of a race of people. 88

81 Fr John Healy, "The Abo Again", in Manly, 4, 1 (1930), 53.
82 Fr J. Healy, "The Australian Aboriginal", in ibid., 4, 2 (October 1932), 39.
83 ibid., 38.
84 cf. ibid., 53.
86 cf. ibid., 32.
87 cf. ibid., 34.
88 ibid., 35.
Healy looked forward to the 1934 Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne as the first occasion on which the Church in Australia would offer "widespread public prayers" for Aborigines. He hoped the Congress would launch a fresh effort by the Church to help restore to Aborigines their rights. He must have been disappointed, for the Congress said little beyond recounting the history of Aboriginal missions. Rev H. Johnston SJ did urge Catholics not to forget the Aborigines who were dispossessed, "and often driven out and exterminated". He said Australians had to make recompense for their sufferings, but viewed this in strictly missionary terms, not in terms of justice or political activity. This was a disappointing result, especially since Mgr Raible of Kimberley quoted C.C. Martindale from the 1928 Eucharistic Congress as saying that "Nobody seems to allude to the blacks". The message seemed to be interpreted in narrowly religious terms.

Dr Rumble probably reflected the dominant view in 1935 when he said "aborigines had not made good any claim to permanent ownership by settled occupation" and so white settlement was justified; he made no mention of Aboriginal rights to land.

The 1938 Eucharistic Congress at Newcastle gave more attention to the plight of Aborigines. Mr Walter J. Enright described the clashes, killings of Aborigines, decimation through disease, and the conflict of cultures. "In utter disregard, the invaders took possession of the land" which were sacred to the Aborigines. He saw hope in education, and called for quick action to establish government and missionary stations to protect remaining Aborigines. The response from Mgr Gsell MSC, Apostolic Administrator of Darwin, was to say that Aborigines had to be

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89 Fr John Healy, "The Blacks and the Whites and the Church in Australia", ibid., 47.
91 Most Rev Otto Raible, "Kimberley Black Missions", in ibid., 175.
92 Dr Rumble, in Annals, October 1935, 415.
94 cf. ibid., 281.
95 cf. ibid.
trained while children and treated as such: "Our Aborigines have a child mentality. They are but children". For him, protection of the Aborigines meant paternalism. Paul McGuire seemed one of the few leading Catholics at the time who addressed the issue in terms of justice. In Australian Journey (1939) he said that settlers had brutally dispossessed the Aborigines:

They were treated often as mere beasts to be put to toil or murdered. Less than half a century ago licences to shoot aborigines were still granted. And anyone who knows the centre or the north-west hears, too often, rumours of abominable ill-treatment.\(^{97}\)

The author said it was time for whites to recognise and respect the Aboriginal culture. He lamented the "indifference which has succeeded hostility and in which we let the aborigines die because we will not be bothered to save him whose land we took and whose life we broke".\(^{98}\)

However, paternalism remained the dominant theme in the Catholic media, which gave much space to Aboriginal missions as well as missions in Papua and New Guinea, the Pacific and Asia. The missionary effort was well-meaning and intended to protect Aborigines; but the failure in Sydney to think through the issues in social and political terms reflected the narrow devotionalism of the Church under Archbishop Kelly.

Conclusion

By the time Lang came to power again in New South Wales in October 1930, the Sydney Catholic Church had made an effort to articulate the main points of its social philosophy. The weakness of this effort is readily apparent. There was little developed Catholic thinking on society and politics on which to draw. The expositions of the clerical academics tended to be merely commentaries on the encyclicals with little attempt to offer suggestions about the reform of capitalism or to invite any significant lay participation in such an attempt. There was no mention made of the debates among the European Catholic social movements.

\(^{96}\) cf. ibid., 284.
\(^{97}\) Paul Maguire, Australian Journey, 351.
\(^{98}\) ibid., 357.
notably the disputes between the Christian Democratic wing and those of a more authoritarian view. Rather, the competing models of Catholic social and political movements were harmonised, so that there was no indication of conflict, debate or contradictions in the European movements. Though the Manly professors made occasional reference to overseas authors (notably Fr Ryan in the United States), there is no evidence of a depth of reading. Their ideas are eclectic, undeveloped and sometimes contradictory. Though they wrote occasionally on social issues during the decade, they did not play a leading role. They were not specialists in these questions, and were possibly requested to write these papers by Sheehan. The lecture series could have been the beginning of an extended enquiry into Catholic social philosophy and its application in Australia, but in fact these clerical academics did not pursue the questions.

Sheehan's own contributions were significant and firmly supported the currents of Labor reformism. His views would have been welcomed by Catholics across most of the range of Labor opinion, and reinforced the Catholic/Labor alignment which was to be fundamental to NSW politics in coming decades. They also would have consolidated Labor sympathies among the current and future Catholic clergy. These were also the basic ideas which would be taught in the social science course at Springwood seminary during the 1930s.99

In general, Church guidance tended to remain somewhat abstract, on the level of principle, without clear means of application to social and economic problems. The Church possessed neither the means nor the will to articulate detailed programmes of reform. That was considered to be the role of the laity acting on their own initiative. This was not simply a capitulation to unthinking pragmatism; Sheehan outlined the compatibility of Catholic social principles with Labor reformism and legitimated traditional activity of Catholics in trade unions. He

99 Little information remains in the Sydney archives about the seminary courses in social justice during the decade. Fr John Madden recalls the students being introduced to current topics: the social encyclicals, Douglas Credit, Fascism, Nazism and communism. (Phone interview, 1 July 1987).
offered a sympathetic assessment of socialism in Australia and headed off enthusiasts who condemned socialism without distinguishing the many meanings it could have, and emphasised that social change could take place by gradual changes based on common sense and reason, even to nationalisation of big industries and monopolies; he urged Catholics to consider the pros and cons of such moves in practical terms and results. Against Kelly's leaning to authoritarian forms of government, Sheehan supported the democratic tradition of the labour movement. He promoted no grand plan or theory of reform: reforms had to be thought out stage by stage and implemented when politically possible; but it was the task of lay people to do this, within the moral guidelines of the Church. Sheehan emphasised a tradition of placing action before theory, of what works in practice.
CHAPTER FOUR

ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE DEPRESSION AND THE BEGINNINGS OF CATHOLIC ACTION IN SYDNEY DURING THE 1930S

The structure of Catholic organisations at the beginning of the 1930s reflected the strategy of social defence; a range of organisations tried to foster religious practice and social cohesion. While many of these groups were struggling to cope with the Depression, new forms of organisation began to receive attention under the title of "Catholic Action". The term had originated in Italy, and Australian Catholics began to ask what it meant and whether it provided a model for Australia. What more was expected than had traditionally been done by the existing organisations of laity and clergy?

The Traditional Organisations

Catholic organisations tried to satisfy as many of the social needs of Catholics as possible. Varying parish organisations fostered the devotional and spiritual life of Catholics, and there were also social and sporting associations. Four main organisations have special relevance to the development of the social and political affairs of Catholics. The first and most significant was the Knights of the Southern Cross which throughout the 1930s acted as a focus for Catholic socio-political activity, spawning a number of other organisations. Secondly, the Catholic benefit societies acted as insurance agencies within the Catholic community, and helped develop Catholic self-reliance. Thirdly, the St Vincent de Paul Society had a network of voluntary workers throughout the parishes of the Archdiocese. And Catholic women were organised into the Catholic Women's Association and other smaller groups, notably the Theresians.
Other organisations were affected by or influenced the development of Catholic Action at various times. The Third Order of St Francis under the direction of Fr Celsus Kelly OFM saw itself as the preferred vehicle of Catholic Action early in the 1930s. The debating societies helped train future Catholic speakers and, hopefully, leaders. And the Newman Society at Sydney University attempted to develop the intellectual aspects of Catholicism. Only later in the decade was a specific body formed to co-ordinate Catholic activity in the social and political field under the title of the Secretariat of the Lay Apostolate. How were the existing organisations to reconcile themselves with the new concepts of Catholic Action coming from Europe?

The Knights of the Southern Cross

The central Catholic lay organisation in Sydney during the early 1930s was the Knights of the Southern Cross. Modelled on the US Knights of Columbus, they were founded in 1919. The first Grand Knight, P.J. Minahan,1 described them:

A union of well to do Catholics of this State for the purpose of rendering mutual aid to each other in temporal matters should it become necessary to do so, and incidentally to assist our fellow Catholics in whatever civic or social direction it may be deemed proper.2

The initial emphasis was on acting as an elite group of business men rather than as a Catholic defence organisation. But "our society known no politics, and it knows no political parties."3 By 1921, however, the function of the Knights had clearly shifted to defence: "Political questions do not enter: the main objective is to defend and protect socially the Catholic body",4 but there was no strong control

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3 ibid., p. 10.
4 Kelly to Fr Collender, 5 January 1921, in ibid. Jory claims that the Knights were "a product of the new Catholic policy of social aggressiveness which had replaced Cardinal Moran's social integrationism" (The Campion Society, 19); the evidence seems rather to indicate that the Knights had little to do with assertiveness, and with the sectarian outburst of 1920, concentrated on defence.
or direction from the hierarchy. A further shift occurred when the Knights decided to open their membership beyond the small group of "influential people" to others. They later lamented that this meant a loss of quality.

Membership of the Knights was by invitation only, after careful enquiries about religious practice and character, and they numbered only 1271 for Sydney at 30 June 1934, throughout the State hovering about 3000 for most of the decade. They included, at least nominally, many of the Catholic elite, including P.S. Cleary. The Knights were bound to secrecy: "Ordinary prudence requires that our members should be protected against victimisation or anti-Catholic influence", without too much risk to their own jobs, they could take action to protect Catholics who, in the sectarian conflict of the 1920s, had been denied jobs and advancement. They contested job discrimination by approaching "the firms against whom [sic] charges were made and asked for the discontinuance of the actions complained of". Firms which continued to discriminate were put on a blacklist which was distributed to members in the hope that they would avoid doing business with them. The Knights also watched appointments in the public service and recruited members in government departments to see if Catholics were being victimised.

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5 Carl Smith in interview, 28 July 1986, Tape 2A.
7 cf. State Council Minutes (SCM), KSC files, 24/6/35, 234.
8 ibid., 23/1/34, p.70.
9 Report on Special Sub-committee, op. cit.
10 cf. Carl Smith, op. cit.
11 They also spawned other organisations during the decade, and in 1940 claimed credit for initiating the following: the Southern Cross Business College, the Southern Cross Library, the Guild of St Christopher for police, the Guild of St Luke for doctors, the Pharmaceutical Guild for chemists, the Caledonian Catholic Association, the Catholic Luncheon Club, the Catholic Film Council, the Catholic Migrants Committee, the Via Crucis Ceremony on Good Friday, the Newman Society, the Annual Red Mass for the legal fraternity, a Catholic Education conference, the Annual Catholic Ball, the Metropolitan Catholic Younger Set, and campaigns against indecent literature, birth control and victimisation of Catholics; they also lobbied for tax exemption for school lands. The Guilds, Newman Society and Film Council were autonomous. (List of Principal Organisations Initiated by K.S.C. in New South Wales and How Controlled, August 1940, in Knights' file, SMA).
12 cf. SCM, KSC, 22/9/30, p.85.
13 ibid., 26/8/35, p.007.
Faced with unprecedented unemployment, the Knights' Employment Committee was overwhelmed. It reported in 1931 that it had placed 251 people in jobs during the previous year, 67 of whom were members;\textsuperscript{14} this Committee lapsed in late 1932 for a time;\textsuperscript{15} but in the financial year 1932-33, 174 people had been placed in jobs. In late 1934, four Knights met with the St Vincent de Paul Society to discuss unemployment;\textsuperscript{16} with the result that the St Vincent de Paul undertook responsibility for an employment agency.\textsuperscript{17} By 1937, the Knights wanted to withdraw entirely from job placement, and recommended that employment enquiries be "gradually directed to the St Vincent de Paul Employment Agency".\textsuperscript{18}

The Knights used the name of the Catholic Evidence Guild (of New South Wales) from 1921 as a public front when contacting firms, but their use of the name was not widely known. This was to cause some confusion later when the Catholic Speakers' Guild, founded by Frank Sheed and Peter Gallagher in 1924 to provide speakers for the Domain and other public forums,\textsuperscript{19} decided to change its name to the Catholic Evidence Guild in line with practice overseas. So there were two organisations by this name, though the Knights' group was not public.\textsuperscript{20}

The Knights in 1920 founded for their members a Catholic library but turned it into a general Catholic lending library, the Southern Cross Library, in April 1929.\textsuperscript{21} It had 5700 books about this time, and 750 subscribers in April 1930; but over 90% of the books borrowed were fiction.\textsuperscript{22} The Newman Society was allowed

\textsuperscript{14} cf. Annual Conference 1930-31, p.68.
\textsuperscript{15} cf. SCM, 26/9/32, p.25.
\textsuperscript{16} cf. ibid., 12/11/34, p.170.
\textsuperscript{17} cf. below.
\textsuperscript{18} SCM, 22/2/37, p.63.
\textsuperscript{19} cf. O'Farrell, The Catholic Church, 373.
\textsuperscript{20} The Speakers' Guild asked Sheehan in 1936 if it could adopt the English name (cf. Eugene Weber to Gilroy, 25 June 1938, CE file, SMA). Sheehan replied that the title was "vacant" and the Speakers' were free to use it (Sheehan to Weber, 5 November 1936, CE file, SMA). The Knights, however, objected to the use of the name by the Speakers' (cf. William Ross to Gilroy, 17 June 1938, CE file, SMA), so a compromise was reached with the Speakers' being renamed the Catholic Evidence Guild of Sydney, and the Knights retaining the Catholic Evidence Guild of New South Wales.
\textsuperscript{22} Report 1930-31, SMC, p.63.
to hold its meetings in the library.\textsuperscript{23} In 1934, after comparing their library with the Melbourne Central Catholic Library, the Knights decided to turn their collection into Sydney's Central Catholic Library and secure public support.\textsuperscript{24} It then became more of a centre and various groups met there.\textsuperscript{25} Desmond O' Connor, however, did not regard the library highly in 1934, calling it "nothing more than a safe collection for shop girls."\textsuperscript{26} There were problems with personnel and finance in running the library,\textsuperscript{27} and Pellegrini's book store\textsuperscript{28} bought it for 500 pounds in late 1936.\textsuperscript{29}

The Knights also tried to establish a Catholic radio station. Discussions about starting a Catholic Broadcasting Company began in late 1931 but were dropped in December 1931.\textsuperscript{30} Radio 2SM (for St Mark's church, Drummoyne) was established independently of the Knights in 1931, and provided an outlet for Dr Leslie Rumble MSC and his "Question Box" which had begun on radio 2UE in 1929 and ran till 1968.\textsuperscript{31} The Speakers' Guild began broadcasting in 1926 and did so regularly till 1928. Their activity in the social area was cut short when Archbishop Kelly from at least 1934 forbade Guild members to talk on social issues,\textsuperscript{32} though they sponsored the annual Catholic Evidence Guild lectures.

The Knights served as a link between the hierarchy and governments, acting as an informal channel with members of governments and political organisations. At times they also acted independently of the hierarchy, as when they lobbied for carriage of Catholic school children in government vehicles.\textsuperscript{33}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{23} SCM, 28/4/30, p.162.
\item \textsuperscript{24} cf. ibid., 14/5/34, p.106.
\item \textsuperscript{25} ibid., 25/11/35, p.050.
\item \textsuperscript{26} C. Jory, \textit{The Campion Society}, 57.
\item \textsuperscript{27} cf. SCM, 10/8/36, p.4.
\item \textsuperscript{28} SCM, Executive, in ibid., 20/7/36, p.69.
\item \textsuperscript{29} cf. SCM, 23/11/31, p.52.
\item \textsuperscript{30} cf. ibid., 21/12/31, p.66.
\item \textsuperscript{31} cf. Patrick O'Farrell, \textit{op. cit.}
\item \textsuperscript{32} ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{33} SCM, 27/1/31, p. 153.
\end{itemize}
Attitude to Freemasonry

One might expect that the Knights' attitude to Freemasonry would illustrate the belligerence displayed in some of the official writings against Freemasonry, but this does not seem to have been so; in the late 1920s relations with the Masons do not seem severely aggrieved. In 1929 the Minutes note "that as the Bishop of Goulburn strongly disapproves of their attitude in attending Masonic functions that they be instructed that they are not to attend Masonic functions in future". It later resolved to advise all branches "that it is against the laws of the Church and the wishes of the Order for members to attend Masonic functions". These resolutions are not consistent with previous strong antagonism between the two organisations, but rather indicate fairly amicable relations in places; restrictions were being imposed by the clergy. This indicates a considerable gap between the rhetoric of some clergy and the practice of the Knights, for the official Church position was quite strict: Mgr J.J. Nevin, in April 1925, answering a question "Is it ever lawful for Catholics to attend Masonic balls?", had written that a Roman decision in 1876 held that Catholics who attended Masonic functions were guilty of grave sin, and were excommunicated if they helped advance the interests of Masonry. "Though the penalty is now restricted to those who join the sect, yet the above decision is sufficient indication of the serious view the Church takes of attendance at such dances". In 1930, the Knights seemed to move a little closer to this clerical view; the State Council warned members against Freemasonry, and the teaching brothers were asked to inform Catholic school children about it. State Council also decided to reject the nomination of ex-Masons and Orangemen as members. In one of the few other references to Masonry in the Minutes, the Public Matters Committee in 1931 recommended "that all Honorary Magistrates in the Order be asked to take an interest in the Justices' Assoc. in order to try and

34 Ibid., 9 September 1929, p.60.
37 SCM, op. cit., 22/9/30, p.85.
38 cf. Ibid., 22/12/30, p.130.
prevent Masonic and Orange influence from controlling the Executive.\textsuperscript{39} The Knights were also concerned about Masons receiving publicity in the Catholic newspapers and resolved to take the matter up with Mr Cleary, "in a very tactful manner".\textsuperscript{40} The records thus reveal some antagonism but very little explicitly anti-Masonic activity.

Memories about relations with Masons varied. Mr Carl Smith denied that relations with the Masons were strained,\textsuperscript{41} but others interviewed said that Masonic influence was very strong and anti-Catholic, especially in the Education Department and Public Service Board. Daniel Gold said it was difficult for Catholics there to find work or gain promotion.\textsuperscript{42} Ken Boland, a Knight from 1933, said that the Masons were very strong in local government. In his view, the Knights had been "formed mainly to counter the powerful influence of the Masonic Lodge", and tried to get their people into positions of influence so they could see that Catholics were not victimised. He did not recall any relaxation against the attitude to Masonry, or any definite action against the Masons either. The attitudes were simply "completely negative between Masons and Catholics" at the time.\textsuperscript{43} However, the records of the Knights in the 1930s do not reveal a preoccupation with Masonry.\textsuperscript{44} If anything, in practice views remained generally relaxed; the Knights ruled that Catholics could not attend Masonic functions of a religious nature, but for purely social functions advised members to see their priest before accepting an invitation.\textsuperscript{45} This was far from the strict line J.J. Nevin had advocated. Perhaps an explanation for this ambiguity can be found in a discrepancy between belief and practice; or some may have accepted the rhetoric of an anti-Catholic conspiracy by Masons, and others did not, and so mixed socially with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{39} ibid., 23/2/31, p.198.
\item \textsuperscript{40} ibid., 20/3/33, p.57.
\item \textsuperscript{41} Carl Smith in interview 28 May 1986, Tape 2A.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Daniel Gold in interview, 2 July 1986, Tape 1A.
\item \textsuperscript{43} Ken Boland, interviewed 30 June 1986, Tape 1B.
\item \textsuperscript{44} Jack Woodward's history of the Queensland Knights contains only one vague mention of the Masons; it is not clear if this indicates lack of concern, or the sarge uncertainty as in Sydney. Cf. \textit{The Knights of the Southern Cross}, 27.
\item \textsuperscript{45} SCM, 23/10/33, p.41.
\end{itemize}
Masons. It seems that organisational conflict between Masons and Catholics, where it occurred at all, was focussed on certain businesses, government departments and universities. Certainly in these areas some Catholics felt very strongly that Masonry even of the non-Continental type "was absolutely anathema to Catholic people" and "was no friend of the Catholic position". Brian Doyle said there was a Masonic Lodge in the newspaper industry which severely limited prospects for Catholics in the 1930s. Freemasonry was also strong in the universities: "Way into the thirties, you could traverse university after university and you would hardly find a Catholic employed in any discipline whatever", especially in the humanities. Catholics also met notable prejudice and discrimination in the banking and insurance industries, and certain government departments, especially the Department of External Affairs.46

There were surprisingly few Catholic studies on Freemasonry. Rev E. Cahill's *Freemasonry and the Anti-Christian Movements* was one, though it is difficult to judge how much influence it had.47 A review in the *Australasian Catholic Record* welcomed the book as "a comprehensive and well-documented statement of the Catholic case"; "well-meaning persons can be Masons for a long time and yet remain ignorant of the real character of the Craft".49 Perhaps the Knights realised this was often the case, and so their response varied with different groups of Masons. They were not interested in a clerically-inspired crusade against Freemasonry since they seemed to feel that it was no major threat to Catholics in Australia. When the Spanish Civil War broke out, however, Catholic commentators and writers tended to adopt a firmer stand against Freemasonry, though it was a response to beliefs about Freemasonry overseas rather than a reaction to it in Australia.

46 Brian Doyle, interview 25 January 1986, Tape 7A.
47 cf Chapter Six.
49 *ibid.*, 192.
Communism

Even despite the turbulent years of the early 1930s the threat from communism only occasionally appeared to alarm the Knights, as when the Newcastle Branch grew concerned about local communist activities. Father Collender "recognised the seriousness of the matter and... stated that nothing better could be done by the Order than to push the sale of the Catholic Evidence Lectures".50 The Knights later decided that "an organised move should be made by the Order against Communism":

"THAT THE CO-OPERATION OF EACH INDIVIDUAL MEMBER BE SOUGHT IN AN EFFORT TO COMBAT THE SPREAD OF COMMUNISM, AND THAT THE STATE COUNCIL EXECUTIVE BE ASKED TO PREPARE ALL DETAILS OF A SCHEME FOR SUBMISSION TO THE BRACHES [sic]"51

They arranged for a public lecture on communism with the Catholic Debating Societies Union.52 Further action on communism had been foreshadowed by the Supreme Conference held in Melbourne in November 1931, which "resolved also that a special work for the coming year be active opposition to Communism and anti-Catholic bodies, and the obtaining of information regarding such organisations".53 But the Knights found it difficult to take any action. After hearing about communist activity at Broken Hill, the Knights recommended distribution of Catholic Truth Society pamphlets, and gave five pounds for their purchase.54 Such a response was trivial. They had no real industrial base and could find no appropriate response to communism at that level. In mid-1932 they set up study circles on the example of the Order in Adelaide.55 At the end of the 1931-32 year, "the State Council was requested to make a special work of active opposition to Communism",56 but the 1932-33 annual report admitted that "So far, however,

50 SCM, 27/4/31, p.201.
52 ibid., 26/10/31, p.37.
53 Supreme Conference 1931: Melbourne 18 November 1931, in ibid., p.64.
54 cf. SCM, 10/9/34, p.151.
55 ibid., 20/6/32, p.73.
56 Minutes of Meeting of Supreme Quota of NSW. July 1932-March 1941, Report. from Period from Conference 1931, in ibid., p.10.
little practical work has been done. After this, concern about communism waned, and there was very little mention in the Knights' records of communism till the Spanish Civil War.

Among the Knights were many of the leading Catholic laymen in Sydney, including some business leaders and politicians. The influence of small businessmen and professionals meant that it had little in common with the working class radicalism such as Mannix appealed to in Melbourne; they did not want the overthrow of the capitalist system but its reform. Sydney Knights were concerned to advance the socio-economic and political interests of Catholics by working quietly within their own circles. And their politics had to be broad enough to embrace people of most political persuasions, though Catholics were predominantly Labor people. Their scope for activity, however, was limited by the uncertainties of Archbishop Kelly's leadership and the Knights and other Catholic organisations drifted along without much guidance from the hierarchy. It would be a mistake to see them as clerically controlled, especially at the local level. The Knights were loyal to the hierarchy, but carefully preserved their independence.

The Benefit Societies

The benefit societies also played an important role in generating and maintaining the social cohesion of Catholics. There were three Catholic benefit societies in the 1930s, the Hibernian Society, the Australasian Holy Catholic Guild and the Irish National Foresters, the Hibernians being the largest. The problems the societies faced in the 1930s are exemplified in the Hibernians. It maintained a funeral and sickness fund, covered costs of medical attendance and medicine through the Lodge Contract System, and had a hospital fund, which had to close in 1931. Growth during the Depression was slow; its property suffered severe depreciation and it struggled to meet its commitments. Membership stood at 15,982

at 30 June 1930, but declined to 13,144 by June 30 1937. Similar problems faced the Australasian Holy Catholic Guild as faced the Hibernians and it was barely able to maintain its membership throughout the 1930s.

The Hibernians, who were highly regarded by the hierarchy, played an important part in Catholic life at this time, particularly by providing a range of social activities. The Society had a wider influence on the Catholic community through the Freeman's Journal in which it had invested 1000 pounds in 1914, and had the right to nominate one director. The Freeman's became the official organ of the Society, and gave it extensive publicity. "Except for the Depression years, excellent dividends were paid".

Thus the Depression placed the benefit societies under great strain, and though they recovered towards the end of the decade, their role in Catholic society was then threatened by national insurance schemes. The years of Depression seemed to have loosened Catholic cohesion and the benefit societies could no longer draw on as tight a Catholic allegiance as in the past. Nor could they offer much to extend the scope of Catholic Action.

The St Vincent de Paul Society

Perhaps the best known of all the Catholic organisations because of its welfare work was the St Vincent de Paul Society, which celebrated its fiftieth birthday in Australia in 1930. Besides aiming at the sanctification of its members by a practical charity, it considered its primary work visitation of the poor in their own houses, but undertook many other works as well. Members were to respond to poverty wherever it was, irrespective of creed. The 1930 Report said that its 103 conferences and 2089 members in Sydney were finding unemployment the major problem: "Every one of our Conferences is doing its best, but their

59 ibid., 61.
60 Much of the success of the Freeman's was due to the efforts of the St Vincent de Paul Society, which sold about 220,000 copies a year, or about 4400 a week, and received about 1300 pounds in commission (ibid., 68).
efforts meet only with failure and heart-breaking disappointment". Nearly one thousand members of the Society were themselves out of work.\textsuperscript{61}

Other major works of the Society included: the Westmead Boys' Home, caring for 180 boys from 10 to 18 years old; the Seamen's Institute, which welcomed 18,000 seamen during 1929; and St Anthony's Home for babies at Croydon; extensive hospital visitation to all without distinction of "creed, class or country"; distribution of literature, especially ACTS pamphlets; and work for boys.\textsuperscript{62} The Society co-operated closely with government departments and the Smith Family, another welfare organisation. These activities continued throughout the 1930s. By 1939, Sydney membership stood at 2618, in 125 conferences.\textsuperscript{63}

To tackle the problem of unemployment more adequately, various Catholic organisations met in 1934, as noted earlier, to form the Australian Employment Bureau, a non-profit making group. This rationalised the scattered activities of the other Catholic organisations, and effectively placed most of the work in the hands of the Society. But it took time to establish effectively. By February 1938, 123 St Vincent de Paul conferences were co-operating, and had found positions for 701 of the 2,484 people applying.\textsuperscript{64}

The Debating Societies

The New South Wales Debating Societies Union had been founded in 1915 to promote the public speaking and debating skills of Catholics.\textsuperscript{65} Following Quadragesimo Anno in 1931, Archbishop Kelly "urged special attention to Catholic Social Science especially the teachings contained in the present Holy Father's latest Encyclical on Social Problems."\textsuperscript{66} But its scope was proscribed in 1936

\textsuperscript{62} cf. ibid., 6-7.
\textsuperscript{63} cf. Annual Report for 1939, 5, St Vincent de Paul Archives, Ozanam House.
\textsuperscript{64} cf. ibid., February 1938, 35.
\textsuperscript{65} cf. Circular of New South Wales Debating Societies Union, signed by R.M. Riggs, secretary of Union, 18 November 1935, Debating file, SMA.
\textsuperscript{66} Letter from Dr E. O'Donnell, 30 July 1931, SMA.
because of problems with censorship and a fear that it would not be able to represent the Church adequately in debate, the Debating Union could hardly be a good avenue for the development of Catholic Action, and its scope was limited to innocuous topics which would not compromise the Church.

The Newman Society

Of more promise for the development of Catholic thought were the Catholic colleges at Sydney University, St John's for men and Sancta Sophia for women, and the Newman Society for men (founded in 1928) and the University Catholic Women's Association (founded about 1922 and later absorbed into the Newman Society). In 1930, there were only 90 members in the Newman Society, but in two years it arranged 17 study circle meetings and four public meetings. Speakers included Mr J.K. Heydon, P.S. Cleary, C.C. Martindale SJ, Frank Letters, William Keane SJ and Fr Lockington SJ; topics covered aspects of communism, Russia and theories of the modern State. However relations between the Newman Society and St John's College were strained. Fr M. O'Reilly's attitudes are exemplified in this incident; he wrote to the Newman chaplain, Fr Thomas King of Stanmore, on Anzac Day 1930 complaining about the discourtesy of the Newman Society organising a "Field Mass" at the very time of St John's Memorial Mass; he accused the Society of anti-clericalism:

Personally, I think that time has come for winding up this dangerous Society, which gives promise of doing more harm to the Catholic body than could be effected by the whole body of Orangemen.

Tension between Fr O'Reilly and the Newman Society was not settled by making O'Reilly its chaplain in place of Mgr King in October 1930. Eris O'Brien had originally been appointed, but O'Reilly "exploded", according to Fr Des O'Connor, arguing from the College charter that he alone could be chaplain. Wishing to avoid

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67 cf. Letter from Fr McDonald to Archbishop Gilroy, 20 October 1937, Debating file, SMA.
69 Fr M. O'Reilly to Fr Thomas King, 25 April 1930, in SJCA.
a bitter fight O'Brien resigned and O'Reilly was appointed. O'Reilly was disliked by students, and was nicknamed "the Bull" from his manner and bearing. The Society received little support from O'Reilly and from about 1932 went into decline.

St John's made a token effort to foster Catholic intellectual activity among its less than 50 students, and Eris O'Brien from 1930 to 1934 was listed as lecturer in modern history at St John's; he then left to study at Louvain. After O'Reilly's death in 1933, Fr John Thompson CM MA Dip Ed (Oxon), who had been Vice-Rector since March 1930, became Rector. He did not share O'Reilly's interest in political or social affairs, and the College fostered little in the way of Catholic intellectual work during his rectorship. Thompson had once publicly debated with Professor John Anderson on the proofs for the existence of God and according to Des O'Connor, suffered a humiliating defeat. There were no Catholic clergy at the University who could hold their ground with the Andersonians, except for Fr Paddy Ryan MSC, but his activities on campus had to be circumspect because of the attitudes of O'Reilly.

Women's Groups

Sally Kennedy and Hilary Carey have described the Catholic Women's Association (CWA), and it is sufficient to note here that at this time it was experiencing a period of expansion and new direction, adopting a more public role and undertaking some social service work as well as its usual socialising. The style of the CWA contrasted strongly with that of the Catholic Women's Social Group in Melbourne, which with the encouragement of William Lockington SJ, emphasised women playing a greater socio-economic role. Though the Guild seems

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71 Interview with Fr Desmond O'Connor, 14 May 1986, Tape 2A.
73 cf. Melbourne Advocate, 4 March 1948, 4.
74 cf. Council Minutes, St. John's College, III, 1884-1950, Special Meeting, 18 March 1930, p.400, in SJCA.
75 cf. Des O'Connor interviewed 25 April 1986, Tape 2A.
76 cf. Sally Kennedy, Faith and Feminism, 64ff, and Hilary Carey, draft of For God and Country.
77 Kennedy, op. cit., 83.
far more active in social relief, comparisons with the CWA are complicated by the
Sydney women preferring to work through the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The other main Sydney women's group, the Theresians, was begun in 1919 in
association with a Sister of Charity from St Vincent's Hospital, Sr Therese. The
Theresians were mostly working women, who took up practical activities such as
teaching catechetics, running holiday camps, organising retreats for young working
women, visiting children under the care of the Child Welfare department,
organising plays and so on. They averaged between 200-300 members throughout
the thirties, and had a reputation as down-to-earth, practical women who
willingly engaged in welfare or catechetical work without any fuss or fanfare.

Early understandings of Catholic Action

Early in the 1930s the term Catholic Action was vaguely understood as doing
the traditional Catholic things but doing them better, while avoiding politics.
The Pope, in his letter to Cardinal Segura, said that Catholic Action was "above
and outside the competition of parties. This does not mean, however, that Catholics
must not take an interest in the different problems concerning public life".

And in the case where political questions intermingle with religious and moral
interest, Catholic Action will be able to and must then intervene directly,
directing all the forces of the Catholics above particular views by an action
disciplined and subordinated to the superior interests of souls and the
Church.

The classic statement of Catholic Action as the "participation of the laity in the
Apostolate of the Hierarchy" clearly established Catholic Action within a clerical
framework. Lay people were not exercising an independent apostolate in the world
and on their own initiative engaging in political or social affairs, but were invited
to work in the clerical Apostolate under the direction of the Hierarchy. Such a

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78 cf. ibid., 149.
79 Brian Doyle, untaped interview 6 January 1986.
80 cf Chapter Six.
81 Catholic Press, 9 January 1930, 5.
82 The phrase was implicit in the encyclical Ubi Arcana Dei (1922) but
became the official formula in various allocations by 1927. Cf. L. Civardi, A Manual
of Catholic Action, 5.
view of Catholic Action accorded with the views of Archbishop Kelly. Rather than
Catholic Action being a vehicle for Catholics to directly embark on social reform,
Kelly wanted to keep Church organisations firmly non-political lest they prejudice
institutional Catholic interests, notably the continuing attempt to win back State
funding for Catholic schools.83

After conflict with the Fascists in 1931, the Pope tightened control of Italian
organisations and brought them under the protective umbrella of Catholic Action,
thus indicating to Mussolini that he could not push the Church further without
bringing Church/State relations into crisis. Catholic Action was forbidden to engage
in political activity, though Catholics as individuals could take part in politics
understood as that which "studies and promotes the good of the people".84 Since
Catholic Action was defined as "the participation and the collaboration of the laity
in the hierarchical apostolate";85 it was obviously the prerogative of the bishops to
decide what was political in a forbidden sense and what was not. But the Catholic
press gave little or no attention to the Italian background of these movements.86

The first serious effort to rethink what Catholic Action might mean in
Sydney came from Fr Aubrey Goodman MSC under the pseudonym of "Sacerdos" in
a series of articles in the Catholic Press in 1931. He understood the Pope to be
making a "clarion call to a world-wide Catholic Action" to restore peace and
order,87 but most of the articles were concerned with traditional Catholic activities
of piety and apostolate. In the ninth article he mentioned the Catholic Evidence
Guild as "an ideal interpretation of Catholic Action", with debating clubs, retreats
and summer schools.88 Only in the eleventh article did he consider social action:

83 cf. ibid., 5 June 1930, 23.
84 cf. ibid., 25 June 1931, 7.
85 cf. Pius XI, Nos Abiamo Bisogno, 1931, in The Church and the
86 For the Italian background to Catholic Action, see Daniel A. Binchy,
Church and State in Fascist Italy; Richard A. Webster, Christian Democracy in Italy
1860-1960; John N. Molony, The Emergence of Political Catholicism in Italy; Luigi
Sturzo, Church and State; and J.D. Holmes, The Papacy in the Modern World.
87 ibid., 20 August 1931, 14.
88 ibid., 29 October 1931, 7.
...how many non-Catholics know that there IS a Catholic programme of Social Action? How many would be surprised to hear that the middle course they desiderate [sic] between Capitalistic tyranny and the tyranny of Communism is exactly the course that is directed by the "Rerum Novarum"?

Sacerdos said that every Catholic must be ready to "join the worldwide Catholic Social Crusade". The Church, "counselling by the Voice of God Himself", will be their guide in social reform. "The Church would then be seen not as the enemy of the workers, but as the unique saviour of society, and the one hope of the oppressed". "Pope Leo gave us a programme of the immediate and practical steps which must be taken for the adjustment of the relations between Capital and labour".89 Goodman's views were thus clerical and hierarchical, assuming that the Church had answers readily to hand and just needing to be implemented.

The Third Order of St Francis

Another early Sydney response to the call to Catholic Action came from Celsus Kelly OFM (1900-75), who had revived the Crusader magazine in 1930. Kelly was to play an important part in the development of Catholic Action in Sydney. He had studied first in Ireland, then at Propaganda College and the Gregorian University in Rome before being appointed secretary to the Franciscan provincial in Ireland in 1926. After his return to Australia, he was appointed to manage and edit the Crusader from Waverley NSW, which he did until 1945. The Crusader had originally been published as a quarterly in July 1915 as the organ of the Third Order of St Francis, a 700 years old association of lay people dedicated to living in the spirit of St Francis; Kelly was its director, too. By 1935 it printed 21,000 copies and varied from 48 to 64 quarto pages in size.90

In an editorial of August 1930, he regarded Catholic Action as properly lay activity with four characteristics: it was "planned and systematic co-ordination of all Catholic forces" to spread the Gospel; it was organised by bishops and priests to help them in their work; "Its formal object is to produce, change and adjust all

89 ibid, 3 December 1931, 8.
90 Fr Celsus Kelly to E. O'Donnell, 10 July 1935, in Catholic Press file, SMA.
religious, moral, social and economic thought and procedure of modern life to Catholic standards"; and it meant actual organisation under the authority of the bishops and local pastors.\textsuperscript{91} Undaunted by the enormous scope here outlined for Catholic Action, Kelly wanted the Third Order to take the lead in social reform,\textsuperscript{92} and "play a leading role in 'Catholic Action'".\textsuperscript{93} He referred repeatedly to a quote from Leo XIII that 'My social reform is the Third Order of St Francis'.\textsuperscript{94} He related Catholic Action to the threat from communism: in the USA and elsewhere, "a spark may set the red fires of revolution flaming throughout the world." The way to eliminate the threat from communism was to give the workers justice. "Mainly with the Third Order resides the responsibility of shouldering this great and essential work".\textsuperscript{95} Such was the confidence Kelly placed in this pious association, which at this time numbered about 2,250 people in the Waverley fraternity (which actually extended throughout much of Australia), and of whom only 620 were active.\textsuperscript{96} But by September 1931, Kelly was trying to clarify role expectations: "Since the Third Order was instituted primarily for the sanctification of members, it prescribes no particular external, social or charitable good work, no matter how pressing and praiseworthy."\textsuperscript{97} He then seemed to doubt whether the Third Order was suitable for the works the hierarchy had in mind.

The Association of Catholic Action and other Interpretations

The Sydney hierarchy was thinking more broadly than the Third Order of St Francis, and set up the Association of Catholic Action in 1932.\textsuperscript{98} It was conceived

\textsuperscript{91} "Some Aspects of 'Catholic Action'" in Crusader, August 1930, 98.
\textsuperscript{92} "Catholic Action and the Third Order", in Crusader, August 1930, 119.
\textsuperscript{93} ibid, 120.
\textsuperscript{94} "Editorial", in ibid, October 1930, 162.
\textsuperscript{95} "The World Needs Catholic Action", in ibid, November 1930, 194.
\textsuperscript{96} cf. ibid, 203. Fr John Madden recalled that the seminarians at Springwood were also enrolled in the Third Order as part of their response to the social crisis. Interviewed by phone, 1 July 1987.
\textsuperscript{97} Editorial, in Crusader, September 1931, 151.
\textsuperscript{98} Mgr McCosker recounted a story that a Jesuit gave an address on Catholic Action at the inaugural meeting of the association, but Archbishop Kelly interrupted him and told him to be quiet. Kelly appointed Fr McCooe, director-general of the Association. McCooe was the Administrator at the Cathedral; according to McCosker, he was not likely to do anything. It seems that Kelly's
in very traditional terms as a "lay Apostolate" to promote "Any work whatsoever of a spiritual nature for the love and glory of God, and for the help and enlightenment of ourselves and our neighbours"; and it was under tight episcopal control. The "Association is outside and above all party politics", and there was very little room allowed for social debate. The Archbishop himself or his appointee was to chair general meetings, and he appointed the clergy directors. The executive was elected by the General Meeting which consisted of all school principals (presumably all members of religious orders) with the president of the ex-students' union or his/her nominee and a third representative of the school. As the Freeman's said, it was to be "purely spiritual in its endeavours" and concentrate on works of piety. It meant "nothing more or less than that Catholics who hear the word of God and keep it are living the life enjoined by Catholic Action", showing good example. The Freeman's had earlier denied that it called "for a new political party or any mischievous interference with politics". It meant knowledge and practice of religion, support for Christian marriage and struggle for educational justice. It was firmly within the policy of ghetto cohesion.

However, various conflicting views of Catholic Action were proposed. Fr A.J. Mills in Brisbane, editor of the monthly Australia magazine, sought to distinguish the Catholic Lay Apostolate as the most spiritual form of Catholic Action, being primarily an Apostolate of Prayer. Mills set up his own organisation in Brisbane

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99 Association of Catholic Action, 1932, p.3, in CA file, SMA.
100 ibid., 8.
101 ibid., par. 4. Jory's evaluation that the Association was "founded on a false conception of Catholic Action" assumes that there was a clear model available for emulation and that it could be readily applied (cf. Jory, op. cit., 54). Neither of these assumptions, in my view, can be sustained.
102 ibid., p.5.
103 ibid.
104 ibid., 4.
106 ibid., 7 January 1932, 20.
called the Catholic Lay Apostolate. Dr Tuomey of Sydney interpreted Catholic Action as having been exercised by the thousands of nuns who carried the Catholic school system. He also urged Catholic men to combat the Freemasons in trade unions and Trades Hall. Tuomey combined a use of the term in a very restricted sense with a quasi-political scope which had been explicitly ruled out by the hierarchy.

P.S. Cleary, speaking at the Annual Communion Breakfast at North Sydney, tried to clarify the meaning of Catholic Action: "the Pope means organisation, not for political or secular ends, but to impress the world with the virility of our faith." He saw it as strengthening the internal cohesion of the Catholic community and reinforcing its moral attitudes in society.

Bishop Farrelly of Lismore, speaking at Maclean, reiterated the point that Catholic Action meant organisation and "the help which the laity give to their parish priest in the work of his pastoral ministry". Farrelly was thus entirely clerical in his view of Catholic Action and also saw organisation in terms of cohesion. Bishop Gleeson of Maitland thought of Catholic Action as giving first place to the St Vincent de Paul Society, not unnaturally in a region of very high unemployment. And a Press editorial on the Legion of Mary understood Catholic Action as an attempt to "stem the spread of religious indifference and to strengthen the bonds of Christian charity". It said "His Grace the Archbishop wisely began with the schools". These interpretations of Catholic Action largely emphasised maintaining Catholic social cohesion.

Only a few suggested a broader view of Catholic Action. Father N. Hehir of Lavender Bay understood it as needed to counter the intense activity of organisations against the Church: "the Catholics must organise too". With some

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107 cf. Press, 7 April 1932, 5.
108 ibid, 14 April 1932, 13.
109 ibid, 17.
110 ibid, 19 May 1932, 12.
111 cf. ibid, 5 January 1933, 13.
112 ibid, 13 October 1932, 21.
113 Freeman's Journal, 8 December 1932, 12.
foresight, a religious of the Sacred Heart from Rose Bay wrote that Catholic Action needed to adopt the Belgian methods of organisation and operation, and linked this with efforts to combat Bolshevism.\textsuperscript{114} There appears to have been no follow-up to this mention of the Belgian models, notably that of Cardijn’s Young Christian Workers (YCW), the Jocists (cf. Chapters Eight and Eleven).

Celsus Kelly continued to have high hopes for the Third Order: “the Vicars of Jesus Christ call upon the clergy and the faithful to espouse the cause of the Third Order as the best instrument for the reconstruction of a tottering civilization”.\textsuperscript{115} He feared both Freemasons and communists. Drawing from E. Cahill’s \textit{Freemasonry}, Kelly referred to the notoriously anti-Semitic \textit{Protocols of Zion},\textsuperscript{116} “their avowed purpose is the complete destruction of Christianity and the enslaving of all the Christian nations of the world under the heel of the Masonic Jews”.\textsuperscript{117} Even worse were communists; Kelly said that if Catholic leaders did not solve the Depression, communists would try to smash “Christian civilisation”.\textsuperscript{118}

Further obscuring the meaning of the term Catholic Action, the \textit{Crusader} reprinted an article from the US \textit{Minorite} which claimed that “The present-day form of Christian Democracy is \textit{Catholic Action}”.\textsuperscript{119} “Christian Democracy through Catholic Action, therefore, is the Church operating in the world through all its members, particularly its lay members.”\textsuperscript{120} The author appeared entirely ignorant of the struggle between Christian Democracy and Catholic Action as competing forms of Catholic activity in Europe.

In Melbourne, too, the understanding of the meaning of Catholic Action was uncertain and changing. David Kehoe says that from the founding of the Campion Society in 1931, it was simply understood in a traditional sense of a lay person’s

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{114} \textit{Press}, 9 June 1932, 7.
  \item \textsuperscript{115} “Third Order Topics”, \textit{ibid.}, May 1932, 21.
  \item \textsuperscript{116} For anti-Semitism among Sydney Catholic opinion-makers, see Chapter Six.
  \item \textsuperscript{117} Editorial, \textit{ibid.}, May 1932, 2.
  \item \textsuperscript{118} “Third Order Topics”, June 1932, 55.
  \item \textsuperscript{119} \textit{Crusader}, January 1933, 274.
  \item \textsuperscript{120} \textit{ibid.}, 275.
\end{itemize}
role in the world. But from late 1932, it began to be understood as laymen engaging in the apostolic work of the Church. Not till late 1934 did the Campion Society understand the "technical definition of Catholic Action [as] a movement of laymen involved in apostolic work under the control of the local episcopacy". In contrast with Sydney, the Melbourne Campions provided a focus for a small group of Catholic intellectuals to debate the meaning of Catholic Action and to propagate their views through the Catholic media. Hence they were able to exercise more influence on later developments than groups in Sydney where lay people at this time lacked Catholic intellectual encouragement and the favour of the hierarchy.

The early development of Catholic Action in Sydney was thus hesitant and uncertain. There was no clear idea of what was meant or expected, and little leadership from the hierarchy which could direct lay activity into other than traditional works. The basic model was one of religious cohesion and there was little sign of co-ordination of groups or change of function beyond maintaining that cohesion. It was in this context that efforts were to be made to find new cohesion around the Association of Catholic Action.

\footnote{David Michael Kehoe, The Origins of the Australian Secretariat of Catholic Action: The Response of Melbourne Lay Intellectuals To A Crisis in Western Civilisation 1931-1938, 37.}
CHAPTER FIVE

DEMOCRACY IN TRAVAIL: THE LANG LABOR GOVERNMENT 1930-32

The Depression presented Sydney Catholics with problems they were little prepared to handle: how were Catholic opinion-leaders to react to the political and economic crises occasioned by the Depression? The strain on political institutions in New South Wales was unprecedented; some feared civil war as the New Guard prepared to defend conservative, capitalist Australia against the radicalised Labor forces supporting Lang. How did this social distress affect the relationship between the Labor Movement and the Catholic Church? Would New South Wales see another burst of Protestant sectarianism allied with anti-Labor political forces as happened only a decade before?

The October 1930 elections had returned Labor to government in New South Wales, but Lang came to office with no financial schemes about how to handle the Depression. He relied on his populist anti-imperialistic and anti-capitalist rhetoric. With Labor in power in both New South Wales and in Canberra, Labor voters hoped that the politicians would be able to alleviate the Depression. Catholic sympathies and hopes were overwhelmingly with Labor, but it faced an unprecedented economic crisis. Unemployment had risen from about 11.1% in 1929\(^1\) and was to peak at 29% in 1932\(^2\), before declining to 9.3% by 1937.\(^3\) The economic collapse meant that it was no time for Catholics to press the education grievance. Nor could Catholics view these governments as show-pieces of Christian Democracy, since many perceived Lang as allied to the "Trades Hall Reds" with their radical varieties of socialism. Despite this, Lang appealed to many Catholics; he drew on a

\(^{2}\) cf. \textit{ibid.}, 743.
Catholic working-class tradition of radical anti-capitalism, their rejection of the Anglican and Protestant social establishment, anti-British sentiment and social reformism.

Lang in government presented Catholic leaders with unique difficulties. To what extent was Lang implicated in the forms of socialism or communism condemned by the Church? In his various schemes to retain power through his alliance with Trades Hall, was Lang actually falling into the hands of the Church’s enemies? As Lang’s radical populism became more extreme, what guidance should the Church offer Catholics on social reform?

Factions in the Lang Government

Almost immediately on gaining office in New South Wales, Lang had pursued his rival Theodore, pushing relations with Federal Labor to breaking point. Theodore’s political enemies had raised accusations about his business dealings years before over the Munghana Mining Leases, and he had been forced to resign from Cabinet in June 1930. After Prime Minister Scullin had gone to the Imperial Conference in London for five months from August 1930 and with Theodore out of the Cabinet, Federal Labor was without effective leadership, and conflict within Labor ranks opened cleavages which were to split the Party. Lang and his allies raised the spectre of repudiation and undermined much of Scullin’s work in London.2

When in January 1931 Theodore returned to the Cabinet, he vigorously tried to draw together a coherent economic programme, and at the February 1931 Premiers’ Conference, argued for a mild expansionary policy. Lang was alarmed that if this succeeded, Theodore could challenge him for the leadership of the NSW Party. Moreover, Lang was under pressure from the Socialisation Units and had taken on the populist role of champion against the Money Power.3 Lang countered Theodore’s remedies with the “Lang Plan”, which had been drawn up with the aid

2 cf. C.B. Schedvin, Australia and the Great Depression, 192,
of his advisers Harold McCauley and A.C. Paddison. The Lang Plan aimed to defer interest payments to private British bondholders till Britain reduced interest rates as the USA had done for Britain; to reduce interest on all government borrowings in Australia to 3%; and to replace the gold standard with a "goods standard". These items were summaries of arguments put in various forms at many labour movement and Party meetings, and in parliament, since at least June 1930. There was nothing original about them. They may have been "economic rainbows" for the disenchanted masses, as Schedvin described them; they were obviously tailored to Lang's populist political interests, but they appealed because they promised to relieve immediate indebtedness. Lang's programme further damaged Labor unity and undermined Theodore's proposals. When the banks refused to co-operate with his plans, Theodore in frustration tried to alter the Commonwealth Bank Act to allow an increase in the fiduciary issue, without success. He could not even win enough support from the Premiers. The consequence was that the Commonwealth Government lost control of events and economic planning.

NSW Labor was now in revolt against Federal Labor and the Commonwealth Government. Lang claimed the right to direct Federal parliamentary members in New South Wales; and at the East Sydney by-election in March 1931 he demanded the subjection of the Federal Party to his own views. The Federal Party was forced to expel the NSW Party, with the result that Labor in NSW was divided into bitterly feuding State and Federal parties. Lang retained the loyalty of most of the NSW Party, including that of seven members in the Federal parliament. The by-election had been fought on issues of economics, with Eddy Ward advocating repudiation, not just postponement, of foreign debt repayments; though Lang did not personally agree with the repudiation policies, he had become dependent on Trades Hall politically. He worked to win back control by trying to get rid of Willis and Garden: the post of NSW Agent-General in London he offered to Willis,
who accepted and left on April 3; when he returned in September it was the beginning of their estrangement.\textsuperscript{8} And he encouraged Garden to run for Federal politics, which he did in the 1931 elections, but unsuccessfully.\textsuperscript{9}

Having embarked on a populist course, Lang found it difficult to alter it, and increasingly fell back on a conspiratorial view of events, particularly misinterpreting Theodore's programme.\textsuperscript{10} On March 27 he announced that NSW would default on interest payments due to England in April. The Commonwealth Government stepped in and made the payments, then tried to recover the money from NSW. Lang appeared to buckle under to the Federal Government when he signed the Premiers' Plan in June 1931, which provided for a 20\% cut in government expenditure, including cuts in salaries, wages and pensions; conversion of the internal debts of governments on the basis of a 22.5\% reduction in interest; increased taxation; reduction of bank interest rates and relief for holders of private mortgages.

But the fate of the Commonwealth Government was sealed when Lang's supporters finally voted against Scullin in November 1931. Labor was heavily defeated by the United Australia Party (UAP) led by former ALP Federal Minister and exemplary Catholic J.A. Lyons, and the UAP remained in office for the rest of the decade. After defaulting again in early 1932, Lang himself was dismissed by the Governor of NSW on 13 May 1932, and heavily defeated at the polls.\textsuperscript{11}

**Pressure from the "Socialisation Units"**

Lang was being challenged by extreme socialists and communists from the industrial wing of the Party. The militancy of radicals had alarmed sections of the community and caused them to organise to resist a social revolution. The Who's For Australia League (founded 1929) emphasised loyalty to the Empire and favoured authoritarian rule; many of these people admired the way Mussolini had stopped

\textsuperscript{8} cf. Nairn, \textit{op. cit.}, 267.
\textsuperscript{9} I. Young, \textit{The Impact...} 64.
\textsuperscript{10} cf. Nairn, \textit{op. cit.}, 230.
communism in Italy. The All For Australia League was able to enrol 100,000 members of the Anglo-Saxon race to defeat communism. A token response came from the so-called Australian Labor Army which sold 35,000 of its badges featuring a red star and pledged its members to "overthrow the present capitalist system of society" to attain the socialisation of production, distribution and exchange. However, "the Army never materialized" because Lang opposed it and the Socialisation Units; moreover, such a mobilisation was alien to Australian Labor tradition. On the Right, the Old Guard was formed of ex-army officers with support from the business and social establishment of Sydney to assist police maintain civil order and protect property. With the increase in political tension during 1931, a more militant group broke away from the Old Guard to form the New Guard. It was largely Protestant and middle class, and within a year had enlisted 87,000 members, though it declined quickly to 1500 in 1933 when political stability was restored. Despite the support of anti-Catholics like the Congregational Minister, Rev E. Ruth, Catholics at the time did not see the New Guard as a sectarian organisation. Some few Catholics joined it, though it represented property and business interests and was opposed to the Labor sentiments of most Catholics.

So strong had Lang's hold become on Labor militants that even the communists "were unable to shake the militant workers' faith in him". Lang's personal following undercut much of the appeal of communism; people needed someone to believe in, and Lang filled a populist role as that someone. Within the

13 cf. ibid., 30.
14 ibid.
15 Nairn, *op. cit.*, 229.
17 cf. ibid., 4.
18 Carl Smith firmly denied any sectarian aspect to the New Guard, saying it represented property interests. The Knights had nothing to do with the New Guard, since they regarded such matters as the concern of individuals, not of the Order (cf. interview 28 May 1986, Tape 2A).
19 I. Young, *op. cit.*, 80. Cf also Nairn, *op. cit.*, 257.
Labor Party, however, Lang had trouble containing communist elements.\textsuperscript{20} Although communist organisations were banned from the ALP, members of these organisations sat at the Annual Conference as union delegates. After some dispute it was ruled that as members of banned organisations, they could not remain members of the ALP, but as members of affiliated unions they could. This was a "clear invitation to Communists to enter the ALP through the back door, and was probably a major factor which induced Lang to seek dismissal from office", according to Irwin Young.\textsuperscript{21} Certainly he relinquished office with some relief: "Well, I must be going. I am no longer Premier, but a free man" he said. "I have attempted to do my duty".\textsuperscript{22}

With the split from Federal Labor he had hand-picked his own people for the NSW executive and committees. He also had personal control over Party funds and government appointments, and considerable powers of patronage. He brought the Labor Daily under his control when Norm McCauley became editor in September 1932, and A.C. Paddison the chief leader writer.\textsuperscript{23} With Garden in control of radio 2KY, Lang controlled Labor media.\textsuperscript{24} NSW Labor remained firmly in his hands.

The Payne Report

The extreme socialistic tendencies to which Catholics most objected were clearly supported in the Report which T.G. Payne presented to the 1932 Metropolitan Conference. Payne had been to Moscow with Garden in 1922 and did not renounce the Communist Party till 1928,\textsuperscript{25} after opposing Labor in the 1925 elections.\textsuperscript{26} Payne recruited non-Labor members to the Socialisation Units, beginning an infiltration of crypto-communists. Lang was shaken by the instruction of the conference on 14 February to make the socialisation of industry the main

\textsuperscript{20} The Communist Party grew from a membership of about 300 at the start of 1930, to over 1000 in early 1931, over 2000 by January 1932 and nearly 3000 by 1934. Cf. J.B. Brown, The Communist Movement in Australia, 52.
\textsuperscript{21} I. Young, op. cit. 91.
\textsuperscript{22} Nairn, op. cit., 261.
\textsuperscript{23} Cf. R. Cooksey, Lang and Socialism, 15.
\textsuperscript{24} Cf. Young, op. cit., 67.
\textsuperscript{25} Cf. Nairn, op. cit., 196.
\textsuperscript{26} Cf. ibid., 173.
issue at the coming elections. If Lang was to retain power, he had to defeat the Socialisation Units. Not only were they a threat to his Inner Group, but their extreme proposals would have alienated voters and put an end to Lang’s hopes of entering Federal politics. The Report said socialisation required “the capture of political power by the working class”. “This act entails a social revolution, which means in essence the complete destruction of the Capitalist State apparatus”.

The aim of the working class should, and must be, the complete expropriation of the capitalist class, and, in its stead, set up a dictatorship of the working class for the purpose of organising society upon the basis of socialism.

The problem was not that of abolishing the Legislative Council and the position of Governor (favourite tactics of Lang to distract the attention of militants) “but the complete seizure of political power.” The Report also declared its support for the USSR: “...the aim of capitalism is to wage war against the U.S.S.R. Should this eventuate, then it behoves the working class of Australia to turn the conflict into a revolutionary struggle for the seizure of political power.” The Report clearly reflected its communist inspiration; and though the Central Committee rejected it, the socialisation issue was pressing. Despite strong communist support at the 1932 Conference, the Lang-Garden organisation defeated the socialisation moves by introducing the red herring of the socialisation of credit. J.J. Graves’ report came down against the Units and Garden used it to win over the conference to Lang’s forthright declaration that only constitutional means would be used by the Party. Garden was elected to head the Socialisation Units, blocking the socialisation moves through conference.

By mid-1932, the Socialisation Units began to organise within the unions in their bid to win control of Labor conference; they threatened to become a “party within a Party”, rivalling union and Labor Party organisation. But Lang’s Inner Group worked against them, so that by April 1933 there were only 15 unions with

27 cf. ibid., 254.
28 R. Cooksey claims that Archbishop Sheehan intervened, but there is no evidence in the Archdiocesan Archives on this. Cf. Cooksey, op. cit., 64ff.
31 ibid., 32.
units. At the Annual Conference in 1933, the Socialisation Units forced a motion for a three-year plan of socialisation, but Lang, with Garden’s support, had the decision rescinded the next day. The Socialisation Units were severed from the Party on 14 April 1933.

Thus while concerned about the moves by communists and socialists, Catholics could see that Lang was set on containing them. Moreover, much of the debate was not seriously discussing ideological proposals for implementation, but was faction-fighting.

Catholic radicalism and Labor

By and large, the sympathies of many Catholics at this time remained strongly radical, anti-capitalist, anti-British ruling class and willing to consider proposals for major social change. Most of Labor’s perceived enemies were also those of the Church; but few Catholics were willing to countenance revolutionary change in Australia. Their Irish ancestors had suffered for their religious beliefs, and communism appeared not as a social liberator but as another oppressor. Many Irish-Australians retained a thirst for land and property, and socialistic proposals alienated them from “Red” radicalism. These threads are constantly reflected in the pages of the Catholic papers of the time. Moreover, the old Irish enemy, British capitalism, was seen as supporting Russian communists. Bishop J.W. Dwyer of Wagga wrote a pastoral letter in early 1931 accusing the British government of betraying Christianity for financial gain, and “supinely acting in concert with the God-hating Soviet of Russia”. The Freeman’s Journal continued to be alarmed about communism; in June 1931, it reported that “following their failure to prevent the police carrying out their instructions in recent Sydney eviction cases, the Communists are talking of an armed revolt”. The paper called for firm action against the communists. “But instead of fighting them, we find the authorities - in

32 cf. ibid., 31.
33 Nairn, op. cit., 230.
34 cf. Cooksey, op. cit., 81.
35 Freeman's Journal, 26 February 1931, 11.
New South Wales at least - strangely philosophic.\textsuperscript{37} By September the Freeman's was thoroughly alarmed; it said "the boldness of Australia's Communists can hardly be exaggerated and thoughtful citizens are a little alarmed at the way our governments ignore their constant challenges."\textsuperscript{38}

The bishops of New South Wales issued a Joint Pastoral Letter on May 11 1931, "On the Present Economic Distress", warning against the small Communist Party "which, though for many years of negligible importance, has become more active in these troublous times". However, the Pastoral was vague and said little in fact about the economic distress; it aired Catholic grievances about education.\textsuperscript{39}

About the economy, the Catholic press shared the dominant views of the time. The Press quoted J.M. Keynes comments on the Premiers' Plan in the Melbourne Herald, which said that wages should not be reduced more than 10%; but it didn't follow through on Keynes' advocacy of greater intervention in the economy and credit expansion. The Press wrote: "But Mr. Lyons is right in insisting that politics must not be allowed to meddle with the exchange problem. That is a matter for the Commonwealth Bank".\textsuperscript{40} It is surprising that the Press, which was so critical of the money-power and private control of credit, should have accepted the independence of the Commonwealth Bank; it was economic orthodoxy at the time.

The Press, in line with Archbishop Sheehan's statements on socialism and the compatibility of Australian forms in the Labor Party with Catholicism, was assuming that the question of socialism was pretty well settled. The extreme forms rejected by the Church concerned communism now, rather than socialism. So the news of the condemnation of socialism in Pope Pius XI's Quadragesimo Anno came as a surprise and caught Catholic Labor supporters off balance.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 14 June 1931, 20.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 10 September 1931, 14.
\textsuperscript{39} Press, 28 May 1931, 13.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 7 July 1932, 20.
Interpretations of *Quadragesimo Anno* and the problem of socialism

Pius XI published his encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, as the name indicates, on the fortieth anniversary of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. Pius XI recognised Leo's encyclical as the "Magna Carta" of all Catholic social activity, and recapitulated many of its themes. *Quadragesimo Anno*, if we except the question of socialism, was well received in Australia.¹ Dr Rumble, in a commentary to the Newman Society at Sydney University in September 1931, emphasised the Pope's teaching that to be just, a wage must enable the worker to "become a property-owner in a moderate way. The wage-contract is not essentially unjust, but it should be supplemented by some participation in profits, whether by some contract or partial ownership, by shares, or by bonus".² Rumble understood it as reinforcing Catholic commitment to Labor reformism and the extension of property holdings to workers.

But it was the sweeping condemnation of socialism which was so unexpected and threatened the Catholic/Labor alignment. The first reports of the encyclical found the *Press* embarrassed to explain the condemnation of socialism: "there are alleged passages in the Encyclical which need further explanation". The Press said that the phrase "No one can at the same time be a good Catholic and a true Socialist" "obviously requires a definition of the term Socialist."

Many good Catholics in England, not to speak of Australia, call themselves Socialists and advocate the nationalising of essential commodities. There is another alleged passage in the Encyclical which is probably bungled in translation. It refers to "a mitigated Socialism which is partly consonant with Catholicism, but generally irreconcilable [sic] with the Gospel".

The *Press* promised to publish the authorised translation as soon as it arrived. "In the meantime Catholics should refrain from using the extracts in controversies".³

The *Freeman's Journal* also was puzzled:

In saying that no one can be at one and the same time a good Catholic and a true Socialist, Pius XI. probably is not issuing a warning against Christian socialism, but against that Bolshevism, Communism and extremism which is white-anting industrial movements in many lands.⁴

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² *ibid.*, 17 September 1931, 25.
These early reports anticipated trouble with Sheehan's interpretation, and came at a particularly difficult time for Catholics in Labor.

The encyclical said that if the changes in socialism continued, then it was possible that its programmes would be no longer different from those of Christian reformers. But instead of allowing that the term socialism could be used in different ways, and hence that some forms might be acceptable, Pius XI insisted on a rejection of socialism "as long as it remained Socialism"; he understood that it implied belief in purely materialistic organisations which denied mankind's spiritual destiny. The Press played for time by castigating the Labour Party in Britain and the dominions for any sensation about the Pope's statement, saying that the Labour Party itself was to blame that it had drifted into doubtful associations with those condemned by the encyclical.

Archbishop Sheehan countered by pointing out that Australian society with its easy divorce laws, secular education and vanishing respect for religion was "as pagan as the Bolsheviks" and just as materialistic.

Its effort to collectivise man is not peculiar to it; in capitalist countries, big business has crushed out smaller owners, has seized on the press through which it supplies the people with ready-made opinions, and has constituted itself master of the fate of millions. The only difference is that in Russia, the common folk are aware of what is happening to them, whereas elsewhere men still continue to feed on the illusion that they are their own masters.

Sheehan saw communism more as a variant of the main enemy capitalism, rather than as something quite new in its militant abuse of human as well as religious rights. He had taken a more benign view of Soviet Russia than the Press. His objection to Soviet communism stemmed from its religious persecution, and he considered the Soviet abuse of human rights "certainly not greater than they would have been, had the Czarist regime continued". Sheehan dismissed reports of slave labour in Russia as "capitalist propaganda... Bolshevism, so far is neither Socialism, nor Communism; it is, as I said elsewhere, a form of stunted capitalism."

46 cf. ibid., 24.
47 Archbishop Sheehan, "Soviet Russia", in ACR, VIII, (July 1931), 263.
48 Ibid., 266.
49 Press, 9 July 1931, 14.
Press took a less sanguine view and a few weeks later reported a London meeting alleging slave labour in Russian timber camps. The Freeman's also warned Australians to take Bolshevism more seriously because it wanted to destroy the Christian State and religion. It appears that the Catholic papers were taking a firmer line on communism than Sheehan. Quadragesimo Anno's rejection of socialism, then, cut across Sheehan's previous interpretations of socialism in Australia, and threatened Church support for Labor.

Together with Archbishop Sheehan's explanation of the encyclical two other writers contributed to an interpretation. The first was William Keane SJ in the Australasian Catholic Record of January 1932, with comments by Archbishop Sheehan. The second was Father Alphonsus CP who wrote in following issues of the Record.

Keane said "the chief interest lies in the repetition and extension of Leo XIII's condemnation of socialism". It is clear from the general tone of his teaching that what he had in mind was "Revolutionary" Socialism, with class struggle and the destruction of private property. However, Pius XI is more concerned with "Evolutionary" Socialism. Even these forms of "mitigated socialism" preach an ideal of society which is alien from Catholic teaching.

What precisely was wrong with moderate socialism then? Keane said it was not "enough that a system does not interfere with man's supernatural end". A "Catholic cannot give total adherence to a system in which only natural well-being finds place". In other words, the Pope was taking a stand against the secular or non-confessional State, implying an insistence on the Catholic confessional State which explicitly acknowledged God. Thus guild socialism was also objectionable, Keane said, since "the scheme rests on a false philosophy as to the nature of civil society. It denies that the State is what Scholastics call a 'perfect society', which

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50 ibid, 30 July 1931, 21.
51 Freeman's Journal, 6 August 1931, 21.
53 ibid, 11.
54 ibid, 11.
55 ibid, 11.
would not recognise the divine authority of the State. "The Guild State is only a free federation of groups, no rational safeguard against anarchy."\(^{56}\) Since the War, Keane added, theorists had treated the State "as an institution, purely human in origin, with no power but that of force."\(^{57}\) So Keane's interpretation rejected the guild socialist proposals put by Catholic authors earlier in Australia.

The English-speaking bishops had long assumed that the question of the confessional State had been settled in practice and considered it inapplicable in their countries. Hence the papal insistence caused the problem of squaring the new statements with Australian practice. The central question was that of Socialism, and Father Keane approached it with care.

We may notice that the name "socialistic" covers so many varieties of political and social endeavour that the content, not the [name?] of any "socialistic" policy must be considered.\(^{58}\) Keane defended the right of the State to public ownership, and denied it was socialistic. The problem lay in the detailed application of the Church's principles here: "there is no authoritative teaching on the limits to be set to nationalisation... Even the principles to be applied are not clear."\(^{59}\) What was crystal clear, however, was the Church's defence of the right to private property in itself. The implications for Catholic involvement in Labor were important:

We have to choose, each for himself, the party or policy which seems to us at any time most likely to promote public welfare. We Catholics are not greatly concerned with the nominal aims of any political party. "Objectives", "platforms", "formulae" we, in common with a great body of citizens, look on as so much window dressing. It is with practical issues not party formulae that we are concerned.\(^{60}\)

Catholics had to look not to rhetoric but to practice. "If a party is socialistic not only in its formulae, but also in its practice, no Catholic can adhere to it". An outright attack on the institution of private property as such would be immoral, or an appeal to class bitterness. And, if "a political party is formally associated with

\(^{56}\) ibid., 14.
\(^{57}\) ibid., 15.
\(^{58}\) ibid., 16.
\(^{59}\) ibid., 17.
\(^{60}\) ibid., 18.
the Third International... it would be wise to assume that a measure of
nationalisation introduced by it was tainted at the source.61

Until the bishops state that a question bears on the moral law... it will be, in
practice, safe for a Catholic, as far as morals go, to follow such economic
leading as comes to him from any political body which is not professedly
communist.62

Keane maintained that Soviet communism was akin to capitalism: "The only stable
form of socialism has turned out to be the worst form of capitalism that the world
has known - the horror of Bolshevism."63 Thus Keane defended Catholic
involvement with Labor, and situated the problem of socialism within the larger
problem of existing capitalism.

Sheehan in response said "He could not become a Socialist without becoming
an Atheist; he would have to hold that the end of man is merely his material
well-being." But he queried the papal definition of socialism:

Socialism, with us, may have a perfectly innocent meaning. No doubt, it would
be well if we could pin it down to its harmful connotation, but we are only a
fifth of the population, and there is no likelihood that our protests would be
listened to.64

There could, of course, be no question of a Catholic becoming a communist since
they were avowed enemies of God. Yet "In spite of disavowals and expulsions, the
Labour Party seems to be unable to shake them off."65 But if most Catholics
withdrew from the Party, manual workers would be "at the mercy of the
capitalists, who would grind them in the dust. That fear of oppression, whether
well founded or not, is a psychological fact that must be reckoned with."66 He
allowed the further nationalisation of industries if the State had extreme need, just
as the hungry person may steal to live. The way ahead was to adopt the
programme of Pius XI: redistribute wealth and income, control banking and credit

61 ibid.
62 ibid., 19.
63 ibid., 23.
64 Archbishop Sheehan, "Remarks Suggested by Father Keane's Paper", in
ibid., 26.
65 ibid.
66 ibid., 27.
and have the State take a greater supervisory role. Sheehan did not oppose the socialisation objective, at least on ideological grounds:

The Labour Party might win support for a much wider extension of State ownership, and even for complete Socialisation, but for the fact that most State-owned enterprises in Australia have been an utter failure.

Part of the problem was that "Democracy has broken down. We, citizens, merely flatter ourselves with the illusion that we enjoy representative democracy". He advocated changes in the system of government to give voters greater control over legislation. Sheehan’s position contrasted with the Old and New Guard movements and also with Archbishop Kelly’s admiration for authoritarian regimes. Sheehan was advocating a more representative political system, not an authoritarian one.

Archbishop Kelly adopted a curious stand on political events; in February 1932, when protesting increased taxation, he made a virtue of ignorance of politics:

You may not heed my opinion regarding politics. I hardly thought it worthwhile to vote and have not heard and did not remember who was elected at the last election. What is the right thing?... Let them reduce expenditure and increase the income... By the time he had got through his breviary thanks be to God his sight had so been restored, and God had attended to his correspondence, he had not time for many other things, but enlightened men said that Australia was on the verge of bankruptcy and so, too, is the whole world [sic].

With Kelly of such a mind, any responsible guidance from the hierarchy in Sydney had to come from Sheehan, who continued to address the issue of socialism.

Sheehan appeared remarkably sympathetic to the socialisation proposals, arguing that compensation over time might be possible for expropriated owners, but that "in some instances no compensation whatever need be given". He hesitated on practical grounds to push for such radical social change, fearing civil war; even though socialisation might be the "less of two economic evils, [it] would be a risky step for us in Australia". Despite his anti-capitalism, Sheehan maintained a reformist position aimed "at a cautious and carefully contrived control of Capitalism". Sheehan also toned down over-literal interpretations of the encyclical.

67 ibid, 28.
68 ibid, 29.
69 ibid, 30.
71 Archbishop Sheehan, "Notes", in ACR, IX, 2 (April 1932) 175.
saying that if people went into exile in search of the perfect society, "we should soon become expert travellers".72

Thus Sheehan and Keane preserved the legitimacy of Catholic involvement in Labor against anti-Labor critics. Their traditional Irish radicalism allowed them to be anti-capitalist and to grant the theoretical right to far-reaching programmes of socialisation, though this was moderated by their pragmatism. Their defence of the right to private property was in terms of the wage earner, not big business. They opposed communism and illicit forms of socialism, but the Church's difficulties with socialism remained obscure. While preserving verbal loyalty to Quadragesimo Anno, Pius's thinking was linked to a defence of the confessional State which the Australian bishops had long ignored. Obviously they could hardly spell this out without bringing down upon their heads the charge that they were being disloyal to Rome. They were forced into the position of repeating the papal rhetoric but in such an obscure fashion as to allow Catholic participation in the Labor movement as usual. There was no clarification of this on the theoretical level at the time. But as Sheehan argued, Labor proposals for nationalisation did not come under the condemnation of the Church, and could be judged on their merits.

This mild interpretation received support from overseas. Cardinal Bourne of Westminster said in June 1931 that "I think it will be generally admitted that very few members of the Labour Party would base their desire for social reform on the principles which his Holiness has so rightly and so strongly condemned".73 John A. Ryan in the United States defended the condemnation of "true" socialism,74 but seemed relieved to read Nell-Breuning's "excellent commentary". Ryan acknowledged the objection that non-socialist parties and philosophies were sometimes just as opposed to the Catholic concept of society as socialism, but could find no reply.

72 ibid.
73 S. Ehler and M. Morrall, Church and State Through the Centuries, 411.
He said people could vote for a political party even if it called itself "Socialist"; even Nell-Breuning had accepted Bourne's interpretation.75

Nell-Breuning's book was regarded as a definitive interpretation of Quadragesimo Anno, and possibly it was known in Church circles that he had drafted the encyclical. Clearly the Vatican was reluctant to abandon the concept of the confessional State, and seemed to consider that the only alternative was a secularist State where religion had been confined to the realm of private morality:

"We must consider the phrase 'religion is a matter of private concern' as the great and fundamental heresy of Socialism". Why it should be peculiar to socialism Nell-Breuning did not explain. He insisted that it was not enough for an individual to be religious:

Even if the socialist, as an individual, believes in the existence of a creator, and man's destination for an eternal life hereafter, even if he is a religious individualist - a religious socialist is a contradiction in terms. For the atomism, individualism, and mechanism of the socialist concept of society have no room for God in society.76

Nell-Breuning conceded that there may be Socialists who are also religious, or "Christian" according to their own idea but he asserted:

...religious or Christian Socialism does not exist because the very concepts cannot really exist. Therefore the Pope's statement: "No one can be at the same time a sincere Catholic and a true Socialist". Old August Bebel is right: "Christianity and Socialism are like fire and water".77

Nell-Breuning admitted that the English Labour Party called itself socialist, "although it has very little connection with Socialism in the accepted sense of the word. The Independent Labour Party alone is really socialist." He said that the Pope could not prevent people "who actually are not, from calling themselves, and even seriously regarding themselves as socialists".78 He even defended proposals for property reform from attack as socialist: "Arousing public opinion against these

75 John A. Ryan, "American Catholics and American Socialism", in ibid, (December 1932) 596ff.
76 Oswald Von Nell-Breuning SJ, Reorganization of Social Economy, 299.
77 ibid, 307.
78 ibid, 291.
movements [for social reform] and their promoters by a loose sense of "socialist" is a gross abuse, unfair tactics, and bespeaks of lack of intellectual honesty.  

Thus Nell-Breuning's book helped clarify what the Catholic objection to socialism was, at least as much as it could be without resurrecting the spectre of the confessional State. But the problem of the definition of socialism could have been handled much better, distinguishing more clearly between the various senses of the term, and not insisting that the only legitimate meaning was that the Pope gave to it. The condemnation provided a ready weapon for anti-socialists to use against social reform, even if promoted by the Church.

The interpretation of the encyclical was continued by Father Alphonsus in "The Church & the Social Problem". He argued that the root of the problem lay in the workers being denied ownership with the consequent polarisation of society into opposing classes; socialism and communism are reactions against the injustices of capitalism. "Such a system of class war and of intrinsic opposition to religion obviously cannot be tolerated by us". Alphonsus quoted Sheehan's pamphlet, Socialism and Labour that socialism embraced a wide range of positions:

"We must accept the fact that in English usage the term Socialism covers as many varieties of principles, aims, methods and policies as there are colours in the rainbow". Alphonsus distinguished communists from other socialists on the grounds that communists use violence to introduce a socialist State, whereas socialists prefer a gradual and constitutional reform. Yet not all socialists are anti-religious. Why, then, had the Pope condemned them? "The reason for such a condemnation is that even mitigated Socialism is essentially anti-Christian in its conception of the sublime ends both of individuals and of society".

As I understand it, the Pope condemns Mitigated Socialism not only because it conceives a society and a social character of man utterly foreign to Christian

79 ibid, 288.
80 Father Alphonsus CP, "The Church & the Social Problem", in ACR, IX, 3 (July 1932) pp. 227-35.
81 ibid, 230.
82 ibid.
truth but also because Socialism will not remedy the evils of the present system.83

Once again, the argument against socialism rests on an implied premise of the requirement for the confessional State. This is bolstered by a consequentialist argument that socialism will lead to tyranny:

Under Socialism, there will arise a bureaucratic control of industry. Quis custodiet custodes? With the management and the control of industry in their hands, the State officials would constitute a new aristocracy. The Church in condemning Socialism is protecting mankind.

A change to socialism “would be but a change from one form of concentration of power in the hands of a few, to another, which would bring with it a form of tyranny more despotic than the tyranny of Capitalism”.84

Alphonsus said that despite allegiance of “a great number of Catholics to the ALP - some indeed with a fervor that equals if not exceeds their devotion towards their religion”, that Party “has socialist aims, and at any moment may bring forward a policy contrary to Catholic morality”.

Would the obedience of these Catholics stand the test of the condemnation of this policy? It seems that before moulding public opinion in Australia, we must first mould Catholic opinion. The Catholic people must be shown the futility of the Socialist remedy for the evils of the present system.85

Alphonsus thus took a firmer line against socialism than did Sheehan. However, he drew very little on past Catholic social thinking, and did not even seem aware of P.S. Cleary’s advocacy of industrial democracy in the early 1920s. He took a more critical view of socialism in the ALP than Sheehan, possibly influenced by the rise of the Socialisation Units at this time. In his view, a condemnation of the moderate forms of Australian socialism and of the ALP seemed not out of the question.

As a way to end the conflict between the classes, Alphonsus, noted the Pope’s suggestion that free vocational groups be set up to provide each industry

83 ibid., 231.
84 ibid., 232.
85 ibid.
with self-government, though with some State regulation. The implication was that they were not to be like the Fascist corporations. 86

This critique of socialism was still linked to a rejection of the abuses of capitalism. In a later article in July 1933, "The Basis of Marxian Economics", Alphonsus insisted that both communism and exaggerated capitalism were inimical to Catholics. "Catholic Social Action" must fight "with equal vigour against exaggerated Capitalism", and Catholics must know and combat the errors of socialism and communism. 87

Further comment from Sheehan

Archbishop Sheehan made a further major statement on socialism at a meeting of the Hibernians in October 1932: the socialism the Pope condemned was that which "even when not openly anti-God is so tainted with paganism as to be irreconcilable with Christianity; it is economics raised to the level of a religion, the religion of material well-being". But this did not describe socialism in Australia where it did not appear anti-religious; it wanted to reform the system of ownership. This looked harmless, but a second glance "may lead you to revise your opinion". Citizens could transfer their goods to the State, but could not transfer those of their children. "This is where Socialism offends against justice". Sheehan's strained reasoning reflected the difficulty he was having trying to interpret the Pope's strictures on socialism in Australian circumstances. His solution this time was that though he found socialism as a system "morally unsound" (and hence he was loyal to Quadragesimo Anno), Sheehan said that one may vote for it when the alternative was a greater evil. 88 "Similarly the present system of uncontrolled capitalism with its many and well-known abuses is morally unsound, and cannot lawfully be supported by anyone except as an alternative to an equal or greater evil". In this way he again argued for the legitimacy of Catholic support for Labor.

86 ibid, 231.
87 Father Alphonsus, "The Basis of Marxian Economics", in ACR, X, 3 (July 1933) 211.
88 It was an argument advanced by Walter McDonald in Some Ethical Aspects of the Social Question, 138.
He claimed that the Pope's ideal, though "nominally Capitalist... has many features of Socialism". It maintained the principle of private property for the individual but allowed greater State control. He concluded by calling on Labor and their political opponents to "scrap their game of politics, and unite on a common programme", lest Australia fall into "civil war and widespread ruin."89

The Labor Daily responded to Sheehan's speech by claiming that he did not attack socialism as it was proposed by the ALP. The Catholic Press replied that the Labor Daily was equivocating: "as we have pointed out on many occasions, if anybody implies that the Australian Labor movement is akin with Continental socialism the party has itself to blame." "The most objectionable form of Socialism is openly advocated";

[James] claimed that "the shadow of Communism is over the Labour movement. Revolution has stepped upon the stage". With a strength of less than 1000, Mr. Garden asserted that Communism controlled 400,000 workers, of whom 270,000 are in New South Wales. Most of this was, no doubt, foolish, but none of Mr. Garden's audience had either the courage or the sense of humour to say so.90

Sheehan reiterated his defence of Catholic involvement in the Labor movement: even if Catholics were forced to choose between the socialist "extreme programme" and unreformed capitalism, they should choose the lesser evil:

No Catholic can regard the extreme programme of Socialism, even in its exclusively economic aspects, as in itself desirable; but, as I explained some time ago, a Catholic may be excused for supporting it if in the actual situation the only practical alternative is a policy which his spiritual guides would regard as at least equally objectionable. But observe that the same is true of the present system of unreformed capitalism; its attendant abuses constitute such a social evil that no Catholic could lawfully vote for their continuation except in the hope of escaping something as bad or worse.

The Pope's solution was reorganisation along guild lines. The State would have a directive role, and he would end domination of the world by financiers.91 Sheehan indeed urged radical reforms to capitalism, but of a non-Marxist and non-revolutionary type.

89 Freeman's Journal, 20 October 1932, 18.
91 Ibid, 27 October 1932, 14.
The editorialist of the Press also saw both "rationalist socialism and the immense power of wealthy combines" as enemies. He considered that the manifest inequality in the distribution of wealth gave socialism wide appeal among workers: "...as Belloc pointed out, Capitalism and Socialism are 'sisters under the skin'."

One would gather all industry into a big combine, which could dictate prices, wages and labour conditions; the other would merely substitute State bureaux for the combine. In either case the conditions of the workers would be servile, and the lot of those who consumed the product of industry would be little better. Even under bureaucracy, the great combines would pull the strings.92

Thus the threat from communism, the Depression and Catholic grievances were situated within the dominant Catholic frame of thought: anti-capitalist, anti-Protestant and anti-establishment. The Press interpreted capitalism as a continuation of "the individualism created by the Protestant Reformation". The capitalist talk of making the world safe for democracy was a sham, for it meant making it safe for capitalism; "it will not now be seriously disputed that the Great War was a 'sordid trade war'... The whole capitalistic system is still in a state of war". Communism was explained as a reaction against capitalism:

Communism, which is a more futile tyranny than capitalism, will never be uprooted until capitalism is reformed altogether. Banks, joint stock companies, captains of industry - human money-bags - are the Stalins of our system, and we must first put our own house in order.93

There is here a striking continuity between what the Press saw as the abuses of capitalism and its determined opposition to communism as well as to extreme forms of socialism. Catholic views incorporated much of radical labour populism.

The Challenge from Communism

Throughout the period of the Lang Government, the Catholic press and some clergy had kept a close watch on communist activities and were pressing Lang to end communist and extremist influence. The Press saw the shipping strike of 1931 and the abattoirs hold-up as communist attempts "to disorganise key industries" and

93 Ibid, 1 December 1932, 20.
incite revolution.94 Already fear of an apocalyptic conflict between communism and Christianity was appearing. One person wrote:

Our world of to-day, that is, our civilisation, is dividing itself, or being divided, into two philosophies, Christian and Communist. We are preparing for the mortal conflict, Christ and anti-Christ.95

In October 1931, the Freeman's thought that the "Reds" believed that "they are nearly powerful enough to inaugurate a reign of anarchy and chaos", and called for suppression of Bolsheviks as agents of a foreign power. Fr Lockington SJ affirmed that local communists had to be taken seriously: "I speak only of their awful plan for letting in the jungle and creating a world-wide empire of dreadful death."96 The Freeman's said that communists were "much more powerful than most people suppose... Yet a fight against these Soviet influences must be made sooner or later."97 A few months later, however, the Freeman's thought better of proscription of the communists. "We do not want Bolsheviks in Australia, nor do we want martyrs, and therefore anti-Communistic measures should have a lot of thought."98

Critical of the Labor parties as the Catholic papers were, they were not anti-Labor as such. The Press wanted the isolation of communists from Labor and attacked anti-Labor politicians for "lumping Labour with Communism". In December 1931, it claimed that the "Federal Labour Party differs from the Sydney Labour junta in fundamental principles, in methods and in objective". It condemned the Lang Plan as a Soviet plan to which "the Garden gang had induced the Premier to lend his name".99 Garden aimed at destroying Labor in the interests of communism; his men had taken over the NSW executive and were working on "lines prepared in Moscow".100

94 ibid, 29 October 1931, 20.
95 ibid, 29 October 1931, 35.
96 Freeman's Journal, 29 October 1931, 21.
97 ibid, 5 November 1931, 21.
98 ibid, 3 March 1932, 20.
99 ibid, 10 March 1932, 20-21.
100 ibid, 17 December 1931, 20.
The answer did not lie in provocative anti-socialist organisations such as the New Guard, said the Freeman's "It is not by a rising or by violence that Bolshevism will obtain control in Australia but by skilful propaganda which political organisations cannot prevent by high-handed methods". A few weeks later it added that it did not think either the New Guard or the Red Army were seriously contemplating civil war. Most Australians were tired of machine politics and wanted a change "but not in the direction of Socialism or Fascism". The New Guard seems to have attracted no notable Catholic support. Its leader, Eric Campbell, was a Mason, and sectarian anti-Catholics of the past such as the Congregationalist minister Rev. T.E. Ruth were prominent members. While it shared with Catholic papers a desire to eliminate machine politics, it also campaigned for Throne and Empire, thus offending the sensibilities of many Catholics. At one stage the New Guard campaigned for the UAP but after a later falling out with Lyons, was prepared to overthrow the government. There is nothing to indicate any official Catholic links with the New Guard.

At the 1932 elections the Press called on Lang to stop being used by the communists.

The real issue is whether this State will continue to be a member of the Commonwealth or a Soviet of the Russian type. The "Catholic Press" is not addicted to publishing alarmist stories, nor does it fear that Communism will ever obtain control of Australian government. But a well-organised, if small, group of plotters can create extensive misery among the people.

It said that the takeover of the NSW State executive by the Sydney Trades and Labour Council, "a Communist body", had failed.

The Freeman's ran advertisements for both Lang and Federal Labor, as well as for the UAP in the 1932 elections. The UAP advertisement ran:

Can you ask for any further proof that Langism means REVOLUTION! Homes would be expropriated and become the property of the State... The objective of Lang and his "Red" Trades Hall Dictators is Revolution, and the setting up of a Socialist State at the earliest possible moment. Your only guarantee of

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101 Freeman's Journal, 7 April 1932, 21.
103 cf K. Amos, op. cit., 25.
104 cf. ibid., 76.
Freedom, Work and Wages is to see that Lang never rules again. "YOU MUST DESTROY LANGISIM AND ALL IT STANDS FOR BEFORE IT DESTROYS YOU." ¹⁰⁶

Yet Catholic loyalties to Lang generally prevented personal attacks on him by the Catholic papers, nor did the papers imply that he himself was in sympathy with communism. "Mr. Lang will be thrown aside when the Reds have no further use for him. Union secretaries are ruthless." ¹⁰⁷ Catholics were not likely to forget that Labor under Lang in 1925 had delivered them from the sectarianism of the Fuller government in New South Wales.

Persecution in Russia

Since communists were clearly perceived to be agents of Soviet Russia, events in Russia were interpreted as having direct relevance for Australia. The Pontifical Commission on Russia, instituted to monitor religious affairs there, reported that persecution had reached an alarming state, "hardly equalled by any other religious persecution since the days of pagan Rome". Most Catholic priests had been sent to Siberia. The Freeman's commented:

Now these are facts, duly verified, and cannot be dismissed as the exaggerations of a capitalistic press [directed at Archbishop Sheehan?], and Australian Catholics should remember them when Communists are allowed to join organisations to which they belong. ¹⁰⁸ There was "a struggle to the death" in Russia. "Between Communism and Christianity, there can be no truce." ¹⁰⁹ In 1933, the Press reported that the Soviet Government wanted to eliminate any conception of God.

Any manifestation, however remote, of desire to practise religion, described by orthodox Bolshevism as "hankering after mind opium", is to-day met by incarceration and early banishment to the Arctic lumber camps, where death is sure from starvation and weather inclemencies. Let "Catholic Socialist" apologists meditate on the sufferings of many a Catholic priest who went down this way. ¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Freeman's Journal, 9 June 1932, 29.
¹⁰⁷ Press, 10 December 1932, 21.
¹⁰⁹ ibid, 25 August 1932, 21.
¹¹⁰ Press, 2 March 1933, 38.
Religious persecution overseas, not just in Russia but in Spain, Mexico and elsewhere, was to be an important indicator for Australian Catholics about what they could expect should communists come to power here.\textsuperscript{111}

Gathering doubts about democracy

The turmoil within NSW Labor, the threat from communists and extreme socialists, the destructive faction-fighting, the conflict between State and Federal Labor culminating in Lang bringing down the Scullin Government, dismayed many Catholics. Labor had destroyed itself, leaving Australia paralysed in the face of the Depression. As a result, economic distress was needlessly severe and prolonged, and the Labor forces were thoroughly discredited. It is not surprising that the Catholic papers shared the disillusion with politics and parties. During the political battles of 1932, the \textit{Freeman's} rejected the party system as such: "There are many excellent gentlemen in politics - and good churchmen among them but the party system holds most of them in thrall".\textsuperscript{112} The paper wanted to see the party system scrapped altogether and replaced by a "national instead of a party government".\textsuperscript{113}

Underlying this rejection of parties lay the traditional Catholic educational grievance which in the Depression had grown very heavy, but there was nothing that could be done at such a time. At the best of times, the party system seemed to preclude a solution. But the overwhelming issue was that of the Depression which was so severe that Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane warned of approaching civil war in early 1932. The \textit{Freeman's} thought that this was "too pessimistic a view of the situation, but it is undeniable that our political leaders are not realising what their quarrels mean to the country".\textsuperscript{114}

The demise of the Labor governments did not lead to a revival of sectarianism, however. While Sheehan had with some difficulty interpreted \textit{Quadragesimo Anno} in a way which legitimated Catholic involvement in Labor, new

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{Freeman's Journal}, 31 March 1932, 20.
\textsuperscript{113} \textit{Ibid.}, 7 April 1932, 20.
\textsuperscript{114} \textit{Ibid.}, 5 May 1932, 21.
lines of cleavage precluded a sectarian reaction. No leading Catholic cleric in Sydney supported Lang or emerged as spokesman for Catholic working-class radicalism as had Mannix in Melbourne in an earlier period. The Catholic press had indeed been critical of Lang, and the Church’s opposition to communism meant that conservatives could be confident that Catholics would not ally themselves with Labor extremists. Catholics and Protestants could, in these circumstances, find common ground in their resistance to communism, if not always to forms of capitalism. But the Irish-Australian conviction in parliamentary democracy as the way to social and political change had been profoundly shaken. If democracy could not secure social justice and prosperity for Australia, where were Australian Catholics to look?
CHAPTER SIX

DEMOCRACY UNDER QUESTION: A LOOK AT ALTERNATIVES 1933-35

The failure of Labor in Australia and the apparent near-collapse of capitalism and democracy overseas forced some Catholics to consider alternative economic and political systems. Of decisive importance for Christian democrats everywhere was the collapse of the Centre Party in Germany before Hitler; it appeared Christian Democracy was collapsing. What position, then, were Australian Catholics to take on Nazism, and was it different from Italian Fascism? The Pope recommended corporatism, and various European states were experimenting with it, notably Austria, Italy, and Portugal. What did the Church mean in its support for corporatism? Was the Church advocating Fascism? With communism on the rise in Mexico and Spain, and now stirring in Australia, how should Catholics respond, and what would it mean for the Catholic alignment with Labor?

The Church and the Depression

By 1933, the worst of the Depression was over but, though some economic gains had been made, there seemed no immediate prospects of a return to prosperity. The Sydney hierarchy offered little leadership during these years. Archbishop Kelly was ageing and little interested in social or political affairs; and Archbishop Sheehan said little publicly from 1933 till his return to Ireland in 1937.

Under pressure from his priests, Kelly appealed to the Government on behalf of the 60,000 people on the dole or relief work, saying that the needy required a decent standard of living, even if this meant restricting profits.\(^1\) He proposed the

\(^1\) cf. *Catholic Press*, 8 November 1934, 23.
extension of relief work and raising the dole by government economies. Such an
appeal was idealistic but lacked awareness of how to implement it.

So we must turn to the Catholic papers as indicators of the attitudes of some
leading Catholics during this period: the Press, the Freeman's Annals and the
Fireside. These did not necessarily reflect the views of the bishops or clergy. From
1934, the monthly devotional journal Annals of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
(founded in 1889) began to take an interest in social questions. It was published by
the Sacred Heart Fathers and edited by Fr P.J. (Paddy) Ryan MSC, later a leading
anti-communist. Another monthly magazine, the Catholic Fireside, began publication
in August 1934 as the organ of the Catholic Club. Its first editor was Mr Edward
Bennetts who worked in "a responsible position in the Education Department" and
was private secretary to the Minister for Justice. Bennetts, who had no
pretensions to being a Catholic intellectual, sold the idea to the Catholic Club as a
way to improve its image; at the time it "had a bad name". By November 1934 it
was printing 3000 copies a month, but its financial position was precarious and it
was subsidised by the Catholic Club. It described itself as the "foremost Catholic
literary magazine in Australia", and drew heavily on authors from the Catholic
Literary Revival in England, including Chesterton, Belloc, Lunn and an American
writer, H.L. Mencken, for comment on European affairs. The Catholic Club provided
a focus for much Catholic social and political life in Sydney, and Catholics on both
sides of politics could be found there; the Fireside had to recognise this diversity
of views among members, and wrote favourable articles about Lyons and Scullin.
Even John Albert Beasley, "the leader of that group in the Federal Parliament
which is by common consent the most radical", was associated with the Club and
held in good standing.

2 Minutes of Committee of Management Meetings, April 10 1928-June 1934.
3 cf. Brian Doyle, Interview 25 January 1985, Tape 7A.
5 Catholic Fireside, June 1935, 3.
6 The Archbishop had "refrained from patronising any of their functions"
because of the Club's reputation for drinking. (Cf. Letter from Dr. E. O'Donnell to
7 Catholic Fireside, December 1934, 9.
Views on the Depression and Capitalism

The Press' understanding of the causes of the Depression continued to follow the standard analogy of balancing the household budget. In the international system it traced the problem to financial tyrants and the "stranglehold" of banking; J.P. Morgan was instanced as the best propaganda for communism. The capitalist conspiracy theory was still a strong element in Labor populism as well. This financial power lay behind the "British Ascendancy", which wanted to turn Australia, like Ireland, into its cattle ranch. The Press thought that a remedy lay in a return to the land. Chesterton's ideas of Distributism found an audience among Catholics who believed in opening up the land and spreading ownership. "The chief object of Distributism is small ownership. It is the antithesis of Capitalism, or what the Americans call 'Big Business'".

This critique of capitalism continued to be connected with an anti-Protestant polemic. Rejection of the Catholic Church had led to interest-taking and the growth of the international financiers, the source of the evil. Fr L. Brice SM said "The Government of England has never been a democracy; it has since the Protestant Reformation been a plutocracy, government of the poor by the rich". Capitalism and Protestantism go hand in hand, but not Catholicism and capitalism. The Fireside, too, maintaining the conspiracy theory, saw capitalism as "a financial despotism which is indeed the actual synthesis of every anti-Christian principle," and the major enemy of the Church. P. O'Connor linked it with Protestantism, both of which had opposed the Catholic Church. Communism, as Belloc argued, was seen as "the ultimate fruit of the

9 ibid., 1 June 1933, 20.
10 ibid., 2 March 1933, 20.
11 ibid., 14 July 1932, 21; cf. also ibid., 4 June 1931, 3, and Freeman's, February 1932, 21.
12 ibid., 9 February 1933, 20.
13 ibid., 8 March 1934, 5.
14 Catholic Fireside, April 1935, 18.
15 ibid., September 1935, 8.
Reformation". Thus current events continued to be interpreted within the framework of a conspiracy against Catholicism; what these Catholic views added to, the dominant Labor populism was an anti-Protestant polemic.

This conspiratorial worldview was reinforced at this time by an important Catholic text on social reform. Rev E. Cahill's 701 page opus, The Framework of the Christian State (published in Ireland), reflected conservative European Catholic thinking, and incorporated a conspiracy theory involving Jews, Freemasons, Protestants, capitalists and socialists in an attack on the Church. Fr W. Keane SJ reviewed it saying it would "undoubtedly be adopted as a text-book for private and class study". He criticised a tendency by Cahill to idealise the guilds and argued that the guild system at times suffered from abuse; but he did not attack the conspiratorial worldview. Cahill denounced the "dictatorship of finance" which "puts the financial magnates, who are mostly Masonic Jews and the inveterate enemies of Christianity, in position to... form a kind of irresponsible super-government".

Freemasonry was the evil genius behind many of the Church's problems:

Freemasonry is to-day the central enemy of the Church and of every Catholic government and Catholic institution in the world. It is closely associated with modern Judaism (including the Nationalist Jews, as well as those of the Talmud and the Cabala); and it is largely under Jewish influence and guidance.

Freemasonry was to blame for most civil disorders as well:

The constantly recurring revolutions, political upheavals, assassinations, and religious persecutions, which loom so large in the modern history of Europe and America have been, for the most part, the work of Freemasonry.

Cahill condemned liberal Catholicism for failing to maintain that the State must recognise God's authority and give Him worship. On religious toleration, he said that Catholic States could tolerate existing religions for the sake of public order, but could not allow new religions to be introduced. He also took a hard line

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16 Press, 14 April 1932, 3. The Press was not uncritical: "Bellew's cocksureness irritates at times", it said of Crisis of Our Civilisation. Cf. ibid., 18 February 1932, 3.
17 Rev W. Keane, in ACR, X, 1 (January 1933), 79.
18 ibid., 152.
19 ibid., 221.
20 ibid., 227.
22 cf. ibid., 123.
against socialism for its materialism, denial of the existence of God and elimination of free will and human responsibility.23 The book reflected the more rigid stance taken against socialism since Quadragesimo Anno, and reinforced the conspiratorial worldview which saw the Church locked in combat with Freemasonry, the Jews, big finance, liberalism and socialism. At a time of social distress, Cahill's book was likely to reinforce Australian conspiracy theories and Catholic ghetto thinking.

The Collapse of Christian Democracy in Germany and the Rise of Nazism

From the early 1930s, the Nazis were clearly seen as new enemies of the Church: "they hold the Jews in contempt, and their attitude to the Catholic Church is anything but friendly."24 The Press reported the German bishops' opposition to Nazism: in Bavaria, Catholics were forbidden to co-operate in the movement.25 The Freeman's claimed that Hitler was receiving help from the Bolsheviks in his campaign against the Church,26 and was no ally against communism. This "fanatical Nationalism... deifies the race, the people and the nation". Rosenberg's views also meant conflict with Rome, since the Churches must be replaced with a "Germanic Christ". "In the course of a few months all the Bishops in Germany condemned the heresies contained in National-Socialism."

An article in favour of National Socialism strangely appeared in the Press in August 1933, but was prefaced by the disclaimer that the paper did not accept responsibility for the opinions in the article. "G.S." argued that National Socialism was a bulwark against communism and socialism, and that the State had a claim to totality in the civil order as the Church did in the spiritual.28 Possibly to avoid any misunderstanding of its position, in the same issue the Press printed an account of the Fulda Conference of German bishops which rejected Nazi policies and the attempt to establish a national church in Germany independent of Rome.29

23 ibid, 181.
24 Press, 11 February 1932, 33.
25 cf. ibid., 30 June 1932, 5.
27 ibid, 22 September 1932, 18.
28 ibid, 10 August 1933, 5.
29 ibid, 21.
Quite clearly the Nazi State and the Catholic Church were headed for serious conflict on a range of issues.

The signing of the Concordat between Germany and the Vatican and the apparent abandoning of the Centre Party caused problems of interpretation in Australia.\textsuperscript{30} The \textit{Freeman's} tried to put the best face on things: "So German Catholicism is not only forced to abandon, it now can do without organisations with purely political aims,"\textsuperscript{31} this seemed to renounce the Christian Democratic tradition. Reports of public trials of the clergy and harassment of the Church continued to appear in the papers.\textsuperscript{32} The \textit{Press} defended the papacy:

\begin{quote}
[The Pope] immediately denounced the sterilisation law; condemned the persecution of Jews - as Jews; and informed the Lutheran authorities who appealed to him that he would stand shoulder to shoulder with them in upholding the integrity of the Old as well as the New Testament.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

In May 1934 the \textit{Press} quoted \textit{L'Osservatore Romano} that Hitler had misinterpreted the Concordat:

\begin{quote}
[The Vatican] did not dissolve the Centre Party, and said not a word about the right of the German laity to organise a political party. The clergy alone were forbidden to enrol themselves in partisan political bodies.\textsuperscript{34}
\end{quote}

This clarified some of the issues: it was not a case of Italy all over again, or an abandonment of Christian Democracy.

Catholic views against Hitler hardened after Von Papen's arrest and the shooting of his secretary, the murder of Dr Erich Klausener, head of Catholic Action, and of other Catholic leaders,\textsuperscript{35} and the arrest and execution of priests in September 1934.\textsuperscript{36} A new \textit{Kulturkampf} was being fought in Germany, with Hitler

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\textsuperscript{30} The Sydney papers made no critical evaluation of Mgr Ludwig Kaas, leader of the Centre Party from 1928, or his role in promoting clerics and Bruening in the Party, and the consequent move to the Right; the Party tried to undercut the appeal of Nazism by also promoting German nationalism. Lewy says that Bruening's personality cult "created a pattern of authoritarian power" which Hitler later used to advantage (Gunter Lewy, \textit{The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany}, 19ff.). Adulation of Bruening and the Centre Party left Sydney Catholic writers unable to explain the capitulation of the Party to the Nazis in the Enabling Act (cf. \textit{ibid.}, 21-22; also J.S. Conway, \textit{The Nazi Persecution of the Churches}, 1-44).
\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Freeman's}, 14 September 1933, 21.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{ibid.}, 26 April 1934, 20.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{ibid.}, 24 May 1934, 20.
\textsuperscript{35} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 30 August 1934, 22.
\textsuperscript{36} \textit{ibid.}, 20 September 1934, 31.
\end{flushright}
trying to set up a totalitarian State on the same principles as the communists.\(^{37}\) The threat from communism was then seen to be receding as Stalin was growing weaker while Hitler grew stronger.\(^{38}\)

**Attitudes to Anti-Semitism\(^{39}\)**

The *Press* attitude to anti-Semitism, promoted by its editor P.S. Cleary, was complicated by its suspicion of the wire services and the feeling that the British were prepared to protect Jews in various countries but not Catholics. The paper deplored persecution of Jews, but regarded much of the reporting as propaganda orchestrated by Jewish-run press agencies - Reuters, Wolff's and Havas. The *Press* thought that things could not be as bad as reported since the Centre Party had not voted against Hitler.\(^{40}\) Despite Mannix writing in sympathy to the Hebrew Congregation in Melbourne at news of the persecution in Germany,\(^{41}\) the *Press* was sceptical, regarding stories of Jewish persecution as "grossly exaggerated and misrepresented". It quoted an Austrian bishop attacking "Depraved Jewry" allied with Freemasonry, capitalism and the founders of communism, and noted the withdrawal of the ban on Catholics joining the Nazi Party.\(^{42}\) It was initially sceptical not only about reports of persecutions of Jews, but also of the killings of prominent Catholics.\(^{43}\)

The *Press* in July 1933 was at last convinced that Hitler had been persecuting the Jews, but claimed the Jews were themselves partly to blame.\(^{44}\) "Ashkenazim, or low-class German Jews" were "little better than nomads or gypsies", and provoked anti-Semitism in Austria where they controlled much of the press and had

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\(^{37}\) cf. ibid, 10 October 1935, 22.

\(^{38}\) cf. ibid, 28 November 1935, 13.

\(^{39}\) Anti-Semitism was endemic in European Catholic movements. Even the studious Gustav Gundlach SJ "argued that a political anti-Semitism, fighting the Jews' 'exaggerated and harmful influence' was permitted as long as it utilized morally admissible means" (Lewy, *op. cit.*, 271; cf. "The Jewish Question", in ibid, 268-308).


\(^{41}\) cf. *Freeman's Journal*, 20 April 1933, 21.

\(^{42}\) *Press*, 18 May 1933, 24.

\(^{43}\) cf. ibid, 22 June 1933, 21.

\(^{44}\) ibid, 20 July 1933, 20.
subverted Dollfuss in a socialist revolt. Fr Paddy Ryan agreed with this conspiratorial view of Jews in Austria; he saw "the Jews, who control the press of the world" scheming with "the Jews who are behind the Communist movement. By means of Communism these [Jewish] adventurers hope to arrive at world power." Ryan claimed that he was speaking of Jewish individuals, not of the race: "The great majority of the Jewish people would condemn such diabolical intrigue every bit as much as we do."

In October 1934 the *Press* was again shaken from its scepticism about reports of Jewish persecution by the arrest and execution of Catholic priests; it printed articles in defence of the Jews. But its views remained ambivalent: on the one hand, it wished Jews well; on the other, it protested media bias in condemning anti-Semitism in Germany but not persecution of Catholics in Mexico or Russia, where it claimed 40,000 priests had been imprisoned, banished or killed, while in Germany 600 priests and members of religious orders were currently in concentration camps. It continued to relay arguments and prejudice against Jews for their alleged part in modern finance capitalism and power in Central Europe.

A review of *How Odd of God* by Lewis Browne echoed some of Belloc's views that the problem for the Jews was that they were a race apart and could not integrate. Moreover, the number of Jews who were leaders of revolutionary groups, though not typical of German Jews, gave the Nazis a pretext to attack all of them. Yet, another review of *Anti-Semitism Throughout the Centuries* candidly condemned "the many terrible wrongs done to the Jews in the name of Christianity", though it defended the liturgical prayers "pro perfidis Judaeis".

Hence the *Press*' views were erratic and at the height of the Spanish Civil War it lapsed into more blatant anti-Semitism. An article by a Rev M. McCurtin in November 1936 blamed the "intriguing Jewish race" for the trouble in Spain,

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45 *ibid.*, 22 February 1934, 20.
46 "The Bolshevik War on Religion", *Annals*, May 1934, 278.
47 *cf. Press*, 4 October 1934, 3.
48 *ibid.*, 9 January 1936, 22.
49 *ibid.*, 2 January 1936, 3.
50 *ibid.*, 14 May 1936, 3.
because of their control of the press, and their leadership in communist movements and Freemasonry. He did not condemn all Jews, "of course," for "Even in the most disreputable society there are honest men".

For the past 30 years the Jews have had hopes of destroying Christianity, and in its stead establishing a godless kingdom of men on earth, with, of course, leading Jews at the head. It will be seen from the infamous "Protocols of the Learned Men of Zion," stolen from an influential and highly initiated Freemason... that the Jews fanatically hate Christianity and have visions of the advent of their dreams - the godless kingdom of man on earth, under their rule. Christianity, of course, means here the Catholic Church. The other so-called Christian bodies are as wax in the hands of the Jews.

But the fierce hatred of Catholicism, so much a part of Judaism, and, therefore, of its twin offsprings, Communist anarchy and Freemasonry, is given full publicity under the guise of reform by the press of England and her time-serving colonies to-day.51

It was outrageous that such views should have been presented in a Catholic paper, especially as the Protocols of Zion had been clearly exposed as anti-Semitic propaganda. Cleary must bear the responsibility for this. His earlier defence of Jews indicates that he was not unaware of the persecution against them, but the Jewish-capitalist conspiracy theory, undoubtedly magnified by events in Spain, overwhelmed his humane concern.

This view of Jewish involvement in an international conspiracy was strongly advocated by some overseas Catholic writers, notably Rev E. Cahill in an ACTS pamphlet, The Truth about Freemasonry, which linked Jews with Freemasonry:

The great capitalist press of the United States, England and France, is now almost entirely controlled by the moneyed interests of the world, in which the international financiers, mostly Jews, hold a primary place.52

Cleary's views were not too dissimilar and were to reach a full-blown conspiracy theory in succeeding years.53

Such attitudes were in marked contrast to those of the papacy itself. In 1928 the Holy Office had declared that the Church "particularly condemns hatred of the people once chosen by God, the hatred that commonly goes by the name of

51 ibid, 19 November 1936, 7.
53 Press, 7 December 1937, 26; 29 July 1937, 22; 19 August 1937, 22.
anti-Semitism.\footnote{54} In 1938 there were other important references to anti-Semitism, notably that of Pius XI on September:

Mark well that in the Catholic Mass, Abraham is our Patriarch and forefather. Anti-Semitism is incompatible with the lofty thoughts that fact expresses. It is a movement with which we Christians have nothing to do. No, No, I say to you it is impossible for a Christian to take part in anti-Semitism. It is inadmissible. Through Christ and in Christ we are the spiritual progeny of Abraham. Spiritually, we are all Semites.\footnote{55}

The Sydney Catholic papers did not pick up this message of unambiguous condemnation of anti-Semitism, but tended to qualify their discussions with criticisms of the role of Jews in finance, communism and Freemasonry.

There is no evidence the Sydney hierarchy contested the views in the Catholic papers, though Archbishop Gilroy’s attitude to Jews seemed humane, for in 1939 he welcomed refugees from Germany.\footnote{56} The \textit{Press} took the occasion to consider the question of a Jewish settlement in west Australia; it said Italy’s colonisation of Libya could provide a model, but it warned that “If this wild gamble fails thousands of penniless Jews, some of whom may belong to subversive European factions, will drift to the cities and other States”.\footnote{57} The \textit{Press} had earlier advised its readers to consider Bellocc’s book on the Jews before agreeing to a Jewish colony.\footnote{58}

\textbf{Communism}

Catholics carefully watched communism overseas and its persecution of the churches, seeing it as an instance of the pagan anti-Catholic conspiracy. The pattern for this apparently monolithic, militantly anti-religious movement had been set in Russia, but was being repeated in Mexico and Spain. They were all instances of what Catholics could expect here if the communists took over. Communist progress in Spain\footnote{59} was seen as part of a world-wide plan directed from Russia to fulfil Trotsky’s prophecy that “Spain would become the Red Russia of Western

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\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{54} J. Derek Holmes, \textit{The Papacy in the Modern World}, 115.
  \item \footnote{55} ibid., 116; also L. Sturzo, \textit{Church and State}, 524.
  \item \footnote{56} \textit{Press}, 17 August 1939, 15.
  \item \footnote{57} ibid., 28 December 1939, 20.
  \item \footnote{58} ibid., 17 February 1938, 22.
  \item \footnote{59} cf. ibid., 25 December 1930, 24. Cf. also \textit{Freeman’s Journal} 20 March 1930, 25 and 9 April 1931, 24.
\end{itemize}
Europe.\textsuperscript{60} By September 1931, events seemed to be bearing out these fears.\textsuperscript{61} The \textit{Freeman's} was horrified how anti-Catholic activity in Spain was reported in the Australian press; the \textit{Sun} especially reflected "sources in which anti-Catholic antipathy was almost blazing—is strange to say, anti-religious outrages in Spain are reported in some Australian papers almost joyously, so deep are anti-Catholic prejudices in certain press circles."\textsuperscript{62} This Catholic sense of alienation from the media reporting of Spain and Mexico was to continue throughout the decade.

As early as 1931 the \textit{Freeman's} was seeing the conflict in terms of an apocalyptic struggle in almost Manichaean terms: "Mr. Belloc is quite right when he sums up the situation as a struggle between Christ and anti-Christ, between God and the devil". The paper was even prepared to countenance a revolution against the Freemasons in Spain.\textsuperscript{63}

The \textit{Press} did not always see the Spanish conflict simply in terms of communism and anti-communism. In June 1932, a more detailed analysis appeared arguing that Spain was split between socialists and syndicalists as well as communists and anarchists,\textsuperscript{64} though it vastly inflated communist strength. However, the \textit{Press} generally saw the conflict in terms of Marxism against Christianity. It objected to the sympathy shown to the socialists in the British press, and its linking of "Catholic" with "Fascist,"\textsuperscript{65} and later denied that Gil Robles was a Fascist.\textsuperscript{66}

Till the Republican Government fell in 1933, it appeared to be implicated in extremist attacks on priests and nuns and the burning of churches.\textsuperscript{67} The \textit{Press} denied that the atrocities were simply the work of peasants; it insisted Soviet agents were responsible.\textsuperscript{68} In contrast with these \textit{Press} views, however, the Pope in his 1933 encyclical \textit{Dilectissima Nobis} protested the violence against Catholics.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Press}, 20 August 1931, 21.
\textsuperscript{61} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 10 September 1931, 21.
\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Freeman's Journal}, 22 October 1931, 20.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{ibid.}, 31 December 1931, 20-1.
\textsuperscript{64} \textit{Catholic Press}, 30 June 1932, 41.
\textsuperscript{65} \textit{ibid.}, 29 November 1934, 22.
\textsuperscript{66} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 15 November 1934, 23.
\textsuperscript{67} \textit{ibid.}, 8 June 1933, 20.
\textsuperscript{68} \textit{ibid.}, 14 December 1933, 21.
but did not condemn the Republic, and the moderation of the papacy encouraged the development of a Catholic political party under Gil Robles.69

The Catholic papers feared that the same pattern of events was to be repeated in Mexico.70 The tide of events there turned strongly against the Church from 1932 with harassment of clergy, closing of churches and Bolshevism - in Catholic perception - increasing its hold.71 During the next few years, the Press objected to the apparent unfairness of world opinion which protested the persecution of Jews but not of Catholics in Mexico.72 However, from 1934 better diplomacy by the Mexican bishops and a refusal by them and Rome to endorse rebellion helped relieve tension.73

**Italy, Fascism and Catholic Action**

Australian Catholics were puzzled by the crisis between the Vatican and the Fascist State which erupted in 1931. The Catholic Press revealed its complete misunderstanding of Quadragesimo Anno when it said "It is curious that these outbreaks should have happened on the very day on which Pope Pius XI issued his encyclical, in which he praised the Fascist State Corporations as an ideal solution of the social problem".74 It could find no explanation for the attacks on Catholic youth societies by Fascist squads. The Freeman's denied that the problems arose from the "Church's sympathy with the elements that are opposed to the Fascist movement. Catholic Action in Italy as elsewhere, has no political purpose".75 It did not understand the dispute over the political scope of Catholic Action in Italy.

There was little analysis of Italian Fascism in the early 1930s. Rev W. Baker of Springwood Seminary saw Fascism as government by experts, "reserved to an

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70 For a concise analysis of the problem of Catholicism in Mexico, see "The Cristero Revolt in Mexico", Ch. 16 in Guenter Lewy's Religion and Revolution, 385-412. Cf. also James W. Wilkie and Albert Michaels (eds), Revolution in Mexico.
71 Lewy argues that the conflict resulted not from the increasing power of Bolshevism, but from competition between mutually exclusive ideologies of Church and State. cf. op. cit., 389. But cf. Freeman's, 13 October 1932, 20.
73 cf. Lewy op. cit., 410 ff.
74 Catholic Press, 6 August 1931, 12.
75 Freeman's Journal, 9 July 1931, 20.
aristocracy of talent, with a sense of moral responsibility.\textsuperscript{76} The \textit{Press} in 1932 reported Count Carlo Sforza who was more critical:

If the best elements in Italy still endure him [Mussolini], that is because they hesitate to plunge their country into civil war, partly because they are convinced that the despotism cannot last long.\textsuperscript{77}

As the Depression wore on and this 1931 conflict with the Church settled down, Italy compared not unfavourably with the democracies; the \textit{Press} in 1933 naively said that there was no unemployment in Italy, while two million were out of work in Britain.\textsuperscript{78} However, in 1934 it commended Catholics for being faithful to the democratic ideal as long as possible, "whilst recognising the many good points of Fascism, and doing their best, once Fascism was established, to help it loyally." If the democratic systems could not be made to work, then the Church found it possible to come to terms with Fascist regimes and moderate them.\textsuperscript{79} Dr Rumble was more suspicious of Fascism; when arguing that Catholics were not required to abandon the Labor Party because of its Socialist Objective, he said that the Pope objects to Fascism as a system because it savours too much of state tyranny. But... he does not call upon Catholics to desert it.\textsuperscript{80} Thus Catholic views on Italian Fascism ranged from cautiously optimistic to severely critical.

The Question of Socialism

The presence of communists in the labour movement continued to place pressure on the Catholic alignment with Labor, and the key question of socialism was authoritatively addressed by Dr Rumble in \textit{Radio Replies}. He reiterated Church support for social reform, but opposed communism, extreme forms of socialism, or even mitigated forms which "ignore religion and rely upon purely materialistic

\textsuperscript{76} \textit{Catholic Press}, 3 March 1932, 16.
\textsuperscript{77} \textit{ibid.}, 23 June 1932, 20.
\textsuperscript{78} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 26 January 1933, 20.
\textsuperscript{79} \textit{ibid.}, 5 April 1934, 21.
\textsuperscript{80} Dr Leslie Rumble, \textit{Radio Replies}, 422. This was a collection of replies to questions sent to him on Sydney radio in the previous five years. Many of these replies were also printed in the \textit{Freeman's}, but only a few touched on social issues. First published in 1934, it sold 50,000 copies in Australia and went on to sell four million copies in US editions by 1952 (cf. \textit{ibid.}, xi) and seven million by 1968 (cf. E. Campion, \textit{Australian Catholics}, 135).
methods". In these and similar senses of the word no Catholic can be a socialist. Moreover, "no policy of socialism which aims at the destruction of all social inequalities can be tolerated". Rumble defined socialism as "the name given to any one of various schemes for regenerating society chiefly by a more equal distribution of property possessed and regulated by state authority", i.e. as State socialism, not guild socialism.

How, then, could Catholics reconcile the Pope's strictures on socialism with involvement in the Labor Party? Had the Church condemned Labor's Socialisation Objective? Rumble said that Labor people were not agreed on what it meant. "But taking it on its face value, I do not think any Catholic can in conscience support that objective as an objective; above all, if it be intended as a future permanent regime."

Even if dispossessed owners were reasonably compensated, the system would violate moral and social justice. It would deprive men of their personal rights to their own property, and to their use of it to their own advantage, and to the saving up of the proceeds. Any man may voluntarily renounce his right to property, but he cannot impose that renunciation on others. If the expropriated individual be compensated, it would be difficult to admit that he could not use the compensating revenue in any form of personal industrial enterprise. The socialisation of all industry, production, distribution and exchange is too sweeping, and cannot but violate the just rights of individuals. Without compensation, of course, the case would be far worse.

Rumble explained Catholic participation in supporting the Objective as either a result of ignorance or the belief that it is a dream, not a practical issue.

On the score that it is not worth fighting about, they vote for it, not really intending it, but intending other lawful measures in the Party platform. Others, again, interpret it in a much milder way than it stands, and intend only lawful applications of it.

Rumble, using the argument that it was the lesser evil (Archbishop Sheehan's argument), said Catholics could support the Labor Party as long as they did not support the Socialisation Objective as it literally read:

I would say this. Without subscribing to the "Socialisation Objective" as a theory, a Catholic could support the Labour Party in its present practical

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81 Rumble, op. cit., 415.
82 ibid., 416.
83 ibid.
84 ibid., 420.
85 ibid.
86 ibid.
programme. But within the Labour Party, he would be obliged to use his influence to secure a re-statement of the Objective on less drastic lines.\textsuperscript{87}

He said he had "no brief for the present system of what I would call 'Unreformed Capitalism'."

It is neither reasonable nor just, and no Catholic is free in conscience to support its injustices. The Pope has clearly condemned the economic evils prevailing in the existent system so that at best a Catholic could support a modified capitalistic regime, purified of its present abuses.\textsuperscript{88}

He thought that the nationalisation of banking, with due compensation and provided the people agreed it was necessary, was not unjust. "The Pope himself advocates some form of public control of credit and banking". He also thought that the State could take over essential industries if necessary.

But the general proposition "Socialise major industries" is dangerous without any indication as to which will be declared to be major industries, and with no indication as to the reasons in each case. I think it is doubtful whether a Catholic could support even this modified proposition. To sum up:

The complete socialisation of all means of production, distribution, etc., is unlawful as an objective from a moral point of view, and no Catholic could support it.

The nationalisation of essential enterprises inefficiently conducted by private owners is certainly lawful.

The nationalisation of banking is probably lawful as an economic measure, if the majority of the citizens believe it to be necessary. The socialisation of major industries is a doubtful proposition because too general.\textsuperscript{89}

Hence Catholics could vote Labor as the lesser evil, but could not endorse totally the Socialisation Objective. Rumble said Catholics did not have to desert Labor while they worked for the reform of the Objective:

Workers can be quite sure of the genuine sympathy of the Catholic Church. If that Church, whilst denouncing the oppressive financial system which is grinding the worker down, warns the worker against the other extreme of socialism, it is not only because of the moral principles involved, but also because the Church sees clearly that only a further increase of human misery can result from it.\textsuperscript{90}

Rumble disclaimed that the Church had "a constructive plan" to reform the economy but laid down "moral principles which must be embodied in whatever plan is evolved by men. Temporal well-being is a natural good to be regulated by men.

\textsuperscript{87} ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} ibid., 421.
\textsuperscript{89} ibid., 421-2.
\textsuperscript{90} ibid., 422.
according to the rules of natural prudence. On this reasoning, he said Douglas Credit was not against Church teaching, but it was up to people to decide if it would work. The Church could not "advocate positively one economic system rather than another".

Thus Rumble restated and tidied up the arguments over socialism; he preserved Catholic involvement in Labor and reconciled this practice with the Pope’s condemnation. In theory, the objection to socialism remained obscure. Rumble did not mention the Catholic ideal of the confessional State with its rejection of a secular State, but this seems to be the underlying implication.

Rumble’s colleague, Fr Paddy Ryan, was a little clearer. He regarded as "Godless Government" that which attributed the authority to rule to the people without reference to God. By implication this too rejected the secular State. Annals even claimed that the Pope’s condemnation of socialism was "an infallible decision concerning an indirect object of the Pope’s supreme teaching authority, and is, therefore irrevocable." Socialism was condemned as "mere materialism". The Annals seems to have been alone in insisting on the statement’s infallibility.

Rumble’s position was important for Catholics at the time since they wanted to remain critical of capitalism as well as communism. The Fireside criticised the Sydney Morning Herald which had lately "shown an uncontrollable tendency to set loose the sectarian dogs" for not presenting the Catholic view as equally against capitalism as Communism". In the Herald, Mr R. Holmes had used Pius XI’s denunciation of socialism to attack Catholic support for Labor. Roger Hanly in the Fireside replied that Archbishop Sheehan in 1930 had given an official response to

91 ibid, 424.
92 Douglas Credit was the name given to economic proposals of Major Douglas to abolish money and the financial dictatorship by having governments issue credit equal to the productivity of industrial groups. The proposals were rejected by most economists as unsound. George Crowley, a noted economist in favour of mild credit expansion and a Director of the Freeman’s Journal, firmly rejected them. Cf. Freeman’s, 17 November 1932, 21; 24 November 1932, 13; 8 December 1932, 21; 15 December 1932, 10. The Knights considered it a "subject purely for individual study" and understood that "there is nothing in the system that is opposed to Catholic doctrine" (SCM, KSC, 24/11/32, p.34).
93 Rumble, op. cit., 423.
94 Annals, August 1934, 459.
95 Annals, August 1934, 471.
the question, and Catholics were free to work within Labor for social reform. He relied on Rumble's analysis in *Radio Replies* for the details of his argument. Hanly concluded that "The Pope has so clearly condemned the economic evils prevailing in the existent system that at best a Catholic could support a modified Capitalist regime, purified of its present abuses." 96

Rumble was undoubtedly the current outstanding Sydney Catholic spokesman and thinker and spoke as the intellectual voice of the Church on difficult issues. In the authoritarian Church of his time, he had not the freedom to attempt a more critical but still loyal evaluation of Catholic positions. Part of the difficulty for Rumble, as it was later for Brian Doyle in his study of social questions, was that the degree of authority of various levels of Church statements was not clear; loyal Catholics felt bound to accept encyclicals and official Church statements as matters of faith. 97 This helps explain Catholic efforts to push concepts like corporatism when they seemed out of place, and also the apparent evasion in questions such as the papal teaching on the confessional State.

The ideal of a corporate State was a central element in papal proposals for social reform. 98 It provided an alternative to both communism and Fascism, as well as to parliamentary democracy. Fr Matthew Egan SJ thought corporatism would restore true democracy by the vertical organisation of industry. He looked to the free Medieval guilds for a model, but did not romanticise them. 99 Especially after the use made of corporatism by the Fascists in Italy, the corporate proposals ran against the tradition of Catholic involvement in Australian politics. There is no

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96 Catholic Fireside, April 1935, 17.
97 Brian Doyle said that they raised the corporatist proposal "almost in a propagandist sense". "I now realise that in the thirties, when we read *Quadragesimo Anno*, we really thought we had to accept [the corporate State] virtually as an article of faith de fide." (Interview, 25 January 1985, Tape 6A).
99 Fr M. Egan SJ, "Towards a Corporative Society", in *ACR* XII, 1 (January 1935), 27ff.
evidence that Catholics in the Labor Party took them seriously, or even bothered
to dispute them.

The Catholic call to extend property rights struck a surer note in the
Australian context, as when Fr Paddy Ryan saw economic reform being based on an
extension of property ownership:

Private ownership must no longer be the monopoly of a few but the common
heritage of all. We need "not less capital, but more capitalists"; not the
abolition of private ownership, but the multiplication of it. The worker's
right to a family wage, a decent home, and the means of making reasonable
provision for his wife and children must be respected. Financial control must
be wrested from the mad ambitions of a handful of unscrupulous adventurers
and placed in the hands of responsible governments, for the State has the
right and the duty to control the activities of financiers, to prevent the
accumulation of excessive wealth in the hands of a few individuals, to the
detriment of the whole nation. Class war must give way to class
co-operation.

The Catholic papers continued to endorse a conspiracy theory: the Depression
had been caused by the profiteering of greedy capitalists and financiers who were
particularly strong in England; their power had arisen from the outcome of the
Protestant revolt in England and the consequent growth of capitalism there; as
seen in contemporary affairs, this British ascendancy was prejudiced against
Catholicism and seen to be flirting with communism. The Church was seen as
the protagonist for humanity, civilisation and moral principle.

Deepening Disillusion with Democracy

The conspiracy theory, fear of communism and a deepening sense of isolation
were leading the Catholic papers further into disillusion with democracy. The Press
defended itself against the charge that it was anti-British, but blamed British
politicians, and Australian ones, too, for the failure of democracy.

Communism concerned both Catholic papers. The Freeman's was concerned at
the growth of the communist vote at the 1934 Federal elections which, compared
with the main parties, was still insignificant, but 20,000 nonetheless. Bishop

100 Annals, October 1934, 597.
102 cf. ibid., 4 May 1933, 21.
103 ibid., 4 May 1933, 21.
104 ibid., 3 May 1934, 21.
McGuire of Townsville warned that communism was a serious threat to democracy here. The Press quoted Chesterton in support of its distrust of democracy; democracy did not protect people against the effects of Original Sin.

Was there an alternative to democracy? "We cannot imagine that any sensible person could desire autocracy, proletarian or Fascist, before representative democracy, but what can save us from it?" Autocracy may be the only alternative to communism:

"...we resolutely decline to be tabbed as backers of Hitler or Stalin, merely because we fear that our Parliaments are abdicating before the onslaught of mob autocracy. Let us not forget that there are Catholics behind Hitler, while Dr. Dollfuss, who had to resort to dictatorship to crush anarchy, is an exemplary Catholic."

These disarming remarks reflect increasing disillusion about Australian democracy; the Press had forebodings of its collapse before communism.

From 1934 the Annals under Fr Paddy Ryan MSC began its involvement with social questions with a series on Catholic Action. Ryan agreed with the themes appearing in the Catholic weeklies, shared their distrust of the "great dailies" as sources of information and was concerned to expose the "Systematic lying" of the Bolsheviks. "The war against God, inspired and controlled by Moscow, grows daily more widespread and daily more intense."

The Catholic papers claimed that they were independent of political parties. The Fireside said it was not "tied to the apron strings of any political party."

If we are political in any degree, it is only in the sense that the Papal encyclicals are political. It we have a policy, it is the policy of Christian Social Democracy as expounded in the encyclicals.

The Fireside's insistence on "Christian Social Democracy" was in striking contrast with the cynicism of the Press, and its criticism of the Catholic politicians who frequented the Catholic Club.

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107 ibid., 22 November 1934, 5.
108 ibid., 12 April 1934, 21.
110 ibid., 278.
111 Catholic Fireside, October 1934, 3.
The Press wrote that it too had "sedulously opposed every attempt to connect
the Church with any form of party politics. Catholics as such are free to join any
political party as long as its tenets do not clash with the social doctrine of
Christianity", meaning communism in the context. In fact, the Press supported
Federal Labor against New South Wales Labor. Following the 1935 State elections,
the Press said that the NSW Party had ceased to be a Labor Party; the Reds had
got control. Still it did not condemn Lang. Nevertheless, the Press defended
"the alleged 'Reds' against the UAP "barrage" which accused Labor of being "in
secret accord with Stalin".114

This disillusionment with parties and democracy was reinforced by the
writings of Chesterton and Belloc in England. These writers had long carried out a
campaign to expose corruption in British politics, and to argue that parliamentary
representatives were not truly democratic, but represented vested interests. In its
review of Path to Rome, the Press said "He does not defend Mussolini, but asks
who can attack him? [sic]. Italy is not free; but is England, France, Germany or
America?"115 Chesterton in an article in the Catholic Press said:

[When the Fascists' revolt appeared in Italy, I could not be entirely hostile
to it; for I know the hypocritical plutocracy against which it rebelled. But
neither could I be entirely friendly to it; for I believed in the civic equality
in which the politicians pretended to believe.

The whole of the real case for Fascism can be put in two words never
printed in our newspapers: "secret societies". The whole case against Fascism
could be put in one word now never used and almost forgotten:
"legitimacy".116

The Press lamented "the failure of Parliaments"117 but still saw capitalism as the
main enemy; it lauded efforts by the Labour Movement in Britain and the Roosevelt
Administration to "attack Capitalistic dictatorship" and overthrow capitalism by
introducing "genuine self government in industry and industrial democracy".118 At
the same time, however, the Press quoted Christopher Dawson that "The conflict

112 Press, 13 September 1934, 23.
115 Ibid, 8 January 1931, 3.
117 Ibid, 15 November 1934, 22.
between Christianity and Marxism - between the Catholic Church and the Communist party - is perhaps the vital issue of our time." 119 The Press was then opposed to the extremes of both communism and Fascism as well as unreformed capitalism: "Uncontrolled Capitalism is an evil thing; State Capitalism directed by politicians is putrid; regulated Capitalism is necessary." 120 The implication was that to reform capitalism, eliminate corrupt political parties and avoid communism, an autocracy was needed. But where was one to be found? Despite its suspicion of Fascism, in February 1935, the Press took the drastic step of advocating Fascism: "Fascism must take charge until corruption is destroyed." 121

The Fireside on the other hand took a strong line against Fascism and in favour of democracy; opposed to both "Unreformed Capitalism" and communism, as well as Nazism and Fascism, the monthly took its stand on the "principles of social democracy so ably expounded by His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII." 122 It reprinted a strong attack on Italian Fascism by Anthony M. Tutano (taken from the American Mercury), blaming it for increased unemployment, depressed wages, press censorship and propaganda, militarism and police surveillance. Elections were a farce. 123 And P. O'Connor strongly supported a writer who described "Fascism as a force arrayed against the Church." 124

Apart from the Fireside's rejection of Fascism and authoritarianism as an answer to Australia's problems, there is no evidence of any reaction to the Press' call for Fascism in Australia. It aroused no cry of outrage from Catholics or flurry of protest letters to the paper; Archbishop Kelly's earlier enthusiasm for Mussolini may have made such a protest difficult. Brian Doyle thought the lack of response indicated disinterest or a complete ignoring of Cleary's views by the Catholic democrats in Sydney. 125

119 ibid.
120 "Social Justice", in ibid.
121 ibid., 21 February 1935, 22.
122 Catholic Fireside, February 1935, 3.
123 ibid., January 1935, 8.
124 ibid., May 1935, 30.
125 Brian Doyle, Interview 22 January 1985, Tape 2A. Few of those interviewed had any recollection of Cleary's call for Fascism in Australia. Sivertsen said he was "staggered" to hear of it, and wondered if it was simply the view of a
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The Press' February call for Fascism in Australia soon wavered. In coming months its attitude to Fascism and corporatism was uncertain. By August 1935, as the debate over Abyssinia unfolded, it had lost enthusiasm for things Italian and was afraid that the corporations would be political instruments in the hands of the State. The paper seemed now to see capitalism less unfavourably in relation to Fascism. For the moment, it withdrew from its call for Fascism.

The debate over Abyssinia

The debates over Abyssinia and later the Spanish Civil War coincided with the erosion of Lang's hold over NSW Labor, particularly after the severe defeat in the May 1935 elections. In an effort to maintain his leadership of the Party, Lang increasingly drew on the bogey of communism.

As the radical unions began pressing for international intervention against Italy for its invasion of Abyssinia, the Labor Daily made a sudden shift of policy on August 23 1935 from support of League intervention to opposing it. Eric Andrews has argued that this reflected Lang's change of tactics. Faced with revolt in the NSW ALP and combatting the Miners' Federation, led by the communists Nelson and Orr, Lang launched a strong attack against sanctions and League intervention, arguing that sanctions meant war and war meant conscription. Lang hoped to strengthen his position against Scullin and also against Garden, who had drifted out of Lang's orbit when he moved to Federal parliament in 1934. R. J. Cooksey argued that there was also a meeting between one of Lang's colleagues and Archbishop Sheehan towards the end of August in which Sheehan "emphasised the support of the Catholic Church for Italy, and the preponderance of small coterie around the Press or Cleary's own views (Interview, 4 July 1986, Tape 1B). Mgr James McCosker thought such views were not those of Mgr Collender, his parish priest and chairman of the Board of Directors of the Press (cf. Interview 4 July, 1986, Tape 2B). Neither McCosker nor Ken Boland had any recollection of Cleary's call for dictatorship (cf Boland interview, 30 June 1986, Tape 1B).

126 Press, 22 August 1935, 22.
127 ibid.
129 ibid., 210.
130 cf. ibid., 208.
Catholics in Lang's party. There is no documentary evidence for such a meeting, and given the embarrassment about the Italian action, if it took place at all any intervention would not have been in favour of Italy, but against a war with Italy. Andrews is on firmer ground concluding that Lang "used the Abyssinian crisis to rally Catholics and other anti-communist support behind himself and his struggle for power with union elements."

The Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935, though not a major issue for Catholics, sharpened questions about Italian Fascism. The Italian Church (though not the papacy) strongly supported this nationalist adventure overseas. The fact that the Catholic papers would not believe the cables about the support of the Italian Church for the venture indicates that the Sydney Catholic editors were not sympathetic to it. The Press quoted a Bulletin report of September 4:

"The silence of the papacy on the Italo-Abyssinian quarrel has been remarked all over the world. It was broken by the Pope [when he said], "a war of conquest would be plainly unjust and unbelievably sad and horrible."

The editorialist rejected as "irresponsible romancing" the pressman's statement that "Italian Catholics and clergy are practically unanimous in supporting Mussolini."

Dr Rumble, however, in defending the role of the papacy, outlined the case for the Italians. Writing in the Annals in October 1935, he said that Italy's civilising mission in Abyssinia must be considered:

"We are suggesting to people who know little or nothing of the political and administrative conditions of Abyssinia, that not only the needs of Italy, but the very state of Abyssinia may justify Italy's action, for all we know [sic]."

The Pope could not intervene until he had all the facts and was asked to adjudicate; Article 24 of the Concordat prevented the Pope from any say in a war involving Italy, unless invited by both parties. "Whatever may be the rights and wrongs of the dispute between Italy and Abyssinia, blaming the Pope for not preventing the trouble between the two countries is rank injustice and folly.

131 cf. ibid., 211.
132 ibid., 212.
133 Press, 12 September 1935, 22.
134 Annals, October 1935, 415.
itself. Rumble’s argument from ignorance was unconvincing, and he side-stepped the moral issues raised by the invasion.

Only two of the Catholic bishops in Australia appear to have spoken on the Abyssinian conflict, Brisbane’s Archbishop Duhig and Melbourne’s Archbishop Mannix. Duhig, who had studied in Italy for six years, loved Italy and was a strong supporter of Italian migrants in Queensland, attempted to defend Italy and compared Italian action in Abyssinia with Australia’s treatment of the Aborigines. His comments caused an uproar and led to an involved dispute. Duhig said there seemed to be a double standard operating: would critics of Italy have been as critical of Britain in similar circumstances? Some Italian priests in Australia were much more explicit in their support of the Fascist regime at Italian rallies which linked Fascism with nationalism.

Mannix’s attitude is not altogether clear. He sympathised with the “unfortunate Ethiopians”, but used the issue to embarrass the British saying he was against all trade wars; he compared the Italian aggression with British bombing of Indians and action in Belfast, implying the British were as guilty as the Italians.

In Sydney the Catholic Fireside also linked a move against Italy with British Imperialism, and fell back on the capitalist conspiracy theory:

No one can get unnecessarily upset over the poor Abyssinians when one remembers our own aborigines. What is at the back of all the fuss over Abyssinia? It is apparent some fiendish plot is brewing. Perhaps the armament-makers are preparing to arouse public opinion against Italy so that the sale of arms may proceed openly with the full concurrence and support of the British people.

The Fireside attributed press attitudes on Abyssinia to the wishes of financial masters, sanctions against Italy would mean a profitable war between Britain and Italy. Moreover, the Fireside did not want to see Britain weakened by such a

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135 ibid., 416.
139 ibid., 23.
140 Catholic Fireside, September 1935, 3.
141 ibid., December 1935, 1.
war since Australia relied on British forces for defence; nor did it want to see
Australians dying in another European war. Hence it urged Australia to keep out of
sanctions and war.\textsuperscript{142} When in October the Pope again spoke against Italian
actions, the \textit{Fireside} wrote: "To show the Pope's remarks were understood by both
belligerents we need only add that while Mussolini suppressed them, Haile Selassie
publicly thanked the Holy Father for making them".\textsuperscript{143}

The \textit{Press}, however, interpreted the Pope opposing Mussolini's method of
colonial expansion, not colonial expansion itself.\textsuperscript{144} It also defended an Italian
bishop blessing troops as not condoning the war, but as praying for men going into
war. These explanations were strained; the \textit{Press} was trying to put the best
possible interpretation of Italian Catholic attitudes to Abyssinia, unable to
reconcile the ambiguously reported statements of the papacy (Mussolini censored
them in Italy), the outright pro-Mussolini stance of most Italian Catholics and its
own uncertainties about Italian Fascism.

One \textit{Fireside} writer, W.L. Burke, tried to turn the Pope's statement into a
pro-Italian position:

The Pope's attitude, then, is that Italy should have sought a peaceful
settlement of the question. Whether Italian aggression against Abyssinia would
be justified, is a matter on which His Holiness is silent. Nevertheless, from
the Catholic and Christian point of view, Italy would be a better power in
Abyssinia than its present rulers, who are unable to protect the Catholic
minority from persecution.\textsuperscript{145}

But the most forceful pro-Italian advocate was the medical practitioner, Dr
H.M. Moran, a member of the Dante Alighieri Society and a supporter of Italian
language studies at Sydney University. He met Mussolini in 1932 and again in 1935,
in which year he wrote \textit{Letters From Rome}.\textsuperscript{146} In this he took a benign view of
events in Italy, describing Fascism as "the normal reaction... to the invasion of a
corrupt communism"\textsuperscript{147} and "the most remarkable example of the spiritual

\textsuperscript{142} \textit{ibid.}, November 1935, 1.
\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Catholic Press}, 7 November 1935, 22.
\textsuperscript{144} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 9 January 1936, 22.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Catholic Fireside}, January 1936, 9.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{ibid.}, 44.
regeneration of a nation in modern times. He saw Fascism as the opponent of "selfish landowners" and international bankers as well as "The intellectuals, those mischief-makers of every country whose futility in ideas rivals their pathetic sterility in practical statesmanship." His articles in the Fireside defended the Abyssinian venture on the grounds that the Italians needed space for excess population; they were following the civilising mission exemplified by the British in Transvaal, for instance. He admired Mussolini greatly:

An autocrat, he has done more for the working people, of whom he is one, whose interests alone are near his heart, than all the democrats in the world. After all that, your arguments about the liberty of the subject leave me cold.150

Some months later Moran wrote that sanctions against Italy would not be effective, but could precipitate a war.151 Meanwhile in March 1936 he went to Abyssinia for two months as a free-lance doctor,152 spent winter 1936-7153 in Munich and returned to Australia in November.154 In the August 1936 Fireside, Moran complained that naval action in the Mediterranean had brought Italy close to a war and could have involved Australia: "What Australian wishes to die for the League?"

Mussolini is a man of peace. No other statesman in the world can compare with him: none has his quality. He made Italy a nation out of the chaos left by the war. He saved Austria from a German coup d'etat. He alogue, of European leaders, sees and understands the menace of the East.155

The Fireside in April 1936 drew a lesson from Moran that the cables could not be relied upon for Italian affairs. It questioned also the cable news about Germany, especially since "the Jews owned the cables", but found confirmation there from Catholic sources. Nevertheless the cables should not be blindly believed:

They are doing the work of forces opposed to the people. The cable services, the press gang, the money barons, the armament and munition manufacturers are alleged to be owned and controlled by the same group - a world group.156

148 ibid., 52.
149 ibid.
150 Fireside, February 1936, 17.
151 ibid., April 1936, 32.
153 ibid., 31.
154 ibid., 35.
155 Fireside, August 1936, 21.
156 ibid., April 1936, 1.
The *Fireside* continued to interpret events in the light of the conspiracy theory.

While dying of cancer in 1945, Moran, with the aid of his son, P.A. Moran, a member of the Campion Society, wrote his autobiography, *In My Fashion*. He told how he had volunteered for the British Army and of his experiences as a doctor during the Second World War. He tried also to explain what had happened in Italy; "At no stage did I attempt to justify the unethical action of the Italian Government". Moran was an educated and humane man, and his work displayed some insight and understanding of events in Italy; but the book was partly an apologia, establishing his patriotism and dedication during the War. He must have regretted his earlier enthusiasm for Mussolini.

Apart from the writing of H.M. Moran, there seems to have been in Sydney no determined Catholic defence of Italian actions in Abyssinia, rather disbelief and embarrassment at the supine support of the Italian Church and relief at the stand by the papacy. Kneipp concluded from interviews that Catholics were not very sympathetic to Mussolini, and that their opposition to sanctions sprang from other causes. The few who did sympathise with Mussolini tended to be of Italian or Continental origin. In Melbourne, Denys Jackson took a decidedly pro-Italian line as editor of the *Advocate* till removed. His support for Fascism was so pronounced that the Italian consul proposed to his government that he be given recognition. He became editor of the lesser Catholic paper, the *Tribune*. Jackson was supported by two Campions of Italian descent, Valentino Adami and B.A. Santamaria. Adami tried to swing the Campions towards the Italian position; Santamaria, who edited *Orders of the Day*, followed Jackson’s views. Abyssinia was of little concern to the other members of the Melbourne Campion Society. After the departure of Jackson, Kneipp says that the *Advocate* alone among Catholic papers then argued for Abyssinian sovereignty.

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158 cf. Pauline Kneipp, *op. cit.*, 422.
Increasing turmoil in Spain, however, focussed Catholic fears on communism rather than Fascism, so much so that the Press swung back to its call for Fascism. Because of its fear of the unpredictability of the masses, in January 1936 it said it "is probable that the ambition of dictators is far less dangerous to peace that [sic] the shilly-shallying of vote-hunting politicians". The paper commended Colonel Hutchinson who, while rejecting Fascism as suitable for Britain, proposed to replace parliament with "an assembly of experts". "In truth", said the Press, "it is a reversion to real democracy". A national workers' movement was to be built on a guild basis, and thus an attack made on the international money power which has turned the League of Nations into a financial conspiracy.

The Fireside, however, continued its attack on Fascism, and put it on the same level as communism, while expressing its preference for democracy, even if faulty. Australian pseudo-democracy fell well short of the ideal, but better the devil you know than the one you don't. "Fascism may prove satisfactory; but so might Communism. In the meantime, it is good to be able to sit and watch from afar, both Fascists and Communists fighting for a place in the sun". This splendid detachment was to be shortly disturbed by the debates in Australia over the Spanish Civil War. Though disillusioned with democracy, the Fireside would not choose between communism and Fascism: "It would appear that parliamentarism is doomed, as Belloc suggested it was two decades ago. The fight seems to lie between Fascism and Communism"; one was as bad as the other. The editorial saw both as forms of materialism which would soon attack the Church.

But as the threat from communism loomed larger, the European democracies seemed even less able to resist revolution. Discussing whether the greater danger came from communism or Fascism, the Press argued that Fascism, as in Italy, was the mildest form of authoritarian rule, requiring only "unanimity in politics".

Nazism chose the model of the totalitarian State, not Italy's, and was akin to

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163 Ibid., 23 January 1936, 22.
164 Ibid., 13 February 1936, 3.
165 Catholic Fireside, January 1936, 1.
166 Ibid., June 1936, 1.
communism, with one exception: communism wanted to "establish Soviet Government in all foreign countries" and it launched its "insidious attack" from within.\textsuperscript{167} The paper warned against the tactics of the United Front and the manipulation of even religious and peace groups.\textsuperscript{168} If democracy was indeed doomed, and communism and Fascism were equally bad, where did this leave Catholics in their political options? The prospects were indeed bleak.

Lang's increasing reliance on anti-communism

The NSW Labor Party was finally readmitted to the Federal ALP after unity talks in February 1936, but Lang felt his leadership threatened. Reacting to Lang's shift to the Right, Garden launched a bitter attack on him at Trades Hall on 5 March 1936; he accused Lang's lieutenants, Norm McCauley and J.B. "Plugger" Martin, of lobbying Lang MHRs to start munitions shipments to Italy. Designed to "arouse passionate religious and ideological emotion", as Nairn says,\textsuperscript{169} it was untrue. Garden was expelled from the party, but Lang's position had been damaged. R.J. Heffron and C.C. Lazzarini called for a Labor Council conference which in August 1936 criticised his methods and use of the "Red Rules".\textsuperscript{170} Lang responded with increased reliance on anti-communism. "A new stridency replaced Lang's previously composed and effective criticism of Communists; now he claimed that they were the main cause of the Party's troubles". Graves echoed Lang that the Communist Party was trying to take over Labor through a dictatorship of trade unions.\textsuperscript{171}

Since 1934, the communists had been making some headway in Australia.\textsuperscript{172} They reversed their tactics in that year from denouncing Labor people as Fascists to seek alliances with them. In November 1934, Australian communists organised the Anti-War Congress of the Movement Against War and Fascism. This change anticipated the 1935 Seventh Congress of the Comintern which called for United

\textsuperscript{167} ibid., 5 November 1936, 23.
\textsuperscript{168} ibid., 9 April 1936, 23.
\textsuperscript{169} B. Nairn, The 'Big fellow', 283.
\textsuperscript{170} cf. ibid., 285.
\textsuperscript{171} ibid., 286.
\textsuperscript{172} cf. R. Gollan, Revolutionaries and Reformists, 31.
Front tactics and support for collective security.\textsuperscript{173} The debate over Abyssinia became an important test for the communists to try their new tactic of the alliance against Fascism. But Lang greatly exaggerated the threat:

"The Communists were not a serious threat to Lang, or to Australian security, in the 1930s. But, as in the 1920s, they provided a convenient scapegoat, this time for Lang and his retainers as well as the conservatives."\textsuperscript{174}

As earlier Lang had relied on his conspiracy theories about the Money Power, now he turned to another conspiracy, this time by the communists. He was to pursue his anti-communist campaigns for many years.

Conclusion

As the decade wore on, many Catholic opinion-makers grew sceptical about the ability of existing capitalism to recover and restore decent living standards, particularly to the unemployed, and drew on the familiar conspiracy theory to explain events. What was specific to this Catholic version of the conspiracy theory was that it involved an anti-Protestant polemic as well. But Catholic rhetoric shared much of the dominant conspiracy theory of the "Money Power", so pervasive in NSW Labor circles. These Catholic and Labor theories were mutually reinforcing. But the Catholic protest was generally not against capitalism as such, despite at times the rhetoric. It was against the failure of capitalism, or "unreformed capitalism" as it was called. Unable or unwilling to analyse adequately the mechanisms of capitalism, Catholics fell back on the familiar Labor scapegoats. They blamed international financiers and profiteers, the banks for not creating credit, monopolists for forcing up prices, the Jews and Freemasons for control of finance and of the destiny of nations. Distributism appealed not simply because of its critique of existing capitalism but because it wanted to make every person a capitalist. Now Nazism, communism and perhaps Fascism headed the pagan forces about to attack the Church.

The political views of some of the Catholic opinion-makers also began to change. The march of Fascism and communism overseas and the collapse of

\textsuperscript{173} cf. ibid, 43.
\textsuperscript{174} Nairn, \textit{op. cit.}, 279.
democracy, especially the previously much admired German Christian Democracy, alarmed these Catholics in Australia. P. S. Cleary, who had earlier shown no sympathy with Archbishop Kelly's pro-Mussolini statements, was the most startling convert to Fascist authoritarianism. No doubt he was a special case; by this time a very old man, his scepticism about parliamentary democracy presumably owed much to his own failure in the Democratic Party in the 1920s. The failure to solve the Depression and political divisions in Labor brought discredit on the entire political system. Yet Cleary's call for Fascism appeared to receive no support. The Fireside, without attacking Cleary directly, strongly rejected Fascism, while not ruling out some form of non-Fascist corporatism. With parliamentary democracy weak and communism beginning to appear a more direct threat in Australia, where were Catholics to focus their political hopes? Fr Egan spoke of corporatism as "true" democracy, which implied an abandoning of parliamentary democracy and its puppet politicians. However, while the extremes of Fascism and communism were clearly ruled out, Dr Rumble helped maintain the legitimacy of Catholics in Labor, where undoubtedly the sympathies of most Catholics remained. Only among a few Catholic opinion-makers did a new type of political structure appear possible. Was this the moment for them to take a decisive step to a new form of economic and political organisation, as the papacy suggested? It would be able to resist communism by removing the abuses of capitalism; but to remove the scheming politicians and the financial wire-pullers, the new form of government would have to be authoritarian. The logic of the argument was felt through much of the Catholic world despite Luigi Sturzo's warning in the Dublin Review in 1935:

The psychology of those who desire an authoritarian State is strange. They imagine that authority in such a State, that is to say, the men in government, or even a dictator, would have the same political, moral and religious ideas as themselves, and would be bound to favour their political views. And if the contrary came about? If such men upheld a new paganism as in Germany, or a tyrannical socialism as in Mexico?175

In Sydney, however, only a few Catholics seriously considered Fascism; on the other hand, it was only a few who firmly rejected the call to Fascism. There is

little evidence that others took much interest in the debate. What, then, would be
the role of Catholic Action? Would it supply a mass organisation for an authori-
tarian option, remain confined to works of religion, or help prepare Catholics to
participate as citizens in a parliamentary democracy?
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CATHOLIC ACTION IN SYDNEY 1933 - 1936

From 1933 to 1936, Catholic Action began to take on a more definite meaning; some of the more obvious misunderstandings about it were cleared away. And there were choices to be made about goals, scope of action, strategies, who was to control it, how it was to relate to existing Catholic organisations, and how it would affect the socio-political activity of Catholics. About all these aspects there was considerable confusion, yet Sydney Catholic opinion-leaders began to see that the older pattern of Catholic cohesion was no longer enough in the changed circumstances following the Depression. Given that the Catholic / Labor Party alignment favoured a Christian Democratic style of political behaviour, which favoured lay autonomy in the political sphere, why did some of the clergy and Catholic writers favour instead the Catholic Action model of Italy, which favoured clerical control?

Different Interpretations of Catholic Action

Understanding of Catholic Action developed very slowly. Archbishop Kelly continued to interpret Catholic Action in terms of traditional piety and religion. In January 1933, in a letter "Catholic Action in Public Schools", he regarded it as lay people helping the pastor; but he did not allow catechists to work within the State schools, since these schools "may not be regarded by a Catholic in any other light than as a false prophet, and the wolf in sheep's clothing". ¹ Catholic Action tended

¹ Catholic Press, 19 January 1933, 14.
to be seen in terms of the traditional Catholic struggle against secularism and for Church schools, though Bolshevism was an increasing threat.

Anti-communism was also prominent in the rhetoric as the Catholic Action Association established parish groups around Sydney: "...in the last resource it will be a struggle between the Catholic idea of life and the Soviet idea of life, God supreme or the State supreme". No reliance could be placed on the other churches which were thought to be collapsing. However, Mr T.J. Purcell, president of the Association, had no organisations for anti-communist activity and encouraged people to "join the sodality best fitted to our sex, age and talents". The stress here was on strengthening Catholic cohesion to resist communism, not organising against it. As yet there had been little organisation of study circles, but Purcell called for a wider education of Catholics about social questions. In practice, the new goals and strategies remained vague and Catholic Action continued its traditional religious role.

In November, however, the Press reported the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Archbishop Cicognani, saying that Catholic Action did not mean striving for individual perfection, or the usual work of lay or religious organisations, but "associations of the laity (1) organised by a special mandate of ecclesiastical authority; and (2) working under a code of regulations sanctioned by it." The Press concluded that the Holy Name Society as constituted in Goulburn under Bishop Barry may be considered a form of Catholic Action. Catholic Action was the Pope's way to "stop this leakage and to restore to the true faith people of good will". The Press had latched on to the notion of the mandate but still saw Catholic Action with no scope beyond traditional activities and maintaining Catholic cohesion. The Crusader also made the point that the laity had to have a mandate from the hierarchy and saw this apostolate in clerical terms: the laity were to go where priests could not. But by the end of 1933, the Crusader was

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2 ibid, 26 January 1933, 20.
3 ibid, 20 April 1933, 7.
4 ibid, 16 November 1933, 20.
taking a more cautious stance over Catholic Action, warning Catholics not "to extend infallibility beyond its restricted limits", and not to cause misunderstandings for non-Catholics. The Crusader had shortly before stated that though the friars were to help direct the lay people (tertiaries) in the spirit of St Francis, the "Tertiaries are not ruled and governed by the friars" [sic]. This suggests disagreements in the Third Order about the expanded scope Celsus Kelly had advocated. The magazine supported Catholic Action in this role of social reconstruction, but no longer claimed a key role for the Third Order.

Another possible model for the development of national Catholic Action was that of the US National Catholic Welfare Conference. In "The Voice of the American Hierarchy" in the Australasian Catholic Record, John T. McMahon wrote that it was a voluntary association of bishops without legislative power to organise US Catholics "in all matters of national importance". It seems Mannix drew on the US pattern when he proposed setting up a bishops’ social welfare conference in Australia in 1935 (cf. Chapter 9).

Something more was needed than was available in Australia at the time. Fr M.F. Toal said that Catholic Action was not what many people claimed it was: it was not simply good Catholic living, or practical charity or individual sanctification. It was the "co-operation of the laity in the Apostolate of the hierarchy". Catholic Action "will aim not merely at combating injustices, disabilities and false principles, but at building up and maintaining a Christian and Catholic social order." But the questions of what degree of control the bishops would have and its relation to political action were not considered. It was definitely under clerical direction: "Without intimate and responsive co-operation of lay organisations with the Church's divinely appointed leaders, Catholic Action fails

7 "A Wrong View of the Third Order", in ibid., June 1933, 57.
in its essence, and will remain in this work merely a lay movement, inept, groping, doctrinaire". He recommended the Legion of Mary and the Grail (cf. also Chapter 9) as instruments of Catholic Action.

The Legion of Mary had been founded in Ireland only in the previous decade and spread to Scotland and England. It included men and women working as lay missionaries to non-Catholics or "fallen-away" Catholics, primarily through personal visitation. They had been founded in Melbourne in 1932 but were not welcomed to Sydney. The Grail was an association of lay women who organised a Catholic girls' movement; it had 15,000 members in Holland and had been recently introduced to England. Toal wanted them in Australia. His understanding was very vague, but the Grail appealed because of its phenomenal success in Holland. However, neither the Grail nor the Legion of Mary met the criterion for Catholic Action which Toal himself had laid down, that they engage in the work of social transformation.

A Question of Politics

The political implications of Catholic Action in social reform had already been raised in England where the bishops had appointed a National Board of Catholic Action. It had been interpreted as a form of "ecclesiastical aggression" or a "species of masked political activity. In reality, the movement is entirely pacific, being of a spiritual character", the bishops said. Given the sectarian conflicts in Australia's recent past, the Catholic Church in Sydney was likely to be sensitive to similar charges. The Press commented: "As far as we can see, the only circumstances under which politics may become involved in Catholic Action is when politicians persecute Catholics, as in Russia, Spain..." The paper saw Catholic Action as another defence organisation to protect Church interests rather than as a means to change society. It was clerically controlled, restricted in scope and represented a tightening of discipline and effort to strengthen Catholic cohesion. It

11 ibid.
12 ibid, 125.
13 ibid, 127.
14 Catholic Press, 5 July 1934, 22.
drew back from advocating an assertive political role beyond the ghetto but wanted "organised action" to combat the new materialism, secularism and paganism. There was to be no Church action in politics, in selfish politics, that is, "but it has a place in creating government under the Golden Rule". This was not a complete disavowal of politics, but it was primarily a politics of Catholic defence. It left unanswered how the Church could defeat the new paganism while remaining in its ghetto defence organisations. If the Church were to combat its enemies more effectively, would it not have to play a greater part in politics beyond the ghetto? Who was to decide what was political in an excluded sense, and what came under the moral law of the Church? What criteria would be used for such a judgement?

Some clarification came from the Pope's letter to the Archbishop of Bogota in Colombia. The Pope said that Catholic Action did not want to replace "those economic and professional associations whose immediate purpose is to provide for the temporal interests of the various classes of people engaged in intellectual and manual activity."

These activities must preserve their own autonomy and exclusive responsibility in their particular spheres, just as the political parties, even those formed by Catholics, must be autonomous in their own field and be solely responsible for the work carried on by them.

Catholic Action was to operate in a narrower sphere than the independent activity of Catholic groups and parties in politics; it was to train personnel, develop ideas and supply co-ordination on moral issues among Catholics for such independent initiatives. It was not to control such activity. By this time the notion of Catholic Action included a mandate from the hierarchy, invited lay participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy (and hence was clerical in nature) and had extended its scope to include social reform, but without engaging in politics except where Church interests or values were threatened. Despite all this, Archbishop Kelly continued to adopt a minimalistic interpretation of the scope of Catholic Action. In a pastoral letter in October 1934 he said "we may acquit ourselves of the duty of

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15 ibid, 19 July 1934, 22. cf. also Bishop Farrelly in ibid, 26 July 1934, 15.  
16 Freeman's Journal, 26 July 1934, 21.
'Catholic Action' by practices of Catholic devotion under the special invocation of the Queen of All Saints.\textsuperscript{17}

Goodman's explanations of Catholic Action

The difficulty the Sydney Church had about understanding Catholic Action is exemplified in the writings of Father Goodman MSC, who in 1933 published a pamphlet on the topic which he expanded the following year into \textit{A Handbook of Catholic Action}.\textsuperscript{18} The pamphlet was in fact a collection of articles he had written for the Brisbane \textit{Catholic Leader}. Goodman embraced the Italian model of Catholic Action wholeheartedly, without considering if there were other models of Catholic political behaviour more appropriate to Australia, especially forms of Christian Democracy, because it was the model proposed by the Pope.\textsuperscript{19} Goodman was confused about the precise meaning of the term, and oscillated between a broad definition of it as an umbrella term for Catholic religious and cultural activity, and a narrow sense of a tightly organised campaign to remedy modern evils. In the broad sense, he equated it with the "lay apostolate" where religion is not simply privatised.\textsuperscript{20} He tried to reconcile statements on Catholic Action from the popes back to Leo XIII without being aware of the different circumstances which they had in mind.\textsuperscript{21}

This broad understanding of Catholic Action meant doing what they have always done but doing it better and in a more organised fashion. It remained essentially clerical: helping the "parish priest in his apostolic work for souls".\textsuperscript{22} He did not distinguish the lay apostolate from that of Church officials, and identified the elites of Catholic Action as "our noble Nuns and Brothers".\textsuperscript{23} Nor was he clear about the relationship between Catholic Action and other Catholic organisations.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Press}, 16 August 1934, 25.
\textsuperscript{18} It was well received by the \textit{Press}: "we can recommend none more highly" for its understanding of Catholic Action. The reviewer looked forward to establishing a "national centre" (\textit{Ibid}, 13 April 1933, 3).
\textsuperscript{19} Fr Aubrey Goodman, \textit{The Modern Crusade for Christ the King: A Call to Catholic Action}, 3.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid}, 12.
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Ibid}, 24.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Ibid}, 32.
\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid}, 42.
He repeated the rhetoric of the papacy in its conflicts with Fascism, communism and Nazism - "the satanical banners of war against God" - but showed no awareness of the historical context, and interpreted such statements in a universalised fashion. Hence papal statements about the crisis facing Europe tended to be seen as applicable to Australia also: "Even the most optimistic observer can see nothing ahead but disaster."24 The Catholic Church stood alone against the forces of modern paganism. "This is a fact. Outside the Catholic Church, even among professing Christians, paganism is rampant as it was in pagan Rome". Following Belloc, he traced the evil to the "pernicious teachings of the materialistic philosophy, bequeathed to the world four hundred years ago by the so-called 'Reformation'."25

Therefore the primary task before us is to meet the hellish propaganda of atheism and oppose the satanic Marxism of Godless men, by launching a united crusade against the menace of infidelity, naturalism, Communism.26 He left unsolved the problem of how a clerically-controlled Catholic defence organisation could effectively combat communism.

Goodman said Catholics would find all the answers in the social encyclicals which "frame a grand programme of Catholic Social Action. They form the material for a vigorous crusade against Lenin the Godless and his godless followers".27 But Goodman's actual list of tasks for Catholic Action ignored this anti-communist crusade and was thoroughly traditional, revolving around prayer, good reading and catechetics.28 The rest was rhetoric. Beyond a brief exhortation for the laity to be well equipped intellectually and to study the Church's social teaching, there was little awareness of a broader intellectual field of activity and enquiry. He looked to Germany for a model of Catholic social action and recommended study circles and conferences. He did not regard it in terms of Christian Democracy.

Promoting social change implied the question of politics but his 1933 pamphlet "expressly excluded politics" though all parties should act in accordance with

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24 ibid, 3.
25 ibid.
26 ibid, 28; cf. also ibid., 41.
27 ibid, 29.
28 cf. ibid, 20-27.
Christian principles. He must have been aware of the difficulty here for his 1934 Handbook changed this by saying that Catholic Action is "not a political party" and hence presumably allowed for non-party political activity.

The 1934 Handbook clarified some of Goodman's earlier thinking. He explicitly identified Catholic Action as something different from traditional activities, though he retained a vaguer and broader sense of the term because of his attempt to reconcile Roman statements. Goodman also introduced a new chapter on Italian Catholic Action which deduced what was specific to Catholic Action; it was completely dependent on the hierarchy and required a direct mandate from it; and it must be organised. Taking the Italian Supreme National Council as a model, Goodman anticipated such a group being set up in Australia under the control of the bishops.

But Goodman did not consider some important underlying questions. Firstly, even if the bishops were prepared to set up such an organisation, which bishop(s) would act for the other bishops in a supervisory role? Secondly, how would other Catholic organisations react to claims by Catholic Action to co-ordinate their activities? Goodman was unable to explain how Catholic Action would both co-ordinate them and yet leave them autonomous. He was faced with the problem of reconciling papal statements which supported both points of view. On the one hand he realised that Catholic Action was to act as a "stabilising disciplinary centre", preventing lay fragmentation and ensuring ecclesiastical control over an emergent laity. This looks very like a programme for Catholic Action to take over other Catholic organisations and would be bound to cause friction. Yet he also insisted that Catholic Action "in its essence was as old as the Church itself, but in our time new forms and new tasks have arisen". Thus while identifying something new about Catholic Action, he still confused this with a broad sense of the term.

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29 ibid., 47.
30 Fr A. Goodman, A Handbook of Catholic Action, 111.
31 cf. ibid., 13.
32 ibid., 87.
33 ibid., 23.
Goodman examined various models of Catholic Action but adopted the Italian one, and detailed its parish-based and clerically-orientated structure. "Cells" were to be set up in the parishes on which diocesan groups could build a national organisation till "a national crisis affecting faith and morals is launched by the enemies of Catholic Christianity". Though aware of the Belgian pattern, Goodman rejected it, asserting that the "Italian form has become the model" without making any attempt to evaluate its likely effectiveness in the Australian context.

Goodman also hoped for a Catholic institute of social science such as had lapsed in Spain. As well as doctrine, proper training should include "ethics, sociology and economics". No such institute eventuated, or even seemed to be seriously discussed anywhere.

Catholic Action was not limited to spiritual action; it must especially help the working classes materially by institutions having their own "distinct responsibility and authority in things that are purely technical and economic"; they must preserve workers from "the insidious and pernicious activities of Communism". Hence Catholic Action was to prepare Catholics for socio-political action outside the field proper to Catholic Action itself, so they would act on their own initiative and responsibility. Goodman misunderstood the significance of papal statements against political involvement by Catholic Action. He abstracted from Italian circumstances and took the Italian model as the papal ideal, rejecting the Fascist allegations that Catholic Action was involved in politics as "unjust". Indeed, Goodman rejected any "political" tendency in Catholic Action as illegitimate, and criticised the German Catholic lay societies for this. He presumably meant a party-political tendency which he considered regrettable.

34 Ibid., 15.
35 Ibid., 16.
36 Ibid., 83.
37 Ibid., 85.
38 Ibid., 20.
39 Ibid., 21.
40 Ibid., 15.
41 Ibid.
The booklet was very favourably reviewed by the Press. "R.M." said that the reader "will find all that he may require in order to grasp the meaning and the scope of Catholic Action in this country." Fr William Leonard also reviewed it favourably: "Italian Catholic Action is taken as a norm, because it has been most immediately inspired and directed by the Head of the Church", though it must be adapted for "a country where Catholics are surrounded by heretics."

The adopted model was that of Italy, under tight clerical control, strengthening Catholic cohesion in anticipation of attack. It was also to be non-political, but to combat secularism and communism. It was not clear whether it would simply prepare others to engage independently in politics beyond the ghetto, or whether such an extension would be defined as a religious work conducted under Catholic Action.

**Fr Paddy Ryan expounds a Model**

Under the editorship of Fr Paddy Ryan, Annals magazine helped push forward Sydney thinking on Catholic Action. Annals, with a circulation of 35,000 in 1935, was to be an important Sydney forum for the ideas on Catholic Action from this time. Father Malachy, reflecting on a Catholic Action convention at the 1934 Melbourne Eucharistic Congress, drew on the experience of Spain and Mexico to argue that Catholics had to be organised to resist oppression. "Our enemies organise, so must we". He hoped to co-ordinate Catholic organisations to rouse public opinion; but this raised numerous questions about the relationship with existing organisations, control, competition for membership and precise goals.

No clear model of Catholic Action emerged from the Melbourne Eucharistic Congress, which took the theme "The Eucharist and Catholic Action", but there were competing interpretations between the Campions and Bishop Barry who promoted the Holy Name Society as saving souls; regularly receiving Communion together helped men maintain religious practice. He made no mention of wider

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42 Press, 10 January 1935, 3.
43 Dr William Leonard, in ACR, XII, 2 (April 1935), 187.
44 cf. Catholic Press file SMA.
45 Annals, 1 December 1934, 13.
socio-political activities which could come under Catholic Action. But neither did
the English writer, Fr C.C. Martindale in a major address to the Congress, nor the
Papal Legate himself, Martindale and the Apostolic Legate explained Catholic
Action in terms of religious practice. Only the talks by Paul McGuire and Kevin
Kelly really touched on the new elements in Catholic Action (cf. below). Mannix
assured the Newman Society Convention held after the Congress of hierarchical
support for any feasible proposals the convention offered. A sub-committee on
Catholic Action was set up, consisting of Mannix (President), with Bishops M.
Beovitch, Barry and J. Dwyer (Wagga Wagga), but little was achieved in the next
two years. Given the uncertainty about what Catholic Action was and the
disagreements among the bishops, this was not surprising.

Dr Paddy Ryan, a confrere of Fr Goodman, in a series of five articles which
were later published as a pamphlet, An Outline of Catholic Action (1935), referred
to Goodman's "excellent" Handbook, but without explicitly saying so, appears to
have clarified and corrected it on the nature of Catholic Action, the non-political
role of Catholic Action and its relationship to other Catholic organisations. He
undertook to remove the "thick fog of error, equivocation and prejudice"
surrounding the term Catholic Action, resulting in much "uncertainty and
confusion." Ryan said that the term "Catholic Action" was of recent origin,
possessing a new form of organisation of the lay apostolate which was as old as
the Church itself. He distinguished three uses of the term. First it "may be
applied to any approved Catholic activity of whatever kind"; such an indiscriminate
use of the term was an "abuse". Secondly, the term could be used for the activity
of an apostolic group such as the St Vincent de Paul Society. Thirdly, the term

46 cf. Most Rev John Barry, "Catholic Action for Men", in The National
Eucharistic Congress, Melbourne 1934, 134-5.
47 cf. "Chastity and Honesty: Father Martindale's Sermon to Men", in ibid,
53-60.
48 in "Pontifical High Mass for Aborigines", in ibid., 47-50.
49 Archbishop Daniel Mannix, in ibid., 279.
50 cf. David Kehoe, Draft History of the Y.C.W., Chapter 3: Catholic Action:
51 Annals, April 1935, 176.
52 ibid., 179.
could be used in a more restricted sense to those lay organisations working in an apostolate not only with the approval of the hierarchy, "but in direct dependence on it, and with constitutions determined and sanctioned by the hierarchy itself [sic]. This, and this only, is Catholic Action in the strict sense of the term; the official Catholic Action, Papal and Roman, which the Pope wishes to see everywhere established." Organisations such as the St Vincent de Paul Society could be seen only as auxiliaries.53 Ryan thus established the ranking among various organisations and the primary role of Catholic Action as a co-ordinating body with a mandate from the bishops. He also indicated the scope of Catholic Action:

Cultural Apostolate. - The study of the problems of every order - philosophical, moral, religious, social, political, scientific - in the light of Catholic teaching. The Catholic solutions of these problems, which are always the true solutions, are to be popularised by means of study clubs, cultural schools, series of lectures.

He did not doubt that there was a "Catholic solution" proper in all these fields and apparently ready to be transmitted to the faithful; but he made no attempt to examine how Catholic theological or moral views could be linked with the various disciplines involved.54 Ryan also explicitly allowed for social activity to benefit the working class and quoted Pius XI in support.55

In his third article, on the organisation of Catholic Action, Ryan drew heavily from the Italian model as expounded by Mgr Civardi in his Manual of Catholic Action (cf below). Ryan gave no evidence that he understood the Italian political background to the development of Catholic Action; he simply adopted the model.56 He maintained the position that Catholic Action did not take part in party politics, but said that it tried "to form enlightened and upright statesmen". It was to be tightly controlled in the parish, and was to act as "the right hand of the priest".57 Catholic Action was "supra-political. It has no merely political end in view; it is far removed from party politics". However:

53 ibid, May 1935, 216.
54 ibid, 218.
55 ibid.
56 Annals, July 1935, 297.
57 ibid, 298.
When it is not a question of party politics, but of politics in the etymological sense of the word, which considers the common good of the nation as a whole, Catholic Action has the right and the duty to take part.\textsuperscript{58}

This was an important step, clearly extending beyond the boundaries of ghetto defence or defence of Church interests, into a more positive socio-political activity. He avoided the strictures of Archbishop Kelly by distinguishing it from party politics. Again, presumably, the decision about what is purely party politics or politics for the common good is left with the hierarchy.

The context for the development of Catholic Action in Australia was the Church's struggle with modern secularism. "The task is not one of defence only. We must rebuild what secularism has destroyed. Society must be reconstructed from its foundations on Christian principles."\textsuperscript{59} This was a definite call to move beyond the defence role of the past to reconstruct a better social order. Yet Ryan's views remained very clerical. The duty of the laymen, even in the factories, was to "prepare the way for the priest, to continue and confirm the work done by the priest. It is for him to meet and refute the insidious propaganda of communism, to oppose organised effort to organised effort." In this way, the laity were to effect a "rapprochement" between the clergy and the masses alienated by communism and other movements.\textsuperscript{60} Ryan's ideas were thus of wider scope than those of the Association of Catholic Action, which saw its work as helping the clergy convert the world.\textsuperscript{61}

Two developments augured well for Sydney Catholicism at this stage. The first was the revival of the Catholic Women's Association and its redirection to practical charitable work. However, its story has been told elsewhere; the clergy appeared to make no effort to conscript it into Catholic Action.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} ibid, August 1935, 336.
\textsuperscript{59} ibid, September 1935, 15.
\textsuperscript{60} ibid, 376.
\textsuperscript{61} Press, 8 February 1934, 15.
\textsuperscript{62} cf. S. Kennedy, Faith and Feminism, 81 ff.
The Campion Society: Melbourne and Sydney

The second development was the founding of the Campion Society in Sydney in 1934. It was modelled on that of Melbourne, which was begun in 1931 by Frank Maher and seven others to promote the intellectual aspects of Catholicism. Maher had studied history at Melbourne University and taught from the early 1930s at St Kevin's Christian Brothers' College at Toorak. The Melbourne Campions received strong support from Fr Hackett, but he was the only Jesuit enthusiast for the Campions. Fr Jeremiah Murphy SJ deplored the "activism" of the Campions. While many young diocesan priests supported the Campions, few of the young Jesuits did. Maher described the Campions as purely a discussion group drawing on their own resources; there were to be no outside lecturers. On the whole, politics were kept out of the Campions. Maher did not regard himself as part of the small group of Campions engaged in philosophical debate, unlike Kevin Kelly who was an enthusiast for Jacques Maritain. Kevin Terence Kelly (born 1910), an early member of the Campions and later ambassador to Argentina and Portugal, also saw the Society as not promoting "Catholic activism" but as a school for the apostolate and a "kind of Catholic university"; it aimed at a renewal of the Catholic mind, not at political allegiance. Over perhaps two or three generations, the Campions would help renew Catholic intellectual activity in Australia. Most members were already intellectually mature adults and wanted to pool their ideas, the results of their university investigations and experience. They read avidly and debated the work of the Catholic Literary Revival in England, especially that of Chesterton, Belloc and Dawson.

A further major influence came from the Jocist Movement in Belgium. A French scholar, Kevin Kelly came across an account of Jocism and introduced the

63 cf. C. Jory, The Campion Society, 43.
64 Frank Maher, interviewed 12 August 1986, Tape 1A.
65 Kevin Kelly in untaped interview 5 July 1986.
66 Kevin Kelly in interview 5 July 1986, Tape 2B.
67 Kelly had for a short while been a school teacher and then a clerk in the Neglected Children's Centre of the Victorian Chief Secretary's Office. At the same time he took out a BA in Arts at Melbourne University, graduating in 1936. From that year he was general assistant to the Inspector-General of Goals and Reformatories; cf. Kehoe, op. cit., Chapter 3, p.7, see also Jory op. cit., 65ff.
Young Christian Workers' idea to the Campions in 1934. He spoke on "The Theory of Catholic Action" to the Newman Convention at the 1934 Eucharistic Congress; Paul McGuire was the other speaker on Catholic Action, following similar lines. In contrast to the Italian model, the Jocist one emphasised division by specialisation, so that groups would form not just on the basis of age or sex, but according to "the principle of unique interest, environment or milieu." 68 Kelly understood Catholic Action not just as devotional or religious in its aims, but as forming groups to be active in their work-place and "milieu", autonomous, but not engaging in party-political activity; that was to be left to individuals. For two years, Kelly did not pursue his interest in the YCW. With Brian Harkin, he had founded the Catholic Evidence Guild in Melbourne in 1934, 69 and was active in the Campions, the University Debating Team, the Newman Society and increasingly the Catholic Worker. Not till 1936, did he revive his interest in Jocism and begin a close correspondence with Fr Robert Kothen, assistant to Fr Cardijn, in Belgium. This was to continue till and after the War. 70

There were added differences among the Melbourne Campions about the role of the Church in social and political affairs; it involved followers of Maritain, and those attracted to a more direct Church political involvement, who tended to draw on Charles Maurras and French conservative traditions. The main protagonists for Maritain's views were Kevin Kelly, Frank Murphy (who continued to write for the Advocate for 35 years), Brian Harkin and Kevin Wallace. They drew on The Things That Are Not Caesar's, written after the 1926 condemnation of Action Francaise 71

68 Kehoe, op. cit., 14.
69 cf. also C. Jory, op. cit., 64-5.
70 Kehoe, op. cit., 17.
71 For an account of Action Francaise and its condemnation, cf. Denis Gywnn, The "Action Francaise" Condemnation; Ernest Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism; and Eugen Weber, Action Francaise. Its founders absorbed de Maistre's sense of apocalyptic struggle between the Church and the Satanic Revolution (cf. Nolte, ibid., 57), de La Tour du Pin's break with liberalism and his radical rejection of capitalism (cf. ibid., 75), and his attack on the Jews (cf. ibid., 76) which was developed by Edouard Drumont into full-blown anti-Semitism (cf. ibid., 77). Charles Maurras brought these conservative traditions into a politically active form; they were energised by the underlying motive of fear (cf. ibid., 140-1). The enemies of this conservative France were grouped together as liberalism, democracy, socialism, communism, anarchism, the Germans, English and Jews, and high finance; but not Protestants or Freemasons (cf. ibid., 164). Hence Action
when Maritain left it and rethought his political philosophy. He held that the Church had no directly political role aside from addressing the ethical issues concerned. His Campion followers contested the conservative, monarchist views of Denys Jackson, an Anglican High Church convert, and of Frank Quaine, both of whom were attracted to elements in the philosophy of *Action Francaise*. Kevin Kelly said that many of the ideas of Maurras and other leaders of *Action Francaise* "commended themselves automatically to leading Catholic thinkers, both clerical and lay, throughout the Latin world":

> By and large, Maurras' criticism of the negative consequences of the French revolution of 1789 enlisted intelligent Catholic approval. In social matters, his positive doctrine coincided largely with Catholic social principles. He stood for authority in the State; the exaltation of the family; the repudiation of liberal industrial capitalism; a widespread distribution of productive property among the people; and the creation of new forms of social and economic organisation, based on the principle of the ancient guilds. *L’Action Francaise* regarded the Church as a sort of convenient social cement, and AF's philosophy was basically naturalistic, excluding revelation and the supernatural, and particularly the virtues of charity or fraternity; whence Pius XI's condemnation. Even after that condemnation, intelligent European Catholics could rightly continue to agree with most of the positive elements in the ideology of *L’Action Francaise* [sic].

The issue in dispute concerned the limits of official Church commitment to courses of political action.

The disagreement among the Campions became sharper in the discussion leading up to the founding of the *Catholic Worker*, or "The Front" as it was originally proposed; it was to fight communism "on its own ground - the popular press" before the ground lost became irretrievable, and to arrest the drift from the Church. But Kelly said in interview that the role of the paper was not clear. It was agreed that it would help form the social thinking of Catholics; secondly, that it would suggest how to apply social principles; and thirdly, that it would give some sort of a "lead" to Catholics. It was this effort at "mobilisation of Catholics in the temporal and religious sphere under a standard and under a leader" which disturbed Kelly and the other followers of Maritain, particularly Brian Harkin and

Francaise embodied a conspiratorial worldview, and called an elite group to intellectual and political struggle to rescue the nation (cf. *ibid.*, 72).

72 Letter from Kevin Kelly to the author, 26 August 1986, 2.
73 C. Jory, *op. cit.*, 76.
Kevin Wallace. They rejected talk of a "Christian Front". The key issue then was Maritain's refusal to allow the Church to be drawn into partisan or party-political campaigns. This view was accepted by most of the Campions.

The tension over the question of a political direction for the Campions arose in The Orders of the Day, the Campion organ edited by B.A. Santamaria; in its first issue it undertook to "mould the one and a half million Catholics of Australia into an organic unity ready to resume the Catholic Offensive" and "hammer Catholicism into an impregnable fortress on which heresy will shatter itself". But Kevin Kelly and others thought overt political comment was out of place in this type of publication.

Throughout 1935 discussion continued on whether to found a new paper. Kelly said that he and Maher discouraged the idea because they thought it was not yet properly thought out, especially in terms of Maritain's writing. "What we wanted was some form of temporal action of Christian inspiration recognising only the ethical principles prescribed by the Church", and not under the control of the Church. On Santamaria's authorisation, Kelly informed Mannix of the proposal to start a paper; and in August, Archbishop Killian of Adelaide responded to an approach by Kelly with some sympathy for the idea. Paul and Margaret McGuire in Adelaide were also in support, "feeling that it would be quite safe" in the hands of the Campion Society. But while Kelly tried to delay the paper till its charter had been worked out, at a chance meeting of Campions at Melbourne University "Santamaria announced that whatever happened, the Worker was going to come out on 2 February 1936". Kelly and others insisted that it had to be a group effort. "I

74 Ibid., 75.
75 Kevin Kelly, interviewed 5 July 1986, Tape 2B.
76 Kelly insisted that, despite a note of 30 May 1935 signed by Santamaria and Stan Ingwersen (cited by Ursula Bygott, With Pen and Tongue, 261) that a provisional committee of the Catholic Worker movement had been established, none was actually set up; "I affirm absolutely that... no such provisional committee was then in existence". Maher was not involved in the attempts to establish the newspaper but kept informed about progress. "While I was sympathetic with the idea of its establishment he, like me, wanted to know whether it was going to act within the ecclesial field or outside it. (To use a later phrase, 'Catholic action' or 'action of Catholics')" Kelly added that "As late as December 1935, [Maher] had grave reservations about the desirability, in the circumstances then existing, of its publication". Cf. Kelly to the author, 26 August 1986, 3.
remember distinctly that it was agreed that in January representatives of the group would go and formally ask Archbishop Mannix for permission to launch the paper. Kelly was away when the group went.

Only when I read Against the Tide did I realise that Santamaria wasn’t accompanied by any members of the group at all, that he had taken a senior Campion with him, Val Adami, who had never been in the discussions, and who was never a member of the central committee.77

Kelly said that Santamaria announced he would be the first editor and wrote most of the first issue. But the Campions decided that each issue had to be edited by a board representing the Campions as a whole.

No editor was ever announced, but there was a difference between Santamaria and the other collaborators, and they very quickly grew to a group of about 15 or 20, a difference between Santamaria and the rest on management. He believed that a paper could only be produced by an editor who was effectively in charge of all aspects of production and policy.78

The dispute was over whether the Worker should try to mobilise Catholics as a single force, or should merely present examples of how they might apply principles. Soon some priests were writing to the editors saying that some of their parishioners disagreed with the Worker’s political views being labelled Catholic. The central committee tried to clarify the question from the early issues, saying that its views were only one suggested application. This debate continued in the committee for months “with Santamaria often in a minority of one or two”.

He inevitably got the impression that people he had expected to be his junior collaborators had taken the show over from him, and looking back, that’s what happened from the second or third issue.79

Nor did Santamaria like the way articles were reworked by committee. Though these tensions were to be important later in Melbourne, they did not appear to affect the Campions in Sydney.

The Sydney Newman Society members became aware of the Melbourne Campions after Des O’Connor represented them at a meeting in Melbourne to prepare for the Eucharistic Congress of 1934.80 He had earlier written to Newman

77 ibid.
78 ibid.
79 ibid.
College to make contact with the Newman Society, but had been referred by the Dean to Frank Maher of the Campion Society.\textsuperscript{81} O'Connor wanted to have the Campions established in Sydney as a lay body independent of the Newman Society; he gathered a group of friends who began meeting at the Southern Cross Library, and followed a study course such as Maher had suggested. In February 1935, he informed Fr Thompson CM of this; Thompson had succeeded Fr O'Reilly as Rector of St John's, and was also Chaplain of the Newman Society.\textsuperscript{82} O'Connor and the Irish Thompson were "good friends", and his family had close links with the Vincentians; but he shared with some other lay Catholics an impatience with the clericalism of Sydney, by which he meant "the priest running everything, and turning everything into a clerical thing."\textsuperscript{83} He was careful to defend the Sydney Newman Society (but not the Melbourne one), and invited it to form a study group within the Campions; he hoped to get the Archbishop's approval for the formation of the Campions, which would excuse Thompson from worry that the members would get into "culpable mischief". "I don't think they will get into hot water. They are too damned mild".

O'Connor's main concern was to rebut Thompson's accusations that the Melbourne Campions were "Anti-clerical".

If they feel they have been cheated and misled they cannot but feel bitter - they are still young enough to feel the bitterness of disillusion... They have idealised the priesthood (and surely this is commendable) but can they be chided if they are angry with bitterness when it falls short of their ideal... they are active Catholic-Actionists and ready subjects of the Holy Father. They have heard his call (no thanks to the Australian priesthood) and they are impatient to be permitted to answer it. But the clerical arm holds out against them and the priest says "NO" "You cannot do this without me, and I will not help. I will not serve". They forget that because he is vowed to Celibacy he is not so bound to Humility. They forget (in their innocence) that perhaps he does not think it wrong to leave his parish to scanty care while he sets himself about amassing a scandalous fortune.\textsuperscript{84}

Even Bishop Barry of Goulburn confessed that "he had no idea what Catholic Action is", and thought that the Holy Name Society fulfilled the Pope's call.

\textsuperscript{81} Des O'Connor, interviewed 25 April 1986, Tape 1A.
\textsuperscript{82} Letter from Fr O'Donnell to O.M. Moriarty, 12 December 1933, SJCA.
\textsuperscript{83} Des O'Connor, interviewed 25 April 1986, Tape 2A.
\textsuperscript{84} Mr Des O'Connor to Fr Thompson CM, 2 February 1935, 2, SJCA.
That estimable association never was, is not and probably never will be Catholic Action. It is purely a case of "Ignorantia haud excusat." With the greatest of respect I affirm that His Lordship of Goulburn has defied the Pope. He shouts out "I will not serve" and he leads behind him a merry band of purple and black.85

He insisted that the Melbourne Campions were anxious to set up Catholic Action as the Pope wanted it:

For Catholic Action is a Revolutionary movement. The spirit that is behind it is not new - it is as old as Christendom. But its method is entirely new. It is defined by the Pope (as you already know) as "The participation of the Laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy". It is a lay movement but its organisation must come from the Bishops. Without them it is impossible - without them no activity can be styled legitimately Catholic Action.86

While preserving a role for the bishops in Catholic Action, O'Connor did not consider how it was properly a "lay movement" when laity were participating in the apostolate of the bishops, which is presumably clerical. The basic ambiguity of the definition was not clarified. Nor was the distinctive YCW emphasis present.

O'Connor signed the letter "Your very respectful anti-Clerical", though he was far from being an anti-clerical, of course; he was shortly to join the Jesuits. Not till 1937 did the Sydney Campions risk seeking approval from the Archbishop (cf. Chapter Nine); they were anxious to preserve their independence.

Thompson's support even for the Newman Society seemed tentative at best. Though its chaplain, he said in 1936: "There is one society which I would most strongly recommend to university young men. It is the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, founded by a University man for University men"87 He was also at this time chaplain to the St Vincent de Paul Society. His recommendation of the St Vincent de Paul Society at University rather than the Newman group indicated a preference for Christian action rather than thinking.

The Search for Models: Civardi or Somerville

In trying to understand what the Church was asking in social reform, Australian Catholics found it difficult to interpret the European debates, particularly those between Christian Democratic currents and Catholic Action. Brian

85 ibid., 3.
86 ibid., 5.
87 in St. Vincent de Paul Monthly, April 1936, 187.
Doyle said that the Sydney Catholic groups were not aware of the debate in these terms at all. However, it is undoubtedly true that many Catholic social activists in Europe did see it in such terms. Because the Vatican had suppressed the Christian Democrats in Italy, it was hardly politic to dispute its action in print at the time. This may explain why the debates were obscure to Australians not in direct contact with European Catholic thinkers. And few Sydney Catholic activists could read the foreign language publications anyway, not excepting Doyle himself.

Accounts of alternative Catholic organisations were available in Australia through various books, particularly Henry Somerville's *Studies in the Catholic Social Movement* (London, 1933), which was read by some of Sydney's Catholic thinkers; and Luigi Civardi's *A Manual of Catholic Action* (London, 1935), which was seen as the standard Roman text on Catholic Action.

Somerville was one of the leading Catholic social writers in England and had been one of the principal organisers of the Catholic Social Guild at Oxford. His book described Christian Democratic-style organisations which were more or less closely associated with official Church hierarchies, but supposed a wide area of lay independence and initiative in the political field, under the general inspiration of Church doctrine. Such activity overflowed into political action, and party action at that. He saw the main enemy of Catholicism as being capitalism, and drew particularly on German Catholic writers for his theory of reform; he was aware of the debates within the Catholic social movements. But his advocacy of the German models of Christian Democracy sustained a severe blow with the collapse of the Centre Party and of the mighty Catholic mass organisations before Hitler. In the introduction, Somerville lamented that he could not explain the collapse.\(^89\)

Ironically, his book may have added weight to the argument that Christian Democracy had failed and could provide no protection for the Church against the modern demagogues. He also noted the Jocist movement in Holland, but thought it

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\(^88\) Brian Doyle, untaped interview 6 January 1986.
was not suitable for England since it would demand a monopoly of youth organisations.\textsuperscript{90}

Thus the organisations which looked to Christian Democracy for inspiration lacked a convincing rationale and historical record at this time. The collapse in Germany seemed to discredit them greatly as a means of protecting the Church and civilisation against the modern, militant pagan forces.

The most authoritative work on Catholic Action was undoubtedly Luigi Civardi's, \textit{A Manual of Catholic Action}, which is referred to repeatedly in the Australian literature. Fr C.C. Martindale, who translated the first volume, said that though "the Holy Father is pleased when Catholic Action anywhere approximates in its main lines to what it is in Italy, he naturally does not expect it to do so in detail".\textsuperscript{91} Catholic Action was defined as the laity carrying out every form of apostolate "for the assistance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and not only with its approbation, but at its special behest and in direct dependence on it, and having rules decided on and sanctioned by its authority".\textsuperscript{92} A 1928 quote from the Pope summarised the key elements:

\begin{quote}
The participation of the Catholic laity in the Hierarchic Apostolate for the defence of religious and moral principles, for the development of a wholesome and beneficent social action, under the guidance of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, outside and above political parties, with the intention of restoring Catholic life in the family and society.\textsuperscript{93}
\end{quote}

Catholic Action was to be highly organised, and as part of the work of the bishops, aimed to repair "the losses that the realms already conquered have endured", to re-evangelise the cultures of Europe.\textsuperscript{94} Civardi saw Catholic Action as the answer to "secularism, which engineered the social apostasy from God."\textsuperscript{95} Liberalism also remained an enemy of the Church because it privatised religion.\textsuperscript{96}

About the role of the laity within Catholic Action, Civardi was not clear. On the one hand he insisted that "Laymen in the army of Catholic Action are not

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{ibid}, 118. \\
\textsuperscript{91} Luigi Civardi, \textit{A Manual of Catholic Action}, vii. \\
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{ibid}, 3. \\
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{ibid}, 6. \\
\textsuperscript{94} cf. \textit{ibid}, 13. \\
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{ibid}, 18. \\
\textsuperscript{96} \textit{ibid}, 41.
\end{flushleft}
called to act on their own initiative;\(^97\) and he spoke approvingly of Catholic Action as the "long hand" of the hierarchy.\(^98\) The Catholic Action press was to be "a faithful interpreter of the thought and direction of the Hierarchy, and [was] meant to diffuse the orders of the directors."\(^99\) On the other hand, "Catholic Action, being an apostolate of the laity, will be found to possess also a lay-direction, though subordinated to the higher command of the Hierarchy."\(^100\) These lay centres co-ordinated other Catholic forces in an organised and disciplined way.\(^101\) Yet the various organisations retained "a relative independence" according to their special tasks.\(^102\)

So Civardi provided no clear formulae for settling disputes over the degree of independence of laity from the hierarchy. In Italian practice, of course, such judgements about the amount of independence confided to the laity rested with the Pope or Vatican officials. The whole model rested on the possibility of having a unified command to decide what issues were properly religious or moral, and so included in the scope of Catholic Action. This could be possible in Italy under the centralised command of the Pope, but it was more difficult to achieve elsewhere if bishops were not of one mind.

Civardi was also unclear about the authority of the lay directors. They shared in the authority of the bishops and were expected to carry out the orders of the bishops.\(^103\) "Catholic Action, is, therefore, a quasi-priesthood."\(^104\) Again, "Catholic Action today is indispensable, almost like (quasi come) the priestly office; and with it all, at least 'ad minimum' must co-operate."\(^105\) Thus the lay directors were invested with ecclesiastical sanction for what they did, and were assumed to be carrying out the orders of the hierarchy to whom alone they were answerable.

\(^97\) ibid., 7.
\(^98\) ibid., 56.
\(^99\) ibid., 28.
\(^100\) ibid., 93.
\(^101\) cf. ibid., 78 and 93.
\(^102\) cf. ibid., 96.
\(^103\) cf. ibid., 97.
\(^104\) ibid., 58.
\(^105\) ibid., 69.
Catholic Action shared the same relation to politics as did the Church. Where politics had an ethical dimension, then the Church had a role. But where it was simply a matter of parties or a choice between various acceptable means, then the Church had no role. Hence Church involvement in politics was indirect in the sense of concern for the moral aspects of politics.\textsuperscript{106} While members of Catholic Action could belong to parties, Civardi stressed that "it is a good thing, speaking generally, that its directors - who in a measure represent the interests of religion - should not hold responsible positions in any political party."\textsuperscript{107} This was obviously intended to keep Catholic Action out of factional or party disputes.

However, there was a similar problem about the relationship between Catholic Action and socio-political movements. The latter depended on Catholic Action "only in their religious and moral side; for the rest they are autonomous."\textsuperscript{108} In these spheres, they had to accept "the assistance and direction that Catholic Action, as representative of the Hierarchy, offers them."\textsuperscript{109}

Here all sons of the Church must feel the duty of solidarity, and form a compact army. Here all discord is treachery. When the supreme interests of religion and morals are at stake, party interest and personal opinions must keep silence.\textsuperscript{110}

A vital question here was who decided when a question was simply political or when it was religious or moral and so came under the direction of Catholic Action. Presumably the hierarchy made the decision, or perhaps the directors of Catholic Action. But there was no room here for a right of dissent. Nor was it clear what would happen if the bishops themselves were divided on a course of action.

Civardi also supported the Roman teaching on Church and State without spelling it out too explicitly. He said that the State must recognise the public role of religion\textsuperscript{111} and that the Church must regain its rightful place in society.

Catholic Action in the meantime acted as 'the 'secular arm' that in past centuries

\textsuperscript{106} cf. ibid., 187-8.
\textsuperscript{107} ibid., 205.
\textsuperscript{108} ibid., 244.
\textsuperscript{109} ibid., 245.
\textsuperscript{110} ibid., 209.
\textsuperscript{111} cf. ibid., 107.
the public powers offered for the protection of the Church.\textsuperscript{112} The Church was
turning to mass organisations of the laity to support it where once the State had.

This book was regarded as the classic study of Catholic Action. Read apart
from the historical background, it tended to present a formal model for emulation
elsewhere. Instead of being seen as an attempt at Church organisational defence
against the Fascist State, and hence developed for conditions specific to Italy, it
was seen as having implications for the whole Church. Even as a coherent
theoretical model, there were problems in the relationship between laity in general,
the lay directors and the hierarchy. Outside of Italy, it was bound to cause
problems.

Comparing the two streams of thought represented in Somerville and Civardi,
major differences appear between the Christian Democratic and the Catholic Action
alternatives. The former favoured an independent role for the laity, though still
drawing inspiration from the social teaching of the Church. For them, the role of
the laity was not merely executive under the directions of the hierarchy; the laity
were to study the moral principles articulated by the Church and apply them on
their own initiative. Catholic Action was a centralised clerical model developed
to protect Catholic interests in the conflict with Fascism. Because of its links with
the Vatican, it is not surprising that many Catholics regarded the models of
Catholic Action as somehow obligatory. Civardi insisted on tight hierarchical
control, while allowing lay initiative on the executive level.

Conclusion

Thus ideas about Catholic Action in Sydney had developed considerably since
1933. Then, Archbishop Kelly's view of Catholic Action was highly clerical and
hierarchical: lay people helping the priests. He was aware of the enemies,
Bolshevism and secularism, but prescribed narrowly religious remedies; and so the
Catholic Action Association remained within the strategies of religious cohesion. In
the writing of Fr A. Goodman we see the transition from the past clerical cohesion

\textsuperscript{112} \textit{ibid}, 108.
model to explicit advocacy of the Italian model of Catholic Action as the best way for the Church in Australia to defeat communism: it was to maintain religious cohesion and prepare Catholics to act independently in the social and political arenas. Catholic Action was not to be party-political, but its legitimate political role was not clear. Fr Paddy Ryan's views were more sophisticated, and he confirmed Catholic Action as a specific organisation with a clear mandate from the bishops, and not to be confused with other organisations like the St Vincent de Paul Society. He broke with Kelly's policies and advocated that Catholic Action must have a political scope if it were to change society, but not a party-political role.

The basic change was from simply defending the Church in a hostile, sectarian and secularist culture, to realising that Catholics must also address the broader socio-political issues of the time, and help restore justice in society. It was no longer adequate for the Church to maintain a religious and as far as possible social ghetto. All its efforts to strengthen Catholic cohesion would not necessarily help it against the new enemies, particularly communism. Resistance to communism and secularism must be carried out by the Church reaching beyond the confines of the ghetto to help reconstruct the socio-political world on Christian principles.

There was also a preference for Catholic Action over Christian Democratic movements. The Christian Democrat models espoused by Somerville and the Oxford Social Guild were discredited by their collapse in Germany. The Italian model of Catholic Action, however, had reached a working arrangement with Mussolini's authoritarian regime; it was favoured by the papacy over Christian Democracy, was disciplined under the control of the bishops and tightened the cohesion of the Catholics masses. It had demonstrated that it could survive under an authoritarian regime and that the Church could maintain effective mass defence organisations even after the collapse of democracy.

The Italian model was considered in Sydney just as some Catholic leaders of opinion had lost hope in parliamentary democracy and were considering
authoritarian forms of government as alternatives to parliamentary democracy. Hence this new form of Catholic Action held out promise of providing a Catholic mass base for restructuring Australian political institutions. These possibilities may have remained the dreams of a small group of Sydney Catholic intellectuals, but for the impact of the Spanish Civil War.
CHAPTER EIGHT

TRANSFORMATION IN THE CATHOLIC WORLDVIEW:

THE CALL TO CRUSADE

The Spanish Civil War deeply engaged fears and anxieties in the Australian Catholic sub-culture, and dramatised the horror of communism. Why were priests and nuns being killed in their thousands? Was the Church there simply a reactionary force as much of the media claimed, and why did the British media play down the role of the communists on the republican side?\(^1\) How could Australia escape the fate of Spain and organise to defeat the communists? These were questions forced on Catholics by what Church leaders and papers widely interpreted as a major threat to their survival.

Spain, Communism and the Labor Party

The Civil War in Spain became a contentious issue within the NSW and Federal Labor Parties, with communist and other groups pressing for intervention by the League of Nations against the Nationalists and arousing strong opposition from Labor Catholics. Lang, fighting to maintain his leadership, supported the Catholic side against League intervention. The issue was not simply one of communists versus Catholics in Labor; anti-militarism traditional in Labor also favoured non-intervention. So polarised were the left wing of Labor and some Catholics on this issue that John Curtin realised that only isolationism and

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\(^1\) For a brief analysis of the Church's role in the Spanish Civil War, cf Guenter Lewy's "The Spanish Civil War", Ch. 17 in Religion and Revolution, 413-440; also Hugh Thomas, The Spanish Civil War.
avoidance of the Spanish issue could keep the Party together. Still trying to recombine the NSW and Federal Parties, Curtin spoke to the 1937 NSW Metropolitan Conference. The Federal Executive denounced the bogus conference of August 1936, and lifted the expulsions of Garden, Heffron, Lazzarini and others. Curtin was also concerned about communist influence in the group trying to overthrow Lang;\(^2\) at least two known communists, Lloyd Ross and H. Denford were on the rebel executive.\(^3\) The Federal Executive totally rejected affiliation with the Communist Party or advocacy of a United Front.\(^4\) It also allotted Curtin the major role over Lang in the election campaign at Gwydir, thus establishing the authority of the Federal Party. After the defeat of Federal Labor in the 1937 elections, pressure increased to remove Lang.\(^5\)

**Interpretations of events in Spain**

The Spanish Civil War was regarded by many Australian Catholic magazines and papers as a topic of the utmost urgency. Not only did the Catholic weeklies, notably the *Catholic Press*, offer detailed commentary on events, but magazines previously of a devotional nature gave unprecedented space to Spain and its significance to Australia. *Annals* gave special attention to the Civil War and the threat from communism. More dramatic was the change in the *Crusader* which gave over almost entire issues during the next few years to the problems of Spain, communism and Australia. The *Catholic Fireside* also wrote much on these questions, but maintained its literary emphasis. It was in striking contrast to the Melbourne Catholic *Worker* which was more crusading in style and political in content, but strove to remain more anti-capitalist than anti-communist. The *Worker* had considerable circulation in Sydney through the Catholic Speakers and the Campion Society, and hence comes briefly into this purview.\(^6\)

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\(^3\) ibid., 295-6.
\(^6\) Archbishop Sheehan directed that Dr Rumble or one of the Sacred Heart fathers was to censor each issue; cf. Fr E. O'Donnell to P. Gallagher, 14 February 1936, Campion file SMA.
Cleary's Interpretation

Cleary had followed the conflict in Spain throughout the 1930s, and summarised his views of the War in a 64-page booklet in 1937. Despite his earlier and soon to be repeated calls for Fascism and dictatorship in Australia, Cleary argued that Spanish Catholics were true democrats and not Fascists. He drew on his conspiracy theory of Jews plotting with Freemasons and Protestants to effect a communist revolution, and complained that "not a whisper of protest was heard from Lambeth Place, from noisy Fleet Street, or from English Jews" about the persecution of Catholics in Germany, Mexico or Russia by the Jewish-led Masonic influence.

Cleary challenged the interpretation coming through the cables and the "despicable" British journals, notably the News-Chronicle, that the conflict was between democracy (the Republic) and the forces of reaction (the army, Church and rich). Instead he argued that traditional anti-clerical groups, especially the Freemasons of the Grand Orient, and old-fashioned liberals had become allies with powerful anarchist, syndicalist and socialist groups against Catholic democrats, monarchists, sections of the military, conservatives and Fascists. He argued that many Catholics were democrats devoted to the Republic, but had been forced to join Franco because of the terror and manipulation of the Republicans. The leftist Government had failed to protect its citizens, and instead encouraged outrages upon them by agitators and killers. Such abuse of its power established the moral grounds for revolution. He also argued that a Bolshevik revolution was planned for July 21. "It was the Reds, therefore, who began the Revolution". The war was between those waging Moscow's fierce anti-religious persecution and those

7 cf. Catholic Press, 1 October 1936, 22; 29 October 1936, 22.
8 ibid., 15 October 1936, 23.
9 ibid., 13 August 1936, 22.
10 cf. Cleary's Spain's Civil War, 59; Press, 26 March 1936, 23.
11 Cleary, Spain's Civil War, 57-8.
12 ibid., 64; cf. also Press, 26 March 1936, 16.
allied with Franco, who aimed to “prevent Spain from becoming an appanage [sic] of Moscow”\(^\text{13}\). 

Cleary also denied the charge that the Church in Spain was a big land-owning exploiter of the poor. He argued that under Spain's anti-clerical liberal regimes, the Church had been impoverished; he attributed the propaganda about Church wealth to the influence of the Freemasons. But he did not intend a complete white-wash for the Church. He admitted that there were class divisions among the clergy and that the bishops were appointed by the government, but "Whatever blame may be laid at her for the neglect of education and lack of interest in social justice, has been exaggerated beyond reason"\(^\text{14}\). Such an apology left unexplained the extreme attacks on the Church, and failed to consider adequately the social stance of the Church in Spain. Instead, the anti-Catholic conspiracy theory was brought into full play and seemed dramatically confirmed by events. 

At the same time as he was arguing that Catholics in Spain were democrats and not Fascists, Cleary continued to be attracted to Fascism for Australia. "We wonder how soon the time will be ripe for an Australian Mussolini or Stalin? Parliaments seem utterly futile"\(^\text{15}\). This ran counter to Catholic involvement in the Labor Party, of course. One unidentified public man complained to the \textit{Press} about what he termed constant ridicule of the parliamentary system and democracy; such ridicule tended to sap the confidence of the people in their government which could result in "godless systems" taking power. The \textit{Press} replied that the parliamentary system had become "the plaything of politicians" and was not based on democracy\(^\text{16}\). It supported Catholics being involved with Labor as long as they didn't work out of self-interest, and all parties were kept free of anti-religious influence\(^\text{17}\).

\(^{13}\) \textit{Press}, 8 April 1937, 21. 
\(^{14}\) Cleary, \textit{op. cit.}, 5. 
\(^{15}\) \textit{Press}, 27 August 1937, 23. 
\(^{16}\) cf. \textit{ibid.}, 22 October 1936, 22. 
\(^{17}\) cf. \textit{ibid.}, 15 October 1936, 22.
The Fireside's view

Though the Fireside had not regarded communism as an immediate threat in Australia before the Spanish War, and in fact had taken little interest in Spain, immediately defended the revolt: "It is not wrong to rebel against evil". Its interpretation of events in Spain was influenced by religious persecution in Mexico. Rev J. Phillips SJ wrote a long article in the September, October and November issues arguing that the US government had fomented revolution and Masonic persecution of Catholics in the hope of gaining more territory. Hence he, too, was drawing on the familiar anti-Catholic conspiracy theory, this time involving the Protestant US government with Masons, international capitalism and communists. Many of the same factors seemed to be at work in Spain. The Catholic Worker shared a similar conspiracy theory about the USA and socialists persecuting Catholics in Mexico. Denys Jackson, Kevin Kelly and the Jesuit Messenger had also focussed on Mexico as an example of communism in action.

The issue of Spain had at last forced the Fireside to choose between the communist alliance in Spain or their opponents. It saw the conflict as part of a world-wide struggle between the Church and communism, the "anti-God monster". "Even Fascism (objectionable as it is to the average Australian) is the lesser of the two evils". But why, it asked, did Britain seem to be on the side of the Russians with regard to Italy and Spain? However, it was not uncritical of the Spanish Church. Fr R.J. Murphy SJ, in explaining why some Basques fought with the Republicans, admitted that there were serious social problems in Spain, which "a large part of the ecclesiastical world" failed to see. The Fireside was also alarmed that young Catholics in Australia were drifting to communism because the Church appeared uninterested in reforming capitalism.

18 Fireside, August 1936, 11.
20 Catholic Worker, 13: February 1937, 1.
22 cf. Fireside, November 1936, 1; cf. also p. 26.
23 Ibid., December 1936, 5.
24 Ibid., September 1936, 5.
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There was little dissent among Sydney Catholics from the view that the conflict in Spain was primarily religious, apart from an article in the Crusader by Harold E. Smith (from the US Commonweal), an article in the Catholic Readers' Digest and some articles in the St Vincent de Paul Monthly (see below). Answering the question why the workers had turned from the Church in Spain, Smith said: "In the eyes of many, if not most, intelligent workers, the idea that Catholicism could possibly be mentioned in the same breath as 'working class' interest seems laughable".\(^{25}\) The Church was thought to be allied with the ruling class, and wealthy Spaniards had prepared the way for communism by their blindness; "Our duty is to tell the truth and the whole truth".\(^{26}\) This article was an exception; in the same issue Carl Kaeppel argued that a "Government' victory was a victory for Moscow and Communism".\(^{27}\) The Press claimed that Commonweal was the only Catholic publication not solidly pro-Franco;\(^{28}\) it did not mention that the US Catholic Worker also printed articles opposed to Franco.

There was practically no reporting of difficulties between the Vatican and the nationalists;\(^{29}\) an article in the Melbourne Catholic Readers' Digest, modelled on the US Catholic Readers' Digest and which first appeared in 1937, proved an exception. Nickolas Breakespeare wrote that "the Nationalists are furious with the Vatican for failing to espouse the cause of General Franco".\(^{30}\) But in general in

\(^{26}\) Ibid, 160.
\(^{27}\) Ibid, 128.
\(^{28}\) Press, 8 September 1938, 23.
\(^{29}\) Three times Franco tried to gain Vatican recognition for his regime, but the Vatican maintained tenuous relations with Madrid. Not till August 1937 did it recognise the Burgos Government, and it took another year before a full nuncio was installed (Cf. J. Derek Holmes, The Papacy in the Modern World, 99). Franco refused to let Pius XI's encyclical against the Nazis, Mit brennender Sorge of 1937 be read lest his allies be offended (cf. Edouard de Blaye, Franco and the Politics of Spain, 144); the Vatican feared Nazi and Fascist influence in Spain, but Franco was strongly influenced by his devout wife and came to see his role in religious terms (cf. H. Thomas, op. cit, 274). The Church also took a firm stand against Nazi influence; when Cardinal Segura returned as Archbishop of Seville, he denounced the Falange as irreligious and deplored Nazi influence. (cf. ibid, 602).
\(^{30}\) Nickolas Breakespeare, "The Foreign Policy of the Vatican", Catholic Readers' Digest, February 1937, 21.
Australia, difficulties between Franco and the Vatican were overlooked in the trauma of the fight against communism.

Thus most initial interpretations of Spain were predominantly in terms of the traditional anti-Catholic conspiracy by Freemasons, Jews, capitalists, Protestants, social extremists, and now especially communists. In the words of Fr Leo Dalton MSC, Spain was caught in a "titanic struggle... fought out to the death between the two mightiest powers on earth - communism and Catholicism".31

While Cleary was ready to abandon democracy and call for Fascism, the Fireside continued its defence of democracy.32 Clutha Robertson warned against thinking that the Church's enemies were all on the Left; the Church had Nazi and Fascist enemies, even among the Spanish Nationalists.33 The Catholic social ideal was that everyone should own their own home, have independent means and acquire security for old age.34 She defended socialism as a legitimate option for Catholics as "the substitution of moderate property and State services" for the excessive concentration of wealth under capitalism.35

The Press, however, was drawing other conclusions. Alarmed that democracy might not prevent a communist take-over in Australia, in April 1937 it renewed its call for a dictator: "We do not defend the Fascist form of Government, but we believe it to be, in these days of adult suffrage and time-serving politicians, the only method of combating Communism". The paper argued that to defeat communism, capitalism must be reformed to prevent the proletarianisation of the people. "It is up to the middle class to do it. If it cannot be done by elected persons, euphemistically called legislators, then a dictator is the only solution".36 Discussing reforms suggested by the Pope, the paper returned to some of Cleary's themes of the 1920s: reforms should aim not just at a change of ownership, but of

31 Crusader, December 1936, 779.
32 Fireside, February 1937, 4-5.
33 ibid., March 1937, 5.
34 ibid., May 1937, 13.
35 ibid., June 1937, 19.
36 Press, 15 April 1937, 22.
control; the popes had suggested partnership and profit-sharing, but consumers should not be overlooked. Cleary asked if this ideal could be brought in by a "present so-called democratic regime, or will it be necessary to call dictators to our aid in order to avoid Communism?" 37

In Melbourne, however, other lines of thought were being developed by the Catholic Worker. It was to have a major impact on Catholic Action movements in Australia, and offer more concrete suggestions for social reform.

The Crusading Anti-capitalism of the Catholic Worker

The Catholic Worker was the product of some enthusiastic Melbourne Catholic intellectuals in the Campion Society who were concerned about secularising trends in Australia and who looked to Catholic proposals for social reform with which to criticise social injustice. It is difficult to analyse the paper because it articulated conflicting views among the Campions about whether to attempt to mobilise Catholics in a united political campaign (Santamaria's view) or to allow greater recognition for the diversity of options open to Catholics (the view of other Campions). By mid-1936 the Sydney Campions circulated 5000 copies,38 selling it in the Domain and Wynyard Station, and trying to get it into parishes; by 1937, Sydney sales reached 14,000.39

To situate its position on the Spanish Civil War it is necessary to understand that it had already defined capitalism rather than communism as it primary foe. Its philosophy was strongly influenced by the Distributists in England, and notably by Hilaire Belloc. It called for the reform of capitalism by wider distribution of property, so avoiding collectivism, monopoly capitalism and the "servile State."40 In

37 ibid, 22 April 1937, 22.
38 Jory, The Campion Society, 77.
39 ibid, 99. O'Connor said that he disagreed with the title of the Worker from the beginning, regarding the link with the US Catholic Worker Movement as too romantic and idealistic. Cf Interview 25 May 1986, Tape 1A.
40 The Worker frequently misunderstood Belloc's phrase; he did not mean that workers would be reduced to utter destitution or slavery, but that they would exchange political and economic freedom for "certain necessaries of life and a minimum of well being" (H. Belloc, The Servile State, ix).
contrast with Sydney’s Catholic Fireside, the Worker was geared to the working classes. When Pope Pius XI gave a special blessing to the Worker, it named him “the Pope of the Workers” and said it wanted to help redeem “the working classes from the twin destroyers of personality - Capitalism and Communism.”41 It was a different style of publication to any of the Sydney papers. For a start it was only a monthly four-page broadsheet and sold for a penny. In comparison with the relatively small circulations of the Fireside and the Catholic weeklies, the Worker sold 11,000 of its first issue, 18,000 of its second,42 climbed to 27,000 within six months of its foundation43 and “achieved an average monthly circulation figure of 50,000 between the years 1936 to 1938.”44

The disputes among the early Campions have not been clearly described in the existing literature. Santamaria says that “a somewhat big proportion” of the first 19 issues was his work, but is silent about the role of the large group of Campions involved.45 Difficulties in the editorial committee finally led the Campion Society to abolish the editorship on 22 October 1937 on a motion from Kevin Kelly, and set up an editorial board of Santamaria, Gerard Heffey and Frank Keating. Jory wrote:

Shortly afterwards Santamaria relinquished this position also, and ceased to attend committee meetings. It was held that the welfare of the Secretariat would best be served if its officers avoided commitments which could involve them in political controversy.46

In 1937, there seemed to be a change of style in the Worker: the earlier crusading anti-capitalism was not carried through at the same pitch into a crusading anti-communism; there was generally more restraint.

45 cf. B.A. Santamaria, Against the Tide, 17.
46 Jory, op. cit, 176. Santamaria claims that not till 1941 was his connection with the Worker "terminated", at which time its circulation was 70,000 copies (B.A. Santamaria, Against the Tide, 17).
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Central to its philosophy was the question of private property, which it defended but urged its radical redistribution. To highlight the point, on the masthead of its second and third issues the Worker inscribed the slogan "Property for the People". It insisted that no one had the right to unlimited property and there was no absolute right to property. If the rich refuse to pay just wages or use wealth unjustly, it claimed governments had to enforce "the social obligations attaching to ownership." The duty of distributing surplus goods to the needy imposed an obligation of justice, not of charity. The Worker thus pushed its views far beyond what the official Church teaching held, and beyond what the Sydney Catholic papers argued.

In its early years, the Worker was so anti-capitalist that it was not afraid to quote Peter Maurin of the US Catholic Worker movement claiming the title "Christian Communist" for the Worker people. The second issue proclaimed that communism was not the Worker's main enemy:

The exalted position of Public enemy No 1 is reserved for Capitalism, not because it is a system which is intrinsically more evil that Communism - they are both equally false and equally fatal to human personality - but because today it dominates the world.

It regarded capitalism and communism as "sisters under the skin. Both these systems make soulless slaves of the poor by depriving the worker of direct ownership."

It shared with the Sydney papers the suspicion of conspiratorial collusion between the British capitalists and Russian communists. "It has always been our argument that the so-called struggle between the Capitalist and the Communist is so much eye-wash". Continuing its conspiracy theory, it considered "the slave press is Public Enemy No. 1." "Let us not mince words. The newspaper game is a

47 "Attacked", Catholic Worker 2: 29 February 1936, 1.
48 "Died Worth a Million", ibid, 2.
50 ibid, 1: February 1936, 4.
51 ibid, 2: 29 February 1936, 1.
52 "Property for the Worker", ibid, 5: June 1936, 1.
53 "Hands Across the Class Struggle", Worker 2: 29 February 1936, 4.
racket and the men who run our great dailies are nothing but gangsters.\textsuperscript{54} It regarded the Melbourne "Herald" as "a mouthpiece of the Masonic-Marxist clique\textsuperscript{55} and complained about unfair reporting of the persecution of Jews and Catholics: "When Nazis beat up Jews - screaming headlines across the front page. When Nazis murder Catholics, it isn't news."\textsuperscript{56}

How can we be expected to mince matters when the Church is engaged in a life and death struggle against this conspiracy? Are we to remain silent when we see our workers being ground down from the hopelessness of Capitalism into the despair of Communism, by the denial of a living wage? ...the perpetrators of these crimes are criminals, just as real and far more dangerous that [sic] the common murderer.\textsuperscript{57}

Thus the Worker unashamedly invoked a capitalist conspiracy theory which had much in common with Labor populism. The paper's rhetoric was radical, but also assertively Catholic, and in some ways its view of the conspiracy rivalled that of Labor populism: "the Church is the only organisation which has a revolutionary teaching."\textsuperscript{58} It claimed to recognise the right of others to disagree with its proposals but insisted that "you are not entitled to call yourself a good Catholic and ignore the revolutionary social teaching of the Church."\textsuperscript{59} The Church had called Catholics to "a new Crusade - all must be Crusaders.\textsuperscript{60} In this holy war, Catholics had to be disciplined like soldiers:

Liberalism is dying and with it toleration... To assist the Bishops and Priests in this holy war, the Pope by means of Catholic Action, has called the laity to an official status in the apostolate. Catholic Action means the participation of the laity in the apostolic mission of the hierarchy under the direction of the Bishops. The orders for mobilisation have gone forth.\textsuperscript{61}

"Remember that every Catholic who fails to co-operate with Christ's vicar in his clarion call to Catholic Action... is a traitor to Christ our King", for Catholics

\textsuperscript{54} ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{56} ibid., 3 March 1936, 1.
\textsuperscript{57} ibid.
\textsuperscript{58} ibid., 1: February 1936, 1.
\textsuperscript{59} ibid., 2: 29 February 1936, 3.
\textsuperscript{60} ibid.
\textsuperscript{61} "The Role of Catholic Militants", in \textit{ibid.} 3: April 1936, 4.
were at "war". It insisted on "unity and harmony within our ranks, lest our crusaders fire on one another. Division means death."

Unity is what we need if the Church is to defeat the era of persecution, which has already begun in some countries. In Australia there is only one Catholic to some four or five pagans, and if the Catholic tries to stand alone he is running a great risk of having his faith weakened.

The two most significant intellectual figures to influence the Worker were Christopher Dawson and Hilaire Belloc, Dawson for his philosophy of history and Belloc for his polemical historical writings. Dawson had developed his apocalyptic worldview of a desperate struggle between Catholicism and paganism in Religion and the Modern State (1935); it was recommended as "the best and most authoritative book on modern world movements and their relation to the Church," and was one of the works most quoted by the Worker. Dawson favoured an authoritarian State, and supported the Church’s call for a corporative State which was closer to Fascism than liberalism or socialism: "it is clear that Catholicism is by no means hostile to the authoritarian ideal of the State". Belloc, Dawson and Martindale were mutually reinforcing in their view of apocalyptic world struggle. Dawson and Belloc shared a distaste for party politics and disillusion with democracy, and feared it would turn totalitarian. While both were strongly anti-capitalist, they were also anti-communist, and many elements in their thinking could lend themselves to a crusade against communism such as the Spanish Civil War was to spark. However, the Worker itself crusaded against capitalism, rather

62 ibid. 3: April 1936, 29; also June 1938, 3.
63 ibid. 23: December 1937, 3.
64 ibid. 10: November 1936, 4.
65 ibid. 31: August 1938, 4.
66 ibid., 135.
67 Santamaria in 1981 claimed that he was not directly influenced by the writings of Belloc and Chesterton, any influence being indirect, through the reading of others; but he considered the Servile State "a masterly piece of social analysis of the structures of industrial capitalism and was fifty years before its time" (Santamaria, Against the Tide, 16). If Belloc did not influence Santamaria, whom he quoted so frequently, it is doubtful if he undertook the serious reading of books at all at this time. "Our action thus owed little to book-learning, since it began before the books were written", he wrote (Australia at the Crossroads, 84). Social activists engaged in what they saw as a life-or-death struggle had no time to read books.
than communism, demanding property for workers. Like the Sydney papers, it drew on fears of a conspiracy by British capitalism, Masons, communists and modern paganism, but its rhetoric was at times even more exaggerated and assertive, anticipating a struggle to the death. However, this attitude did not carry through to its view of Spain: largely because of Kevin Kelly, the Campions thought it was up to individuals to interpret events, not the Society. Jory says that senior Campion men were worried about an excessive preoccupation with communism.68

The Worker said it "wishes to make clear that there is no such thing as a Catholic 'line' on Spain".69 But why did the Worker not honestly admit the weaknesses of the Spanish Church or adopt a more critical view of the struggle there? Its reporting on Spain was in contrast with the neutrality of the US Catholic Worker which published articles by Jacques Maritain who argued against seeing the War as a religious crusade.70 In the USA, only Commonweal and the Catholic Worker maintained neutrality on the Civil War, all other Catholic publications supporting the Nationalists.71

Response of the Australian Catholic press and bishops to Spain

There was no quick or united response from the Australian bishops to the Spanish Civil War. Archbishop Sheehan in August 1936 warned that an adequate response to attacks on the Church could only come through working-class organisation:

The influences which are moulding civilisation to-day are not coming from above; they are rising from below, from the masses. The only influence we will have in the future is an indirect one. We must get down to the workers and train the masses, get down to the proletariat, and build up a strong active Christian body.72

69 Worker, 8 September 1936, 1.
70 cf. P. Kneipp, Comparative Studies of American and Australian Reactions to European Diplomatic Crises: 1933-1939, 250. The Worker noted the neutrality on Spain of the US Catholic Worker and Commonweal (CW 36: January 1939, 2), but there was practically no mention of Maritain at all during the 1930s (except for CW 41: June 1939, 3).
71 cf. Kneipp, op. cit., 239.
72 Press, 6 August 1936, 22.
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This signalled a major shift in the pastoral thinking of Sydney. Previously Catholics had been generally left to their own devices while the Church legitimated and supported their involvement in social reform movements. Now Sheehan saw a bigger role for training workers to take a more active role in society and the unions. This would mean a shift of Catholic energies from traditional cultural and welfare activities within the Catholic sub-culture to a wider social and political involvement.

Archbishop Kelly, however, remained in his traditional categories, and linked persecution in Spain with that of the Irish and their descendants in Australia who had "kept the faith". He said the drama in Spain "presages the destruction of civilisation", and called for special prayers. Archbishop Mannix took a more definite stand and opposed a call from a unionist to support the Republicans. He attacked the British press agencies "which have always been consistently against the Catholic Church", and regretted that Trades Hall should support such terror in Spain.

By November 1936, individual bishops were warning that Australia could expect a repetition of events in Spain. Bishop Norton of Bathurst said that there was now no doubt that the fight was between Christianity and anti-God communism. Spain was a warning to Australians; Catholics must remain in their unions to beat communists here. Mannix too warned Australians that events in Spain could be repeated here. "We are living in a time in which there is a stand-up fight between God and the devil - between Communism and Christianity". The Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Panico, said that communists intended to repeat the events in Spain everywhere; the Church was "the one great obstacle to the accomplishment of their diabolical designs".

73 Ibid, 10 September 1936, 21.
74 Ibid, 24 September 1936, 27.
75 Ibid, 5 November 1936, 11.
76 Ibid, 12 November 1936, 18.
77 Ibid, 20.
against nuns, priests and lay people reinforced this view of the conflict in Spain. Reports of the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern confirmed that Stalin had subordinated the International to his own control and was set on a policy of "armed insurrection" and world revolution. Bishop Norton said that communists were trying to win control here, and were using the movement for Spanish relief as propaganda. The Press cited figures for Soviet persecution in 1935 to show the degree to which communism was militantly anti-religious; in that year, 14,000 churches, chapels and synagogues were closed; 3678 clergymen were tried by the secret police, with 29 sentenced to death. 42,800 had already died in concentration camps, leaving only 1200 in the Soviet Union. "Of the 896 Catholic priests who were in Russia in 1917, only 30 were left in 1936." This was what the Press feared for Australia. Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane warned of reports that communists were trying to establish "Sovietism" in Australia. The alarm about communism was further increased with Pope Pius XI's encyclical, Divini Redemptoris, in March 1937, which was followed by statements from the bishops in Spain and Australia.

The papal encyclical, Divini Redemptoris

Vatican policy towards the Spanish Republic had been conciliatory from 1931, even removing the provocative Cardinal Segura. In the Spanish Church, too, opposition to the Republic was not universal. Some of the bishops had tried to work with the Republic; and the Christian Democrat party (the CEDA) worked within the political system. "Thus no clear statement could be made of the political attitude of the Church as such". Even after the revolt, Vatican policy was cautious and suspicious of Franco's Fascist connections. Franco complained

78 cf. ibid., 14 January 1937, 39.
79 ibid., 12.
80 ibid., 11 March 1937, 18.
81 ibid., 23.
82 Crusader, March 1937, 199.
84 H. Thomas, The Spanish Civil War, 34.
repeatedly that the Pope refused to condemn the Basques; the Pope condemned co-operation with communists, but objected to Franco executing Basque priests.\footnote{cf. ibid., 358.}

Nevertheless, Pius XI feared a communist victory.\footnote{Fireside, March 1937, 26.}

The Pope developed his views in his encyclical on Atheistic Communism,\footnote{cf. Colin Jory, The Campions. 186. The London Catholic Truth Society titled its second edition Communism, Capitalism & Christianity to bring out the intent to be a critique of capitalism as well as communism. The Australian Catholic Truth Society version sold 87,000 copies.} Divini Redemptoris, showing why the Church rejected communism.\footnote{Pope Pius XI, On communism, Capitalism and Christianity, (Divini Redemptoris), CTS, 1943, par. 20.} He warned that "what is happening to-day in Spain may perhaps be repeated tomorrow in other civilized countries."\footnote{ibid., par. 18.} Like Australian Catholic commentators, the Pope noted the "conspiracy of silence" by much of the world press.\footnote{ibid., par. 58.} Pius' famous passage against co-operation with communism occurs in this letter:

Communism is intrinsically wrong, and no one who would save Christian civilisation may give it assistance in any undertaking whatsoever. Those who permit themselves to be deceived into lending their aid towards the triumph of communism in their own country will be the first to fall victims of their error.\footnote{ibid., par. 39.}

The Pope called for reforms of the capitalist system and "remedies which will effectively ward off the catastrophe which daily grows more threatening."\footnote{ibid., par. 62.}

Divini Redemptoris concluded on a note of urgency: "When our country is in danger, everything not strictly necessary, everything not bearing directly on the urgent matter of unified defence, takes second place. So we must act in to-day's crisis."\footnote{ibid., par. 64.} He gave pride of place to Catholic Action, which must "make known the Christian solution of social problems."\footnote{ibid., par. 65.} Catholic Actionists were to be apostles for the workers, and "collaborate, under the direction of especially qualified priests, in that work of spiritual aid to the working class."\footnote{ibid., par. 65.} But the Pope did not see
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Catholic Action taking over the whole field of social reform; special groups and organisations must take up questions of social justice, and he urged Catholic Action to participate with them and the State in promoting change, "supposing always the necessary respect for liberty and private initiative".95 Thus the encyclical combined an attack on capitalism with a call to organise against communism, especially, but not exclusively, under the banner of Catholic Action, which was to be under clerical direction and co-operate with other organisations without prejudice to the freedom of Catholics.

**Australian responses to the encyclical**

Some of the initial Australian responses to the encyclical were cautious and urged readers not to view the conflict in Spain too simplistically. Fr H.A. Johnston SJ, the Irish Rector of Werribee Seminary in Victoria from 1930 to 1947, wrote restrainedly in a May 1937 ACTS pamphlet, Propaganda:

> I do not pretend that all who are on one side in Spain are saints, and all on the other side demons. I do not pretend that all on one side are inspired by the highest motives, and all on the other side by the worst motives. But by word and deed those who are directing the policy of one side have made perfectly clear that their object is, and has been, to establish a Communist State on the model of Russia.96

In Sydney, Fr W. Keane SJ warned that it was "not enough to condemn

Communism". The principles and programme of the Pope were "the only means to

save society from the ruin with which it is threatened by Capitalism and

Communism alike".97 In this climate of high anxiety about communism it was unexpectedly announced that Archbishop Sheehan had retired and would be replaced by an Australian, Norman T. Gilroy.

**Archbishop Gilroy appointed to Sydney**

Many in Sydney were surprised to hear in June 1937 that Sheehan had resigned. Writing to him after hearing of his "spontaneous resignation", Archbishop

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95 ibid., par. 69.
96 Fr H.A. Johnston SJ, Propaganda, ACTS (30 May 1937), 15.
97 Press, 3 June 1937, 13.
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Kelly wished him well and offered him a generous pension of 750 pounds a year. According to Fr Des O'Connor, "who knew him reasonably well", Sheehan had submitted his resignation soon after arriving in Sydney during a bout of illness and depression; but just as he was about to take over from Archbishop Kelly, Sheehan was "shattered" to hear that his resignation had been resurrected by the Apostolic Delegate. He left for Rome "an embittered, broken and despondent man". The common explanation advanced for his resignation was that he was poorly treated by Kelly and resigned from frustration. However the archival record throws a different light on relationships between the two archbishops, though the full story will not be known till the Vatican releases its files. What remains of their correspondence is courteous but strained. Sheehan asked that all his correspondence from the archives be sent to Archbishop Panico to destroy "any letter objectionable in terms". Kelly agreed to do so, but kept his own, which "are not to be discredited at all, but left to Divine Providence". Sheehan's side of the case is not extant in the archives.

Sheehan undoubtedly had qualities which made him unsuitable as Archbishop of Sydney: he was a shy, nervy and retiring man; he would not say Mass under the cupola of the Manly seminary chapel for fear it would fall. He also lacked judgement: one priest said that he intended, if he were in charge of the diocese, to insist that all priests be in their presbyteries by 9pm. Moreover, he was Irish at a time when the Australian clergy were demanding more Australian bishops.

Michael Gilchrist and Santamaria think that the Apostolic Delegate prevailed upon Sheehan to resign to make way for an Australian. Gilchrist says that Mannix was shocked at Sheehan's resignation; some of the bishops wrote to him saying

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98 Kelly to Sheehan, 2 June 1937, Archbishop Kelly and Sheehan file, SMA.
99 Des O'Connor, Interview 25 April 1986, Tape 2B.
100 Brian Doyle, Interview 22 January 1985, Tape 2B; cf. also Fr H.W. Slattery, Interview 29 April 1986, Tape 1B. Tom Boland wrote that Sheehan was tired of waiting to replace Kelly, and that he also wanted to avoid the Irish-Australian conflict (cf. James Duhig, 268).
101 Kelly to Sheehan, 22 June 1937, Archbishop Kelly and Archbishop Sheehan file, SMA.
they were filled with "sorrow and consternation" at the news - a "real tragedy", and regretted that they had no chance to dissuade him. Sheehan had been Mannix's choice for Sydney, and Santamaria put his resignation down to the anti-Mannix politics of Archbishop Panico. But it could only have been a contributing factor to his removal, the primary one being his obvious unsuitability. However, the affair embittered relations between Panico and Mannix who never forgave the Apostolic Delegate.

To the further surprise of Sydney Catholics, the relatively unknown Norman Gilroy was appointed to replace Sheehan in July. Norman Thomas Gilroy (1896-1971) was thoroughly Australian. He had worked as a telegraph messenger boy in 1909 and joined the Naval Wireless Transport Service during the First World War, which saw him on a ship at Gallipoli. In 1917 he went to Springwood, and two years later to Propaganda College in Rome. Ordained in 1923, he took a doctorate in divinity summa cum laude, and from 1924 to 1930 worked as secretary to the Apostolic Delegate in Sydney. He then became secretary to Bishop Carroll of Lismore, the "Kingmaker", till his appointment at the age of 38 as Bishop of Port Augusta, South Australia, in December 1934. Gilroy asked Archbishop Kelly if he could be consecrated in St Mary's Cathedral, but Kelly refused, quoting Jesus' saying, "He who loves father or mother more than me..." Under pressure, Kelly allowed the consecration but did not attend it. When a few years later Gilroy was appointed his Coadjutor Archbishop, Kelly was shocked, as were the predominantly Irish parish priests. Slattery said that the clergy "gasped at the wording of the Bull" formalising Gilroy's appointment to Sydney; it made clear that he had all the authority of the Archbishop. This may have been partly aimed at Kelly to make

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103 ibid., 160-1.
104 cf. B.A. Santamaria, Daniel Mannix, The Quality of Leadership, 185.
105 cf. Fr Des O'Connor, Interview 25 April 1986, Tape 2B.
106 Bishop Carroll had married Gilroy's parents and was keen to promote the young Australian; cf. Fr. H.W. Slattery, Interview 25 May 1986, Tape 2A.
sure that Gilroy was treated properly; but it also seemed directed to the Irish clergy, who were far from happy with a young Australian Archbishop.108

Some had been expecting Justin Simonds, "the lion of the Australian clergy" and "an authentic scholar", to be appointed to Sydney.109 He was the first Australian made an archbishop but had just been appointed to Hobart.110 Gilroy, by contrast, was not at all academic; he feared "Modernism" in the Church and this fear helped perpetuate anti-intellectualism among the clergy. He was favoured in Rome because of his piety, virtue and fervent loyalty,111 and he also had powerful patrons. Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, which had jurisdiction over Australia at the time, had taken a special liking to both Gilroy and Simonds in Rome.112 And the Apostolic Delegate in Sydney from 1917, Archbishop Cattaneo, never forgot how Gilroy shielded him at the Delegation; Cattaneo had some physical handicaps which made him the object of jibes.113

Gilroy's appointment was well received by many lay people, for it symbolised an end to the Irish allegiance with all its potential for political and social isolation of Catholics in Australia. Catholics wanted an Australian, and Gilroy became an "ambassador" for Catholics, showing a friendly face to governments and the general public. His presence at the landing at Gallipoli was particularly symbolic since it demonstrated that Catholics were not disloyal; in time he helped win social acceptance for Catholicism.114 The Irish dominance in Sydney was at an end.

Gilroy became archbishop at a time of perceived crisis for Catholics. He suddenly found himself having to understand, guide and lead a Catholic response to communism. Yet the Archdiocese must have been run down, with very slight intellectual resources and with no clergy trained for work in the socio-economic

109 Brian Doyle, Interview 22 January 1985, Tape 2B.
113 Fr H.W. Slattery, Interview 29 May 1986, Tape 2A.
114 Daniel Gold, Interview 2 July 1986, Tape 2A.
areas. How was he to rally Catholics to resist communism? Would Gilroy emerge as a national Catholic leader, riding on a wave of social agitation as Mannix had done two decades earlier? Would he be able to continue Sheehan's important guiding role?

Continuing reaction to *Divini Redemptoris*

Meanwhile Sydney Catholic commentators were responding to *Divini Redemptoris*. The Sydney Catholic Evidence Guild organised a series of lectures, in which Frs Eris O'Brien and Leo Dalton MSC gave special attention to communism. O'Brien foresaw a "great campaign of anti-Communist education of the workers, in accordance with the holy Father's command". He did not suggest any detailed industrial strategy, but seemed to leave it to the laity to decide.\(^{115}\) Leo Dalton argued that communism was "an actual menace in Australia, and urged Catholics and all believers to throw off their apathy in order to avert the menace". He quoted Lang that communists wanted to exploit the Labor Party for their own ends.\(^{116}\) Communism was growing because of the slowness in remedying the abuses of capitalism, "especially private monopolies in credit". In Australia, he said, the Communist Party was relatively stronger than in England. By the end of 1937 the Party was expected to have 10,000 members; the revolution in Russia needed only 25,000 members.\(^ {117}\)

Dalton developed his thought in *Red Menace in Australia, A Companion to the Encyclical "Atheistic Communism"* (ACTS, 10 July 1937), which sold 43,000 copies.\(^ {118}\) He outlined the weaknesses of communism, its abuse of human rights and its enmity to religion. He said communism was growing quickly in Australia and particularly since Dimitrov laid down the tactics of the United Front. Communists had been white-anting the unions as their way to political power for years, but added strength came from their sympathisers, particularly academics and

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\(^{115}\) *Press*, 1 July 1937, 10.

\(^{116}\) ibid., 29 July 1937, 28.

\(^{117}\) ibid.

churchmen. Followers of the Third International were "working in our midst, with a fanatical energy, to set up their Communist Dictatorship, no matter what the cost in the blood and freedom of the people."\textsuperscript{119} But he did not regard Fascism as an alternative; the Pope had condemned it as "Statolatory" [worship of the State] "it would need to undergo a very considerable transformation before it can profess to be in harmony with Catholic Social ideals."\textsuperscript{120} Referring to Nell-Breuning's \textit{Reorganisation of Social Economy} and John A. Ryan's \textit{A Better Economic Order}, he called for a just wage, "a wider distribution of wealth" and a vocational system able to fix hours and conditions of labour, settle industrial disputes and undertake economic planning.\textsuperscript{121} As a practical step, Dalton recommended organisation within unions, not "to capture the executive positions on Trade Unions for Catholics alone," but to elect sound men, "be those men non-Catholic or Catholic."\textsuperscript{122}

Gilroy listened well to Dalton, Paddy Ryan and Eris O'Brien, and accepted their views about the communist threat in Sydney. With his backing, they were to lead the official Catholic response against communism in the next few years.

The Catholic papers joined in this chorus of alarmed voices. The \textit{Crusader} gave details of communist strength and methods in Australia.\textsuperscript{123} It hoped to rouse Catholics from their "apathetic" attitude towards the Sovietisation of Australia; Australians must "hearken to the call of Catholic Action".\textsuperscript{124} The \textit{Press} remained preoccupied with the state of NSW politics and continued to criticise State Labor.\textsuperscript{125} The \textit{Press}' disillusion with democracy and its toying with the idea of dictatorship or Fascism was in harmony with some overseas writers and magazines, particularly G.K.'s \textit{Weekly},\textsuperscript{126} which took a pronounced pro-Fascist swing after the

\textsuperscript{119} Rev Leo Dalton MSC, \textit{Red Menace in Australian}, p.23.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{ibid}, 24.
\textsuperscript{121} \textit{ibid}, 30.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{ibid}, 32.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Crusader}, May 1937, 318-9.
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{ibid}, August 1937, 497-98.
\textsuperscript{126} G.K.'s \textit{Weekly} had been among British magazines one of the most consistent defenders of Fascist Italy and moved further to the Right in 1936 when G.K. Chesterton's second cousin, A.K. Chesterton, became editor of the \textit{Weekly Review} (which replaced G.K.'s \textit{Weekly}). A.K. Chesterton was a leading member of

The Catholic Worker, too, at times reflected great alarm about communism:

These next three years may be the last which are left to Catholic actionists in which to organise. Organisation alone will save us. Every Catholic unionist must immediately embark upon his task. AND THIS MEANS YOU.\textsuperscript{127}

The Worker insisted that the encyclical was not just against communism; more than two-thirds was about Catholic principles of social reform and against existing capitalism: "This simple fact, Catholics seem almost universally to have overlooked". It warned readers against those "who have distorted Divini Dedomptoris [sic] into an anti-communist heresy hunt and forgetting the positive demands for reform."\textsuperscript{128}

To attack Communism without exposing the iniquities of Capitalism is to brand oneself a hypocrite in one's attitude towards the social doctrines of the Church, an ally of reaction, and an enemy of the teachings of the great leader, Pius XI.\textsuperscript{129}

Fr W. Keane SJ also indicated at the annual Campion meeting in Melbourne that capitalism rather than communism was still the prime enemy:

Bob Santamaria pointed out that no tears should be shed for capitalism which, undisturbed by moral elements, must end logically in Communism. If Communism is atheist, Capitalism was secularist. If Communism massacred its political opponents, Capitalism "eliminated" uncongenial elements by starvation. If Communism was the rule of one boss over millions of slaves, Capitalism was the rule of a few financial magnates over millions of serfs. Catholicism was the mortal enemy of both, and the Catholic who attacked Communism and left Capitalism untouched, was a traitor to his Faith.\textsuperscript{130}

The Worker did not want anti-communism to eclipse its anti-capitalism, but the imminent threat from communism was taken very seriously.\textsuperscript{131} Like Dalton, the Worker supported Catholics working in the unions but warned that there "must be

\textsuperscript{127} "A.C.T.U. Commits Catholic Unionists to Support of Spanish Reds", in Worker, 19: August 1937, 2.
\textsuperscript{128} "Pope's Reforms are Positive", in ibid, 19: August 1937, 1.
\textsuperscript{129} ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} "Campions Vigorously Debate Social Justice", ibid, 20: September 1937, 2.
\textsuperscript{131} cf "Trades Hall Vote Shows Strength of Communism in Australia", Worker 22: Nov. 1937, 4; also "Red Violence Begins in Australia", ibid 27: April 1938, 2.
no Catholic 'racket' in the unions." Catholics had a right to fair representation, but not to adopt the tactics of Tammany Hall.132

Thus Catholic views covered a range of opinions: there was broad agreement that the conflict in Spain was basically religious, and that the communists were part of this conspiratorial attack on the Church; there was no dissent from the view that communism was already a major threat in Australia; and Catholic leaders strove in alarmist tones to rouse Catholics to fight communism in their unions. Despite this call to mobilise, no Catholic organisations offered ready vehicles for an anti-communist campaign. Or would traditional Catholic involvement in Labor check communist power?

Statement of the Spanish Bishops

Partly responding to pressure from Franco and partly to a critique from Catholic writers in Europe, in July 1937 the Spanish bishops, except the Archbishop of Taragona and the exiled Basque Bishop of Vitoria,133 issued a statement on the War, defending the legitimacy of the revolt and claiming that it had prevented a communist take-over.134 They said that 20,000 churches and chapels had been destroyed or plundered, that ten bishops and 6000 diocesan priests had been murdered, and more than 300,000 lay people killed, chiefly for their religious belief.135 However, the letter did not echo the clerical rhetoric in Spain itself which saw the War in terms of a "holy war" or "crusade" against the conspiracy by

132 ibid, 21: October 1937, 3.
133 The Bishop of Vitoria denied that there was religious freedom in Nationalist Spain and that prisoners were executed only after trial (cf. H. Thomas, op. cit., 450-1).
134 cf. Guenter Lewy, op. cit., 425. Though at times some 2000 Soviet advisers were in Spain, a communist victory there was against Stalin's policy. Hugh Thomas considered that the communist plans for a rebellion which were discovered by the Nationalists were genuine (cf. ibid, 108), and were the product of local communist initiative. Carr, however, dismissed the argument that the generals were thwarting 'a highly organised communist plot to create a 'red Spain' as propaganda, while admitting that the fear and possibilities of Bolshevism were real (R. Carr, The Spanish Tragedy, 52).
135 Guenter Lewy's final figures of religious personnel killed in the War were: 13 bishops, c.4000 diocesan priests, 2360 monks and 280 nuns (cf. Lewy, op. cit., 429).
Masons, communists and Jews. After the relief of the Alcazar, Cardinal Goma blamed the "Semitic International" of Jews and Masons for the turmoil. In September 1936 he had supported the revolt in terms of a holy war and a crusade for Christian civilisation,\(^{136}\) while many of the clergy encouraged a war of extermination against the Republicans.\(^ {137}\) The bishops' letter did not support these extreme positions; it even warned against dictatorial tendencies among the Nationalists.\(^ {138}\)

The bishops were also replying to criticism from the Catholic Left, particularly from Jacques Maritain, Luigi Sturzo, Edouard Mounier and Georges Bernanos who strongly contested the apocalyptic worldview and the concepts of holy war or crusade. While Goma and most of the Spanish clergy were caught up in the rhetoric of crusade, Maritain worked as chairman of the French Peace Committee to try to negotiate a settlement in Spain. In Professor Mendizabal's *The Martyrdom of Spain*, he accused the Spanish Church of neglecting social justice and alienating the working class.\(^ {139}\) He condemned the revolt as unjustified, but at the same time accused the Republican Government of complicity and cowardice for allowing the anti-clerical outbursts.\(^ {140}\) He totally rejected the concept of the 'holy war', saying it risked "causing blasphemy of what is holy";\(^ {141}\) and he refused to endorse the Spanish bishops in supporting the Nationalists.\(^ {142}\) In his philosophy of history, Maritain contested the apocalyptic worldview which lay behind the concept of the holy war. In 1931, he had denied that there was a "permanent world-wide conspiracy of the wicked against the good".\(^ {143}\) The conspiracy theory was an evasion of Church responsibility for its own failures, he argued. By blaming wicked men, Catholic apologists avoided facing the collective failure of the Church in

\(^ {136}\) cf. *ibid.*, 421.
\(^ {137}\) cf. *ibid.*, 422.
\(^ {138}\) cf. *ibid.*, 426.
\(^ {140}\) cf. *ibid.*, 13.
\(^ {141}\) *ibid.*, 31.
\(^ {142}\) cf. *ibid.*, 47.
recent centuries to effect its mission to the working classes of Europe. The
defence of the poor "was undertaken by the adversaries of the Christian name."\footnote{144}

Sturzo's views were similar. He wrote that it was absurd "to call the war of
the Spanish generals a war of ideals, a crusade, a holy war."\footnote{145} In his \textit{Church and
State}, he interpreted papal policy as not supporting the notion of a holy war,\footnote{146} and denied that a "holy war" could be Christian at all.\footnote{147} Like Maritain he argued
that the religious motif should be eliminated from the conflict.\footnote{148} Again the
dualist and apocalyptic worldview had to be challenged:

Now the thesis that on the one side there is nothing but evil ("Communism")
and on the other nothing but good (Catholicism and patriotism) and that "the
war in Spain is the result of the struggle between two irreconcilable
ideologies" is, to our mind, an oratorical and not an historical thesis.\footnote{149}

Bernanos was appalled by clerical complicity in the Nationalist terror on Majorca,
and wrote his denunciatory \textit{A Diary of My Time} to expose this; it was reportedly
read by Pius XI.\footnote{150} Bernanos, too, rejected the crusade thinking and said that the
War would have ended earlier but for the religious factor.\footnote{151} "The Crusade-Ideal is
abroad - the Crusade of the Forces of the Lord against the Forces of Evil." He
asked the Spanish bishops if it had occurred to them that they were being made
fools of.\footnote{152}

Catholic fears of a communist revolution in Spain were not unreasonable, but
it was the further step some Catholics took which was at issue, a step which
invested the communist threat with a symbolic significance:

As so often in its history, the Spanish right had entered an era of paranoid
politics, embracing a Manichaean vision of absolute evil and absolute good.
Some vast international conspiracy was threatening the essential values of
sociality. Spain was threatened by Marxists and Masons - the old bogey of
the right - supported by international communism.\footnote{153}

\footnote{144} ibid., 60.
\footnote{145} quoted in Lewy, \textit{op. cit.}, 424.
\footnote{146} cf. L. Sturzo, \textit{Church and State}, 509.
\footnote{147} ibid., 511.
\footnote{148} ibid., 512.
\footnote{149} ibid., 514.
\footnote{150} cf T. Molnar, \textit{Bernanos}, 107.
\footnote{151} cf. G. Bernanos, \textit{A Diary of My Times}, 94.
\footnote{152} ibid., 140.
\footnote{153} Raymond Carr, \textit{The Spanish Tragedy}, 59.
It is this conspiratorial worldview prevalent in so much of the Catholic world which Maritain, Sturzo and others challenged; but they also questioned the apologetics which romanticised Church involvement in the social question and failed to criticise past Catholic practice or policy. This apologetics was fundamental to the attitudes of almost all Australian Catholic activists at this time, except for Frank Sheed.

Maritain went further than simply challenging the dualist philosophy of history with its Manichaean struggle between the forces of good and evil.\(^{154}\) In his True Humanism he advanced his ideas about a restored social order which was not the restoration of a Christendom based on a medieval institutions,\(^{155}\) but was properly "secular in its forms",\(^{156}\) while being inspired by people of Christian inspiration; in this sense it was a "New Christendom".\(^{157}\)

Many Australian Catholic activists also rejected a dualism which isolated the Church from the concerns of the world and reform of society. But it was Maritain's demolition of the apocalyptic worldview which was harder to grasp and which was not absorbed by all the Campions; nor did all understand his insistence that action in the temporal sphere be the prime responsibility of individuals, not the Church.\(^{158}\)

Pastoral of the Australian bishops

The Australian bishops issued their Joint Pastoral Letter on Spain at the Fourth Plenary Council in September 1937, the first such council for 32 years. It was a major statement of social concern, highlighting the threat from communism, but also outlining Church proposals for social and moral reform. Communism was here treated as more urgent a problem than even education, and was called the

\(^{154}\) Maritain did not see Marx in demonic terms either but attributed to him much truth, insisting on a "just critique of Marxism". (J. Maritain, True Humanism, 75; cf. also 38).

\(^{155}\) cf. ibid., 133.

\(^{156}\) ibid., xvi.

\(^{157}\) ibid., 126.

\(^{158}\) ibid., 96.
most deadly evil of the time. The aim is the overthrow of religion and it refuses to human life any sacred or spiritual character, robbing human personality of all its dignity and making man a mere cog-wheel in its system. There is no guarantee that if it prevailed here it would be any different from what it is in Russia, Mexico or Spain. It cautioned the young and workers to beware communist methods, and chastised the government for not warning against communism. "The Catholic Church is left to face practically single-handed this menace to Christian civilisation as she was left alone to combat the twin evils of divorce and race suicide." The Pastoral then called for educational justice, regretting the "deep prejudice that perpetuates injustice to our people" by denying them access to their taxes.

Remedies for unemployment were needed to prevent people being impoverished and radicalised, notably through an adequate family wage. The statement called for a comprehensive scheme of child endowment to help restore equity between families of different size; it also commended Catholic efforts through the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic benefit societies, supported the Catholic library movement, opposed contraception and the falling birth rate, upheld the abstinence pledge, and deplored people leaving the land. Thus it listed the current Catholic social concerns, but placed the threat from communism well ahead of them all. The Australian Pastoral was the most significant follow-up to the letter of the Spanish bishops, and reinforced the view that communism was an immediate threat in Australia.

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159 cf. "Joint Pastoral Letter", in *Concilium Plenarium IV Australiae et Novae Zelandiae*, 181. 2. W. Ebsworth said that Santamaria largely drafted it (Archbishop Mannix, 339), while Tom Boland wrote that "Duhig was the principal drafter" (op. cit., 262).
160 ibid., 182.
161 ibid.
162 ibid., 183.
163 ibid., 184.
164 ibid., 185.
165 cf. ibid., 186.
166 cf. ibid., 187-8.
The feeling of anti-Catholic animus in the media and Protestant establishment was strengthened by the reporting over the Spanish Civil War. A *Fireside* editorial said that the worst aspect of the persecution of the Church in Spain was the support for "the Reds by the sedate Parliament and Press of England", which apparently believe that there is at least one occasion when Communism is right and that is when it is attempting to crush the Catholic Church. It is difficult to suggest when this anti-religious, anti-Catholic campaign will end.\(^\text{167}\)

The debates over Spain were leading to an increased sense of alienation and anxiety among these Catholic opinion-leaders only now communism assumed the position of chief foe.

**In Defence of Democracy**

In the midst of this wave of anti-communist fervour, Catholic opposition to Cleary's invective against Labor and democracy found a voice in Brian Doyle through the *Fireside*. Brian Doyle (born 1915) had been dux at the Marist Brothers, Kogarah, and won the highest pass for a boy from a Catholic school in New South Wales that year. He won the Freehill Scholarship to St John's College at Sydney University, which he was unable to take up.\(^\text{168}\) He found a position at the State Library where he worked in accessions reading reviews of overseas literature; he became aware of the range of Catholic thought on society and politics. Doyle bought key Catholic works for the library, and began to build up his own extensive library. At nights he studied at the University of Sydney and took out an arts degree and a Diploma in Public Administration; later he lectured at a technical college.

Wanting to learn the skills of public speaking, Doyle joined the debating team at the Catholic Club, and was a member of the winning team in the Debating Union in 1936.\(^\text{169}\) He began writing for the *Fireside* in May 1937. In June he argued strongly against Fascism, communism and Nazism in support of democracy.

\(^\text{167}\) *Fireside*, September 1937, 3.
\(^\text{168}\) Brian Doyle, interviewed 22 January 1985, Tape 2A.
He preferred a Christian State, established along the lines suggested by Father Cahill in *The Framework of a Christian State*. He realised that it would be folly to expect such a thing in the short term; at least Christian leaders could look to the encyclicals for light.170 Doyle took over the unpaid editing of the *Fireside* from November 1937 and aimed to turn it into "something like the London *Tablet*". He strove to build up the local writers and strengthen the Catholic Action section.171 He maintained his strong stand against Fascism;172 both Fascism and Bolshevism violate the dignity of the person: "Fascism and Catholicism are diametrically opposed systems" and conflict is "really inevitable".173

The *Crusader* printed a major and very explicit defence of Christian Democracy within the Labor movement in January 1938; it ran for an unprecedented 11 pages. "Christian Democrat" attributed the parlous position of NSW Labor not to any fault with Christian Democracy but to politicians not acting on Christian principles. He denied that the ALP was socialist, but acknowledged there were socialist elements hostile to Christianity,174 and a new communist threat especially in the unions; he advocated the abolition of direct representation of trade unions in the Party,175 and reform of the Labour Leagues.

If Mr. Lang will not declare open war on left elements, the only hope for the ALP, is the entry into the leagues of tens of thousands of Christian democrats, who will force forward the purging of the party. The present situation is intolerable.176

The answer was to make the issue clear-cut so the Reds could be routed. He urged Christian Democrats also to preserve real democracy against Fascism, "this major political heresy".177

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170 ibid., June 1937, 27.
171 Doyle, Tape 7a.
175 ibid., 17.
176 ibid., 22.
177 ibid., 16.
These articles in Crusader and Doyle's writing in the Fireside were closer to the real interests and beliefs of Sydney's traditional Laborite Catholics than the heart-burn in the Press. Cleary appeared to speak for no clearly recognisable group of Catholics.

A Crusade?

So urgent was the sense of alarm and the appeal from the Church that a definite crusading mentality was developing. Frank Sheed questioned this crusading style, and called for fairness and moderation in the case against communism. He said that if one wanted to give a lecture about communism, one should do so "that if Karl Marx were present he would rise up, bow, and say, 'Yes, that's it.'" He warned against making anti-communism a crusade: "We must realise that the Church has no infallible revealed social system to offer... It is our business to try and build up a social system that conforms with the principles taught by the Church." He feared that zealous but ill-informed Catholics would overlook the role of the social sciences as the mediating disciplines between social action and moral principles, and claim that the Church had the economic and social answers when it only claimed moral principles.

Communism interested Sheed because his father had been a Marxist. He thought people turned to it because of its attack on capitalism, though most communists "hardly knew Marxism at all." He wrote of Spain:

Like the majority of Catholics of the English tongue I wanted Franco to win. We did not know much about conditions in Spain, but as between people who murdered priests and nuns and people who didn't, we preferred those who didn't. It was practically a reflex action.

Yet Sheed refused to let the Evidence speakers in England campaign for Franco:

I am not saying, or even suggesting, that in the balance Franco was worse than the other side, as I fancy Jacques and Raissa Maritain thought, and the French Dominican weekly Sept and perhaps England's Catholic Herald. I am saying that we had no evidence to enable us to judge.

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178 Press, 28 October 1937, 12.
179 Frank Sheed, The Church and I, 197.
180 ibid., 199.
181 ibid., 200.
He said it was not the Speakers' work to campaign against communism.

Despite this great alarm about Spain, only one Australian volunteered to fight for the Nationalists, compared with about 60 who joined the Republican forces; 29 years old Nugent Bull joined the Spanish Foreign Legion on 16 October 1937. He belonged to the family of undertakers, W.N. Bull, and had attended Marist Brothers’ Darlinghurst before completing his last two years school at St Joseph’s College, Hunters Hill, where he was particularly influenced by Brother Gerard. He was active in the St Joseph’s old boys’ association, and also attended Campion Society meetings in later years.182 Few Sydney Catholics seemed to know of his going, though he did write to the Campions.183 He remained in Spain till the end of the war, became a gunner in the RAF during the Second World War and was killed in 1940.184 The puzzle is not so much why Bull volunteered for the Nationalists, but why he was the only one, given Catholic fears in Australia about communism. Jim Lang, who knew of Bull, said that the conflict in Spain was seen in very black and white terms, despite the fact that the Campions were reading the journals putting contrary viewpoints; he said they were romanticists in those days and saw the struggle in terms of another Lepanto halting the assault on Christian civilisation.185 Mgr McCosker, who also remembered Bull’s going, said that most Catholics thought of Spain as a long way off with little to do with Australia. He said that while some of the clergy were very concerned with communism at this time, most of the laity were not.186 Carl Smith also indicated a gap between clerical rhetoric and the response of lay people; lay Catholics did not really become concerned about communism till it started to win ground in the unions and ALP.187 It would seem that the alarm of Catholic opinion-makers about

183 cf. Harry Sivertsen, interviewed 2 July 1986, Tape 2A.
184 cf. Keene, op. cit., 264.
185 Jim Lang, interviewed 2 July 1986, Tape 2A.
186 cf. Mgr James McCosker, interviewed 4 July 1986, Tape 1B.
187 Carl Smith, interviewed 28 May 1986, Tape 2A.
communism had not yet convinced the general laity of an immediate danger from communism in Australia, and hence there was little mass response.

The Overseas Connections: A Question of Interpretation

A comparison of the Australian Catholic interpretations of events in Spain with European interpretations available in Australia at the time reveals a surprising lacuna: opinions which dissented from seeing the war as primarily one between Catholicism and communism were ignored. The views of writers such as Maritain, whose articles were appearing in the US Catholic Worker, were rarely reported by the Sydney Catholic papers or the Australian Catholic Worker. Nor was the apocalyptic worldview which Sturzo, Maritain and others challenged ever clearly questioned.

Comparing five leading overseas journals available to Catholic readers in Australia shows major differences of perspective and interpretation. The journals considered are the Dublin Review, Irish Studies, the Irish Ecclesiastical Record, the American Ecclesiastical Review and the English Clergy Review. A range of views was competently argued in these periodicals, from the Catholic Left and liberal views of Maritain, Sturzo and others, to the crusaders of the Right. In the middle ground were authors such as the Anglican E. Allison Peers, who argued that Catholics were properly fighting a war of defence, but who rejected the crusade thinking. Most articles were carefully and empirically argued, and did not accept the worldview of apocalyptic struggle between good and evil. Nor did Belloc's ideas count for much in these scholarly reviews. The point of contrast with Australia was that this debate and range of views in Europe was not reported in the Catholic press here. The Left-liberal views were basically ignored, and the questions they raised often not addressed. This unavoidably skewed the Australian interpretation to the Right.

It is true Australian Catholic interpretations of the war suffered major handicaps from limited, unreliable and confusing sources of information. But it was not just a question of distance and poor communications with Spain; a major
distortion arose from the ingrained and inherited distrust of the cable services, and a tendency to discount reports unfavourable to the Church or the Nationalists as anti-Catholic prejudice or Republican propaganda.

The propaganda war in the papers was real enough. Among western newspapers, the practice of "sending a reporter to the side [they] supported became customary". Distrust of the cables was then well founded. So much so that the Catholic Press and the Bulletin set up their own information services and often contested the cable news. The Bulletin and the Catholic papers sometimes took too favourable a view of the Nationalist cause, as over the bombing of Guernica, but the Bulletin did not accept the Catholic view of the conflict as basically religious, and had no sympathy for Franco or the Church.

Australian Catholic attitudes were partly explained by personal connections with the victims of the Spanish Republicans. Dr Paddy Ryan said that "every priest in the class he had studied with in Spain had been murdered by Communists in the Civil War". Many of the religious orders in Australia also had colleagues who suffered at the hands of the communists.

It is true, too, that the Australian Catholic press followed the weight of Catholic opinion overseas, particularly in the popular press. Even such an authority as Fr Joseph Husslein SJ wrote:

[The Pope] once for all proclaimed that for Catholics no question could arise as to a free choice between Franco and his adversaries in the field - no more than between good and evil. The question was not so much political, as it was moral and religious.

But Australian Catholic interpretations cannot simply be explained by claiming they adopted the dominant Catholic view overseas; rather, they seem to have deliberately excluded any discussion of the liberal wing. They seem to have accepted only those views of Spain which fitted into their previous alienated

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188 Anthony Beevor, The Spanish Civil War, 175.
190 cf. Kevin Treston, Australian Reaction to the Spanish Civil War, 54.
191 ibid., 69-71.
193 Joseph Husslein, "Introduction", in Joaquin Arraras, Francisco Franco, viii.
worldview of the ghetto culture. Roused to militancy, it embraced the apocalyptic view of a holy war in Spain. Events in Spain in turn dramatised and confirmed Australian fears of persecution.

Conclusion

The Spanish Civil War demonstrated the inadequacy of non-intellectual ghetto-style Catholicism. The pastoral strategy favoured by Archbishop Kelly in Sydney had been to strengthen Catholic cohesion with devotional and social organisations. It had proved successful in dampening and extricating Catholics from sectarian conflict by avoiding political controversy as far as possible. It had closed ranks among some Catholics enabling them to defend themselves against the Freemasons, secularists, the Protestant social ascendency and British imperialism. With its clear social boundaries, supported especially by the Catholic education system and discouragement of "mixed marriages", a strong Catholic sub-culture could be sustained. Essential to this bonding was the sense of threat Catholics felt coming from outside the sub-culture. This was no artificial creation, but had deep roots in Irish-Australian experience. In Frank Sheed's borrowed words, it was indeed a church "under siege". The mentality was clearly paranoid, but it was not without historical reasons or internal rationality. The strong hold of this worldview on Catholic opinion leaders helps explain why they ignored liberal interpretations which rejected the concepts of "holy war" or crusade against communism in Spain. There was no discussion of the European debate among Catholics in the Australian media considered here.

The Spanish Civil War challenged the credibility of the pastoral strategy of the Catholic sub-culture. First, the threat was an international one from communism. Catholics could no longer simply withdraw in isolation from concern about international affairs; if they were to protect their own interests, they had to take part in foreign policy debates. Was the Protestant Ascendancy to decide what role Australia should play in the global conflict between Catholicism and modern paganism/ capitalism/ communism? Catholic commentators in Australia and overseas
were already alarmed about conspiratorial collusion between capitalists, Protestants, Freemasons and communists in Mexico; Spain confirmed these fears and demonstrated that the anti-Catholic forces would stop at nothing to eliminate the Church. Thus the world-wide conflict between the Church and modern paganism had entered a new, more militant and dangerous phase.

Secondly, the threat from communism was local as well as international. Because of communist penetration in the unions, Australia, too, could fall to "Sovietism"; the traditional Catholic defence organisations had no developed socio-political activity which could counter communism in the unions. Catholics had to be mobilised to fight communism, but how? Some urged Catholics as individuals to play an active part in their unions and ensure that their activities remained legitimate. Others foresaw a more organised Catholic role in the unions; despite moving into territory hitherto forbidden as political, they saw this as necessary to defend the Church.

Thirdly, the conviction was growing that Catholics had to establish working class organisations to effectively combat communism. It was no longer enough that Catholics remained in small sub-cultural groups; the culture of the working class had to be changed. How was this to be done? The Belgian YCW offered a model for investigation. Or could the existing organisations be broadened to take on a new role?

Fourthly, the threat to Catholics was seen as so pressing and immediate that unity of command and co-ordination was increasingly seen as important. The Pope had developed Catholic Action in Italy to do precisely this. How could it be implemented in Australia?

Fifthly, the Spanish Civil War exposed the paucity of Catholic intellectual resources. Catholics needed not just to refute the errors of communism, but to establish their own programmes of social reform. The Melbourne Campions had begun to develop an anti-capitalist ideology through the Catholic Worker, but Sydney efforts were varied and sometimes confused. P.S. Cleary remained
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preoccupied with the failure of the Labor Party in New South Wales, and many others shared his disillusion with parliamentary democracy. Cleary chose Fascism and dictatorship as a bulwark against communism. Doyle and others argued against Fascism for a new corporate organisation of society which would include features of industrial democracy. It was rare to find an explicit defence of Christian Democracy among the Catholic opinion leaders, although this was the stream of thought which best supported the pragmatic activity of Catholics in the Labor movement. Events overseas had demonstrated that Christian Democracy was failing; the Church in Italy and elsewhere had turned to Catholic Action as an alternative. This also attracted the Sydney hierarchy; it was Roman and it retained control in the hands of the clergy.

Thus the perception of the enemies of Catholicism was both confirmed and partly transformed: the Freemasons, Jews, secularists and capitalists, through their reputed activity in Spain and their propaganda war against Catholics in the media and cable services, were now allied with anti-clerical socialists, communists, Nazis and at times Fascists. If Catholics were to meet the new threat, especially from communism, they would have to move out from the siege-works of their defence organisations and fight the new enemies on their own ground, in the unions, the media and the workplace. Such was the almost unanimous and growing conviction among Catholic opinion-makers. But how was this to be done? And to what extent would Catholic leaders be able to rally the Catholic laity en masse into such an anti-communist campaign? Was Catholic Action the answer?
CHAPTER NINE

INCREASING PRESSURE FOR A NATIONAL ORGANISATION

Awareness was growing that new weapons were needed to stave off the threatened persecution from communism: intellectual, possibly political and certainly organisational, but opinions differed about the type of strategy to adopt: some still favoured a cohesion model of defence, others a more socially activist and propagandist one. First, then, the scope of Catholic Action had to be re-evaluated to see if it should be broadened to meet the communist threat and educate Catholics. Secondly, Catholic organisations had to work out how the new problems affected them, and how they could co-ordinate their efforts.

Sydney-Melbourne rivalry

A national organisation of Catholic Action could offer some real advantages to the Church, giving the hierarchy a more effective voice in national affairs. The Civil War in Spain demonstrated that Catholics could not be isolationist and had to take part in foreign policy debate to protect their interests. But given the past tension between the Sydney and Melbourne hierarchies, how were they to work together? Mannix's radical populism had complicated Church politics in Sydney, exacerbating sectarianism. If Melbourne gained control of the new organisation, it could follow Mannix's assertive style, with perplexing results for the policies pursued in Sydney. Its siting, then, was of the utmost importance. The intellectual resources of the Campion Society made Melbourne the logical choice, but Archbishop Panico, who had replaced Archbishop Bernadini as Apostolic Delegate in
1935, seemed to wish to curtail Mannix's growing influence; establishing a national organisation away from Melbourne could reduce his national prominence.

Mannix's attempt to set up a national body for Catholic Action in 1935-36 had to overcome earlier tension between Sydney and Melbourne. Mannix presented to the May 8, 1935 meeting of bishops at St Patrick's, Melbourne, a proposal of the bishops' Committee on Catholic Action to set up a Bishops' Catholic Welfare Conference to nationally co-ordinate Catholic Action.\(^1\) He envisaged five sub-committees: for Catholic Education; Mission; Public Morals; Literature and Broadcasting; and Social Science. Mannix was to head the Mission Committee and wanted it to distribute the funds in Australia. "Permission of the Holy See to be sought for this change".\(^2\) This was an extraordinary move, for the Propagation of the Faith jealously guarded its financial independence. Mannix had in 1934 obstructed a proposal of Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, the head of the Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith in Rome, that the Melbourne committee of priests under Mannix be replaced by a more representative group of priests and bishops. Mannix now wanted to formalise his control, against the practice of the Propagation of the Faith. It is unlikely that Panico was concerned that Mannix would follow Archbishop Kelly's example and take for his own Archdiocese the one-third of funds collected for the home missions, a practice which Panico regarded as "a great injustice".

The diocese of Sydney is the richest in Australia; in it there is not one Aborigine [sic]. Some of the bishops, knowing what the archbishop is doing, are disgusted, and have asked me to intervene.

Kelly simply said that he had always done this and that Rome approved.\(^3\) But Panico may have been worried that Mannix's changes could give him considerable financial patronage through the Propagation funds. The issue was certainly

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\(^1\) Panico warned the bishops that according to Canon 292, a forthcoming conference of bishops could only be for consultation, and not for legislation; its scope was limited. Cf. Minutes of Bishops at St Patrick's, Melbourne, 8 May 1935, p. 4, in CA file, SMA.

\(^2\) ibid.

\(^3\) J. Waldersee, A Grain of Mustard Seed, 374.
sensitive and the politics behind it unclear; but Panico reorganised the Propagation by moving control from Melbourne to Sydney and placing it under a committee of himself, Archbishop Duhig of Brisbane, Bishops Gilroy of Port Augusta, Barry of Goulburn and Gleeson of Maitland. The original plan was that Mannix was also to be on the controlling committee, but in the event he was omitted. Panico regarded the change as "necessary in order to free the Work from the Melbourne monopoly without offending the archbishop of that city. He hoped that the change in control would encourage more dioceses to collect for the Propagation; and he took care to keep it out of the hands of both Kelly and Mannix. Thus he had outmanoeuvred Mannix and broken what had seemed to many to be a Melbourne stranglehold.

A further point of conflict concerned the distribution of funds from the Catholic Church Property Insurance Company. The bishops in May voted to use some of the surplus funds for religion by correspondence courses. Sheehan had said in November 1935 that he did not approve of the use of funds solely for the Melbourne scheme, because existing course such as Sydney's would be displaced. The bishops requested the insurance company to make an annual grant to each diocese on the basis of the number of children using such courses. However, its directors refused to send the money to Sydney; the NSW bishops on 24 September 1936 responded: "To avoid the humiliation of seeing a unanimous resolution of the Hierarchy set aside by a Board, the Chairman of which is a layman," they resolved that each Diocese be allotted its share of profits in proportion to business. This reinforced an element of provincialism just as the bishops were trying to decide on the national organisation of Catholic Action.

4 ibid, 370.
5 ibid, 373.
6 ibid, 375.
7 cf. Minutes, op. cit., p.2.
8 Minutes Special Meeting of Bishops' Catholic Welfare Committee held at St. Mary's Presbytery, Sydney, Monday 18 Nov. 1935, p. 1, CA file, SMA.
9 ibid, 2.
10 Minutes of meeting of the bishops of N.S.W., at Manly, 14 September 1936, CA file, SMA.
The NSW bishops thus refused to endorse Mannix's reorganisation of the hierarchy, and declined to regard the next bishops' meeting in Adelaide as a meeting of the Catholic Welfare Conference; they would consider it a General Meeting of the Hierarchy, "on the assumption that its chief purpose will be: (A) to offer a hearty welcome to his Excellency, the Apostolic Delegate..."\(^{11}\) It was a clear rebuff to Mannix's plans for a national organisation. The disagreement revealed a serious cleavage in the hierarchy. Bishop Gleeson wrote to Archbishop Kelly: "The want of unanimity is a tragedy. And, strangely enough, the desire of some seems to be unanimity with the Bishops outside the Province rather than with those within it". Bishop Farrelly's (Lismore) withdrawal from the NSW correspondence scheme upset some bishops who saw the issue in terms of a power conflict between Sydney and Melbourne. Gleeson was irked that Dr Barry (who had been Mannix's administrator in Melbourne) "seems to be more sensitive about differing with Dr. Mannix than with his fellow Bishops of the Province".\(^{12}\) It seems the bishops were divided over the degree of control Mannix would have over a national organisation. Both Panico and Kelly must have been concerned about the political significance of Catholic Action and what use Mannix might make of it.

Despite this initial failure of the bishops to agree to set up a national organisation, pressure was growing from other Catholic groups to do so. A Catholic Action retreat near Albury early in 1936 brought together key people interested in the concept. There seem to have been three competing lines of thought: firstly, the Melbourne Campions hoped to set up a national organisation as an outgrowth from their own organisation; secondly, some were pressing for an organisation such as the Holy Name Society to form the basis for the national body; and thirdly, Sydney wanted its own form of Catholic Action under its close control. All were concerned about the threat from communism, but the Melbourne group was more concerned to

\(^{11}\) ibid.
\(^{12}\) Bishop Gleeson to Archbishop Kelly, 28 September 1936, CA file SMA.
develop a national organisation than the others, and wanted to move quickly to more assertive Catholic activity.

A Melbourne View

Following the 1934 Catholic Action convention, a group of Melbourne Campions had developed their views in Campion Pamphlet Number 1, *Prelude to Catholic Action* (September 10, 1936), which was widely circulated. The answer to persecution in Spain, Germany and Mexico was to form Catholic Action, "undoubtedly precisely the thing that will save this generation". The author estimated that there were already 250 people throughout Australia in study groups. "This is not the time for Catholics to stand half-fearful upon the defensive. They must attack. Paganism and materialism are our foes".

We are like foreigners in a strange land - our ideals are at variance with those of our fellow-Australians. This spiritual isolation of Catholics in Australia, together with other influences, leads naturally to an inferiority complex.

Even those who started the Campions felt this. The cure for their ignorance was to be found in study groups and in reading the new histories coming from Dawson, Belloc, Hollis, Morton and others. Papal social teaching was seen as the only guarantee of "social justice and industrial stability", especially against the tyrannical State. Catholic Action was to penetrate the cultural "milieu" and "change it from a pagan to a Catholic one". The crucial next step, said the pamphlet, was for the hierarchy to form national Catholic Action. It wanted to move decisively beyond the older models of ghetto defence.

13 *Press*, 13 February 1936, 10.
14 *Prelude to Catholic Action*, ACTS, 10 September 1936, 6.
15 *ibid.*, 7.
16 *ibid.*, 8.
17 *ibid.*, 9.
18 *ibid.*, 10.
19 *ibid.*, 11.
20 *ibid.*, 22.
The Holy Name Alternative

Others saw the Holy Name Society as a basis on which to build national Catholic Action. It had proved effective in uniting Catholic men in displays of religious affiliation, and in encouraging religious practice; it fostered religious cohesion without any wider scope. Could it be adapted for a broader role in Catholic Action? The Holy Name Society had been introduced to Australia in 1921 by Bishop Barry of Goulburn, and had spread to Victoria. He wanted to introduce it to Sydney, too. The Press supported it as "the very essence of Catholic Action", combatting religious indifference, the "inferiority complex" of young Catholics who lack the courage to assert their faith among semi-pagans, and the invidious effects of anti-God communism. Barry had called for the national organisation of the Holy Name Society at the 1934 Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne, seeing Catholic Action promoting "the interest of souls", under the "command of Catholic Authority". Fr Goodman tried to expand the scope of the Society to undertake a social mission, introducing them to study circles, and recommending Cahill's Framework of the Christian State and Husslein's Christian Manifesto. But the Society had little of the intellectual expertise such as the Campions in Melbourne had built up, and met with little success as an organisational base for Catholic Action.

Sydney and the Italian model

Some of the Sydney clergy, as noted earlier, wanted a more militant organisation than the Association of Catholic Action and turned to the Italian model. A reviewer found Civardi's A Manual of Catholic Action "a complete and authoritative text-book of Catholic Action". Catholics were to "enlist as a kind

21 Press, 8 October 1936, 22.
22 The Annals of the Holy Name Society. A Record of the Goulburn Holy Name Union, p. 4, in Holy Name file, SMA.
23 Press, 9 April 1936, 18.
24 Ibid, 16 April 1936, 11.
25 ACR, XII, 2 (April 1936), 275.
of militia, under ecclesiastical authority, for the service of Christ the King."26 The Crusader too welcomed Civardi's book as "the official text-book" which "should dissipate the wide-spread vagueness" about Catholic Action.27

Mgr Pizzardo, the Vatican official responsible for Catholic Action, stressed the non-political role of Catholic Action and relegated "auxiliary" organisations to a secondary status; those having economic goals and employing secular means "should not be considered Catholic Action as such".28 Lay leaders of Catholic Action should "refrain from all participation in 'militant politics', that is, from contests, rivalries or strife of men or parties, in short from all that is known as politics generally speaking."29 Catholic Action could not take part in any party activity:

The circle of Catholic Action cannot be the circle of political action, or become the agent or the instrument of political parties, however excellent these parties may be... it is not fitting that they [the heads of Catholic Action] should be at the head of political groups.30

Such a definition of politics would seem to exclude Catholic Action organisation in the unions.

Some considered other models. Rev J. D. Simonds wrote in April 1936 of the Jocist movement, the Jeunesse Ouvriere Chretienne, known in Australia as the Young Christian Workers (YCW), as a "model form of Catholic Action."31 But it was not seriously considered in Sydney at this time. Simonds' view was limited: he made no mention of the YCW's distinctive spirituality of the world and work, nor did he mention its insistence on the workers' autonomy. He saw it as being remarkably successful in bringing workers back to the Sacraments, and similar in its social works to other Catholic organisations. The Press also focussed on the YCW, noting its "cell" structure, the apostolate of workers to workers, with priests helping to train militants. "Thus the J.O.C. is not a negative thing to 'stem

26 ibid, 276.
27 Crusader, May 26 1936, 327.
28 ibid, June 1936, 384.
29 ibid, September 1936, 547.
30 ibid, November 1936, 689.
leakage' or attack Communism. It is a positive, dynamic Christian revolution.\textsuperscript{32} It did not advert to the question of worker autonomy or consider its relation to Catholic Action. These ideas about the YCW were, then, very vague, and nothing came of them.

There was little success in expanding the scope of the Association of Catholic Action to take on a more militant and social aspect. A course of Apologetics, was set up for the years 1936 and 1937, with one lecture a week. The Sacred Heart Fathers provided many of the lecturers: Dr Paddy Ryan MSC, Fr F. Brady MSC, Dr Morris, MSC and Dr McGuane MSC; Fr Richard Murphy SJ and Fr N. Hehir SJ also spoke, as did Dr J. Carroll and Fr J. Bowers. It was hoped in the future to include Ethics and Social Science.\textsuperscript{33} Thus the Association of Catholic Action continued to focus on religious cohesion and practice, and the Italian model was favoured as an alternative.

The bishops gather in Adelaide

The Adelaide gathering of bishops in November 1936 for the Catholic Congress on Education took up the question of communism from their September Joint Pastoral. At the official opening, the Apostolic Delegate said "it is the aim of communism that the tragedy of Spain will be repeated in every Christian country"; the Church was the "one great obstacle" to this happening.\textsuperscript{34} The bishops sent a telegram of support to the Cardinal Primate of Spain and opened a Catholic Spanish Relief Fund.\textsuperscript{35} The Congress received a letter from the Pope through Cardinal Pacelli linking the struggle for Catholic education in Australia with resistance to communism.\textsuperscript{36} Hence the highest organs in the Church reinforced this concern with communism, though the conference was formally on education.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{Press}, 7 October 1937, 13.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{ibid}.
\textsuperscript{34} cf. "The Opening Ceremony", in \textit{Australian Catholic Education Congress}, 29.
\textsuperscript{35} cf. Minutes of Bishops' Meeting, Adelaide 13-16 November 1936, CA file, SMA.
\textsuperscript{36} "The Holy Father's Message", \textit{Australian Catholic Education Congress}, 30.
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Press}, 19 November 1936, 22.
The most visible outcome of the Adelaide Congress was the establishment of the Catholic Taxpayers' Association at a meeting attended by 15,000 people.\textsuperscript{38} The Association did "not expect any Government to commit political suicide" and aimed to win over public opinion to the justice of the Catholic case.\textsuperscript{39} This seems a victory for the thinking of Archbishop Kelly who regarded it as "united Catholic Action".\textsuperscript{40} It identified the problem as State aid and avoided a confrontationist style. Kelly, though, was also concerned about communism and sent his priests a copy of \textit{Divini Redemptoris} to explain to their people.\textsuperscript{41} In Brisbane efforts by the Catholic Taxpayers' Association to campaign for educational justice generated a fierce sectarian reaction.\textsuperscript{42} Fear of just such an outcome would help explain why the Sydney Church kept its campaign low-key. The Taxpayers' Association faded from the scene, and in June 1938, Archbishop Gilroy advised the Knights not to revive discussions about it.\textsuperscript{43} The major problems had changed and required a new response.

But if Sydney was concerned about how to manage the laity, the Melbourne address of Countess de Hemptinne would have raised further anxiety. Instead of seeing lay people sharing in the clerical apostolate and acting under hierarchical control and mandate, de Hemptinne, the President of the International Junior Catholic Women's League which had been influenced by Jocism, called for greater lay independence. She argued that civil and professional organisations did not come within the exact compass of Catholic Action, but it had to help form their leaders and officers. She was firm that "Catholic Action admits of no connection with party politics or with political parties", and recommended "one national centre of

\textsuperscript{38} "The Catholic Taxpayers' Association", in \textit{Education Congress}, 64. The NSW officers were Mr T.J. Purcell, president; Mr E.J. Doran, vice-president; Mr M.J. O'Neill, treasurer; and Mr R.J. Vaughan, secretary.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{cf. ibid.}, 67.
\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Press}, 20 May 1937, 21.
\textsuperscript{41} Catholic Taxpayers' Association, an official report with letter from Mr R.J. Vaughan, of 17 March 1937, in CA file, SMA.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{cf State Council Minutes KSC}, 27/6/38, p. 110.
direction and co-ordination". Her contribution opposed a separate Catholic Action organisation in Sydney as well as using an organisation such as the Holy Name Society. She supported the idea of a national organisation, thus inclining to the Melbourne view, but favoured Jocist autonomy rather than centralised control.

Exploring Catholic Action in Sydney

The Sydney hierarchy was coming under increasing pressure to set up a form of Catholic Action which could maintain Catholic cohesiveness while generating the intellectual endeavour, lay leadership and resources to counter communism. But the hierarchy was very sensitive to problems likely to arise if Catholic Action entered into a political arena and aroused sectarian opposition. Eris O'Brien warned Archbishop Kelly the very title Catholic Action was being given "certain sectarian and political aims." He recommended the title "Catholic Lay Apostolate". It identifies it as a purely spiritual work, and clearly obviates any political significance.45

Now the work of reorganisation was to begin, and O'Brien had to see if and how the existing Catholic organisations could be adapted to the new tasks. The main organisations concerned were the Campion Society, the benefit societies, the St Vincent de Paul Society, the Catholic Women's Association and the Grail, the Knights of the Southern Cross and the Holy Name Society. What had they to offer the emerging tasks of Catholic Action?

The Sydney Campion Society

Little initiative was coming from the Sydney Newman Society by 1937, when there were only about 20 active members out of a nominal membership of 100.46 Much more significant was the development of the Sydney Campion Society founded by Des O'Connor in 1934. By the time O'Connor left Sydney in 1938, there were 11

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44 Press, 10 December 1936, 16.
45 O'Brien to Kelly, 22 January 1937, CA file, SMA.
46 cf. Secretary's Report, 8th. Annual General Meeting, 27/4/37, SU Newman Society, SJCA.
groups running. He had intended the Campions to form study groups to prepare young Catholics for their careers. It was also to be a genuinely lay society.

O'Connor had avoided getting approval for the Society because, as he wrote in June 1934, Archbishop Kelly "regards Catholic Action as a 20th century heresy". By May 1937 O'Connor felt uneasy that the Campions had not been approved and wrote to Kelly, explaining the Society as being for "Lay Action particularly in the intellectual sphere and more particularly in the fight against Communism and Militant Atheism", and enclosing a copy of Prelude to Catholic Action. He adverted to their literary and speaking activity, how members had distributed a thousand pamphlets and papers at a Communist youth camp at Katoomba, and how their three-year training course, which O'Connor had set up with undergraduates at Sydney University, was producing advocates for public forums. O'Connor claimed that 100 Campions were already waiting for approval of their Society, and suggested Father Joseph Bowers for spiritual director. Fr Richard Murphy had asked not to be chaplain, since he knew that Kelly would appoint only a diocesan priest. O'Connor went to see Kelly and was greeted well by the old man, a fact which O'Connor put down to family links in Ireland. Kelly wanted to appoint as chaplain Mgr McCauliffe, the financial man for the diocese; but O'Connor was able to secure the appointment of Fr Bowers, a popular, intelligent priest who lectured in philosophy at Springwood.

Much of the driving force behind the Campions came from Fr Richard Murphy SJ. They were also helped by Fr Noel Hehir SJ, "an authentic Catholic intellectual scholar" and John Doyle SJ. Writing in the Fireside in November 1937, Fr Murphy explained the Campions as an effort to overcome the inarticulateness, ignorance and an inferiority complex among Catholics so they could combat communism

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47 Jory, The Campion Society, 57.
48 Des O'Connor, Ted Burke and Damien Parer; cf Jory op. cit., 98.
49 Des O'Connor to Archbishop Kelly, 1 May 1937, Campion Society file, SMA.
50 Des O'Connor, Interviewed 25 April 1986, Tape 1A. O'Connor's great grand uncle had been Lord Chief Justice of Ireland, which seemed to help relations between Kelly and O'Connor.
51 Brian Doyle, interviewed 22 January 1985, Tape 2A.
effectively; he saw the "Campion Idea" as derived from the discussion methods of the communists. The elected president of the Sydney Campions in 1936 was Mr Cyril Walsh, a brilliant law graduate who later became a Supreme Court Judge in Equity before being appointed to the High Court.

O'Connor wanted to organise the Society soundly, and selected R. H. (Harry) Sivertsen, to manage it from 1937. Then a 22 years old clerk with the Commissioner of Taxation, Sivertsen had not been to university but was introduced to the Catholic intellectual world by his teachers in the Christian Brothers, Michael E. Breen and Bro Campbell of Lewisham. He joined the Campions in 1937 and got on well with O'Connor. Sivertsen thought that the essence of the Campion Society was not social action; "that was a by-product"; it met a need when there was "considerable intellectual upheaval about the faith" and an atmosphere which made Catholics feel intellectually inferior. The name "Campion" appealed because the English (pointedly not Irish) martyr, Edmund Campion, "knew the doubts we were going through, which most perceptive Catholic minds go through, and could give an account of his faith. That is what we were after". The Campions also formed an enduring social group with members of the Grail and the Theresians.

The Sydney Archdiocese was looking to staff its own Catholic Action organisation, and O'Connor wrote to Gilroy suggesting Sivertsen, though lacking experience, to head it, with Fr Noel Hehir as chaplain, or preferably Fr R.J. Murphy who "understands the Campion Movement better than any other priest in Sydney, and was responsible for its foundation in N.S.W.". The Sydney hierarchy did not act on O'Connor's advice.

The note of rivalry with Melbourne appears to be quite strong even in the Campions, but the Sydney Campions did not enjoy the confidence of the hierarchy.

53 cf. ibid., July 1936, 30.
54 Harry Sivertsen, interviewed 4 July, 1986, Tape 1A.
Sivertsen said that whereas Mannix treated the laity as adults, the Sydney
hierarchy seemed afraid of the laity forgetting their place; the Campions were not
anti-clerical, but the clericalism of Sydney was so deep that it was "like an anti-
lacism". The Campions wanted to be used by the Church, but were treated as if
they were simply to "pray and pay". The Melbourne people were ten years older
and had already made their mark professionally, while most of the Sydney
Campions were still finding their feet.57

The Benefit Societies

The benefit societies provided "a force for spiritual safety" for members as
well as financial security.58 Mgr King in September 1936 also alerted members to
the threat from communism: "In our own fair Australia, this Anti-Christ is daring
to rear its head".59 The work of the Guild provided social security so that people
did not despair and turn to communism.

The Guild was alarmed about the drift of many Catholics "into benefit
societies beyond the confines of the Church". The Catholic societies had
approached Archbishop Kelly about the problem60 and, in response, he issued a
pastoral letter setting aside the last Sunday each October as a recruiting day for
the "Catholic Associations, and particularly for our three benefit societies", to
"counteract propaganda of anti-religious organisations similar to those at work in
Spain".61 The Guild refused to be drawn into political activity, however. It was
worried that even being involved in the Catholic Taxpayers' Association might
contravene "the rules which forbid any participation in political matters".62 Though

56 Harry Sivertsen, interviewed 4 July 1986, Tape 2A.
57 ibid.
58 Bro J.C. Hurstwaite, in Report and Balance Sheet for Year ending 30 June
1936 and Minutes and Proceedings of Grand Annual Council 25-27 September
1936, p. 28, AHCG archives.
59 Mgr T.J. King to Grand Annual Council AHCG, 25-27 September 1936, in
AHCG Minutes, p.27.
60 Report and Balance Sheet for Year Ended 30th June 1937, p.19, in AHCG
archives.
62 Minutes of AHCG, 4 February 1937, p.735.
approved by Archbishop Kelly, another appeal at the Town Hall to support the co-operative movement on June 7 1937 was also considered to be outside the sphere of activity of the Society.63 However, it endorsed the formation of a Catholic Friendly Societies Council in September 1937.64

The societies were concerned about the impact on them of the proposed government National Insurance scheme.65 A Pastoral letter on July 27 1938 urged Catholics to join the Catholic National Insurance Approved Society, "a society organised and controlled by Catholics." The hierarchy asked the clergy for a house-to-house canvass of Catholics to "ensure that every Catholic, practising and non-practising, is induced to apply for membership."66 Apart from their religious and welfare aims, however, the societies refused to be drawn into any wider political or social activity. The main reason for the Church's support of the Society at this time was to help maintain Catholic cohesion and mutual solidarity.

St Vincent de Paul Society

The St Vincent de Paul Society also had to work out its relationship with Catholic Action, a task which was reflected in the pages of the St Vincent de Paul Monthly first published in September 1935.67 The question of communism was brought before the Society in the very first issue by Fr Leo Dalton: "Many do not realise that Communism is a powerful and insidious force here in our own Australia".

You must have Christ's love of the poor; you must have His sympathy for the afflicted and downtrodden. You must hate the selfish accumulation of wealth as Christ hated it; you must denounce the rich man's oppression of the poor, all social injustice, all of "man's inhumanity to man" as Christ would denounce it.68

63 ibid, 10 June, 1937, 758.
64 ibid, 16 September 1937, p.777.
65 ibid, 4 August 1938, p.833.
66 Pastoral Letter to the Clergy of New South Wales, 27 July 1938, AHCG file, SMA.
67 5000 copies were distributed late in 1936 (cf. St Vincent de Paul Monthly December 1936, 362). Monthly was strictly an internal Australia-wide publication of the Society.
68 ibid, September 1935, 17.
The problem was that this would move the Society into controversial political issues.

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War did not attract in the Monthly the attention it did in Annals or Crusader; there was little on Spain till mid-1937. However, an address by Dr Paddy Ryan, "Catholic Inaction", appeared in November 1936 urging Catholic laity not just to "pray and pay"; they had to take a more vigorous part in the social reform of the papal encyclicals: "Few Catholics have even so much as read them... Yet they contain a magnificent programme of social reconstruction." 69

The struggle between the Catholic Church and atheism, capitalistic and Communistic is not coming. It has already arrived. The battle is now being waged. Neutrality is not desirable and not possible. If you will not stand definitively for Christ and the Church, you must be classed with the enemies of God. 70

In contrast with most of the other Sydney Catholic press the Monthly was critical of the Church in Spain. In February 1937, it reprinted from Catholic Citizen (New Zealand) an article which said "there was much wrong with many Catholics in Spain" because of their neglect of the Church's social teaching. 71

However, Monthly also saw the conflict in religious terms: "The Government stands for a Godless State - another Russia. The Insurgents stand for Christianity." 72

Whilst the work of our Society is in itself Catholic Action, it is not enough if we are to successfully combat the evil forces that are waging war on Christendom today. Each brother should be actively behind every movement in his parish. They should be the right hand men of their parish priests... We should always remember the power of EXAMPLE. 73

Members were expected to support other Catholic organisations, but as individuals and not so as to rival or change the nature of the Society itself.

69 Ibid., November 1936, 344.
70 Ibid., 345.
71 Ibid., February 1937, 47.
72 Ibid., July 1937, 155.
73 Ibid., June 1937, 123.
Though Monthly printed little on Spain or communism, it was not unconcerned; it reported the greatly exaggerated figures that between 40% and 50% of the priests in Spain had been killed. But capitalism was still a major enemy.

"Capitalism", Dr. Gilroy continued, "teaches a man to build up wealth at the expense of his fellow-man. Communism would sweep aside everything. Capitalism is false because it ignores the existence of Almighty God. Both bring misery and wretchedness in their train". The Society was not willing to become involved in anything political, however, and was uncertain how it could support the Church against communism. The Spiritual Director, Fr A. Thomas, lamented that the Church's social teaching had little effect against "oppressive capitalism and the destructive Communist". Fr Meagher SJ, Rector of Riverview College, saw the work of the Society as helping remove the conditions which support communism. The Church was on the side of the worker; the Society could spread knowledge of the Church's social teaching and so lead the poor back to God.

Thus though concerned about communism, the Society did not embark on anti-communist activity; its paper reported that Catholic failure to promote social reform was partly to blame for the appeal of communism. While its members were encouraged to support other Catholic organisations, the Society remained independent of Catholic Action and did not abandon its avoidance of anything political.

The Catholic Women’s Association and the Grail

It is unnecessary to repeat the history of the Catholic Women's Association and the Grail here. Sally Kennedy has argued that the development of Catholic Action ended a period of some independence for Catholic women's organisation and by the end of the thirties imposed a tighter clericalism than had been present.

74 cf. ibid., October 1937, 230.
75 ibid., December 1937, 281.
76 ibid., April 1938, 78.
77 ibid., May 1938, 112.
78 ibid., February 1938, 36.
earlier.\textsuperscript{79} The Grail\textsuperscript{80} had been introduced to Sydney in September 1936. It is odd that Sydney should have made such a fuss over the arrival of the Grail, since its spirit was so opposed to its own clericalism, but ideas about the Grail were very confused.\textsuperscript{81} Lydwine Van Kersbergen said the Grail was a response to the call to Catholic Action, and linked it with the response to communism,\textsuperscript{82} but in fact the Grail stayed apart from the anti-communist mobilisation of Catholic Action.\textsuperscript{83} By the end of 1938 it had 600 members in Sydney, and 900 a year later. Their activities at this time were mainly cultural,\textsuperscript{84} they were not strong in intellectual fields,\textsuperscript{85} and the University group only lasted from 1937 to 1940.

The Knights of the Southern Cross

The Knights were the most obvious group to involve in the fight against communism, but they were reluctant to take any leading role, especially in the industrial arena. They discussed setting up a Railway Employees Section in August 1936 but, aware of the dangers did not pursue this proposal.\textsuperscript{86}

With the agitation over the Spanish Civil War, the Knights sent a Memorandum to Fr Collender on 7 September 1936 noting communist activities and placing themselves at the disposal of the hierarchy to defend the Church.\textsuperscript{87} It warned: "we in Australia, cannot hope to escape entirely the ravages of the Anti-God System."\textsuperscript{88} They volunteered for a watching brief about communism. In September 1936 they went through their membership to find those working in the industrial world "and to take any other steps which are deemed necessary to supplement the propaganda against Communism."\textsuperscript{89} They also began to screen

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\item \textsuperscript{79} cf. Sally Kennedy, Faith and Feminism, 210ff.
\item \textsuperscript{80} cf. ibid, 109 ff.
\item \textsuperscript{81} cf. ibid, 129 ff.
\item \textsuperscript{82} Lydwine van Kersbergen, "The Grail", in ACR XIV, 2 (April 1937) 133.
\item \textsuperscript{83} cf. Kennedy, op. cit, 160.
\item \textsuperscript{84} cf. ibid, 153.
\item \textsuperscript{85} ibid, 158.
\item \textsuperscript{86} State Council Minutes, KSC, 24/8/36, p.14.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Memorandum re Communism, to Fr Collender, 7 September 1936, in Grand Council of NSW Minutes, KSC, 14/9/1936, p.24.
\item \textsuperscript{88} ibid, 23.
\item \textsuperscript{89} SCM, KSC, 21/9/36, p.10.
\end{itemize}
candidates for the Knights fearing communist penetration. A standing committee on communism was set up in 1937, consisting of Bros H. Nowland, J.C. Crowe and P. Cantwell, to "compile adequate records and act as a General Clearing House for Communist propaganda."

Despite clear concern about communism, the Federal authorities of the Order banned discussion of "the subject that has been circulated to all Branches. However, the ban does not limit in any way the activities of members in their opposition to Communism." The fight against Communism had to be waged more intensively than ever. However the Knights as an organisation did not take part in significant anti-communist activity, though individual members were expected to act on their own initiative. The Knights did organise some groups but these were not geared to fighting communism; some railway workers wanted to become better Catholics, and perhaps undertake a bursary for the seminary. "Politics, of course, would be excluded and nothing would be done that would give offence to the department." They were also "to avoid unnecessary publicity or give a handle to our enemies and be misconstrued."

The Archbishop asked the Knights to supply him each month with a report, some of which are presumably the unsigned and undated documents in the Archdiocesan Archives on communist activities. The Knights firmly rejected any attempt to infiltrate the Labor Party when Fr Celsus Kelly in November 1939 suggested "the formation of an Organisation to be active in the Political Labour Party."

Thus the role of the Knights was primarily to gather information for the hierarchy. They renounced explicit political activity within Labor, and confined themselves to acting as a lobby group to protect Catholic interests. Many of their

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90 ibid, 10/11/36, p.44.
91 ibid, 8/2/37, p.60.
92 Communication No. 8, p.18, in Knights file, SMA.
93 Fr Ford to Fr Collender, 26 March 1937, in Craft Guilds file.
94 ibid, 14/6/38, p.105.
95 ibid, 13/11/39, p.21.
members, however, were involved as individuals in Catholic Action groups. The
Knights' customary discretion and caution, their aversion for public display and
their network of contacts through government departments and business exercised a
moderating influence on the Sydney response to communism. Brian Doyle allowed
his membership with the Knights to lapse because they "made no obvious
contribution to the Catholic social movement at all. They would say a contribution
to the social movement was not one of their functions". 96 They remained an ally
of Catholic Action, but formally distinct and under lay control.

A formal structure for Catholic Action was urgently required. In July 1937,
Archbishop Kelly called for organisation in parishes and dioceses linked to a
"National Council", but he saw this in terms of his traditional Irish piety: to secure
"the Faith of children attending _non-Catholic schools_, and to bring "unemployed
workers together, in each parish, under the pastor", where the "result will be a
spirit of courageous resignation, good use of time in some volunteer capacity, in
personal culture by reading and study, and in practices of piety". 97 It indicated
how little Kelly understood about how to fight communism in the unions and
elsewhere.

The Holy Name Society

While other Church organisations were unwilling to lead the anti-communist
campaign of Catholic Action, the Holy Name Society mobilised large numbers of
Catholic men. A Diocesan Union of the Society was approved in Sydney only on 7
July 1937 with Mgr King as spiritual director 98 and Dr Horace Nowland as first
president. It had 20,000 members at the time, compared with Melbourne's 5,000. 99
King had earlier written to Kelly that "In view of the rapid progress of

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96 Brian Doyle, interviewed 22 January 1986, Tape 2A.
97 Press, 29 July 1937, 11.
98 E. O'Donnell to Mgr King, 10 July 1937, in Holy Name file, SMA.
anti-Christian forces", Catholic men be consolidated into the Holy Name Society.\textsuperscript{100}

To the Society, he said:

Raised aloft is the banner of the Anti-Christ, and the battle cry is: "Down with Christ and Christianity!" These enemies would take from you your saving belief in God - would rob you of the sanctity of your home - would give you license instead of freedom and would destroy your children with the fatal doctrines of an "Atheistic Communism".

Communism utters its blasphemous cries and slogans. Your society is an atonement for its atrocities and outrages against our Saviour and His Holy Name.\textsuperscript{101}

At a mass demonstration at St Mary's Cathedral, 10,000 men pledged themselves to the Holy Name. Gilroy vividly portrayed the threat to the Church, but relegated the Society to an auxiliary of Catholic Action.

The plague of Communism is eating into the very vitals of society. This false and pernicious system is making an onslaught against the Church with a violence that is unparalleled in the history of the world. Its aims are degraded, its means are in keeping with its aims. Deception, treachery, outrages, murder are the stock-in-trade of Communism. "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," says Stalin, "is a relentless struggle waged with bloodshed". Let no one be deluded by the claim that Communism here is of a different brand to that of Russia, Mexico and Spain. Class warfare in its extreme form, "the liquidation," i.e. murder of opponents may be advocated - yet. The time is not ripe. God has raised a wall of defence against the tyranny of Communism, an antidote against the poison of its doctrines. That instrument raised by God is a movement that it known as "Catholic Action" and of Catholic Action the Holy Name Society is an auxiliary.\textsuperscript{102}

Gilroy did not envisage the Society as the main vehicle for Catholic Action or see it in an industrial or political role. But it was a means of openly mobilising Catholic men against communism and into properly Catholic Action organisations.

A week later, Bishop Dwyer at Lewisham called on the Society to form "cells" to fight communism: "In three years from now, it was estimated, the Reds would predominate in every union in Australia."\textsuperscript{103} His views of using the Holy Name Society directly against communism were opposed to Gilroy's. It was not surprising that some were confused about the Holy Name Society and its relation to Catholic Action.

\textsuperscript{100} Mgr King to Archbishop Kelly, 17 October 1936, in Holy Name file, SMA.
\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Press}, 22 July 1937, 19.
\textsuperscript{102} \textit{Ibid}, 16 September 1937, 11.
\textsuperscript{103} \textit{Ibid}, 23 September 1937, 5.
The Holy Name Society also embodied a Catholic ideology which had significant cultural and political implications. It proclaimed solidarity not just with the older ghetto-cohesion pattern of Catholicism, but also with the more assertive spirit to which the new forms of Catholic Action appealed. Practically all leading Catholics, particularly members of the Knights and Catholic Action movements, belonged to the Holy Name Society. It rallied Catholics, inspired them, and forged links of group solidarity and determination.\footnote{104}

None of the existing organisations seemed really suitable as a vehicle for anti-communist activity, though most could help in some way. Meanwhile, Gilroy's secretary, Dr E. O'Donnell, again warned Australians against thinking that the communist threat could not materialise here.

\textit{Why not devote some attention to the long process of doping that precedes it? If this is done, it will be at once realised that there is a sense in which "It can't happen here" nay rather, that "It has happened, and is happening here."}\footnote{105}

The threat from communism was seen not merely as a question of politics, but of survival for Catholics. To counter the communists effectively, however, would require a struggle in the unions. Indeed the Sydney clergy had already been considering this, and Kelly's firm line against lay political activity was changed: the rhetoric of "no politics" remained; however it was not politics in the excluded sense, but politics which was obligatory for the common good.

\textbf{Catholic Action and Communism in the Unions}

In preparation for the September 1937 plenary meeting of the Australian bishops, the Sydney promoters of Catholic Action were considering how to fight communism in the unions. Eris O'Brien wrote to Gilroy that Dr Ryan and Fr Leo Dalton had already done much:

\textit{Father Dalton's knowledge of the trade unions is exhaustive. He has files concerning (a) the actual organisation of the unions, (b) the extent, manner and personnel of communist propaganda, and (c) the names of several...}

\footnote{104 In later years, many members wore a distinctive lapel badge as a public proclamation of faith. It identified the wearer to both friend and foe.}

\footnote{105 ibid, 21 October 1937, 16.}
Catholics who might be persuaded to act as contact-man [sic] between Catholic Action and the trades unions.

Dalton's plan "will serve as a tentative modus agendi for the work which Your Grace wishes to be established". The work "is deliberately confined to Trades Unions activities only, as I believe special arrangements are contemplated by Your Grace to deal with 'cultural' communist movements and communist newspapers".

For the time being the modus agendi excludes from its scope the political consideration of communism within the ALP. The root of the evil lies in the unions, which are the chief avenues of political domination.

Not much had been done at this stage, and O'Brien recommended haste. "If we do not act now, the Communist element in the Trades and Labour Council will have the advantage of twelve months' start over us." He suggested that Dalton be appointed full-time director of this work. The new organisation was to have a priest director responsible to the Archbishop; and its secretariat would consist of a priest assistant and 12 laymen.

THE OBJECTIVE of the Secretariat will be to counteract Red influence within the Trade Union Movement. It will therefore aim at: (a) the appointment of reliable agents to the executive positions in the Trades Unions. (b) the appointment of delegates to the Trades and Labour Council.

Sixteen contact men, one from each of the selected unions, were "to enlist the support of non-Communists in Unions and to see that they attend the meeting of the sub-branches of the Unions and out-vote the Communists." Jim Ormonde's name headed the list of 12 men. O'Brien recommended caution and "to a certain extent" secrecy;

...such a scheme as is here contemplated could evoke strong organised opposition in certain quarters (e.g. Masonic and L.O.L. bodies.) The Catholic permeating work must be done before the "Reds" know it has begun. The notion of secrecy, however, must not be carried to that extent where it defeats its own purpose.

The group, called the Ketteler Guild after the social action Bishop Ketteler of Germany, intended to remove communists from office in the unions and Trades and

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106 O'Brien to Gilroy, 30 September 1937, CA file, SMA.
107 An attempt was made to further investigate this list of names, but the Catholic Action file for 1937 containing the list could not be located in the Archives which are being catalogued.
108 ibid.
Labour Council. Dr Nowland held the chair. Mr Cantwell outlined how each man
should form a cell of sound men in his work-place, but unobtrusively; "our men can
successfully counter with the Communists' own plan."

We then informed the gathering that our men would be assisted with advice,
organisation work, information, propaganda, leaflets and the like. The centre,
here, would adopt the role of "clearing house" for ideas, information and
material.

The fact that it had a priest director put it in the category of a Church-controlled
organisation as part of Catholic Action, yet there appeared no discussion about
whether this was an appropriate activity or method for Catholic Action.

Thus Sydney clergy began to organise against the communists in the industrial
area even before the formation of Melbourne Catholic Action. Sydney Catholics had
moved beyond a strategy of ghetto defence into the domain of explicit industrial
politics. But this group seems to have kept a very low profile; even Brian Doyle,
a key figure at this time, had not heard mention of the "Ketteler Guild".

Strained Relations with Melbourne Catholic Action

Meanwhile a group of the Melbourne Campions was still trying to set up
national Catholic Action and submitted a Memorandum to Archbishop Mannix for
the Fourth Plenary Council of Bishops. They also circulated an undated
Memorandum to the bishops which could be read as an indirect criticism of Sydney
Catholic Action.

To begin with, it recommended against trying to involve large numbers of
Catholics rapidly, saying that initial enthusiasm would quickly wane. Secondly, the
Memorandum pointed out "a regrettable confusion in the minds of the majority of
people" about what exactly Catholic Action was. It was to be apostolic in nature,
organised in approved societies, and had to function under the mandate of the
bishop and subject to his approval. Far from seeing the objects of Catholic

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109 Report of First Meeting of Ketteler Guild, 28 October 1937, p.2, CA file, SMA.
110 ibid.
112 Memorandum for Bishops on Catholic Action [n.d.], p.2, CA file, SMA.
Action in traditional categories, the Memorandum called for: the formation of organisations to make Catholics aware of the crisis facing civilisation, especially from communism; propaganda among non-Catholics so that the Catholic view would be understood; and permeating society with Catholic principles. It warned that communists were gaining control of the unions, and that workers had to be educated if this was to be prevented. The proposed secretariat would train Catholics, inform them and report on communist activities. All this Eris O’Brien would have agreed with but the Melbourne group suggested:

"for the present there should be no official organisation of Catholic Action set up in Australia. It should be clear that there cannot be any official Catholic Action until it is set up as such by the whole body of Bishops. What we have for the present is Catholic Action in the preparatory stage and no organisation or group of organisations should be allowed to use the title of "Catholic Action"."

This was likely to sound as if the Melbourne Campions were telling the Sydney hierarchy what to do, and invalidating Sydney efforts at Catholic Action. The Memorandum also warned leaders of Catholic Action "to keep completely clear of all politics":

It cannot be too strongly emphasised that leaders in Catholic Action should take the greatest care lest their political interests should cause them to be attacked as mere tools of Catholic reactionary ideas.

This could have been read as opposing Sydney's moves into industrial organisation.

In contrast to Sydney's firm ecclesiastical control, the Memorandum envisaged a wider area of lay independence:

It has been laid down overseas that, generally speaking, executive authority should not reside in the Priest. It is obvious that no matter of great importance should be taken without his advice and co-operation. He will be in constant touch with the movement and will advise his laymen of all general lines of policy, but the ultimate decision on the methods to carry out the programme should be taken by the laity themselves.

This expanded the area of lay control beyond what the Sydney hierarchy was used to, though O'Brien, as we shall see, was not unsympathetic to lay control.

113 ibid, 3.
115 Memorandum, op. cit., 5.
116 ibid.
117 ibid.
The Memorandum also proposed that no new societies should receive "rigid constitutions" at this early stage, and that "proposed constitutions should be submitted to the Secretariat for approval".\textsuperscript{118} Considering the care and control which Sydney Archdiocese exercised over its organisations, it was hardly likely to hand over such important decisions to Melbourne lay people. The Memorandum acknowledged "the considerable amount of control that must always remain with the Bishop", yet added:

It is essential to encourage the initiative of the laity, to teach them to undertake responsibilities, to insist that Catholic Action is primarily their affair and that they must themselves be responsible for the greater part of its success.\textsuperscript{119}

This was a long way from the Sydney emphasis that the laity were sharing in the apostolate of the hierarchy in Catholic Action, i.e. in a clerical apostolate.

The Melbourne group said the Secretariat's role would be "primarily that of supplying information" and co-ordinating, but each diocese needed an organiser.\textsuperscript{120}

It is essential that there should be unity of opinion at the beginning of the movement and that there should not be diversions of policy and method which would cause Catholic Action to grow in a different way in almost every State.\textsuperscript{121}

The underlying assumption of the Memorandum was that the Melbourne Secretariat was to assume national control of Catholic Action and Sydney was to fit in with the plan. Such an approach could not avoid offending the Sydney hierarchy.

An unsigned paper in the Sydney archives, "Comments", criticised the Memorandum for not having a "definite plan" of Catholic Action, for not looking at training in the schools and undertaking other social relief projects. The Comments also suggested a priest director for Catholic Action. "The Memorandum seems to suggest that the work of organisation and administration throughout the Commonwealth should be entrusted to two men: Messrs Maher and Santamaria". "Against this it may be remarked that the task is too great to be dealt with

\textsuperscript{118} cf. \textit{ibid}, 6.
\textsuperscript{119} \textit{ibid}, 7.
\textsuperscript{120} \textit{ibid}
\textsuperscript{121} \textit{ibid}, 9.
satisfactorily by two men, however excellent their qualifications". The Comments noted that the Memorandum stated "the Bureau cannot undertake direct political action among unionists or control the policy or tactics of Catholic groups of unionists". While acknowledging this in general, the Comments replied:

...immediate action of a semi-political character is necessary if Catholics are to prevent the domination of the Labour Party by the Communists. To this end they must see to it that the Communists do not gain control of the Labour Conference to be held next Easter.122

Immediate action was needed, with Sydney insisting on clerical control and "semi-political" action. It did not see such activity coming under the ban against "political" action.

In view of later events, the irony of this is readily apparent. Sydney was insisting against Melbourne on the need to expand into industrial areas, but under clerical control, and not lay; Melbourne appeared reluctant to move into such "semi-political" activity and continued to press for greater lay control. The effect of this Melbourne Memorandum must have been to confirm Sydney's fears that national organisation meant surrendering policy and control to a group of lay people in Melbourne under Mannix's influence. The Sydney hierarchy faced the prospect of losing control of their own Catholic Action organisations to Melbourne. A breach was imminent.

A national organisation?

Moves towards a national organisation were already under way. The Melbourne Campions had based their Memorandum on elements from Jocism and had rejected the Italian model favoured by Sydney because it was too clerical and did not allow specialisation. Archbishop Simonds wrote to Kelly on November 8 1937 informing him that the last plenary meeting of the Hierarchy of Australia and New Zealand had appointed an Episcopal Committee consisting of Mannix, Simonds, Gleeson and Gilroy "to inaugurate a National Movement of Catholic Action". The Committee had

122 Comments, [n.d., but not before 11 October 1937, unsigned, with additions in O'Brien's handwriting], p.2, in CA file, SMA.
met in Melbourne on November 3 and appointed Mannix chairman, and Simonds secretary. A national secretariat was to be set up immediately in Melbourne with a priest, two lay secretaries and a typist to organise Catholic Action "in every diocese of Australia, under the direction of the Episcopal committee." The Ecclesiastical Secretary was initially to be Fr Basil Roper, parish priest of Warracknabeal, and on the recommendation of Kevin Kelly and Murray McInerney, the lawyers Frank Maher and B.A. Santamaria (then 22 years old), were appointed secretary and assistant secretary.\footnote{Simonds to Kelly, 8 November 1937, CA file, SMA. According to Jory, Mannix had earlier indicated that he wanted Santamaria as Maher's assistant (cf. Jory, op. cit., 92). Kevin Kelly in interview (5 July 1986 Tape 3A) denied that he had been offered the job.}

Despite having Gilroy, Simonds and Gleeson on the episcopal committee, Mannix had succeeded in having the national secretariat sited in Melbourne with his laymen in charge. With this development, Archbishop Kelly decided against joining a national organisation, ignoring the decision of the episcopal committee. It is perhaps not incidental also that Kelly was known to be strongly against money going out of the archdiocese for any purpose.\footnote{It is also possible that Archbishop Kelly had authorised Sydney joining but changed his mind. Fr Slattery said that Kelly was not consistent. (Interview 29 May 1986, Tape 1B).} On hearing of Kelly's decision, O'Brien wrote to the Archbishop telling him not to worry that the work in the trade unions would cease:

> I can assure Your Grace that everything possible is being done; the work will necessarily be slow, if it is to be sure. I hope within a year or two to show you something really tangible. As a matter of fact, our little organisation has already had submitted a resolution for the [den?]ationalising of the metal trades unions, in order to allow scope for votes from each of the organisations which have been affiliated into one big union for the satisfaction of the Communists.\footnote{O'Brien to Kelly, 23 November 1937, in CA file, SMA.}

Despite Gilroy's participation in the Melbourne meeting, Sydney was determined on its own course of action.

Frank Maher wrote to Archbishop Kelly on 25 November 1937 confirming the decision of the Committee of Bishops to "set up in Melbourne a National
Secretariat of Catholic Action", and asking for suggestions for programmes and reading. Sydney's reply was to wind up the Association of Catholic Action and begin its own version of Catholic Action.

Sydney says "No"

The first thing to resolve was the nature and scope of Catholic Action. The Catholic Action Association was clearly inadequate for the task at hand; most of the activity of the Association in 1937 concerned getting Catholic children back to Catholic schools and returning them to the Sacraments. There were also 29 lectures and some study circles, but these seemed more concerned with apostolic work than with social issues. Gilroy wanted to expand the scope of Catholic Action, and told the Association at its 1937 Annual Meeting that Catholic Action was "not being organised here in the manner in which our Holy Father desired":

[He] then explained how Catholic Actionists were the "auxiliaries" of the priest in whose parish they were working. Even though they might not see eye to eye with him in all matters, it was not their responsibility nor their duty to disagree. They should submit wholeheartedly to his directions.

Dr Ryan also addressed the meeting saying that Catholic Action lacked the necessary unity:

Where there are numerous Catholic organisations, working independently of one another, without mutual co-operation, without subordination to a central authority, and, what is worse, divided from one another by petty quarrels and jealousies, there is no Catholic Action properly so called.

The message was clear: Catholic Action was to be reorganised under strict clerical control, not lay. The next day Kelly wrote to Simonds declining to join the national body: "I disapprove of a National Secretariat as compared with diocesan organisation, working on the directions of the Papal Encyclicals." He denied that general assemblies of the bishops had legislative authority; no bishop was bound by its decisions. Kelly also denied that the Plenary Council IV of September 1937 had given any authority for the meeting of the Hierarchies of Australia and New

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126 Frank Maher to Archbishop Kelly, 25 November 1937, CA file, SMA.
127 Annual Report, Association of Catholic Action, 2 December 1937, CA file, SMA.
Zealand, implying that he was not bound by earlier decisions of the bishops. He declined to pay 400 pounds as Sydney's share of the expenses of running the Secretariat.\(^{129}\)

Simonds in 1940 wrote to Kelly asserting that the Episcopal Sub-Committee for Catholic Action had been authorised. "I feel bound to recall to Your Grace's memory the acts of the general meeting of the Hierarchy which took place at St Mary's Cathedral Chapter Hall, Sydney on the 13th of September 1937", i.e., the day after the Plenary Council. Simonds said that Gilroy had himself moved to set up an episcopal committee with Mannix, Simonds and Gleeson; Gilroy was then added to the committee.\(^{130}\) Simonds took the view that the Sydney hierarchy was bound by the decisions of the general assembly of bishops. But Kelly had a point: if it was to be a decision of such importance, why was it not discussed during the Plenary Council itself, especially after the disagreements of previous years? He may have been surprised by Mannix's success in Melbourne against Gilroy, Gleeson and Simonds, and decided that Sydney would not join a national organisation. Consequently the Directorate of Catholic Action was about to be replaced by the Secretariate for the Lay Apostolate\(^{131}\) under Dr Eris O'Brien.

\(^{129}\) Archbishop Kelly to Simonds, 3 December 1937, CA file, SMA.
\(^{130}\) Simonds to Kelly, 2 February 1940, Catholic Action file, SMA.
\(^{131}\) cf Fr. Toohey to O'Brien, 14 November 1938, LA file, SMA.
CHAPTER TEN

SYDNEY ESTABLISHES ITS OWN CATHOLIC ACTION ORGANISATION

Once the Sydney hierarchy had decided not to join the National Secretariat for Catholic Action, both Melbourne and Sydney established the styles of Catholic Action they wanted. Archbishop Simonds, defined Catholic Action as "the participation of the Catholic laity in the Hierarchical Apostolate, for the defence of a wholesome and beneficent social action" against the "destructive agencies". It works under the guidance of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, outside of and above political parties, for the purpose of restoring Catholic life in the family and society."¹ The national secretariat was to act as a central co-ordinating body and to help form diocesan and parochial groups. A sub-committee of Mannix (president), Simonds (secretary) and Gleeson had been elected "to direct the National Organisation". William Keane SJ was appointed Ecclesiastical Assistant, with Maher and Santamaria as the lay officials.² Simonds did not say Sydney was remaining outside the national organisation.

The Newcastle Congress

The Newcastle Regional Missionary and Eucharistic Congress of February 1938 allowed the new Secretariat to formulate its thinking. There also seems to have a continuing tussle between Archbishops Panico and Mannix, for it was here the bishops took away from Melbourne control of the Propagation of the Faith.³

¹ Catholic Press. 20 January 1938, 21.
² ibid.
³ cf. Waldnersee, A Grain of Mustard Seed, 373.
Among the speakers were the Queensland priest, Fr Vincent Cleary, who had studied at Catholic University of America and Louvain, B.A. Santamaria and Rev H.A. Johnston SJ of Werribee. Fr Cleary, in a major address stated the Church's teaching that property should be more widely distributed and criticised the increasing concentration of wealth in the USA. He called for child endowment and a living wage. Following Nell-Breuning he advocated vocational groups independent of the government. "The system is one of self-government in industry, yet the State has the duty of superintendence". He distinguished corporatism in Portugal and Austria from that in Italy and Germany which were totalitarian.

B.A. Santamaria echoed similar themes. He recognised that there "will naturally be the greatest divergence of opinion" about how to apply the Church's social teaching. "So long, however, as no individual claims that his view is the only possible Catholic view in the circumstances, these divergences will lead to clear thinking". He called for the removal of private control of the "machinery of credit", but ultimately thought the answer lay in restoring property to the masses. "That is why Property for the people is the most powerful slogan of Catholic Social Reform". He also supported giving workers a share in the control of industry, so that industries were run by representatives of workers, employers and consumers. These industrial groups would form a Supreme Vocational Council to plan the nation's economy. He stressed that the Church was not just against communism:

Too many Catholic workers are becoming victims to this evil heresy, to this travesty of Catholic social principles. After all, between Capitalism and

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4 Fr Vincent Cleary graduated MA and PhD at Catholic University, with economics as his major. He was the first Australian priest to attend the University and John A. Ryan's lectures. He returned to Queensland in 1935 (cf. Press, 22 August 1935, 21), and taught at Springwood in the late 1930s before being recalled to Queensland to take charge of the new Banyo Seminary (cf. V. Cleary to Gilroy, 27 December 1939, in Springwood file, SMA).


6 Ibid., 103.

7 B.A. Santamaria, in "Pope Pius XI and Social Justice", in Ibid., 105.

8 Ibid., 107.
Communism there lies no fundamental difference. Stalin liquidates thousands of his enemies, sends millions of workers to die in Siberian wastes. Capitalism gives us ballots instead of bullets, but it too grinds out the existence of millions of workers in a crushing poverty. Communism is atheist; but it was Capitalism which first gave us the secular school. Communism deprives the masses of liberty, but it was Capitalism which paved the way by depriving them of property. The Servile State reaches its climax under a Communist dictatorship; but the Servile State is itself the offspring of capitalist decay.

The motive force of Catholic social reform is not "Against Communism". Its programme is possible Justice for the masses and the restoration of property to the people.9

Frank Maher endorsed these themes:

What we have to do is to remedy the gross injustices of modern industrialism and in particular to realise that the average man has practically no property at all. Karl Marx pointed out many years ago that there was for most people no private property left to abolish. Our slogan, therefore, is "Property for the People". We want to make every man a capitalist, every man an owner.10

He said within 20 years communism would take over in Australia unless property and wealth were redistributed.11

For Social Justice restated these themes.12 Vocational groups were needed to overcome capitalism, but these were not the same as Fascist or Nazi versions;13 Belgium, Holland, France and Switzerland had correctly organised industry on vocational lines, but not Italy or Germany. "Fascism interferes all the time, for it controls the group from outside, making it, in fact, a slave of the State".14 "Fascism makes the State a dictator".15 Thus vocational groups were to be democratic and non-Fascist.

The way to social reform lay in Catholic Action, not through politicians or political parties, Maher said in a further pamphlet, The Catholic Revival. The Pope "severely discouraged Catholic political parties" and "let the German Centre Party and the Italian Popular Party perish without protest". The present revival was a

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9 ibid., 108.
11 ibid., 206.
12 For Social Justice, ACTS, 10 February 1938, 2-3
13 cf. ibid., 13.
14 ibid., 14.
15 ibid., 23.
matter of "mind and heart," not a matter of "muscular Christianity"; the Pope has repeatedly warned the leaders of Catholic Action everywhere to keep the movement away from politics. The views of the Melbourne speakers reflected those of the Catholic Worker, especially drawing on Belloc's Distributism and the papal concept of the vocational group.

The concept of "corporativism" was later developed by Fr William Keane SJ in "Industry in Organic Society" (Australasian Catholic Record, October 1938). He saw this proposal as the Catholic answer to communism, and also insisted that this was not Fascist. G.D.H. Cole's guild socialism seemed remarkably similar to Catholic ideas, but Catholics wanted a guild society, not guild socialism, under which the guild would have to rent the means of production from the State. The Church wanted to spread the right of ownership to the workers, not concentrate it in the hands of the State. He rejected the compulsion of the Italian corporate State, and strongly favoured Portugal's efforts: "That Portugal has rapidly passed from a state of economic and social misery to the position of one of the most prosperous and happy countries in the world is a generally recognised fact". Dictatorship was needed there for only a short while and gave way to the guild system of self-government, he said.

Thus the Catholic proposals had much in common with guild socialism but insisted on a corporate society rather than a corporate State - against Fascism and on private ownership of the means of production - against State socialists. Such views were accepted in both Melbourne and Sydney.

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17 cf. ibid., 17.
18 ibid., ACR, XV, 4, (October 1938) 322.
19 cf. ibid., 323.
20 ibid., 327.
21 ibid., 336.
22 cf. ibid., 338.
Sydney establishes its Secretariate of the Lay Apostolate

Much of the Catholic agitation against communism as Sydney prepared to reorganise Catholic Action continued to be done through the Holy Name Society. Fr E Lyons SM warned the Society that Spain and Mexico could be lessons for Australia. He urged them to take an active part in their union affairs:

I appeal to you, then, to leave off that false assurance that Communism is no danger. Throw yourselves with energy into the fight for it is a holy crusade for God, your country, for yourselves and your homes.23

Another mission priest, Fr John Carroll CSsR, used the same urgent rhetoric when inaugurating the Holy Name Society at Darlinghurst a week later:

Never before, perhaps, has [the fight] been waged as fiercely as to-day, when every weapon is employed to drive God from the hearts and the homes of the world. Godless education, the corrupt press, the foul cinema, filthy literature, Communism, and the no less anti-Christian system of greed and oppression which has called Communism into existence. We have to fight whether we want to or not. He who is not in the thick of the battle, close to the side of Christ, must be numbered amongst the ranks of His enemies. There can be no compromise. A compromise is betrayal.24

Finally Archbishop Kelly appointed O'Brien Director of the Apostolate of the Laity on 10 February 1938, despite O'Brien's advice that Fr Leo Dalton be director. Kelly, who gave O'Brien little direction about the nature of Catholic Action,25 was still thinking in terms of his cohesion model of Catholic defence and traditional religious practices. So Sydney's Secretariate for the Lay Apostolate was established, partly as a response to the founding of ANSCA in Melbourne.

O'Brien began work and set up an office. The old Catholic Action Association was dissolved and its organisations regrouped. He sent a draft of a pamphlet on Catholic Action to Gilroy26 and forwarded the Instructions to appear over Kelly's name. Dr Paddy Ryan had agreed with the format, though Mgr Giles thought Catholic Action should start with a few parishes only. O'Brien's view, that all should be informed, was adopted. O'Brien said that much of the Instructions was in

23 Press, 24 February 1938, 7.
24 ibid, 3 March 1938, 11.
25 Archbishop Kelly, Pastoral Letter on the Apostolate, 1 February 1938, in LA file, SMA.
26 Draft pamphlet on Catholic Action, [n.d.] p.1, in LA file, SMA.
the Archbishop's own words: "it seems now to suit our purpose and his own ideas. I have read most of the document to him, and he has sanctioned every proposal and also signed the duplicate copy".\textsuperscript{27} It seemed important to O'Brien that the old Archbishop fully supported the project and that all was clearly authorised. The Instructions, which were addressed to the clergy only, said that the Lay Apostolate could be "affiliated to any national organisation, when the time to so do is judged opportune". They also stressed that the "Lay Apostolate is not concerned in any way with party politics" though it aimed to promote social reform "by constitutional means".\textsuperscript{28} Tight control over the organisation was also important: "The Central Secretariate is under the direct and absolute control of the Archbishop of Sydney", with a priest as Diocesan Director and a Secretariate to organise within the Archdiocese.\textsuperscript{29}

The aim was to set up various special Departments within the Secretariate and Associations in the parishes to link with the Departments. There were to be eleven Departments, the most significant for this study being that for Spiritual and Intellectual Formation headed by Fr Paddy Ryan, and Dr Dalton's Department for Research and Catholic Defence. Other Departments were those for adult men, adult women, male youth, female youth, university graduates, Catholic Schools Apostolate, Government Schools Catechists' Guild, Hospital Visitation, Police Courts and the Visitation Guild.\textsuperscript{30} The new organisation had to absorb the functions of the earlier Association of Catholic Action, and tried to incorporate features of the Italian model of Catholic Action as well; but intellectual and social action was the new element.

The Department for Spiritual and Intellectual Formation was to train leaders in "advanced courses in apologetics and social and political sciences". There was no

\textsuperscript{27} ibid.
\textsuperscript{28} Instructions issues by His Grace, Most Rev M. Kelly, D.D. Archbishop of Sydney to the Priests of the Archdiocese, for Organising the Lay Apostolate in the Archdiocese. The Lay Apostolate in the Archdiocese of Sydney, 22 March 1938, p.1, in LA file, SMA.
\textsuperscript{29} ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{30} ibid., 12.
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secrecy about this, as the particulars were to be advertised in the Catholic papers, and the lectures were to be open to anyone.\textsuperscript{31} It was to counter "the spread of subversive doctrines at home and abroad,"\textsuperscript{32} though communism was not explicitly mentioned. In the parishes study groups were to be set up, Campion groups having begun this work.\textsuperscript{33}

O'Brien's rationale for Catholic Action was outlined in the draft pamphlet sent to Gilroy and which accompanied the circular from Archbishop Kelly.\textsuperscript{34} Some of it reflected Kelly's own traditionalist thinking, but the author shifted the emphasis to social action. "Besides aiming at individual and family reform, ...the Lay Apostolate has a definite social aim". Quoting the Cardinal Secretary of State, 1925, O'Brien continued:

[It] is not merely spiritual and religious action...it is a social action, because it aims at promoting the supreme goods of society, including political goods in so far as these touch upon morality and religion.

But it is "definitely non-party-political", O'Brien insisted. What was needed was a "specialised directive 'organisation', in order to equip 'a compact, unitary, disciplined army'"; a narrowly religious view was inadequate. He took from the Italian model the four great divisions of sex and age, and borrowed the "cell" structure from the "disruptionists".\textsuperscript{35} O'Brien said that it was not appropriate in Australia to form Catholic trade unions though, loyal to \textit{Quadragesimo Anno}, he supported the idea of unionism along corporate lines.\textsuperscript{36} The sense of threat to the Church was keen, and O'Brien urged priests to be particularly aware of "the menace that is being directed against the Church and Christian civilisation."

The counter-attack through the Lay Apostolate is a definite command from the Holy See, and every priest is called upon to facilitate the foundation of this work in his parish. "Every other enterprise...must yield before the vital need of protecting the very foundation of the Faith.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{31} ibid, 3.
\textsuperscript{32} ibid, 5.
\textsuperscript{33} ibid, 9.
\textsuperscript{35} ibid, 3.
\textsuperscript{36} ibid, 6.
\textsuperscript{37} ibid, Part 2: Its Organisation, ibid, 7.
In asking the priests to found and direct parish groups, O’Brien was trying to harness the parish network to Catholic Action and give it priority over all else. It was an extreme response to call for, presupposing grave urgency.

The question of the degree of clerical control and lay independence was obviously a key one to which O’Brien turned his attention. He called for clerical control while allowing for "certain executive rights [for the laity] which are clearly theirs constitutionally". While "priests must direct the laity", the lay associations must be given autonomy within the scope of their work."

"The lay organs of Catholic Action must possess high and authoritative functions... Hence the president should be, if and when possible, a layman. But this autonomy is confined to the practical field of action and of such action as is defined by the Bishop through the Central Secretariat. "Lay action is executive on the practical plane, giving concrete reality, with a responsibility of its own, to the various items in its vast programme." It is "not a directive action in the theoretical order"."

In practical organisation it is within the competence of the ecclesiastical authority to designate the aims of Catholic Action, to indicate the means, to make rules and to judge of the actuality and opportuneness of the others. But the Church regards the Directing bodies of the laity as competent "to see to and direct the execution of initiatives undertaken by ecclesiastical authority" [quoted from Civerdi].

The clerical assistant was not to diminish the independence of the laity nor "energies and responsibilities" which should rightly be left to the lay director.

The priest was to educate the laity in "social ethics and to assist in establishing or participating in practical social activities". Hence the laity had the right of executive action in accordance with the directions, policy and methods decided by the bishops. But the status of lay people within Catholic Action remained ambiguous. In a later document, PAROCHIAL UNION within the LAY APOSTOLATE [sic], he said "The Lay Apostolate consists in the active co-operation of the Laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy. It is a laymen's movement acting under ecclesiastical direction" [italics added]. The ambiguity here was not resolved.

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38 ibid., 8.
40 ibid., 12.
41 ibid., 13.
42 O’Brien to Gilroy, PAROCHIAL UNIONS within the LAY APOSTOLATE [sic], Document 3, 20 October 1938, p.4.
The question of Church involvement in politics remained sensitive. Rumble in his "Question Box" justified Catholic Action as the "defence of religious and moral principles and for the development of a sound and beneficial crusade outside and above all political parties and movements."\(^{43}\) He later said that the Church was entitled to protest when politicians seek to destroy religion. He quoted the Pope that Church intervention in politics was then quite proper: "It is politics that have touched religion and laid hands on the altar".\(^{44}\)

Catholic involvement in Labor politics was under challenge at the time. Professor G. Portus of Melbourne University asked at the Australian Institute of Political Science conference "if it was true that pressure from the Catholic hierarchy had forced the ALP to adopt an isolationist stance". Lloyd Ross later responded that "the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in New South Wales had undoubtedly been responsible for the overnight change in the policy of the Labour Party", presumably referring to Labor Party attitudes to Abyssinia.\(^{45}\)

Catholic Action: not 'political'

At the same time, however, the Sydney hierarchy was sensitive to charges of Catholic Action being used as a secret political movement. A pamphlet Catholic Action (published by the Protestant World Publishing Co.) gave an account of an alleged meeting of Catholic Guilds at the Cathedral Hall on 12 September 1937;\(^{46}\) the Knights had the Catholic Evidence Guild interview the Minister for Justice about it.\(^{47}\) The issue was not settled and Gilroy wrote in March 1938 to the Press denying that there took place on September 8 [sic] 1937 at St Mary's Cathedral Hall a gathering of "so-called Catholic Guilds". He also denied remarks attributed to the Apostolic Delegate and himself.\(^{48}\) Later in June, Dr Rumble, too, denied a report that Catholics were trying to penetrate government services:

\(^{43}\) *Freeman's Journal*, 7 April 1938, 10.
\(^{44}\) *Ibid.*, 28 April 1938, 10.
\(^{45}\) *Press*, 5 May 1938, 22.
\(^{46}\) SMC, KSC, 9/5/38, p.98.
\(^{48}\) *Press*, 3 March 1938, 25.
Every detail in it is sheer fabrication, whether concerning the fact of the meeting, the time and place at which it is alleged to have occurred, and the addresses supposed to have been delivered. I do not hesitate to brand the lot as a deliberate untruth.\footnote{Freeman's Journal, 2 June 1938, 20.}

It is not clear what prompted the attack. There is no doubt that Catholics had long pursued vigilance activity through the Knights; and many guilds had been established over the years.\footnote{The Guild of St Luke for medical doctors had been approved by the Archbishop in December 1933 (cf. Rf Murphy to Archbishop Kelly, 4 December 1933, Medical Guild file, SMA) and by 1935 had a membership of 116 doctors and medical students (cf. U. Bygott, With Pen and Tongue, 245). A guild for police, known as the Guild of St Christopher, was approved in 1935, to protect Catholic interests and members of the police force "who are frequently placed in imminent danger of losing their Faith by the activities of the Masonic Lodge and other non-Catholic organisations". (M.F. Conroy to Archbishop Sheehan, 1 July 1935, Craft Guilds file, SMA).} The attack painted these activities clumsily in a conspiratorial light so that Church leaders had no difficulty denying the details of the charges but they did not deny the existence of Catholic defence organisations with which the Protestant group was obviously concerned. The existence of the Knights' guilds was no secret. For instance, a Mission Guild had been established in the GPO in Sydney in 1936, and had "the approval of the Deputy Director of Posts and Telegraphs (Mr. Duncan), and the Superintendents of all Branches."\footnote{Dr D. Grieve to Archbishop Kelly [n.d.] in Postal Guild file SMA.} In his comment on the Postal Guild's Constitution, O'Brien wanted the words "to act and behave in a Catholic manner" further defined so that so general a statement could not be made to say anything anti-Catholic critics please "e.g. the depositing of non-Catholics for jobs according to the ideals alleged in the famous circular".\footnote{O'Brien to Gilroy, 13 April 1938, Postal Guild file SMA.}

With the experience of sectarian opposition to Catholic organisations, O'Brien was careful not to leave the Guild open to charges of sectarianism or improper political influence. Thus the ever-present possibility of sectarian attack acted as a major constraint on the type and scope of Catholic organisations which touched politics in any way.

A discordant note was introduced into the anti-communist mobilisation by Fr Owen Dudley, a noted English Catholic social thinker. He did not support an
anti-communist organisational crusade, but favoured winning public opinion. "All
these meetings against Communism are very bad; they are not needed", he said.
"All we Catholics have got to do is to give them the Pope's social programme. We
might win Communists over".53 He agreed that what had happened in Spain would
happen in every country where communists gained power, but saw influencing
public opinion as the best way to prevent such an outcome.54

There were some indications of continuing strain between the hierarchies in
Sydney and Melbourne at this time. Archbishop Kelly refused to approve the draft
of a new Melbourne catechism; Sydney would reissue an amended older catechism.55
And in May Gilroy took issue with a report from ANSCA which he interpreted as
demeaning to religious and priests. He wrote to Fr Keane that "this extraordinary
statement appears:"

It is the common experience that boys are greatly impressed and have their
interest aroused and enthusiasm stirred by visits from laymen closely engaged
in Catholic Action. Boys may look on Religious as "professionals" in the
matter of religious teaching.

Would you do me the favour of saying from whom emanates the statement "It
is the common experience"? To me it reads extremely badly that boys
attending Catholic Secondary Schools regard Religious as "professionals" - and
presumably, therefore, not worthy of such attention as laymen - in the matter
of religious teaching.56

There is no record in the Sydney Archives of a reply.

Eris O'Brien had a charter for the work he thought needed to be done by
Catholic Action. The mood of some Catholics also favoured militancy, stung as they
were by a feeling of alienation because of the reporting of the Spanish Civil War.
The Freeman's congratulated the Catholic papers in the English-speaking world for
"fighting misrepresentation and prejudice and the poison-gas of Red propaganda".57

53 Press, 28 April 1938, 15.
54 Ibid, 23 June 1938, 11.
55 Minutes of the Annual Low Week Meeting of the Bishops of the Province
of New South Wales, held at St. Mary's Presbytery, Sydney on April 28, '38, in LA
file, SMA.
56 Gilroy to Rev W. Keane SJ, 18 May 1938, LA file, SMA.
57 Freeman's Journal, 14 April 1938, 18.
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The militant anti-communist rhetoric drew on the Holy Name Society the accusation that it was a political organisation, and Father Vincent CP defended it. The Church supported no political party, but members of the Holy Name Society had a duty to join the study groups to know their faith; to "interest themselves in politics" and become good trade unionists, "not merely disinterested members"; and "they should seek to advance themselves in public life, in such fields as politics, local government" etc.\(^{58}\) In other words, as individuals, members were to assume their full responsibilities as citizens and unionists. This highlighted the ideological and organisational significance of the Holy Name, despite its non-political scope.

Many Catholic clergy, too, were alarmed at the perceived threat from communism, and the agencies of Catholic credibility bolstered the conviction that these were desperate days.\(^{59}\)

Elements in a social programme

It was not enough to be anti-communist: Catholic groups began to put together elements of a positive Catholic social programme, and the Campion Society organised a conference on the social apostolate at Riverview College on June 4-5 1938. Among the speakers, Mr Justice E. A. McTiernan P.C. spoke on "The Lay Apostle in the Scheme of Social Action", stressing that "it would be distortion of the nature of Catholic social action to describe it as a political party. The lay apostle is not a politician." Brian Doyle spoke on "Catholic Activity in the Field of Social Problems" and looked to Portugal for a model. Portugal was one of Doyle's favourite topics also in the *Fireside*\(^{60}\) he even printed an article by Salazar in February 1938.\(^{61}\) Doyle supported papal corporatism, hoping it would solve many social problems "without the ravages of revolution, or a return to a pre-medieval standard of living".\(^{62}\) He looked to the theory of "Solidarism"

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\(^{58}\) *Press*, 19 May 1938, 25.

\(^{59}\) cf. Mgr King's Address to Holy Name Society, in *Press*, 19 May 1938, 5.

\(^{60}\) cf. "The Significance of Salazar's Portugal", in *Fireside* August 1938, 10.

\(^{61}\) Olivera Salazar, in *Fireside*, February 1938, 11.

\(^{62}\) "Portugal Illustrates the Corporate State", *ibid.*, July 1939, 6.
expounded by the German Jesuits Nell-Breuning, H. Pesch and Otto Schelling for the foundations of Catholic corporatism. Doyle's idealistic view of corporatism failed to analyse political problems in Portugal and elsewhere. He continued to oppose Fascism; at a Catholic Evidence Guild lecture he said the "Church was just as opposed to Fascism" in its philosophy as to communism, and denied that Austria and Portugal were Fascist. Dr Rumble in June had also denied that the Church was allied with Fascism against communism: "the Church has had to denounce again and again the excessive claims by Fascism".

At the Campion conference, Fr F. Brady MSC spoke on "The Church has a Social Programme". He said "limitless Capitalism was to be curbed without having recourse to Communism or extreme Fascism"; in a corporate society, prices, production, and wages would be regulated by various guilds.

Brady's talk was reported by the Sydney Morning Herald as calling for a corporate State. The Labor Daily said that if the corporatism Fr Brady talked about was that of the Italian State, then it certainly would not help the poor: "the powers of property in the Italian type of corporate State are too strong to admit of the creation of the advantageous corporate State which he has in mind".

Dr Ryan, who spoke on "The Solution of World Problems can come only through the Spiritual Reformation of the Individual", was more favourably reported by the Labor Daily as condemning modern capitalism, communism and Fascism. The leader said the Labor movement welcomed the support of both the Right and Left to improve the lot of the working class: "Dr. Ryan has a philosophical difference with Communism. That dispute the Labor Movement leaves to be argued out between the Communist theoreticians and Dr. Ryan".

63 cf. "The Significance of Salazar's Portugal", ibid, August 1938, 10.
64 Press, 12 August 1937, 19.
65 Annals, June 1938, 172.
66 Fireside, 16 June 1938, 18.
67 "Catholic Social Action", Sydney Morning Herald, 6 June 1938, in LA file SMA.
68 "Catholics Confront Pressing Social Issues", Labour Daily, 7 June 1938, in LA file, SMA.
If it finds, however, that both a Catholic and a Communist are willing to support a Labor campaign to obtain more milk for under-nourished babies, it would accept such help from both of them, without asking philosophical questions.

The *Labor Daily* accepted co-operation between Catholics, communists and free thinkers, but not with Fascism since the "Hitler State leads logically to war".

The paper used the language of the United Front which papered over the growing cleavage within Labor ranks between communists and Catholics. Aware of the communist tactic to divide the clergy and Catholic laity, O’Brien alerted Gilroy to the *Labor Daily’s* "policy of pretence regarding the Catholic Church."

Sometimes trying to persuade people that the Church is working with the United Front; at other times castigating the Church. Today's effusion is the culminating point, from which it is suggested that the hierarchy and laity are in opposite camps. This is the real United Front propaganda policy.

He said that "We must expose the method objectively. The *Catholic Press & Freeman’s* will have an article on it during the week."

O’Brien also alerted Gilroy to appeals by the communist *Workers' Weekly* for Catholics to form a United Front with them in "the great anti-Fascist front." O’Brien strove all the harder to expose these tactics.

Catholic efforts to spell out a social programme revealed how thin were Catholic intellectual resources in Sydney. The Sydney Secretariate admitted that progress would be slow; the Secretariate "eschews publicity and clamour and is the enemy of hustling methods, growing silently and actively..." An initial step was to get priests into discussion groups so they would not be so "mystified". Women’s groups were being started through the Grail and the Theresians, and lectures were being organised. But the clergy were having trouble organising the Study Groups and the name was changed to "Discussion Groups. "To emphasise study more than discussion appears to give our laity the inferiority complex. Many of them hoped that they were finished with study when they left school."

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69 O’Brien to Gilroy, 26 August 1938, p.2, LA file, SMA.
70 O’Brien to Gilroy, 26 October 1938, LA file, SMA.
71 The Lay Apostolate, [paper circulated by the Sydney Secretariate, n.d. but date stamped 27 July 1938], in LA file, SMA.
stressed that the study groups were lay organisations under lay leaders. Only if these leaders were forthcoming could they compete with the communists.73 As yet they were not forthcoming and study groups were struggling.

The re-organisation of Catholic Action continually raised the question of the proper limits to Church activity in politics, and the issue was formally addressed by Mr Peter Gallagher for the Catholic Evidence Guild in August 1938. Gallagher cofounded the Guild with Frank Sheed, was a member of the Knights and as far back as 1931 had been lecturing on communism; Fr Collender at that time considered him an authority for the hierarchy.74 With both Gilroy and O'Brien present, Gallagher distinguished the different planes of spiritual and temporal authority: "The State is indeed sovereign in its own domain, but that domain is a subordinate one'. The Church had a direct power over spiritual affairs, and an indirect power over temporal, to preserve morals or protect the Church. The Church does prefer "and often command" that clerics 'refrain from active participation in politics', particularly "in purely party politics. And history shows that the forbearance of Catholic Bishops in political matters has been remarkable. The attitude of the Spanish Bishops towards the Civil War has been referred to." Gallagher claimed that the Australian bishops had refrained from political action even in the matter "of the grave educational injustice'. He admitted that the German bishops had taken an active interest in politics, "but that was not in party politics as such, but rather in broad political action calculated to improve generally the condition of the masses'. Gilroy concluded the evening by saying that those who attacked the Church for taking a part in politics were either speaking out of ignorance or were malicious.75 It was clear that the Church had a role in temporal affairs when it concerned major social or moral questions, of which the fight against communism was an outstanding instance. In the context of the struggle

73 cf. ibid., 4 August 1938, 20.
74 SCM, KSC, 4/11/31, p.31.
75 Press, 11 August 1938, 11.
against communism, then, Gilroy must have felt it was not "political" in the
excluded sense.

Disputes in Melbourne between the Campions and ANSCA

The disagreement between Melbourne and Sydney over Catholic Action was
made more complex by increasing friction in Melbourne between the Campions and
the Jocist supporters on the one hand and ANSCA on the other.

Relations between some of the Campions and Santamaria continued to
deteriorate after he was appointed to Catholic Action; the Campions had agreed
that he would continue to produce the Catholic Worker, but under the direction of
the editorial committee. About February 1938, Santamaria refused to print an
article, "Austrian Crisis Provides New Threat to World Peace", by Stan Ingwersen
and Kevin Kelly. Kelly said it was intended for publication at a time when the
Worker had an impact on those advising Prime Minister Lyons and leading members
of the ALP. Kelly stressed that the article represented "a categorical rejection of
Nazi racism and imperialism". He thought that for Santamaria and many others at
the time, "the real enemy was not Hitler but Stalin and strategically everything
had to be subordinated to the cause of resisting Stalinism." 76 It was then,
according to Kelly, that these Campions came to the realisation that Santamaria
was no longer primus inter pares, but assuming an authority over the Worker
which was not his. 77 If Maritain's distinction of planes' model (see below) were
accepted, Santamaria's position as an employee of Catholic Action confused his role
when he advanced personal political views; the Editorial Board and the Central
Committee directed Santamaria, who was at that time in charge of the
technicalities of publication, to publish the article in the next issue. 78

It did appear, but in small print. "This added fuel to the fire", Kelly said, 79 so
that by April there had been a "total and absolute breach between B.A. Santamaria

76 Kevin Kelly to the author, 26 August 1986.
77 Kevin Kelly, interview 5 July 1986, Tape 3.
78 Kelly to the author, 26 August 1986.
79 Kevin Kelly, interview of 5 July 1986, Tape 3.
and the committee'. Despite this "freezing of relations", Santamaria often came to meetings. According to Kelly, most Campions felt he should have resigned from the Worker since he was an employee of Catholic Action, and he should have separated his personal political activities from ANSCA. Kelly said that eventually the breach with Santamaria extended to the whole of the Campion Society, members of which feared that ANSCA wanted to take it over.

A key question concerned the role of Church organisations in social and political fields. Kelly and many of the Campions had followed Maritain's views in The Things That Are Not Caesar's: Maritain developed his thinking in True Humanism (first published in English in 1938) in an appendix called "The Planes of Action". In this model, the first plane of action concerned the spiritual and religious affairs where the Church was supreme. The second plane was that of the temporal world where the Church had no special competence and where Catholics acted on their own initiative without involving the authority of the Church. There was also a third plane of action, which really belonged to the first plane but which was concerned with the application of religious and moral principles in the temporal sphere. Here the social encyclicals had spelt out a Christian wisdom on social and political questions to guide Catholics in their independent action in the temporal sphere. Also, temporal questions such as education and marriage touched on moral issues which directly concerned the Church. "This is the plane of the spiritual as adjoining the temporal", Maritain said.

It is on this third plane as on the first that the laity is called to catholic action to collaborate in the apostolate of the teaching Church. It is on this third plane that they exercise a catholic civic action (in the strict sense of the word), when they intervene in political affairs in the defence of religious interests and in the strict degree demanded by that defence, which is not at all the same thing as working towards a political aim directed to the achievement of a certain conception of the temporal common good.

Such action belonged to the independent initiative of lay people. Maritain was arguing against Maurras' attempt to involve the Church in partisan political causes.

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80 ibid.
He distinguished between acting as Christian (proper to the temporal plane) and action which was Christian as such (proper to the spiritual plane). The teaching Church could prepare lay people to transform society but it was beyond its scope to "penetrate to the ultimate contingent realisations called for by the service of the secular common good". Maritain said Catholics should be united on the third plane, but insisted that it was for the bishops to determine what were truly authentic Catholic interests involved in this plane of action; it was not up to the particular judgment of any person or party "usurping the mission of speaking in the name of the Church, and sometimes thinking that they understand her interests better than she herself". Maritain warned that there would be constant difficulties till Catholics understood these distinctions more clearly.

The rule for the second plane of action was not unity but diversity; Catholics would naturally be divided over the application of moral principles, and Maritain considered it "dangerous" to impose an artificial unity on Catholics in temporal affairs. This was the kernel of the dispute between the Campions and Santamaria. Kevin Kelly said he did not think that Santamaria "ever" mastered these distinctions, nor did Mannix master them either. Mannix was in his mid-70s at the time ANSCA was established, not well informed doctrinally and, wanting to give lay people their heads, adopted a pragmatic approach. He supported ANSCA but exercised very little formal control.

This conflict over Maritain's strictures on the political role of Catholic organisations was spilling over into the debate about the form Jocism should take in Melbourne. Kevin Kelly and Paul McGuire favoured an autonomous organisation closely modelled on Belgian experience, while ANSCA wanted centralised control over it (see next chapter).

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82 ibid, 295.
83 ibid, 297.
84 ibid, 298.
85 Kevin Kelly, interview 5 July 1986, Tape 2B.
86 ibid, Tape 3.
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The Jocist alternative complicated the already strained relations between Sydney and Melbourne and challenged the Sydney approach. The leading Jocists Paul and Margaret McGuire, were frankly unsympathetic to Sydney’s Catholic Action. Dominic Paul McGuire (died 1978) had considerable standing in Catholic circles; the Press regarded him as "perhaps the most outstanding Catholic layman that Australia has produced, with the possible exception of Mr Frank Sheed."

Paul McGuire and his wife Margaret had founded the Catholic Guild for Social Studies in Adelaide in 1932. In the Adelaide Catholic paper, the Southern Cross, McGuire called for caution in setting up a national organisation and stressed the need for gradual development. This supported Sydney’s abstention from national organisation, but not for the Sydney reasons.

Mrs Margaret McGuire was also respected as an authority on Catholic Action. She wrote to Goodman on October 10, 1938 disagreeing with his approach.

Let me be frank - I do not think your pamphlet suitable for active Catholic Action units... we have no active C.A. units in Australia yet. Our groups are simply in the very initial stages of formation and here I think your present M.S. can be really helpful. In another three years we will be all revising our methods.

These comments must have been unsettling for the Sydney Secretariate. It was not seriously considering Jocism, but found its understanding of Catholic Action questioned.

Difficulties and Increasing Public Opposition

In addition to confusion and resistance among the priests, and difficulty in finding lay leaders in the discussion groups, Archbishop Kelly refused to fund the Secretariate and "insists absolutely on the imposing of parochial quotas at once."

This would be unpopular with the priests, but Gilroy could not prevent the parish

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87 Press, 18 August 1938, 21.
89 Southern Cross, 16 August 1938, [n.p.] in LA file, SMA.
90 Mrs Margaret Maguire to Fr Goodman, 10 October 1938, LA file, SMA.
91 O’Brien to Gilroy, 26 August 1938, LA file, SMA.
quotas, which Kelly announced on September 6, at least they were to be forwarded directly to the Cathedral and not to the Secretariate. 92

The Secretariate was still concerned about sectarian and political opposition to Catholic Action. Rev. E. Ruth had lectured in the Pitt St. Congregational Church on "If Christianity is Spiritual, why is Catholic Action capturing the Public Service?" O'Brien had arranged for two short-hand reporters to take notes. 93 A more considered attack came from Hector W. Dinning in The Antipodeans, which argued that Catholics were infiltrating the legislature and public service "with an obvious view to political influence. And the Church in Australia has a militant organisation" (presumably Catholic Action). "A religion that is so Fascistic and Totalitarian in its techniques is incompatible with toleration and democracy". For "the Catholic Church in Australia speaks with one voice - whether in upholding the Spanish Revolution, [or] in countenancing Italy's war of aggression in Abyssinia." This "spiritual dictatorship" created divisions between Catholics and others. 94

Such accusations were likely to make Sydney's hierarchy more sensitive about the political role Church organisations played, and to avoid anything that could be construed as party-political activity. Dr Rumble quoted the Pope that Catholic Action was non-political:

It must keep absolutely outside the tendencies of political parties, even of those to which Catholics belong. Its leaders should not be at the same time leaders of political parties or directors of political assemblies. 95

Sensitivities about a political aspect of the anti-communist campaign and Catholic Action were also raising problems for the Holy Name Society. Fr Thomas King wrote to Gilroy on 2 September 1938 asking for directions lest the spiritual aims of the Society be jeopardised "from misconceptions". 96 Gilroy settled the matter in his address to the Holy Name Society on 27 September 1938 saying that

92 Pastoral Letter on the Secretariate of our Lay Apostolate, 6 September 1938, in LA file, SMA.
93 O'Brien to Gilroy, 23 September 1938, LA file, SMA.
94 Extract from Hector W. Dinning, The Antipodeans, in LA file, SMA.
95 Freeman's Journal, 29 September 1938, 11.
96 Fr Thomas King to Gilroy, 2 September 1938, Holy Name file, SMA. Cf. also King to Archbishop Kelly, 9 September 1938, loc. cit.
"Clearly and simply" stated the aims of the Society were spiritual\textsuperscript{97} King responded that Gilroy's words would help the Society remain "in its true place as a spiritual force," and preserve it from distortions. "Often I have been really anxious about such dangers of 'misunderstandings'.\textsuperscript{98} Thus the Holy Name Society withdrew from any association with Catholic Action except in a purely spiritual sense. It helped mobilise Catholic men over communism but clarified its role as encouraging group solidarity in religious practice and refused to be drawn into political concerns.

Further attacks on Catholic Action came. Melbourne's Anglican Archbishop Head said "were its activities merely spiritual and tolerant of other Christians" there would be no problem; but it "is so often largely directed against the Church of England"\textsuperscript{99} Dr Rumble replied that Anglicans had nothing to fear from Catholic Action.\textsuperscript{100} It is not surprising, then, that the Sydney hierarchy was concerned to keep control of any activity of a semi-political nature, and especially were they loath to hand over such sensitive areas to control by lay people in Melbourne who knew little about the workings of the Catholic Church in Sydney.

**Disappointing results for the Lay Apostolate**

O'Brien's hopes for the Lay Apostolate were not being realised. He wrote to Gilroy: "My statement that I am fairly well satisfied referred mainly to the response by the laity in general." The "reaction of the priests has not been good"; some parishes had responded splendidly.

[Others] are half hearted and most are negligent. It would be a calamity if, once started, the movement began to languish. We could never resurrect it. It is my duty to bring this clearly before Your Grace, because this work will naturally become a big feature in your future administration.

\textsuperscript{97} Address to Holy Name Society, 27 September 1938, 4-5, in Holy Name file SMA.
\textsuperscript{98} Fr Thomas King to Gilroy, 7 October 1938, 25, in Holy Name file, SMA.
\textsuperscript{99} Press, 20 October 1938, 22.
\textsuperscript{100} cf. Freeman's Journal, 24 November 1938, 10.
O'Brien was worried by "hostile criticism", but noted that the Melbourne Secretariat was experiencing the same difficulty.¹⁰¹

While results from parish organisation, the clergy and training of the laity were disappointing, the organisation of anti-communist activists was making some progress: "Anti-Communist group functioning reasonably well, & at present extending activities according to a definite plan: an inner group is studying seriously". There were 42 discussion groups functioning in 17 parishes, with a start about to be made in six other parishes. "Fr. Dalton, Fr. Ryan have been indefatigable" in giving lectures to public societies.¹⁰² O'Brien was referring here to the work of the Ketteler Guild, a report on which said:

Early in the year the group of twenty-two (22) members (comprising the Ketteler Guild) were [sic] requested to provide lists of Catholic contacts in their factories and workshops. The intention herein was to set up a series of "cells" in factories etc. to provide active opposition to the propaganda and tactics of Communists.

A fortnightly series of lectures and discussions was organised, with lecturers being Frs P. Ryan, C. Kelly and Slattery, Messrs M. O'Donnell, Brian Doyle, J. Sivertsen and P.L. Cantwell. As well as attending to Catholic social teaching, the group investigated the "tactics and propaganda of Communism and the best method of answering the arguments of Communists and negativising their tactics in Unions". As a result of Guild activities, over 1500 copies of Fr Dalton's The Red Menace had been sold.¹⁰³

Discussion groups involved 120 people, and "there can be no doubt concerning the value of the work done in awakening them to the need for quiet concerted action against the common enemy". The result has been "active participation by our men in Union affairs, several of them securing election to Executive positions in Unions... proposals by Red sympathisers have been negativised". The report instanced effective opposition to sending money through the local Red Spanish

¹⁰¹ O'Brien to Gilroy, [n.d., but c. September 1938], LA file, SMA.
¹⁰² O'Brien to Gilroy, General Survey of Activities to Date, [n.d. but c. September 1938], LA file, SMA.
¹⁰³ Report on Work of Ketteler Guild, [n.d. and unsigned, but additions in O'Brien's handwriting], p.1, in LA file, SMA.
committee. Contact had been made with the Federal Secret Service, with an exchange of information. Achievements claimed included restoration of moderate control of the Tramways Union; a delegate secured for the Trades and Labor Council; and progress made in the Railway Workers.

[Members were] associated with the Moderate Labour Party (A.L.P.) and give a lot of time to organising to bring the moderates into power. They have succeeded in getting many A.L.P. Members to more strenuously fight for sane policy.

This illustrated the fine line that Catholic Action was trying to walk, avoiding party political activity but at the same time effectively resisting communist penetration of Labor.\textsuperscript{104}

By October 1938, 50 parishes had undertaken Catholic Action, while about 15 private groups had formed societies. "A few are on right lines; most are defective". To remedy this, O'Brien drew up a summary of the right method, and had been instructing leaders. The first priests' discussion group was to start on October 23.\textsuperscript{105} The course for leaders combined apologetics and social principles, with the main reading matter being Dr Coffey's \textit{Property for the People}, another pamphlet \textit{For Social Justice}, and \textit{The Rights and Duties of Labour} by Canon Kelleher.\textsuperscript{106}

The Sydney Archives hold very little information about the Ketteler Guild, which appears to have dropped the name. However there is further mention, presumably of the same group, in the reply to a survey requested by Cardinal Pizzardo, Vatican head of Catholic Action. In his draft reply dated November 12 1938, O'Brien said "It may be assumed that nearly one thousand men and women are actively participating in the work of Catholic Action through such specialised groups".\textsuperscript{107} In a revised report which O'Brien submitted to Gilroy for send to Pizzardo, O'Brien expanded:

A group of thirty men, members of the Trade Unions, who form themselves so as to be able to exert an influence upon other Trade Unionists, and to

\begin{itemize}
\item[104] ibid, p.2.
\item[105] O'Brien to Gilroy, 20 October 1938, LA file, SMA.
\item[106] Secretariat of the Lay Apostolate, [20 October, 1938], LA file, SMA.
\item[107] Draft reply to survey requested by Cardinal Pizzardo, 12 November 1938, LA file, SMA.
\end{itemize}
prevent, in so far as they can, the influence of Communism within the Trade
Unions. 2. A group of Catholic teachers within the State Education
Department to prevent the dissemination of Communist principles within the
Department. 108

Specialised groups, of which the above were only two, existed in 67 parishes
and comprised 124 parochial groups, with seven or eight members in each. "In
addition, there are about 80 young men in a specialised group of Catholic Action
known as the Campion Society" training in apologetics. O'Brien thought he was
making some progress with the priests, for he reported that "About 7 groups of
Priests have volunteered to meet regularly to discuss Catholic Action in small
groups". There was still no magazine for the Secretariate, and it was forced to
rely on ACTS resources; the author hoped for a magazine the next year (1939).

Gilroy wanted further changes in the reply to Pizzardo. The next version left
out mention of the anti-communist activity in the unions, except by "instructing
Catholic members in the principles of Social Justice and in the method of imparting
such knowledge." Anti-Catholic "principles within the State Education Department"
were to be countered by similar means. 109 Gilroy must have felt uneasy about
reporting their anti-communist organisation to Rome; he eliminated any reference
to it and simply reported educational aspects. The reports did not clearly reveal
the collapse of much of this organisation. 110

Conclusion

The first year of the Sydney Secretariate had mixed results. O'Brien had
embarked on a programme of rapid expansion through the parish networks, but was
confronted by apathy, non-comprehension and even hostility over finance from the
clergy. Only a small number appeared to pursue the new social dimension of

108 Another draft reply to Cardinal Pizzardo, [before 16 November 1938], p.2,
in LA file, SMA.
109 Reply to Cardinal Pizzardo, 27 January 1939, 2, CA file, SMA.
110 Santamaria recalled that the number of groups dropped about October 1938
from c.130 to perhaps 30. "The first indication that all was not well came on 20
October, when the regular Lay Apostolate section failed to appear in the Catholic
Pres [sic]. There followed six months of press silence, during which time the
Secretariat sought to salvage what it could." (Jory, Campion Society, 104).
Catholic Action, despite the concern about communism. O'Brien had problems financing the Secretariat, sensitive relations with Archbishop Kelly, and hence uncertainty about policy and control, and few resources on which to draw. He relied heavily on the Sacred Heart Fathers at Kensington, notably Frs Paddy Ryan and Leo Dalton who did much of the anti-communist public speaking and organisation. Dr Leslie Rumble remained out of the fray, always the scholar. Some of the Jesuits also played significant roles, especially Frs Richard Murphy and N. Hehir.

But there was no group of intellectuals on which Rumble could call as could Melbourne. Brian Doyle was the most significant emerging writer and activist in Sydney, but there was no wider group of Catholic intellectuals able to contribute significantly. Organisations, methods, goals and techniques had to be worked out as they went. There were few institutional supports apart from the parishes; no developed intellectual tradition of socio-political thought on which to draw; limited educational resources, few links with the social science disciplines and trained personnel; inadequate training for lay leaders; and few avenues for lay initiatives without clerical supervision. Organisation in the unions pressed tentatively ahead, sensitive to the political dangers but interpreting official Church policies and rhetoric of "no politics" in a party-political sense. It would seem that the threat from communism was so severe that clerical leaders did not doubt that Catholics had to campaign against it; this was an obligatory moral issue, not an issue of optional partisan politics. The initiative for most of this activity was coming from the hierarchy, the clerical activists and their lay associates. There seemed only a grudging response from most of the parish clergy and little practical response from the mass of ordinary Catholics, including most unionists. Melbourne, in contrast, by the end of 1938 had seen diocesan organisers of Catholic Action established in all archdioceses except Sydney, and in 13 of the 24 dioceses, though only five of these organisers were lay people.111

111 cf. Jory, op. cit., 95.
CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE CONSOLIDATION OF CATHOLIC ACTION IN SYDNEY IN 1939

Establishing the Sydney Secretariate had been a difficult task for Eris O’Brien and Gilroy, with Archbishop Kelly in his dotage but unwilling to entrust responsibility to Gilroy. Gilroy for his part was unwilling to take decisions without consulting the aged Archbishop. Kelly continued to see Catholic Action in terms of a traditional model of social and religious cohesion and showed little interest in expanding its scope to effect social change. His Pastoral Letter on Catholic Action in April 1939 made no mention of social and political issues, and dealt mainly with marriage problems as the key to maintaining religious allegiance and preventing leakage. The Secretariate in Sydney thus laboured under far greater difficulties than their colleagues in Melbourne who were assured of Mannix’s strong support.

The collapse of many groups in 1938 meant a period of reassessment for 1939, concentrating on training leaders. Nevertheless, the Secretariate claimed that 1800 men and women were enrolled in discussion groups, with 300 in State schools to give religious instruction to nearly 9000 children. Social and political topics were being systematically treated in the lecture series organised by the Social Science section. A priests’ magazine was to be sent out each month, though priests’ discussion groups were still “as difficult to establish, as they are necessary.”

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1 Brian Doyle, Interview 23 January 1986, Tape 2A.
3 ibid., 4 May 1939, 18.
4 ibid.
Continued strain between Sydney and Melbourne Secretariats

Relations between the Sydney and Melbourne secretariats continued to be strained. O'Brien wrote to Gilroy in January 1939 that he had agreed to attend a conference of Diocesan Directors of Catholic Action in Melbourne. He had received "a curt notice, addressed to all Diocesan directors," to attend on the day he was moving offices.

Also in the new Catholic Directory, page 222, I find that under the Melbourne Section we are included as being under the direction of A.N.S.C.A., just as any other diocese... [This] gives me the impression that they deliberately refuse to recognise our autonomy. I am afraid that, if I go to Melbourne, I shall be submitting to that opinion. As this is a matter that involves the principles of the Abp., I seek your Grace's advice as to whether I go or not.

O'Brien also asked Gilroy for approval for a Sydney diocesan Congress on the Lay Apostolate during the current year. "It would give an impetus & I should like Sydney to be first in this field". Sydney was determined to maintain its autonomy and control over Catholic Action. Gilroy made Sydney's position clear to the National Secretariat after Maher proposed a Catholic Rural Movement conference: "As you know I am not any longer a member of the Episcopal Sub-Committee, and I therefore feel that it would not be becoming for me to express any opinion about the matter".

There was also a difference in style between Sydney and Melbourne which was evident in the attitudes to public demonstrations. O'Brien alerted Gilroy "regarding a united Catholic protest for peace, & a massed demonstration at which the Victorian hierarchy & the Prime Minister will attend".

I think something will be expected from us. I don't see that it is necessary, considering that the Holy Father asked only for a united Catholic prayer crusade. However, we may be expected to do something spectacular on Victorian lines... Would Your Grace wish me to organise something on the same lines in Sydney. [sic]

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5 O'Brien to Gilroy, 24 January 1939, p. 2, LA file SMA.
6 Gilroy to Lay Apostolate Secretariate, 28 January 1939.
7 O'Brien to Gilroy, 14 May 1939, LA file, SMA.
Gilroy replied that "No one of the Hierarchy of New South Wales has suggested a spectacular display such as that mentioned in your letter... To me personally, such a display seems to be perfectly useless."\(^8\)

Differences between Sydney and Melbourne should not be overstressed at this stage. There was considerable overlap in Catholic thinking in the two cities, and interchange between them. The Campion Winter School held at Riverview College on 13-14 May 1939 included Melbourne speakers Raymond Triado and Denys G.M. Jackson, Sydney's Brian Doyle and Miss Norma Parker also spoke.\(^9\) The secretariats obviously shared their concern about the threat from communism.

**Continuing Disagreements in Melbourne: Jocism, Catholic Action and Politics**

While Jocism made very little impact in Sydney, in Melbourne it was hotly debated. In late 1938, Kevin Kelly, the lay patron of Jocism in Australia, objected to the interpretation of Jocism by ANSCA, which he felt wanted to adapt YCW too closely to its own purposes. A number of disagreements resulted. At the First National Conference of Diocesan Organisers of Catholic Action in February 1939, it was decided to establish Catholic Action on the basis of the Enquiry Method. This was a change from the earlier Campion style of group discussion. The Enquiry Method began with the experience of members, not with lectures or study papers. But the Conference decided to divide the units by age, sex and vocational grouping (e.g. doctors, butchers etc.) and not by class as Kelly wanted.\(^10\) Continuing disagreement about the interpretation and development of Jocism led to a breach between Kelly (with his associates Fr Patrick Ford of the Wagga Diocese, Frs Francis Lombard, Day and Murtagh) and ANSCA in July 1939.\(^11\) Hence attempts to establish YCW in Melbourne were made in some conflict with ANSCA.\(^12\)

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8 Gilroy to O'Brien, 16 May 1939, LA file, SMA.
10 David Kehoe, Draft History of the YCW, Ch. 3: 42.
12 cf. *ibid.*, Ch. 4: 23. Fr Lombard was to be a central figure in Melbourne YCW, but Fr Pat Ford returned to the Wagga diocese in 1940 and later taught in the Sydney seminary.
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There were difficulties, too, with the Catholic Boys' Youth Legion and the Catholic Young Men's Society (CYMS) which YCW and ANSCA were trying to refashion from within. The CYMS Legion was founded in November 1937 to train Campion-style activists to operate on YCW lines and win CYMS over to the new methods; by 1938 it had convinced more than 23 branches. Some in the CYMS, seeing their function in terms of social cohesion and not wanting to be displaced by the new YCW or ANSCA, resisted the YCW push, and invited Fr A.M. Crofts, the official chaplain of Catholic Action in Ireland, to help rewrite their constitutions so they could become official Catholic Action. Kevin Kelly debated with Crofts before an audience of Campions and demonstrated the advantages of the YCW methods. Kelly regarded CYMS as not sufficiently apostolic and narrowly defensive, maintaining religious practice by protecting men from the world. The YCW model wanted them instead to get out into the world and work-place and reform it. When ANSCA asked in mid-1939 that the Legion hand its best leaders over to national Catholic Action, the CYMS politely refused. Mannix declined to intervene to dissolve the CYMS.

Kelly differed from ANSCA in that he did not want YCW to undertake direct activity in unions or political parties. There was certainly "no specific organisation" like the later Movement in Melbourne;

[But it would be true to say that the conviction of most of the Campion Society that the bishops and official Catholic action should not involve themselves in day-to-day politics, except where the superior interests of Christianity and ethics were involved, was not completely shared by B.A. Santamaria.]

Kevin Kelly and Paul McGuire developed their ideas on Jocism in an ACTS pamphlet Young Christian Workers (July 31, 1939), which also included sections by

14 cf. ibid., 60.
15 cf. ibid., 61.
17. cf. ibid., 115.
19 Kevin Kelly to the author, 26 August 1986, p.3.
Canon Cardijn and his assistant Fr Kothen; it sold 15,000 copies in six months.\textsuperscript{20}

It quoted Pius XI that YCW was "the perfect type of Catholic Action", and said it was the apostolate of workers to workers, influencing their work "milieu" and fighting for human and social rights.\textsuperscript{21} It was opposed to both capitalism and communism, Kelly said,\textsuperscript{22} but was not a "defensive organisation" sheltering young Catholics from a cold, bad world by gathering people from all classes and holding them by means of "sport, a sort of study and entertainment".\textsuperscript{23} He stressed that the workers have "to give themselves a thorough knowledge of Catholic principles", not simply be instructed by others,\textsuperscript{24} and they should be organised by parish and class, he said, not by vocational group.\textsuperscript{25} He did not speak clearly about the autonomy of the workers' groups, though it was implied.

However, Cardijn's article, "The New Paganism", could be interpreted in a way which supported ANSCA's position. Cardijn called for "the general mobilisation (under the authority of the hierarchy) of all the Catholic forces in the crusade against what is really a new barbarian invasion".\textsuperscript{26} "National unity and control must be regarded as conditions essential to the prestige and efficacy of Catholic Action".\textsuperscript{27} How this was to be reconciled with YCW autonomy was not clear. There was much in Jocism to appeal also to those who favoured a ghetto-cohesion model of Catholic organisation. McGuire said Jocism had "practically stopped" leakage from the Faith in Belgium,\textsuperscript{28} so many youth were involved in YCW. Hence there were many elements in Jocism from which to choose.

In 1937 Paul McGuire had gone to Europe to study Catholic Action and met Fr Kothen. With J. Fitzsimons, McGuire wrote \textbf{Restoring All Things} (1939), "the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} cf. David Kehoe, \textit{op. cit.}, Ch. 3: 21.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Kevin Kelly (ed), \textit{Young Christian Workers}, ACTS, 31 July 1939, 2.
\item \textsuperscript{22} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 3.
\item \textsuperscript{23} \textit{ibid.}, 4.
\item \textsuperscript{24} \textit{ibid.}, 6.
\item \textsuperscript{25} cf. \textit{ibid.}, 31.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Canon Cardijn, "The New Paganism", in \textit{ibid.}, 14.
\item \textsuperscript{27} \textit{ibid.}, 12.
\item \textsuperscript{28} Paul Maguire, in \textit{ibid.}, 33.
\end{itemize}
first major publication on Jocist-inspired Catholic Action written in the English language.\textsuperscript{29} It reflected a conscious shift away from the Christian Democratic tradition and a disavowal of political activity. Catholic Action was restricted to the aim of incarnating "the life of grace in the social milieux."\textsuperscript{30} Elsewhere, however, the authors followed Civardi closely. They deplored the fact that the Christian Democrats "had tried many times to give a political character to their movement, ignoring in this the express instructions of the Holy See".\textsuperscript{31}

A certain group of Italian Catholics were considering the possibility of forming a Catholic political party, but Pius X, in view of the situation between church and state in Italy, would not permit that they should set up a party which pretended to represent Italian Catholicism.\textsuperscript{32}

The authors resented the accusation made by the Fascists that Catholic Action was being run by leaders of the Partito Popolare Italiano\textsuperscript{33} and inferred that the Italian model of Catholic Action implied a complete rejection of the Christian Democratic movements.

Some of the confusion about Catholic Action stemmed from the papacy itself. Pius XI had acted as patron and protector of Cardijn's YCW, calling it "an authentic form, a perfect example of that Catholic Action which is the leading idea of our Pontificate".\textsuperscript{34} Yet as Cardijn said, YCW was to be autonomous and run by young workers themselves. It was "imposed neither by the Church nor by the State". Cardijn said:

Have we been witnesses to this truth in the working masses, for the working masses? The Church must be that witness, and there lies the problem of Communism and the YCW. I have no faith in anti-Communist refutations and organisations, no more than I have in the anti-Fascists [sic] slogan of Communism.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{29} David Kehoe, op. cit., Ch. 3: 28. During 1939, McGuire lectured in the United States with Gerry Herman Derry, a full-time speaker hired by the US Knights of Columbus to campaign against communism, Fascism and socialism. Derry also appealed to help Jewish refugees. Cf. Christopher J. Kauffman, Faith and Fraternalism: The History of the Knights of Columbus, 1882-1982, 333-6.

\textsuperscript{30} Paul Maguire and J. Fitzsimons, Restoring All Things, 15.

\textsuperscript{31} ibid., 105.

\textsuperscript{32} ibid., 114.

\textsuperscript{33} cf. ibid., 121.

\textsuperscript{34} cf. Challenge to Action, Addresses of Monsignor Joseph Cardijn, 88.

\textsuperscript{35} ibid., 107.
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The YCW was to provide, along with many of the Campions and the Catholic Worker, a focus of dissent to the policies and centralised control of ANSCA. Some little attention was given to YCW in Sydney in 1939: the Crusader published some articles; Peter Gallagher noted that Jocism emphasised that the workers regulate their own activities, encouraging them to defend social and industrial conditions. He was not clear about their autonomy and hence their relationship with official Catholic Action. YCW spirituality differed markedly from that promoted in Archbishop Kelly's Sydney; through their efforts to humanise the work place, YCW workers were to evangelise other workers. This was a radical departure from the strategy of the ghetto. The YCW was able to make very little headway in Sydney.

Meanwhile in Melbourne, Kevin Kelly was afraid that ANSCA would be recognised by Belgium YCW as the official YCW in Australia, and asked to have himself designated official YCW correspondent, which occurred in October 1939. However, Kelly soon joined the armed forces; the leading spokesman for Jocist autonomy against the centralised control of Catholic Action departed the scene, as did many of the Campions, and Santamaria began to extend his influence over Catholic groups and organisations, and to mobilise Catholics for anti-communist political and union activity. For this he had the strong support of Archbishop Mannix, but the status of the work was ambiguous: was it Catholic Action or was it the independent action of Catholics? Santamaria's position as an official of Catholic Action confused the issue.

There was also some tension with other organisations, notably the Legion of Mary, which grew rapidly in 1938. The Legion wanted parish-based groups of all classes and did not want to join in a Catholic Action campaign to reform

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37 Peter Gallagher, "Jocists in Action", ibid, September 1939, 315 ff.
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society. To stop competition, ANSCA asked the hierarchy to restrict the Legion to visitation of hospitals and goals, and census-taking. Nor were its members to give material aid, which remained the prerogative of the St Vincent de Paul Society and the Catholic Women's Social Guild. The Legion emphasised quite a different message from the YCW, especially unquestioning obedience to the clergy as opposed to Jocist autonomy. The Legion was not granted official status in Catholic Action, and was admitted as an auxiliary only in 1942.

A Lay Director for Sydney

The Sydney Secretariate, meanwhile, continued its work: throughout July, it organised lunch-time talks on social issues; articles appeared in the Press under its banner; it had wide exposure in Catholic circles for its lecturing and writing and was beginning to build up a group of commentators. Reflecting this progress, O'Brien wanted to appoint a layman as Director, and wrote to Gilroy in July 1939 suggesting that Brian Doyle be appointed on a salary of about 400 pounds a year.

Doyle is the one man in Sydney who is adapted for the job. He is a holy man, indefatigable in giving all his spare time to Catholic Action. He is the best debater in the Catholic Club; pleasing, gentle in manner, but firm in character. He writes splendidly - his experience on "The Fireside" shows that. He can hold his own with anyone on International Affairs and Economics. He is a B.A. of Sydney and has gained his Diploma of Public Administration with high distinction. His moderation, [sic] plus all the academic distinctions, would, I think, assess him as a much more desirable man than Maher or Santamaria in Melbourne - which is saying much. He has read and studied more than these men - for the reading of new books was part of his job at the Library.

With Doyle Director, O'Brien could be Ecclesiastical Assistant "(until you get a better one);

I could then devote myself to training a dozen or so men specially, and to writing the pamphlets, which so many others seem disinclined to write. There would be ample work for both of us. Anyhow, that was Your Grace's intention at the beginning - I had to get the work going; I did so, and now it is so big, that unless more specialised direction is given it will fall back."
Kelly approved of Doyle’s appointment as Director. Gilroy was to interview Doyle on 25 July, and “suggested a period of probation during which Mr. Doyle come in contact with the parochial clergy. After 3 or 6 months of this see about a permanent appt.” This was a moment of real triumph for O’Brien. The Secretariate was now firmly enough established to have a lay director, and allow him to drop back from the forefront where he was somewhat uncomfortable. O’Brien was renowned for his lack of practicality in administration, or even normal day-to-day living. In the Catholic Action office, his poor organisation resulted in a huge backlog of mail, with the disruption of normal operating procedures; mail sometimes went for periods unread and unanswered. To appoint a lay director also recognised a greater role for laity in Catholic Action, but events in Rome within a few weeks were to end this move.

Sustaining the response to Communism

Lang’s control over NSW Labor was crumbling and defectors were drifting to the rebel Heffron party, till by June 1939 it had seven members to Lang’s 25. A paper “prepared by Ross etc. and those who are managing the Guild” [presumably William Ross, an influential Knight] warned of communist influence in the Heffron group. And a confidential Memorandum on Current Labour Politics warned against the “left” nature of the Heffron, members of which had raised money for the Republicans in Spain and welcomed volunteers home as heroes. “There appears to be nothing but danger for us in the Party as it is now carrying on and there are no visible signs of any turn to the ‘right’.”

The Lang section firmly opposed communism, and was in sympathy with Catholic claims “it carried ‘state aid’ in education on its general platform but not on its ‘fighting’ platform” since it could not be used for an election. However, the

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44 cf. Letter of O’Brien to Gilroy, 21 July 1939, LA file, SMA.
45 cf Nairn, The ‘Big Fella’, 298.
46 Report, dated 24 May 1939, LA file, SMA.
47 Memorandum on Current Labour Politics, 1 June 1939, p. 1, in LA file, SMA.
Memorandum warned that the Lang section was suspected of insincerity about the education issue, and it recommended that Catholics remain in the Party to bring about changes. Many Labor members opposed Lang, though there was no one yet strong enough to replace him; moderates were trying to rebuild the Party into a "genuine Labour Party".

If our forecast of a sound moderate Labour Party be realised, it might also cause the subversive elements to build up a strong "left" or Socialist Party in all States. However, if this happens the position of Catholics will be made much more clear to them - and make them choose a more definite allegiance.49

In August, however, the two parties were brought together under Federal suspices,50 and on September 5 Lang was replaced as leader by William McKell.51

It seems clear that the hierarchy were suspicious of Lang, and by no means regarded him as its champion against communism. They were aware of his self-interest in the anti-communism he promoted, and were not drawn in to his political campaign. Lang was a major part of Labor's problem preventing reconstruction of the Party. Catholic anti-communism derived from other and deeper causes.

O'Brien did not want alliances with just any anti-communist political groups and rejected co-operation with a Greg Thomas (and others) because "he has Fascist views, and has actually discussed this matter with Eric Campbell, whom he admires." I believe he has definite political objectives, and may later advocate force as a remedy of present evils.52 Gilroy replied "Your attitude of independence from all political organisations is absolutely correct".53

Despite the approach of war in Europe, both the clergy and the Catholic press continued to highlight the dangers from communism. Fr Forrest in August warned workers that communism imposed "an economic slavery far more cruel than the labouring classes, even in the worst days, ever experienced." He quoted Pius XI

48 ibid., 2.
49 ibid.
50 cf. Nairn, op. cit., 301.
51 cf ibid., 302.
52 O'Brien to Gilroy, 9 August 1939, LA file, SMA.
53 Gilroy to O'Brien, 9 August 1939, LA file, SMA.
that about communism there was a diabolical conspiracy of silence by "various occult forces".⁵⁴ Again the anti-Catholic conspiracy theory appeared graphically confirmed by events.

The leading Melbourne and Sydney Catholic opinion-makers shared a common perception of an immediate threat from Communism. The Sydney Secretariate said:

Communist devotees are about to launch an intensive crusade, which has been planned for several months... The real objective, as stated, is "to form a mighty people's front". The period of the crusade is set from September to the end of November.⁵⁵

Other voices cautioned against this anti-communist crusading mentality. Mrs Paul McGuire in her Handbook for Catholic Action Groups said that "Catholic action is not... something to be hastily grasped at, like a weapon in a moment of emergency."⁵⁶ It was to equip Catholics for daily life in factory or office.⁵⁷ She was influenced by Cardijn on this, who had warned: "Simply to be anti-Communist is not enough to save the working-class and the Church."⁵⁸ Cardijn acknowledged that "There is a very strong element of truth in Communism... - the fact that Marx gives to the working-class a mission to fulfill; a redemptive mission; a messianic mission."⁵⁹

However, the anti-communist campaign continued to take on the air of a crusade, though much of it was still mere rhetoric; anti-communist organisation in the unions proved minuscule and the Ketteler Guild faded out of the picture. Jim Lang insisted in interview that there was no Catholic organisation of unionists before the War: "If anything had been in action of any consequence I would have been following it up".⁶⁰ The fear of communism had gripped the Catholic elite, but not until after the War did it become a matter of urgency among the general

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⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 20.
⁵⁷ cf. *ibid.*, 12.
⁵⁸ Canon Cardijn, *The Hour of the Working Class*, 16.
⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 17.
⁶⁰ Jim Lang, interview 2 July 1986, Tape 3B.
Catholic body. Daniel Gold said lay people began to accept the need for action in the unions only when they saw control of the unions, and hence of the ALP, going by default to small groups of communist militants; the main energy for the struggle was to come not from the clergy but from alarmed unionists and ALP members.

O'Brien continued to see his role as helping form, public opinion about communism and he denounced the insincerity of communist propaganda; its hypocrisy was exposed "by the recent staggering alliance with the Fascist Axis". He warned of the "dread importance within Australia" of the Nazi-communist pact. He disputed the Bulletin's view that the "Australian Reds and Pinks were thunderstruck by Stalin's somersault", and viewed Nazis and communists in league together, as the title for an article indicated, "The Nazi-Communist Party in Australia. Give it a Name". He rebuked Australians for their lethargy: "nothing will arouse Australians and the Australian press, unless it be an immediate, patently evident and fully developed local menace to our personal security".

He said he "wrote those articles more to enlighten myself than others", and to expose communist activities dictated from Moscow; he listed 13 front organisations functioning openly in Australia. He told Gilroy that Lang's paper the Century had at last come out openly for repressive activity against local communists. "I tried to get the Editor to do it a fortnight ago".

Archbishop Gilroy shared the view that communism posed an immediate threat to Australia:

"Here in Australia a similar attack from the rear will be made by the forces of Communism as soon as the leaders of the movement judge the moment to be opportune... The aims of Communism here are identical with those of

61 Jim Lang, untaped interview 2 July 1986.
62 Daniel Gold, interviewed 2 July 1986, Taped 2B.
63 Press, 31 August 1939, 15.
64 ibid, 7 September 1939, 14.
65 ibid, 21 September 1939, 14.
66 cf. ibid., 28 September 1939, 14.
67 O'Brien to Gilroy, 22 September 1939, LA file, SMA.
Moscow, whence local Communism receives its inspiration and its instructions.\textsuperscript{68}

The Secretariate delighted in drawing attention to subversive statements by communists, as when J.B. Miles, secretary of the Communist Party, was reported in the \textit{Smith's Weekly}: "Should England become involved in a war with Russia, Australian Communists will side with Russia and do everything in their power to guarantee her victory."\textsuperscript{69} What more striking evidence of treachery could the Secretariate desire?

The Secretariate denied that "Catholics have been asked to capture public positions and control of the State. Such advice has never been given to Catholics and never will be."\textsuperscript{70} O'Brien warned that "Catholic Actionists should not misconstrue or exaggerate the notion of 'action' in their organisation. The fundamental activities of Catholic Action are prayer, Christian example, and co-operation with the mind of the Church."\textsuperscript{71}

He also charged Australian public opinion with insularity and deplored Australian Protestant bodies not protesting against persecution in Germany, as well as "their lack of concern, and their occasional partisanship, for the ideals of Communism."\textsuperscript{72}

This strong anti-communism remained linked with events in Spain, and Catholic sympathies for Franco remained firm despite his link with the Fascists. During 1938 and 1939 support for Franco became more explicit in the \textit{Fireside}.\textsuperscript{73} It even ran an article by Franco,\textsuperscript{74} and reported on "Vertical Syndicalism in Spain".\textsuperscript{75}

\textsuperscript{68} "Communism is Preparing to Strike... Archbishop Gilroy Warns Australians" in \textit{Press}, 28 September 1939, 17.
\textsuperscript{69} ibid., 12 October 1939, 12.
\textsuperscript{70} ibid., 28 September 1939, 14.
\textsuperscript{71} ibid., 12 October 1939, 12.
\textsuperscript{72} ibid., 5 October 1939, 18.
\textsuperscript{73} cf articles by J.M. Hollis in \textit{Fireside}, July and November 1938, and January 1939, all p. 16.
\textsuperscript{74} cf. ibid., March 1939, 6-8.
\textsuperscript{75} ibid., August 1938, 19.
but it was the corporate structure which Doyle supported, in line with papal thinking, and not Fascism.

Most of the Catholic press strongly supported Franco as well. Paul McGuire, who had been a representative of the Duke of Wellington's Committee for the Repatriation of Spanish Children, said he had strong objections to totalitarianism of any form but "I saw few signs of it" in Spain; he thought the whole tradition of Spain made totalitarianism impossible. More lyrically, Fr John McMahon wrote of Franco:

In the forgiveness of enemies he has been prodigal. A typical gesture of Franco was that of raining down bread on the starving populace of the big cities of the Red zone on the 4th. October. From his private chaplain comes the information that Franco never lets pass a day without the recitation of the Rosary. The drama of Spain faded from Catholic consciousness as Franco neared victory, much to the relief of Catholics:

Archbishop Gilroy summed up the paens of praise featured in the Catholic press. Franco, he said, was "a man who seemed to be raised up by Almighty God." He was a "military genius the like of whom has rarely been seen in the history of the world." At least in Spain, the Catholic champion had won against communism. This interpretation of the basically religious nature of the conflict in Spain remained dominant in the Catholic literature. As Hilaire Belloc put it:

Not to understand that the Spanish Civil War has turned on religion, not to understand that it was a crusade for Catholicism on the one side and stubbornly to crush down Catholicism on the other, is to remain essentially ignorant of the whole affair. The conclusions for Australia were drawn by the Worker in late 1939:

And the day will come within our lifetime when that work of peaceful penetration is completed and the Red Terror is unleashed on Australia. If our Christian workers realise the menace and oppose Communism now in the office and factory, Australia may be preserved from the fate of Russia, Spain and Poland. If they remain lethargic and uninterested, nothing but a miracle can save our nation or our Faith.

76 Press, 29 September 1938, 11.
77 Annals, August 1939, 261.
78 Pauline Kneipp, op. cit., 365.
79 Press, 2 March 1939, 11.
80 Worker 46: November 1939, 2.
Attitudes to Nazism and Fascism

The German model of Nazism was never considered compatible with Catholicism, and was condemned in the strongest terms. The mock morality trials of priests by the Nazis in 1936 were described by the Press as "monstrosities of justice" which would fool no one.\(^{81}\) During 1937 and 1938, the paper continued to report the conflict between the Church and the Nazi State: the attempted arrest of Cardinal Faulhaber,\(^{82}\) the anti-religious programme of the Hitler Youth,\(^{83}\) and the Vatican condemnation of Nazi doctrines.\(^{84}\) Dr Rumble summed up Catholic views when he said: "It is the reign of the Cross that we want, not that of the Swastika".\(^{85}\) Fr Richard Murphy SJ discussed the unfortunate role of Cardinal Innitzer in welcoming the Nazis to Austria and the politics and persecution that followed.\(^{86}\) In January 1939 the Press considered the anti-religious persecution in Germany to be worse than anything the Bolsheviks had done.\(^{87}\) In October 1939, the Press reported the role of Nazi concentration camps;\(^{88}\) many priests were among those being sent to Dachau and Buchenwald camps.\(^{89}\) Far from Nazism presenting any sort of a model for Catholics as an anti-communist dictatorship worth emulating, with the approach of war it began to displace communism as the main enemy of Catholicism.

Italian Fascism was more difficult to assess. It continued to attract the Press as a model for Australia. Mussolini was not perpetrating the mass violations of human rights as was Hitler, and Mussolini had earlier opposed Hitler. The Press

\(^{81}\) Press, 3 September 1936, 23.
\(^{82}\) ibid, 9 September 1937, 31.
\(^{83}\) ibid, 21 July 1938, 13.
\(^{84}\) ibid, 22.
\(^{85}\) Annals, June 1938, 172.
\(^{86}\) Richard Murphy SJ, "The Church in Austria and the Anschluss", in ACR, XVI, 1 (January 1939), 53ff.
\(^{87}\) Press, 5 January 1939, 22.
\(^{88}\) ibid, 5 October 1939, 29.
\(^{89}\) ibid, 14 December 1939, 16.
distinguished it sharply from Nazism, and admired its economic progress.\(^{90}\) It also admired other authoritarian rulers.\(^ {91}\) Inconsistently, it argued some weeks later that "it is only among peoples, if any there be, devoid of all political capacity, that even a temporary dictatorship can be justified".\(^ {92}\)

As late as May 1939, the *Press* was still printing reports favourable to Fascism. Peter Gallagher wrote a generally favourable account of Italian Fascism which was "greatly to the benefit of the Church", though he objected to the worship of the State.\(^ {93}\) Even in September 1939 the *Press* defended Mussolini against what it regarded as Masonic-Jewish attacks for his suppression of Freemasonry. Fascism was not to be confused with Nazism: "In truth, the Fascist ideal is akin to democracy, while Nazism is practically a duplicate of Communism". Fascism was a temporary move to replace parliament till Fascism was itself replaced by a vocational order, a system which de Valera declared to be the most democratic in modern conditions.\(^ {94}\)

Nazi Germany now presented a more immediate threat to Australia than communism. There appears to have been no dissent among Catholics about the need to resist Hitler. Doyle regarded Nazism as "the most massively organized system of human regimentation, spiritual propagandizing and enforced apostasy, that civilization has known".\(^ {95}\) As for the hierarchy itself, oddly enough, Pauline Kneipp says that "No member of the hierarchy was reported in either the Catholic or daily press as having publicly condemned the axis powers in the years preceding the war";\(^ {96}\) but Dr Rumble was critical and Eris O'Brien called Hitler a "pathological case" whose ideals were pagan and the opposite of Catholicism's.\(^ {97}\)

\(^{90}\) *ibid.*, 23 January 1939, 28.

\(^{91}\) *Worker*, February 1939, 26.

\(^{92}\) *Press*, 20 February 1939, 11.

\(^{93}\) *ibid.*, 4 May 1939, 13.

\(^{94}\) *ibid.*, 14 September 1939, 24.

\(^{95}\) in *Fireside*, September 1939, 6.

\(^{96}\) P. Kneipp, *op. cit.*, 507.

\(^{97}\) *ibid.*, 508.
It was felt to be the end of an era, with the outcome unknown. Phyllis Taylor Burke wrote in "Social Catholicism" in the Fireside:

There is one point on which all economic theorists seem to be in agreement that Capitalism as we know it is in its death throes and that the future will develop a more enlightened form of collectivism.98 She saw the way ahead as through co-operatives and the establishment of corporations which she, too, distinguished from those of Fascism.99 The co-operative ideal was vigorously promoted by Doyle in the Fireside.

The Second World War was to alter Catholic Action in Sydney, but most of that story lies outside the scope of this thesis. The Archbishop of Sydney, in a pastoral letter, "The Kingdom of Christ on Earth", blamed the war on the pursuit of pagan and material vanities:

The vindication of international rights and self-defence constitute a just recourse to deadly arms when reason and justice are deliberately overborne by perverted State assumptions. To suffer and to die in such conflicts merits an everlasting crown of sainted glory.

Presumably, then, this was a just war. He directed each family to report to their parish priest to see what work of Catholic Action they could follow.100

But the threat from communism was not forgotten. The Archbishop issued another letter in December which said that "Atheistic Communism aiming at dominion everywhere has established active agencies in Australia. These aver their identification with the Soviet organisers of Moscow."101 The sense of an immediate threat from communism remained into the war years.

Achievements and Limitations of Sydney’s Catholic Action

Meanwhile, the Sydney Secretariate had been making uncertain progress. O’Brien reported to Gilroy on August 22 1939 that it had absorbed older functions and developed new ones:

98 Phyllis Taylor Burke, "Social Catholicism", in Fireside, November 1939, 8.
99 ibid, 7.
100 Press, 2 November 1939, 15.
101 ibid, 7 December 1939, 19.
ii. Three Priests' discussion Groups and a Catholic Action magazine published monthly for Priests-Assistants (80 subscribers).

iii. Catholic News Service, weekly page in Catholic newspapers, lectures on radio and in public halls.

iv. Camp for Catholic Young Men, laymen's retreats.

v. Catholic Action groups within Trades Unions and the University.

vi. Three hundred and thirty Lay Catechists who teach catechism to 8000 children in the Government schools.

vii. Court and Prison Visitation Guild.

viii. Specialised training in Catholic Action Evidence Methods in all Secondary schools and most Primary schools.

Parochial activity embraced 109 parishes "in which there are 232 specialised Discussion groups with a membership of 1800. Parochial Catholic Action Councils are also functioning". The auxiliaries comprised the Campion Society (130 members); the Grall Youth Movement (900 members); Theresian Young Women's Movement (200 members); University Newman Society; and the Catholic Women's Association.¹⁰²

Just as O'Brien thought that he had established Catholic Action satisfactorily enough to hand over to a lay director, there was an unexpected reversion to clerical control. Within six weeks of Doyle's appointment, O'Brien wrote to Gilroy that reports from Rome indicated that the new Pope, Pius XII, "seems inclined to modify C.A. somewhat".

Though the changes are specified for Italy, that country will be likely to become a model for us all. The mind of the new Holy Father is evidently to reduce the administrative rights of the laity, placing the movement under priests appit [sic] by the Bishop. Anyhow, the diocesan branches become "more important" than the Central co-ordinating office.

O'Brien concluded that "This change in Italy (evidently expressing the mind of the Holy Father & the Commission) seems to vindicate Archbishop Kelly's attitude to Sydney Catholic Action".¹⁰³ Thus O'Brien abandoned the idea of a lay director.

With these setbacks to his hopes, O'Brien wrote a few days later to Gilroy that "I sometimes get very despondent about Catholic Action prospects in Sydney." He noted, too, that the Catholic press was in poor condition, with many people boycotting Catholic papers, which "sop up articles like a sponge and never even say thank you. They have rejected Brian Doyle's articles". Doyle had also offered

¹⁰² O'Brien to Gilroy, 22 August 1939, LA file, SMA.
¹⁰³ O'Brien to Gilroy, 13 September 1939, LA file, SMA.
his services to 2SM free each week to speak on international affairs, but the offer was not accepted.104 O'Brien's top man could not get a proper hearing from the Sydney Catholic media, a striking difference from Melbourne where Denys Jackson had been broadcasting on 3AW's Catholic Hour for some years;105 talks by other lay people, too, were common there.

O'Brien's annual report, Observations on Catholic Action in Sydney (dated 28 December 1939), summarised activities. Dr Ryan was writing and working at the University and teachers' colleges; and the Ketteler Guild was also still functioning, though its regular training courses had been interrupted by the illness of Fr Dalton. "There is no one better adapted to influence men in the trades unions than he is, and he is much needed now."

One of the most important groups within Catholic Action consists in 30 highly qualified professional and business men and women, who as experts in their subjects, are undertaking research into the great social problems of to-day, in order to report on these and to indicate the method which a Catholic plan of social re-construction should follow. Already their progress reports [not in Archives] manifest their efficiency and thoroughness. They hope to present papers for discussion at a public Catholic Action Congress, which I hope will receive the Archbishop's approval in October 1940.106

O'Brien reported that the Secretariate "exerted considerable influence in government departments", particularly that of Education and other bodies engaged in social work. It has also "kept in touch with a few members of parliament and with all organisations which are engaged in combatting Communism".107 There were disappointments, too, especially the response from the parishes, where only about 30% of the groups were still functioning.108 O'Brien remained despondent as he neared the end of his term as Director.

O'Brien was sensitive to comparisons with Melbourne and was concerned that "several of the laity (particularly the Campions)" were "becoming critical of Sydney's lack of public demonstrations etc. as compared with Melbourne's more

104 O'Brien to Gilroy, 15 September 1939, LA file, SMA.
105 cf. U. Bygott, With Pen and Tongue, 82.
106 Observations on Catholic Action, 28 December 1939, p. 3, LA file, SMA.
107 ibid., 4.
108 ibid., 5.
public and spectacular policy." He asked for a full-time lay assistant who could attract other Catholic activists: "Under a Priest-Director the danger of undue predominance of the laity could be obviated. However, such suitable laymen are rare; Brian Doyle is the only one I could suggest."

On the other hand, if a priest, possessing more organising ability than I have, were available, his appointment would be preferable, because I find an inclination among the laity to expect quick and sweeping changes and to subject religious procedure to the same methods as those adopted nowadays in business and advertising propaganda.109

O'Brien continued in early 1940 to press with Gilroy for the appointment of Doyle to a role as director of Catholic Action,110 but without result.

Sometime before this, O'Brien took Doyle to see Archbishop Kelly. "I was astonished that day I saw him at the palace" for he was clearly out of contact with reality and needed full-time nursing care. Doyle thought that O'Brien wanted him to see why he was finding it hard to formulate policies in Catholic Action and how tentative it all had to be under the old archbishop.111

O'Brien himself was to be soon replaced as Director of Catholic Action by Fr A.R.E. Thomas.112 Thomas had been ordained in 1931, been curate at Rozelle and at the end of the 1930s was emerging as a central figure in the Archdiocese. In 1939 he was made Director of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, a sensitive appointment in the light of the withdrawal of the organisation from Melbourne the year before.113 He later headed the Catholic Youth Organisation and established the Catholic Welfare Bureau; he had obvious organisational talents and a very forceful personality. O'Brien was appointed Vice President of Catholic Action.114

109 O'Brien to Gilroy, 31 December 1939, LA file, SMA.
110 O'Brien to Gilroy, 1 January 1940, in LA file, SMA.
111 Brian Doyle, interviewed 22 January 1985, Tape 2B.
112 cf. Minutes of Fourth Meeting of the Consultative Board of Catholic Action, 24 September 1940, in LA file SMA.
113 cf. J. Waldersse, A Grain of Mustard Seed, 383. In 1963 Thomas was appointed Bishop of Bathurst.
114 O'Brien to Gilroy, 16 September 1940, in LA file, SMA.
Thus Sydney Catholic Action ended the decade on a somber note. The possibility of lay directorship was blocked; the attempt to base the structure on the parishes proved disappointing, and there was considerable resistance to the Secretariat from the Catholic papers and clergy. On the other hand, it had moved beyond the limited scope of the Association of Catholic Action, adopted new tasks in social and political affairs and something was being done to counter communist influence.

The Southern Cross Library did not play as important a part in the development of Sydney’s Catholic Action as had the Central Catholic Library in Melbourne. In 1937, the Southern Cross Library had been sold to Pellegrini’s and moved to Roma House 543 George St. Doyle, as a trained librarian, had catalogued the library in his own time and was using money provided by Ulysses Pellegrini to buy key books on Catholic social thought overseas. Doyle saw that the library was well stocked with the latest Catholic literature.\textsuperscript{115} The number of subscribers had increased from 820 in July 1937 to 1086 by May 31 1939. Ryan reported that the percentage of "serious" books borrowed from the library had increased from 7\% in 1932 to 30\% in 1939;\textsuperscript{116} he gave a breakdown into fiction and general titles of its holdings:

\begin{verbatim}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1 1937</td>
<td>4500</td>
<td>3539</td>
<td>8039</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 30 1938</td>
<td>6327</td>
<td>4260</td>
<td>10587</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31, 1939</td>
<td>6560</td>
<td>4588</td>
<td>11148</td>
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This compared with Melbourne’s holdings of over 10,000 books by 1932, with a circulation of nearly 24,000 in 1930.\textsuperscript{117}

Organisations which could compete with Catholic Action were not very welcome in Sydney at this time. Despite repeated requests for approval, the Legion of Mary was kept out of the Archdiocese till 1942, and then only as “an auxiliary

\textsuperscript{115} cf Brian Doyle, interviewed 6 February 1986.
\textsuperscript{116} Fr P.J. Ryan, Report on Southern Cross Library, 28 June 1939, p.6,
\textsuperscript{117} cf. O’Farrell, \textit{The Catholic Church}, 317.
of Catholic Action as the parochial unit. Though it seemed ideally suited to Archbishop Kelly's style of Catholic Action, Gilroy was more concerned about communism, and did not want the Legion to compete with existing societies.

Where Sydney lagged behind Melbourne was in having a group of Catholic intellectuals and writers ready at hand such as the Campion Society had provided there. In Sydney, the Campion Society started some years later, and did not have the opportunities or support their colleagues in Melbourne had. But by the end of the decade it had a hundred members in twelve groups. It was not till 1939, however, that one of their members, Brian Doyle, spoke on 2SM. The 1939 report lamented that no more than six Campions had been writing in the Fireside. However, Campions were spreading their activities to other fields: two helped form a film group, some played a role in the Catholic Art Guild, the Vigilance Committee and the Catholic News Service.

Both Melbourne and Sydney produced Campions of intellectual calibre, but the Melbourne men tended to be older, more established in their careers and intellectually more vigorous than their Sydney colleagues. In Sydney, some Campions regretted that discussion papers were poorly prepared and that the level of intellectual exchange slumped. The 1939 Report regretted recent "chaotic formlessness" but hoped that members would seriously apply themselves to study. While the Sydney Society continued to grow and expand after the War, the Melbourne group then faded.

Conclusion

The close of the 1930s signalled an end to an era in the Sydney Catholic Church. Archbishop Kelly died in 1940, and Gilroy assumed full control, pursuing

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118 Gilroy to Fr Rafferty 10 March 1942, Legion of Mary file, SMA.
119 Campion Report for 1939, Campion file, SMA.
120 ibid.
121 cf. Brian Doyle, 23 January 1985, Tape 4A.
122 Campion Report 1939, in Campion file, SMA.
similar policies on Catholic cohesion with the notable exception of the campaign against communism.

Within the Labor Party, radical elements had been marginalised and Federal intervention finally put an end to their hopes of dominating NSW Labor. In a bid to regain power, Lang had soon turned against the McKell Party, particularly attacking the fact that communists were in its ranks; in April 1940 he formed the Australian Labor Party (Non-Communist). An opposing State Labor Party was formed, with Hughes vice-president and Evans secretary. The verdict of the electorate on all this was clear; in the September 1940 elections, Curtin’s ALP won 32 of the 75 seats, with over 40% of the vote; Lang won four seats; and the Hughes-Evans group won none, receiving only 6.61% of the vote. The Lang group accepted the terms of the official Party in February 1941, and in May NSW Labor swept to victory, with the Hughes-Evans section winning only 5.64% of the vote. The transition from Lang to new moderate Labor leadership had been successful.

Gilroy in some ways became more vigorous in his efforts to strengthen Catholic cohesion than Kelly, for in the early 1940s most Catholic organisations were brought under centralised clerical control. The main agents of this change were Frs A.R.E. Thomas and William Clark. In 1945 Thomas and Fr John Leonard centralised the youth into the Catholic Youth Organisation (CYO), which provided a Catholic cultural environment, especially with the hope that these Catholics would marry each other, but also to provide social support for Catholics to practice their faith and be apostolic. Kelly would have much approved of such a strategy to maintain Catholic cohesion and avoid mixed marriages. In later years the CYO reached a peak of 10,000 financial members and fielded 143 football teams and almost as many netball teams.

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123 cf Nairn, op. cit., 305.
124 cf. ibid., 306.
125 cf. ibid.
126 Daniel Gold, interviewed 2 July 1986, Tape 2B.
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In choosing the CYO model for Sydney, the hierarchy was rejecting YCW which would have meant greater lay autonomy and a working class orientation which favoured industrial militancy for workers' rights. There was a further factor: Fr John Leonard, who was familiar with Jocism from Europe and had met Cardijn several times, argued against YCW because it divided the sexes; he wanted young Catholic men and women to mix together and so promote Catholic marriages. He also did not think the Jocist display of flags, uniforms and parades suitable for Australia.\textsuperscript{127}

The other main agent of centralised clerical control was Fr W. Clark, whom Gilroy regarded as an expert in finance. In November 1939, Gilroy drew many Catholic organisations under the umbrella of the Catholic United Services Auxiliary (CUSA). The Knights refused to be drawn into this centralisation of Catholic Action; in June 1940 they decided "that our association with [CUSA] as an Order was at an end",\textsuperscript{128} though they co-operated with Gilroy in other areas.\textsuperscript{129}

P.S. Cleary died in 1941. He was almost blind, and with his support for Fascism and dictatorship a grave embarrassment to the seemingly few Catholic democrats who read his paper. He had remained at the \textit{Press} for far too long, and his death allowed the \textit{Press} and the \textit{Freeman's Journal} in 1942 to be amalgamated into the \textit{Catholic Weekly}.\textsuperscript{130}

Not only did O'Brien step out of a directive role in Catholic Action, but many of the personnel also left as they were caught up in the War. Doyle joined the armed forces but was requisitioned to Canberra where he worked as an assistant to a Federal Cabinet secretary. He continued to edit \textit{Fireside} from Canberra and after

\textsuperscript{127} Mgr John Leonard, interviewed 4 July 1986; cf. also D. Gold, interviewed 2 July 1986, Tape 2B.
\textsuperscript{128} SCM, KSC, 3/6/1940.
\textsuperscript{129} cf. SCM, Supreme Quota, Report till June 30 1939, 2.
\textsuperscript{130} At the time the circulation of the \textit{Press} was about 6,000, that of the \textit{Freeman's} 12,000, and of the \textit{Catholic Weekly}, about 20,000. Cf. Karl Smith, interviewed 28 May 1986, Tape 1B.
the War returned to Sydney to work in the Catholic Weekly; in 1958 he moved to Brisbane to become editor of the Catholic Leader.

The coming of war did not awaken among Catholics the hysteria or concern as had the Spanish Civil War. There was little of the jingoism of the First World War, the complications of Irish politics, resistance to conscription, the anti-British sentiment or fear of entanglement in a war for foreign capitalists. The manifest threat from a common enemy broke down some of the feeling of alienation many Catholics felt; questioning of Catholic loyalty stopped with the War.131

Where did this leave Catholic fears about communism? The non-aggression pact between Hitler and Stalin verified Catholic claims that Soviet communism was also to be feared and fought as another enemy of civilisation; but Catholics no longer found it so necessary to denounce Moscow as public opinion swung against the Soviets. In Catholic eyes, this vindicated their stand on Spain. But Catholics could not now relax; had not the communists boasted that in a war against Russia they would revolt? Nationalism and patriotism in a time of war concurred with Catholic views that communists were traitors. Hence instead of ending Catholic fears about communism in Australia, the Soviet-German alliance aroused suspicion that communists would try to use the disruption of war to launch a revolution, or at least sabotage efforts to win it. The 1941 German attack on Russia and the consequent alliance between Russia and the Allies did nothing to reduce Catholic fears either. Increasing sympathy with the Russians alarmed those Catholics who thought that local communists would manipulate public opinion into sympathy for communism.

Mr Bert Cremeon of the Victorian ALP called on B.A. Santamaria to help fight communism in the unions.132 Santamaria, at the time vice-director of ANSCA

131 cf. Mgr McCosker, interviewed 4 July 1986, Tape 2B.
132 Kevin Kelly insisted that some Campions, especially Frank Keating, had for some time been urging Santamaria to organise against communism in the unions, to rouse Catholics to act on their own initiative, to attend union meetings and defeat the communists; he did not see Catholic Action being urged to take a controlling role (cf. Interview 5 July 1986, Tape 3A).
and secretary of the National Catholic Rural Movement which he had set up in 1939, discussed the matter with Mannix, and began to organise from 14 August 1941. In his autobiography, he says that the "non-Communist leadership of the ALP was, in fact, half-defeated already" by 1939, and that defeat of the non-communists looked inevitable. In fact, as Santamaria notes, anti-communist activity had begun before Cremeans's suggestion, since he had been writing for the Rail Worker and helping industrial workers fight communism since at least May 1938. In Australia at the Crossroads, Santamaria plainly states that "The Movement was thus actually born in 1938."

In 1943 he formally founded the Catholic Social Studies Movement, adopting from the communists the principle of "democratic centralism" and being funded with an initial 3000 pounds by Mannix. The relationship between ANSCA and the Movement was never publicly clarified at the time, and the impression was given that loyal Catholics were obliged to support the Movement. This anti-communist organisation appeared to operate under the umbrella of Catholic Action. Santamaria remained a paid official, in contradiction to the formal Italian model and against the misgivings of the Campions. This mode of proceeding suited not only Mannix; it was not opposed in principle by the Sydney hierarchy either. The dissension between Sydney and Melbourne was over control. In Melbourne the question of control was not at issue because of the special relationship between Mannix and Santamaria, something akin to a mentor one. In effect, Mannix gave Santamaria finance, a free hand and the support of his considerable prestige and patronage. The relationship lasted till Mannix died in 1963. Santamaria was thus able to fashion his own version of Catholic Action in the CSSM: in contrast with Civardi's

133 B.A. Santamaria, Against the Tide, 71.
134 Ibid., 73.
135 Ibid., 74.
136 Cf. Frank Maher to Bishop Dwyer, 23 May 1938, LA file, SMA.
137 B.A. Santamaria, Australia at the Crossroads, 84.
138 Santamaria, Against the Tide, 75.
139 Ibid., 74.
model, it was run largely by himself according to "democratic centralism," not by the clergy; against Jocism, it insisted on centralised control in an anti-communist campaign, not worker autonomy in working-class solidarity. It was a hybrid form of Catholic Action developed pragmatically to meet the communist threat as he judged best.

In Sydney, the development of Catholic anti-communist activity faltered, though some anti-communist activity in the unions continued with the support of Frs Paddy Ryan and Leo Dalton. Fr A.R.E. Thomas in 1941 said that despite the favourable reports he had been given about Catholic Action, many study groups had disbanded:

I understood that approximately 12 months before I came into this department, there had been a number of people grouped together for special work, e.g. research, immigration [sic] etc., but as far as I can find nothing further was done in the matter.140

It would seem that these groups were not then functioning. The anti-communist groups had relied on Fr Dalton, and when he fell ill they appear to have disintegrated. It is certainly unlikely that Eris O'Brien, with his poor organising ability, could have worked closely with such groups; and even Fr Paddy Ryan was a speaker and university man rather than as an industrial organiser at this stage.

The question arises: did ALP Catholics turn to the Church for help in the fight against communism in the unions and Party, or did the clergy draw Catholic Laborites into this struggle? No evidence has been found to suggest that ALP members formally approached the Church for help. And as we have seen, Church leaders were suspicious of Lang and avoided being caught up in his machinations.

An answer needs to consider two things in the response of Catholics. First, there was a wide disjunction between Catholic religious concerns and the secular politics of Catholics at this time. And secondly, a significant group of Catholics were key figures both in the Catholic religious sub-culture and in the Labor Party.

140 A.R.E. Thomas, Report of first six months of 1941 [sic], 15/7/41, p. 3, LA file, SMA.
What the threat from communism did was to expose this cleavage between their religious and secular worlds as inadequate. Pragmatist by tradition, Laborites suddenly found they needed ideological weapons and social philosophy to counter communist arguments. At the same time, Catholic opinion-makers realised that the ghetto strategy which forbade Catholic organisation in the unions made the Church vulnerable to communist attack. It was not simply that different groups, of Catholic Laborites and of Church opinion-makers, realised that they had to join forces, though this was part of it; it was also a realisation that the cleavage in Catholic consciousness was unsatisfactory. What was in question was the divorce between affairs or religion and politics; while drawing on their ghetto cohesion, Catholics had to organise against communism.

The events leading up the Split in the Labor Party in 1954 do not need repeating here. Working from Movement records, Gerard Henderson has documented some of the Church politics surrounding the Movement. It is worth noting that despite the difficulties between Sydney and Melbourne, so alarmed was the Sydney hierarchy about communist activities that it agreed to join CSSM (but not ANSCA) under Santamaria in 1945, when the CSSM won some notable union victories.

Frank Maher had gone overseas in 1945 and after his return played no further role in ANSCA from the end of 1946. He considered that ANSCA had performed its role and that there was nothing more he could do. He saw it as a temporary information and training centre which had developed YCW techniques, and that was all that was to be done; it was up to the local groups to continue their own work. By 1945, he said, ANSCA was “winding down”.

In Melbourne in the 1930s, the YCW influence acted as a check on concentrated anti-communist mobilisation because of Cardijn’s refusal to endorse a crusading approach to communism, and because of his emphasis on YCW autonomy. But in Sydney there was no such YCW influence and little else to provide a similar

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141 Gerard Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops.
142 Frank Maher, interviewed 13 August 1986, Tape 1B.
check, apart from the fear of sectarian or political reaction. Secrecy might avert that, and the campaign against communism was launched under clerical control. Thus militant Catholic anti-communism took a different shape in Sydney than in Melbourne, and attempted to fight communism in the unions independently of Melbourne and, on an official basis, earlier. The factors in the Sydney response showed notable differences in the attitudes and styles of the hierarchy and Church; different intellectual concerns; and quite different histories, particularly in relations with Labor and other parties.

There were also common points: the realisation that a ghetto strategy could no longer protect Catholics from the new enemy of communism; a fear that communists who were active in the unions were trying to take over Australia, and would eliminate the Church; and a conviction that only determined Catholic organisation under the banner of Catholic Action would roll back the anti-Catholic onslaught.¹⁴³ Once the emergency was over, however, the different assumptions on which Catholic Action rested in the two cities re-emerged. The Sydney hierarchy grew alarmed about the political effects of Movement activities in Sydney, which placed in jeopardy the relationship between the Church and the ALP. Political action beyond that strictly necessary to contain communism revived memories of the fiasco over the Democratic Party in 1920 and the bitter sectarian reaction which followed. Moreover, it was against the tradition of the Sydney Church to hand over control of its political affairs to laymen, especially a group taking orders from Melbourne. Early warning that Sydney would not follow Melbourne in the Split had been signalled by deteriorating relations between the Sydney and Melbourne Catholic Action leaders and hierarchy in preceding years. In this light,

¹⁴³ Colin Jory's assessment of Sydney Catholic Action is far from the mark: "The Sydney Church was simply not ready for Catholic Action. Intellectually and psychologically it still lived in a nineteenth-century context where the main enemies of the Faith were Protestantism and Rationalism, not in the twentieth century where the main threat to Christianity came from Secularism and Totalitarianism. It armed the faithful with traditional apologetics, but perceived only dimly the need for Catholic social idealism". Cf. Jory, op. cit., 106.
the Sydney refusal to follow Melbourne was not surprising. When Rome intervened in 1957 to separate the Movement from Catholic Action in Melbourne, however, it did the same in Sydney, thus ending the Sydney version of the Movement as well. Rome thought it improper for Catholic Action to be engaging in direct industrial and political activity. Maritain had the last word after all.
CHAPTER TWELVE

PREACHING A NEW CRUSADE

Before attempting an explanation for this complex process of social change during the 1930s, the questions posed in the introduction must be recalled to lead briefly into a discussion of other factors which are less obvious or obscured by the methodology adopted: how are we to explain the distinctive attitudes of the Sydney hierarchy and Church to social and political questions up till the 1930s? What had the Sydney Church inherited from overseas Catholic cultures? What ideas and movements during the 1930s were picked up from overseas? What shape did they take in Sydney and why? And how did they differ from those in Melbourne?

The distinctive attitudes of the Sydney hierarchy and Church to social and political questions cohere clearly around a policy of ghetto defence resulting from the deep sense of alienation felt by the Catholic community, a feeling which was repeatedly reinforced by bouts of sectarianism. Forced on to the defensive during the early part of the century, the Sydney Church tightened its cohesion by means of the ghetto strategy, and in a careful division of influence relegated thought and activity of a social or political nature to the Labor Party; the Church withdrew to its ghetto. The cleavage between the institutional Church and the secular world deepened, reinforcing the clerical authoritarianism, intellectual narrowness and timidity of the ghetto.

The Sydney Church had inherited little in the way of a lively intellectual tradition from overseas by the 1930s, apart from the scholasticism general throughout much of the Catholic world; mandatory and of little influence in Australia, it could help defend the Church but could not readily engage
contemporary secular thought. However, apart from official Church social philosophy lay a resilient ideology embedded in the social movements of ghetto Catholicism. From Ireland had been inherited the defiance of a people and culture asserting themselves against the progeny of historic religious and national enemies. Indeed, the early Irish bishops in Australia accentuated and exacerbated the cultural conflict between Catholicism and the dominant Anglican / Protestant society. The continuing recruitment of Irish clergy during this period helped maintain the ghetto strategy and its Irish animus, despite the drift of many ordinary Catholics to social assimilation. Though the increasing number of Australian clergy and the campaigns of the Manly Union were eroding Irish control of the episcopacy, the ghetto strategy and the deeper influences in the social movements of Catholics were to endure. Despite the presence of French religious orders in Sydney, the Church there inherited little from overseas Catholic cultures other than the Irish.

During the 1930s, this began to change as social and political crises in Australia and overseas forced Sydney Catholics to give some attention to new ideas and social movements. The intellectual narrowness of the Sydney Church inhibited any deep or sustained interest in Catholic ideas or movements overseas until the threat from communism threw Catholic opinion-leaders into panic. The writings of Chesterton and Belloc helped fill the void for a few, though the Oxford Social Guild and European or US writers generally received less attention. Many Sydney opinion-leaders inclined to writers who reinforced the combative worldview of social crisis and alienation, particularly Belloc for his histories and Dawson for his apocalyptic view of history. The ideas of more substantial Catholic intellectuals overseas carried little weight in Sydney except where they reinforced the beliefs of the embattled ghetto culture and social movements which sustained them.

Events overseas singled out communism as a major threat to Catholicism, especially during the Spanish Civil War. Under pressure from growing ideological conflict in Australia and realising the need to win over public opinion, some
Catholics began an earnest study of the ideas of communism, and of the alternatives to capitalism, particularly corporatism and Fascism. These efforts usually promoted Catholic solutions in an apologetic way, and lacked intellectual depth; their recommendations were often too exotic for Australian conditions. But the threat from communism deeply engaged the fears and anxieties which had made the ghetto strategy possible in the first place. Sydney clericalism and loyalty to the papacy led the hierarchy to adopt the Italian model of Catholic Action, and involved it in an anti-communist campaign which blurred the previous boundaries set by the Church on political action. The Depression had loosened the ghetto strategy, but the anti-communist campaign could help revive cohesion and strengthen the Church.

Much of this response was shared by the Melbourne Church: the alarm about the threat from communism, the sense that it was a present threat in Australia, the reliance on religious populism allied with labour populism, and the need for tighter Catholic cohesion and mobilisation. But in Sydney, Catholic Action was more clerical than in Melbourne. Sydney was far more reluctant than Melbourne to risk public political entanglements, and its hierarchy wanted to keep firm control over the anti-communist movements lest they prejudice other Church interests, particularly the relationship with the Labor Party. Mannix could rely on his working-class populism to reinforce the allegiance of many Catholics, while the Sydney hierarchy, which was more attuned to the middle class, preferred quiet diplomacy through the Knights of the Southern Cross and other groups. Mannix also encouraged more lay independence, especially of those who were within his orbit. Underlying the difference in styles between Melbourne and Sydney lay a history of acrimonious disagreements between Archbishops Kelly and Mannix.

So much is clear, and provides ready answers for our initial enquiry. But the choice of a chronological structure has obscured or separated elements or influences which also need to be clarified or related in this process of social change. How well did Sydney interpreters understand Catholic social movements and ideas
overseas? What were the functions and characteristics of the conspiracy theories which so dominated Catholic thinking? How did they become linked to the call to crusade, and why at the Spanish Civil War and not earlier? How do we explain Catholic certainties about an imminent communist attack on the Church in Australia, and their belief that they were involved in an apocalyptic struggle between the forces of good (the Church) and the forces of evil (communism)? What do these indicate about the social psychology of Sydney Catholics, and what light do theories of collective paranoia shed on this process? This conclusion will also discuss the development of Catholic Action as an adaptation of the older social movement of ghetto Catholicism, and relate it to currents of working-class populism, Irish and Australian nationalism, the Labor Party and its reformism. Lastly it considers why this process in Australia differed from that in other countries.

This thesis has clearly established a consistent pattern of highly selective interpretation of overseas events and social theory by Catholic leaders and opinion-makers. The documentary evidence shows that Catholic leaders and writers only vaguely understood the background to Catholic ideas and movements overseas. Rather than analysing them in their contexts to determine their precise meaning, many commentators took them at face value and tried to harmonise them into a coherent Catholic ideology of social reform. Quite striking is the apparently universal failure to appreciate the contradictions between Christian Democracy and Catholic Action. The authoritarian implications of Catholic Action or of corporatism were sometimes recognised but never properly analysed. Nor was there any attempt to examine seriously how appropriate various models would be in the Australian context. If lack of cultural links and the language barriers help explain the poor understanding of European movements and ideas, they throw no light on why the debates in the United States and England, as that between the Catholic Social Guild and the followers of Belloc and Chesterton, were not adverted to. In the Australian literature there is practically no sense of the conflict between the more
scholarly writers of the Guild, with their emphasis on empirical analysis, and the more dogmatic "Chesterbelloc", with its decided lean to authoritarianism. Australian writers harmonised divergent streams of overseas Catholic thought, and interpreted them in terms of their own cultural experience.

While the Church was authoritarian, unintellectual and largely confined to its "state of siege", the identification and application of "Catholic social principles" was untidy, inconsistent and contradictory. Many Catholic leaders confidently claimed that if only Catholics would follow the Church's social teaching and apply the principles, the world could be changed for the better. But when it came to identifying these social principles, matters became more confused. All accepted the basic defence of private property as according with common sense, the writings of the Distributists and the teaching of the popes. Yet capitalism was often condemned along with socialism. Was it capitalism in itself or abuses of capitalism? The rhetoric was not always clear and, like currents of Labor populism, at times rejected capitalism as a system. The Melbourne Catholic Worker carried on this tradition. More careful writers specifically attacked the abuses of capitalism.

P.S. Cleary in his attacks on the politicians and policies of the Labor Party often invoked Catholic principles to sit in judgement on his antagonists, claiming the higher ground of moral principle against expediency. The difficulty was who would interpret Catholic principles and expound them; to whom should one look for guidance? In theory, the papacy was the supreme authority, but Roman statements still needed to be interpreted and applied. Even in the case of Catholic Action, there was no one model to draw on, since Italian Catholic Action itself incorporated inconsistencies and contradictions. Civardi could present his rationalisation and outline of what Catholic Action meant, and offer it for emulation outside Italy; but Pius XI had preferred Jocism with its worker autonomy even to the clerically controlled Italian models. And how did one explain the elements of the Christian Democratic movements which remained in Italy, protected under the umbrella of Catholic Action? The forms of Catholic Action recommended
by the papacy were the product of competing influences in Italy and incorporated many disparate and conflicting features. Adding to this complexity was the admiration for the earlier success of Christian Democracy in Germany and elsewhere, which Catholics in English-speaking countries often considered more relevant to their countries than Catholic Action.

The official Roman positions on Church and State rested on Leo XIII's teaching on religious toleration and the Catholic confessional State. Though these doctrines underlay the condemnation of socialism and much of the attack on liberalism, Catholics in Australia rarely adverted to them, and instead defended their own civil liberties and practice of religious toleration. The formal papal and Roman models were seen as inappropriate in the Australian context, and interpreters in many cases drew from them what they thought reasonable and ignored the rest.

So rival interpretations of Catholic ideals on society and politics arose in Australia: P.S. Cleary, predisposed to reject the Labor Party and the entire parliamentary system, eventually argued for a Fascist regime and dictatorship in Australia; Doyle and others argued that the papal proposals were a condemnation of Fascism, and instead favoured a regime based on the "true democracy" of corporatism; others argued for a Christian Democratic interpretation of Catholic teaching. So there was no clear model or interpretation of Catholic Action to guide the response to communism in Australia. Most Catholics ignored the theories and stayed within the Labor movement.

As Henry Mayer pointed out in Catholics and the Free Society in 1961, such a process of interpretation is not simply one of logical deduction, or identification of principles and application; historical, sociological and psychological factors have a bearing as well. As we have seen, these factors in Australia had shaped the social consciousness of the Catholic sub-culture in a particular way; it is not too

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exaggerated to say that it displayed strong symptoms of paranoia. The original "troubles" in Ireland, the Cullenite campaign of the early Irish bishops in Australia, the education debates and the conflict with secularism and sectarianism had forced Catholics into a mentality of encirclement and a position of ghetto defence. By the 1930s, the ghetto structure was clearly not simply imposed on Catholics by outside forces, though they could reinforce it, but was the result of historical influences and a chosen pastoral strategy.

It is useful to consider the development of this ghetto consciousness in the light of Murray Edelman's theory of symbolic politics, in which he views "myth" as a story which gives events and actions particular meaning for a large group of people.\(^2\) One can locate such a "myth" among Australian Catholics in this feeling of persecution. In contrast to the American founding myth of a chosen people coming to conquer and tame a land of plenty, the myth of the Australian Catholic sub-culture became that of a defiant group valiantly resisting social and religious oppression. Catholics' assertiveness arose from their sense of insecurity, exposed as they often felt to discrimination in employment and education, and lacking a social or intellectual culture which could compete with that of the "Protestant Ascendancy". Fear and anxiety about their place in Australian society help explain occasional Catholic bravado and triumphalism and why many lay Catholics tolerated the authoritarianism and clericalism of the time, though some undoubtedly resented it; many seem to have felt the need of strong authority figures.

This feeling of persecution left the Catholic community vulnerable to misperceptions about world events. If Catholic authorities overseas blamed Freemasons, Protestants or capitalists for various problems, and if leading Catholic spokesmen in Australia did the same, it was difficult for individual Catholics to question such interpretations of persecution; how could one find the empirical

evidence to examine or gainsay it?\(^3\) The sub-culture thrived on enemies. There was all the more reason to concur with this conspiratorial worldview when the Australian experience lent credence to it, as after conflict with secularists over the schools, Protestants in the Loyal Orange Lodge and sectarianism.

Especially during the Spanish Civil War, Catholics considered themselves in a propaganda war, defending the Church against its enemies; they were deeply suspicious of criticism and inclined to dismiss opposing views as hostile propaganda. To further lock their thinking into a polemical context, these opinion-makers thought that the views of the Vatican, particularly as expressed in encyclicals, were binding in faith on Catholics. This meant that they lacked the intellectual freedom to examine proposals such as corporatism more critically; and religious loyalty inclined them to interpret Catholic proposals as favourably as possible. They became polemists to defend what they considered Church interests and ideas, some of which, as in appeals for social reforms and wider distribution of property, reinforced Labor reformism, while other ideas, such as corporatism, were not productive.

An instance of collective paranoia?

This myth of persecution, which was part of a distinctive Catholic ideology\(^4\) was reinforced by sectarian conflict, and the ghetto strategy was possible because so many Catholics felt genuinely alienated and oppressed. As throughout the Catholic intellectual world, this encouraged the growth of anti-communist conspiracy theories. Conspiracy theories are no monopoly of Catholics, of course. Toch argues from the experience of many groups that conspiracy theories serve

\(^3\) Edelman says that for such a myth it is not empirical evidence which is important, but the social sanction. Indeed, "tentativeness in reaching conclusions and systematic care to check hypotheses against empirical observation" represent the polar opposite to the process of myth formation and adherence. *Ibid*, 15. What more powerful sanction and source of legitimation could there be for loyal Catholics than their Church hierarchy and international leaders calling on Catholics to mobilise against communism?

\(^4\) Hans Toch defines ideology as "a set of related beliefs held by a group"; cf. *The Social Psychology of Social Movements*, 21.
several functions: they provide a target for the release of tensions; they offer simple formulas which can explain world events and eliminate confusion in the minds of believers; and they give believers satisfaction that they belong to an enlightened elite who are bravely able to confront the conspirators and save civilisation.\textsuperscript{5} Obviously, the conspiratorial worldview was helpful in maintaining the cohesion of ghetto Catholicism, but the conspiratorial assumptions need not have led to a crusade.\textsuperscript{6} The conspiracy worldview does not of itself explain the panic occasioned by the communist scare. How then do we explain the leap from a ghetto to a crusade response to conspiracy?

Whether a mentality is paranoid or not depends on whether the perception of threat is based on good judgment and evidence. In a time of stress and social conflict like the 1930s, it was not always easy for observers to evaluate conflicting viewpoints. Catholics had grounds for not trusting the press cables and newspapers; but the fact that they ignored dissident Catholic views on Spain and Europe indicates that there was more than a simple misreading of the evidence. Nor was this simply a matter of key or isolated individuals interpreting the world through paranoid eyes. It will not do to attempt to explain P.S. Cleary's views in terms of his individual psychology or attributing to him a paranoid or authoritarian personality. Cleary was not an isolated individual, but reflected many of the views of the dominant Catholic intellectual culture of the time. Some of his views were certainly idiosyncratic, especially his call for dictatorship and Fascism in Australia. But as we have seen, there was Catholic support overseas even for some of his extreme anti-democratic views. Though there is no evidence that any Sydney Catholics followed Cleary's extreme views, there is little evidence that they were repudiated, and there is overwhelming evidence that the dominant Catholic viewpoints severely misperceived events overseas and the reality of the threat in

\textsuperscript{5} cf. \textit{ibid}, 53-55.
\textsuperscript{6} Toch argues that "The function of a conspiracy-oriented movement is not to do battle with conspiratorial forces, but to provide reassurance and security to its own members". \textit{Ibid}, 69.
Australia. An explanation cannot be found in the psychology of individuals alone, but in the social psychology of Catholic community as a whole, not just in Australia, but overseas as well.

Richard Hofstadter, in his "The Paraphoid Style in American Politics", has proposed certain characteristics of such a style. He understands that "the feeling of persecution is central" to the paranoid style, "and it is indeed systematised in grandiose theories of conspiracy". He has borrowed the term "paranoid" from clinical psychology, but he does not use the term to describe feelings of threat against a person individually; "the spokesman of the paranoid style finds [the hostile and conspiratorial world] directed against a nation, a culture, a way of life whose fate affects not himself alone but millions of others". This was certainly true of Catholic perceptions as seen in the conflict between the Church and modern paganism. Hofstadter says the style of argument gives a clue to the distortion in judgement, but the "central preconception" is "the existence of a vast, insidious, preternaturally effective international conspiratorial network designed to perpetrate acts of the most fiendish character". Elements of such a conspiratorial worldview were frequently present in Catholic writings in the early 1930s, but reached their full extent during the Spanish Civil War. What Hofstadter says of the paranoid worldview applies to how Catholics saw Spain:

"History is a conspiracy, set in motion by demonic forces of almost transcendent power, and what is felt to be needed to defeat it is not the usual methods of political give-and-take, but an all-out crusade. The paranoid spokesman sees the fate of this conspiracy in apocalyptic terms - he traffics in the birth and death of whole worlds, whole political orders, whole systems of human values. He is always manning the barricades of civilization. He constantly lives at a turning point: it is now or never in organizing resistance to conspiracy. Time if forever running out. Apocalyptic warnings arouse passion and militancy, and strike at susceptibility to similar themes in Christianity."

8 ibid.
9 cf. ibid. 6.
10 ibid. 14.
11 ibid. 30.
The paranoid leader is a militant who sees the conflict in terms of absolute good and absolute evil, in a fight to the finish.\(^\text{12}\) In just such terms as these did many Catholic leaders see the conflict with communism.

The enemy of Catholics appeared very like Hofstadter's "demonic agent", not subject to the normal mechanisms of history and limitations of the past: "He makes crises, starts runs on banks, causes depressions, manufactures disasters, and then enjoys and profits from the misery he has produced".

Very often the enemy is held to possess some especially effective source of power: he controls the press; he directs the public mind through "managed news"; he has unlimited funds.\(^\text{13}\)

Again this was very much the case in the Australian Catholic response to communism: it was seen in almost metaphysical terms as the incarnation of Evil itself; the Catholic Church was the incarnation of Good and the agent of God. The struggle between the two forces, which was seen to be graphically demonstrated in the major conflicts around the world, took on the dimensions of an apocalypse, almost Manichaean in the clarity with which the forces of Good were seen to be pitted against the forces of Darkness. So deep a hold did this mentality take that it was to energise the political activities of many key Catholic leaders for decades. The whole process was certainly not one of straight logical calculation by individuals, and was to carry Catholics beyond the intentions of the original activists. The most significant unintended result was eventually to help break down the Catholic ghetto itself, its values of cohesion (and sense of exclusion) and to blur its boundaries. Greater awareness of the complexities of social reform would lead many to relax their dogmatism (and hence increase uncertainties as well as tolerance), and to question Catholic authoritarianism (with its demands for loyalty).

What is important here, says Hofstadter, is not empirical evidence, but a dramatic leap from the evidence to conclusions. Catholic opinion-leaders made just such a leap from events in Spain to their expectation of communist persecution in

\(^{12}\) cf. \textit{ibid.}, 31.
\(^{13}\) \textit{ibid.}, 32.
Australia. Much evidence was accumulated about Spain and communist activities in Australia, but there was little understanding of the social, economic or political causes of the war, or of the complexity or ambiguity of events. Catholic authors attributed an extremely voluntaristic conception of political action to the conspirators. It is this leap of logic which is to be explained. There was no close analysis or reporting of Catholic views which challenged the conspiracy assumptions, so deep were Catholic fears that a disaster was imminent. It was this pervasive fear of looming persecution which drove the Sydney hierarchy into an anti-communist crusade.

Already inclined to suspect conspiracies because of past experience in Australia, this Catholic worldview was further alarmed by the international setbacks to Catholicism during the decade. Overseas Catholic ideas and movements tended to be interpreted within the framework of the pre-existing conspiratorial worldview, and ideas which did not support it were screened out; even dissenting Catholic writers such as Maritain were not given a hearing. On the assumption, then, that the Church was locked in mortal combat with modern paganism, enemies needed to be clearly identified and the ideological and organisational framework for defence established. Such enemies were sometimes not hard to find. However, the significance attributed to them by some opinion-makers and the degree of threat they presented to Australian Catholics were vastly exaggerated, and provides a key indicator of the social psychology of the Catholic ghetto. The identification of communism as the new enemy of Catholicism deeply engaged this sense of paranoia in the consciousness of Catholic opinion-makers, and not only swept along those like Archbishop Kelly who were thoroughly averse to politics, but inclined most Catholic commentators to interpret world events in the light of these Catholic fears.

Hofstadter notes the recurrence of paranoid styles of politics in history, and suggests that they arise after a period of conflict involving fundamental values. "Catastrophe or the fear of catastrophe is most likely to elicit the syndrome of
paranoid rhetoric". This is especially likely, firstly, where social movements are totally opposed (notably the case as Sydney Catholic leaders perceived communism); and secondly, when there is no possibility of the normal political process of compromise and accommodation, and where a group feels excluded from politics: "Feeling that they have no access to political bargaining or the making of decisions, they find their original conception of the world of power as omnipotent, sinister, and malicious fully confirmed." This is borne out in Australia only in part by Catholic opinion-leaders, notably on the education question; however, by the end of the decade, the Labor / Catholic alignment was perceived to be under serious threat, though many Catholics had not lost faith in their Party.

The history of the Sydney Catholic Church in the 1930s thus instances in large part such a process as Hofstadter described; and the earlier enemies of the ghetto Church have been overshadowed by the new enemy of communism.

Of course, the power of world communism, which has taken the place of the international bankers' conspiracy as the central embodiment of evil, is a far more imposing reality. But my point is that the model on which the world is interpreted contains the same exaggerations, the same crusading mentality, the same sense that all our ills can be traced to a single centre and hence can be eliminated by some kind of final act of victory over the evil source.

The choice of enemy was important; as Edelman says, such a choice reflects an anticipation of which "enemy will most potently create and mobilize allies". It would be altogether too cynical to assume that Catholics intentionally looked for an enemy which would win them acceptance in the wider Australian community, but in the long term the identification of communism as the enemy had the effect of allying the Catholic crusaders with Australian nationalists of all religious and most political persuasions, bridging the divide between the Catholic ghetto and its older historical enemies.

The change in the consciousness of Catholics to focus on the new enemy of communism led to a change in their views about political activity and to a new

14 ibid., 39.
15 ibid., 39.
16 ibid., xii.
17 Edelman, op. cit., 114.
perception of their role in the world and Australia. From being defiant but isolated defenders of their religious heritage, these Catholic leaders now became the defenders not just of Catholicism or Christianity, but western civilisation itself. Their crusade became invested with immense significance: the fate not just of the current generation but those of the future and the destiny of the world were at stake. Their sense of exclusion and being on the margins of society, tolerated but not integrated, was suddenly transformed by a sense that everything now depended on Catholic efforts to resist the ruthless agents of communism.

The response of Catholic Action and anti-communism can be understood against the background of an older social movement in the Catholic community, namely the ghetto structure itself. As Paul Wilkinson in Social Movement described a working concept of social movement, three aspects are involved: it must be a "deliberate collective endeavour to promote change"; it must have at least a minimum degree of organisation; and it must involve "conscious volition, normative commitment to the movement's aims or beliefs, and active participation on the part of the followers of members." The effort to strengthen Catholic cohesion and maintain Catholic schools provided the social conditions to fulfill all these criteria of a social movement. The concept is also broader than one linked primarily with a formally explicit ideology or one involving large numbers of people in the movement, even if at times only small numbers of Catholics were active in the movement, and there was little philosophical development of ideology, the effort to maintain the Catholic sub-culture can be understood in terms of such a social movement. This concept of social movement is also closely linked to that of

18 Paul Wilkinson, Social Movement, 27. Hans Toch defines a social movement as "an effort by a large number of people to solve collectively a problem that they feel they have in common"; in The Social Psychology of Social Movements, 5.
19 Colin Jory maintained that "before a Catholic social movement could develop, a disciplined philosophical consciousness would have to gain an ascendency among the Catholic elite over vague emotive dispositions" (The Campion Society, 9). For Jory, even the Catholic Federation was not a social movement but a "sectional pressure-group" (ibid, 12). Such a concept of social movement is much too narrow to help explain Catholic values and groups in Australia.
"culture", and allows us to relate the fundamentally religious dimension of Catholicism in the 1930s to other aspects: its links with working or lower-middle class social protest movements and populism; sectarianism; nationalism; moral and social reformism; and an incipient intellectual and organisational crusade against communism.

In response to economic, cultural and political pressures, the Catholic sub-culture had moved through various options to consolidate its educational goals and its self-perpetuation: after Moran's accommodation policies, Catholics had tried a non-political pressure-group mobilisation through the Catholic Federation; when this failed to influence the Labor Party, NSW Catholics launched their Democratic Party, which also failed dramatically; the fall-back position was to abandon such open militancy and quietly win gradual gains through the Knights of the Southern Cross. Forced to abandon any activity remotely political, the Sydney Church seems to have left representation of class interests and practical concern for social reform mainly to the Labor Party in a careful division of influence.

Why did the ideological drive and organisational crusade only take place with the Spanish Civil War and not during the Depression? The conspiratorial worldview had long been present in the Catholic ghetto, and one might have expected that the distress of the Depression would have activated it more strongly; yet there was little such Catholic response during the early 1930s. It would seem that the basic factor at work here was the division by Catholics between the political arena (largely the Labor Party) and the religious world of the Catholic ghetto. Especially when Catholics were so prominent in the NSW and Federal governments in the early 1930s, there was less reason for Catholics to experience political alienation on religious grounds or the social anxiety they had known in the previous decade because of sectarian conflict. Thus there was no pressing need for specifically Catholic movements to act as channels for the expression of social distress or dissent. Lang performed his populist role admirably; he harnessed the fears and

21 cf. ibid., 46.
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anxieties which many Catholics shared with others, and blamed the bankers and financiers for causing the Depression. Hence the need for a vehicle of working-class and lower middle class social protest was already met in the early 1930s. It would have made little sense for the hierarchy to make scapegoats of Catholic politicians; but the media barons and the bankers were more remote and easy game. Even after the fall of Labor, Catholics could not feel entirely excluded from the political process because Joseph Lyons was prime minister. Perhaps the Church response would have been different had anti-Catholic politicians been in power, for then they could have provided ready targets against which to express the disenchantment of the Catholic ghetto. In these circumstances, distinctively Catholic social movements might have developed as vehicles for social protest. Even then, they would have had to overcome the entrenched views of Archbishop Kelly who had been appalled by the working-class outbursts during the conscription debates, and favoured the politics of the middle-class Catholic elite.

Nor did the Church make too much of Australian nationalism at this time. During the 1920s, Catholic loyalty had been questioned as a result of Mannix's statements during the Irish Civil War, the conscription debates and the later sectarian conflicts. Catholic polemicists indeed used a claim to Australian nationalism as a weapon against the British and the Empire loyalties of the Protestant and Anglican establishment, but they could not press the argument too far while Church leaders were overwhelmingly Irish. Not till Gilroy became archbishop could Sydney Catholics draw more assertively, and less self-consciously, on the rhetoric of nationalism. So while there was an undercurrent of nationalist feeling in the Catholic ghetto, it must have been recognised as a two-edged weapon which could easily be turned against the Irish.

The cleavage between the religious and political world of Catholics also helps explain the lack of specifically Catholic thought on social reform. During his period of government in the latter 1920s, Lang had introduced many social reforms, and the Labor Party offered most promise of effective reform. The main effort of the
leading Catholic social commentators in the early 1930s was to keep Labor open as an option for Catholics by interpreting socialism in a benign sense. But as the decade wore on and it became clear that Labor was wandering in the political wilderness and the UAP unable to overcome the economic distress, disillusionment with the party system deepened among a few. Finally, with the Spanish Civil War and fears among Catholic opinion-makers that communists were gaining control of Labor, Catholic leaders began seriously to search for an alternative to the Labor alignment, and to recognise the need for a Catholic ideology of social reform and for an effective organisation to combat communism. Hence only when the Labor Party seemed unreliable as a defence against communism did the Sydney Church seriously undertake an organisational and ideological role in social protest and against communism.

The widened scope of Catholic Action in its anti-communist campaign was not an abandonment of the ghetto structure or mentality so much as an extension of ghetto defences into surrounding territory. To borrow a military metaphor, it was rather a commitment to "forward defence" than a change in Catholic attitudes concerning their mission to the world. The impulse came not so much from a desire to transform the world, though this was part of it, and certainly so in the rhetoric, but to defend the Church. Needing to establish his authority, the young Gilroy seems to have been carried along by the force of events into legitimating industrial and political activity under the sponsorship of Catholic Action. He authorised the anti-communist campaign, and followed the advice of the Australians Eris O'Brien, Paddy Ryan and Leo Dalton. The effort exposed the paucity of Catholic resources, intellectually and organisationally. O'Brien had the thankless task of trying to generate such resources overnight, train Catholic activists, expound Catholic social thinking which was new to him, rationalise existing Catholic organisations around Catholic Action and encourage the organisation of unions to defeat the communists. The main Catholic lay activists were young men,
intelligent and highly committed but, especially in Sydney, lacking guidance from more experienced people alert to the implications of what they were doing.

The development of Catholic Action can thus be seen as the adaptation of more basic cultural and social movements to the changed circumstances in Australia after the Spanish Civil War. The incipient Catholic Action groups could draw on some of the values, ideology, cohesion and group loyalty of the ghetto culture, but other tasks in adapting Catholic movements had to be undertaken: agitation to arouse Catholics to a new social militancy against communism was done by the leading clergy and laity, including Archbishop Gilroy himself. A sense of esprit de corps was fostered, so that the Catholic Actionists regarded themselves as an elite group within the Church.

But the effort suffered major weaknesses. There was no early development of a specific ideology which could guide the intellectual and organisational efforts of Catholic Action; no major Catholic thinkers emerged to articulate a Catholic programme. The beginnings of a body of Catholic thought were distorted by serious misperceptions of the threats around them, and thinking often resolved into mere anti-communism. The Sydney scare tactics over communism were able to mobilise numbers of Catholics into discussion groups, but could not hold them; there was little to fall back on which related to the immediate situation of most Catholics. The bulk of the literature came from overseas and often reflected the preoccupations of literary romantics; it had little to offer the mass of Australian Catholics. The pamphlet literature, however, catered more directly for an Australian audience, and was geared to mobilising Catholics and directing their reading. But haphazard organisation and the collapse of the initial enthusiasm and groups undermined confidence in the whole enterprise. The movement could draw on deep religious convictions about the evils of communism and on a belief that it was a present threat in Australia, but the Catholic Action movements were divided among themselves; they had no clear direction, hampered as they were by the need
not to appear political; and they were also severely constrained by fear of sectarian animosity.

A major handicap was the fact that Catholic Action did not fit comfortably into either a "reformist" or "revolutionary" category, as Herbert Blumer uses the terms; it straddled them both. In Blumer's terminology, a reform movement accepts the basic tenets of a society and seeks change within a specific area; while a revolutionary movement aims to completely refashion society. Because of its religious nature, Catholic Action claimed to be revolutionary in its aim to re-Christianise and reform Australian society; but with its assertive Catholicism, its demeaning attitude to other denominations and its occasional use of a revolutionary rhetoric, it gained little respectability or sympathy outside Catholic circles. This claim to be both revolutionary in its own terms and reformist made its choice of tactics very difficult: did it seek to win public opinion to its viewpoint as a reform movement; or did it try to win converts or victories in its crusade? The more successful its crusade among Catholics, the less likely it was to be acceptable to the wider community. The more successful with broader public opinion, the less it could present a revolutionary re-Christianising of society along Catholic lines. It was a bind which was not clearly faced in the 1930s.

Sydney’s clericalism would have alienated most intelligent and able Catholics, and the Church did not find suitable leaders to mobilise large numbers of Catholics into a specifically anti-communist mass movement. This is not to deny that Archbishop Gilroy during the late 1930s played a major role in the crusading agitation for Catholic Action. Gilroy was a young man and inexperienced, sharp but by no means an intellectual. He became archbishop just as the anti-communist feeling aroused by the Spanish Civil War was at its height. He attempted to give leadership to this Catholic movement, as Cardinal Moran and Archbishop Mannix

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had done earlier in different circumstances; but he lacked their stature, wit or
ability.

The paradox here is that Gilroy was later known for his bureaucratic style,
for which he was obviously well suited. How then do we explain his activist role in
mobilising Catholic opinion against communism when it seems so different from his
later cautious style? Roche and Sachs suggest that a bureaucrat can become "an
uncompromising fighter when he feels that the sovereignty or organizational
integrity of the group in menaced". 23 This would definitely seem to have been the
case with Gilroy; it was not a role which came naturally to him if his later career
is any indication, but he seems to have been responding to the needs of the hour.
It is likely that the collapse of the initial organisation of Catholic Action helped
convince him that such a crusading style and appeals to the mass of Catholics
were ephemeral, and that surer progress could be made by working through other
channels. However, his position as archbishop, with its traditional authority, and
his public prominence in campaigning against communism inevitably invested him
with some of the aura of charismatic authority, and gave him the values which
Roche and Sachs associate with the "enthusiast": "his frequently prophetic assertion
of basic values and aspirations make him the conscience of the movement, the
voice which calls it back to the ways of righteousness". 24 Yet he did not develop
the same "charismatic" aura which Mannix, perhaps to his own surprise, did soon
after arriving in Australia; whereas Mannix's charisma was soon recognised by the
vast crowds which attended his speeches, it was not the same for Gilroy. Mannix
had allied the Catholic sub-culture with anti-capitalist, working class movements of
social protest. Gilroy did not go so far, in part because of radical and communist
influence in the labour movement, but also because of the Church's more middle-
class links in Sydney. Once the alarm over the Spanish Civil War had eased, the
conditions for sustaining a mass anti-communist movement among Catholics in

Exploration of the Leadership of Social Movements", in ibid, 212.
24 cf ibid, 218.
Sydney waned; whereas for the early Mannix the series of controversies into the 1920s sustained the anxiety and interest of the crowds, and endowed him with a personal following which lasted till his death.

**Why was Australia different?**

One cannot help being struck by the distinctive development of Catholic Action in Australia; Australia seems to have been the only country in the English-speaking world where anti-communist political activity under the umbrella of Catholic Action became so pressing an issue in the 1930s.

Australian Catholic history differed from that in England and the United States in important respects. The Christian Democratic traditions in Catholic thought and politics had firmer institutional supports in England and the United States than in Australia. Catholics in England were in direct contact with some of the principal figures in European Christian Democratic movements, and followed European Catholic thought more closely. The Catholic Social Guild at Oxford nurtured Catholic thinkers committed to the democratic traditions of their country. The Guild also provided a more scholarly centre of thought than the Distributists who had such a following in Australia. The British Catholic community included many intellectual converts to swell the numbers of informed Catholics who read the various Catholic journals of public affairs. In Australia there was no equivalent to this well educated group of Catholics. The English Church could also boast of having scholars of note among its clergy and decision-makers, while Australia had few.

A further point of contrast between Australia and Britain is the homogeneity of the Catholic body in Australia compared with that in Britain. Most Australian Catholics belonged to the Irish tradition and were of the lower-middle or working class. In Britain there were great numbers of Irish immigrants but they entered a small, intellectually strong English Church. Moreover, some of the native English Catholics were middle or upper class, and had close links with the Catholic hierarchy. These class and ethnic divisions in English Catholicism prevented united
action stemming from Irish ethnic grievances. So in England, neither the hierarchy nor the Church as such could provide leadership or a home for nationalist Irish sentiment. In Australia, Irish nationalism had helped nurture a Catholic sub-culture with a deep sense of suspicion of and alienation from the surrounding Protestant / capitalist culture. Such a process was not so likely in Britain; English Church leaders would not stir Irish militancy against Britain, or nourish a sense of social alienation except on religious grounds. So while appeals to Catholic solidarity in Australia could draw on feelings of alienation based on class, ethnic, historical and social divisions, such a course was not so easy in Britain. And being a smaller percentage of the total population than Catholics in Australia, Catholic militancy was not likely to be very useful in Britain.

In the United States, too, the Catholic Church had institutionalised some links with the labour movements and ran programmes to train clergy to understand socio-economic and political affairs, notably at Catholic University with John A. Ryan. The German Catholics of the Central Verein also had their own interests which they protected against incursions by the Irish-Americans. In the United States ethnic and organisational divisions among Catholics made a single national Catholic anti-communist campaign unlikely. Mgr George Higgins insisted that the anti-communism of Catholics in the USA came not from clerical direction or condemnations, but from an instinctive Irish reaction to policies which threatened the family, free education and religion, and from a working-class suspicion of intellectuals (most of the socialists were also German).25

In Australia there was no equivalent to these overseas centres of study or links with Labor organisations. In contrast with Britain and the United States, practically all the agencies of religious legitimation in Australia enthusiastically supported the crusade against communism. There was no native tradition of Catholic scholarship which could interpret it in a way most suitable for Australia;

25 cf Mgr George Higgins, "Commentary", in Michael Novak, Capitalism and Socialism: A Theological Enquiry, 82-3.
there were few scholars who could think through the implications of various models of Catholic Action and present the alternatives to decision-makers; nor were there institutional links with the labour movement which could contest the social and political advantages of Australian democratic traditions. Rather, the Church had distanced itself from any form of political or socio-economic involvement, and by and large left Catholic Laborites to find their own way.

At first sight it is surprising that there seems to have been little influence from Irish thought and movements. The evidence shows clearly that direct Irish intellectual influence in Australia was minimal, with only reprints of Irish pamphlets and a handful of books of any note for social or political questions. Dr Coffey's pamphlet on property was the most significant item, and Fr Cahill's *The Framework of the Christian State* aroused some interest. An explanation for the slight Irish influence is to be found both in Australia and Ireland. Ireland was preoccupied with nationalist and agrarian issues, while industrial and economic questions were obscured. Moreover, Irish Catholicism, except for its link with Irish nationalism, remained a privatised and devotional religion, little interested in questions of social reconstruction. Nor could the few Irish writers compete with the quality and flood of writing coming from English Catholics. Circumstances in Australia also made Australians less likely to take ideas or models from Ireland: the Irish Civil War had disillusioned many Australian Catholics with Irish affairs; what had strife-torn Ireland to offer Australia? Moreover, just at this time the Australian clergy were taking over positions of authority from the Irish, and the rising Australian leaders were hardly likely to appeal to Irish movements if they thought it would strengthen the hands of Irish rivals. The naming of the Campion Society itself was an attempt to move away from Irish cultural dominance. There were token acknowledgements of the Irish heritage, but little real borrowings in social or political thought during this time. In Sydney, the dominance of the Irish

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26 cf John A. Murphy, *Ireland in the Twentieth Century*, 59.
27 cf. ibid., 90.
hierarchy and clergy was ending, and the legacy of Irish politics and divisions, with their bitter sectarian potential, was fading; henceforth it would be native Australians deciding about Australian issues, the first of which was the challenge from communism.

In the event, the attempt to contest communism in the unions had just a few successes. Only a small percentage of Catholics responded to the call; many listened politely and turned out for mass displays of allegiance if required, but most lay people were reluctant to be drawn into anything more. There was no effective anti-communist organisation at the end of the decade in Sydney, but there had been a decisive change in the thinking of the leading Catholic clergy who were thoroughly convinced of the need for such a mobilisation. What was lacking was the conviction among significant numbers of committed lay people that such a crusade was needed. That would come during and after the Second World War, when the alarm of Catholic leaders was being massively reinforced by communist advances in Europe and Asia and by the onset of the Cold War. Hence the post-War mobilisation of Catholics sprang from two distinct sources: the pre-War conviction among Catholic leaders that they had to organise quickly to respond to communism nationally and overseas; and the post-War alarm about communism in the unions and an apparently monolithic and expansionary movement of international communism.

Thus the explanation for the remarkable shift from the ghetto pattern of Sydney Catholicism to call for a new crusade against communism is to be found in a heightened sense of threat playing on a tendency to collective paranoia embedded in Australian Catholic culture and ideology. Stemming from Irish Catholicism, this tendency had been reinforced and developed by social conflict and sectarianism in Australia; it drew formal expression from European Catholic ideologies which were also reflecting the 'state of siege'. The Spanish Civil War and the perceived communist threat to the Catholic / Labor alignment in Australia greatly intensified Catholic fears; Catholic leaders and opinion-makers interpreted these events in the
light of their paranoid worldview and concluded that a communist attack in
Australia and on the Church was imminent. Catholics could no longer remain
isolated in positions of ghetto defence. Only a new crusade under the banners of
Catholic Action could prevent disaster.
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