THE LABOR MOVEMENT IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND VICTORIA, 1830–1860

-- morning Herald
= Melbourne Times

PA = People's Advocate (Sydney)
PPC = Port Phillip Gazette
PPH = Port Phillip Herald
PPP = Port Phillip Patriot
SD = Sydney Dispatch
S = Sydney Gazette
SMH = Sydney Morning Herald
ST = Sydney Times

S and W = Star and Workingmen's Guardian (Sydney)
W = Weekly Register.
THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST OF THE ABBREVIATIONS USED IN

REFERENCES TO NEWSPAPERS IN THE FOLLOWING

PAGES.

A = Argus (Melbourne)
AG = Australasian Chronicle (Sydney)
AU = Australian (Sydney)
P.M. = Melbourne Daily News
E = Empire (Sydney)
FP = Free Press (Sydney)
G = Guardian (Sydney)
MM = Midland Mercury
MMM = Melbourne Morning Herald
MT = Melbourne Times
PA = People’s Advocate (Sydney)
PPG = Port Phillip Gazette
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The development of capitalist forms of production, and the consequent emergence of a class of employees, has been accompanied by organized activity on the part of this class in an effort to better its conditions of life. This raises a number of important questions for social theory. Firstly, we may ask what forms has the activity of working class taken, and what programmes has it adopted? Secondly, is there any possibility of formulating general theory of this activity - does the working class movement regularly adopt any given programme, does it regularly develop in certain kinds of organizations, or does it regularly take up certain attitudes?

Various answers to these questions have been given. It is proposed to set out, in a simplified form, various theories of the labor movement, in order to show in what ways they differ in the answers they give to these questions, and then to see which, if any, is most consistent with the "development" of the labor movement in New South Wales and Victoria up to 1960.

The most important theory relating to the labor movement is undoubtedly that of Marx. Marx did more than anyone else to bring to our notice the political importance of the class of wage-earners, and he made numerous contributions to the development of a theory capable of discussing political phenomena in modern society. Even Marx was not always the first to become aware of certain facts, he often stated the issues much more clearly than his predecessors. The points in his theories, which are of general significance include his recognition that political conflicts are conflicts between classes or groups (and not merely between individuals) and that in capitalist society the conflict between rich and poor had become the more specific conflict between employers and employees. There are other points of equal importance but these are mentioned here because we will make some use of them as we proceed.

A fundamental point about Marx's theory is that it is first of all a theory of social and economic development, and that each class is considered in relation to the position which it occupies in the general development of society. As the working class - or more strictly, the proletariat - is described as the class which will bring about the abolition of private property, the important question is how it is that the proletariat comes to carry out this social rev
solution. For in Marx's writing there is no very clear answer to this question.

One point, of course, is that the logical form of the dialectic requires that
the new type of society should arise out of a conflict or contradiction in the
old, and as we find that socialism arises out of the conflict between the owners
of the means of production and the workers who have nothing to sell but their
labor. But the actual form of this conflict—the development of the working
class into a revolutionary force—is not discussed in great detail, and, in
fact it is rather difficult to find in Marx's writings anything that might be
described as a theory of the labor movement. The general framework of a theory
is there, but the actual mechanism by which the end—result—is reached is not
revealed in full.

One important fact we have is that Marx supposed the workers to be strugg-
ling for the whole of the fruits of production; this is the political significa-
ance of the labor theory of value. Secondly, he supposed that the workers would
in the course of time become more and more united. These are important, and
debatable, contentious, but they do not carry us very far towards an understand-
ing of the development of actual programs of labor. But in the course of the
declarative dispute between Lenin and the so-called "Socialists," it becomes apparent
that there were two or three different traditions relating to the labor movement
in Marxism thought.

In this dispute about the place of ideology and of leadership in the advance
of socialism, the two different views were stated quite clearly.

The Socialists had no real theory of the labor movement and thought that
none was necessary. They were interested primarily, of course, in socialism, and
they believed that "objective" (i.e., economic) forces would bring about socialism.
They therefore, tended to believe that things such as leadership, programs,
(and even consciousness on the part of the working class as to what it was aiming
at), were unimportant. Of the proletariat, they believed that since the time-
cause it would be forced to accept its historic mission; in the meantime they
were not much interested in what it was or did.

Lenin, on the other hand, believed that socialism would be brought about by
a political revolution rather than purely economic developments and that "without
a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement".

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(1) V.I. Lenin: "What Is To Be Done?" (Selected Works, Vol II, Lawrence & Wishart,
London 1935.
(2) "The End To Be Done", op. cit., p. 476.
That if, he believed that the achievement of socialism was dependent on the acceptance of socialist programmes and socialist theories by the workers, and it was of considerable importance to him to discover what trends were developing within the working class. In giving his answers to this question he formulated his own theory of the labor movement. His examination of the working class in various countries led him to the following conclusions:

(1) that the "spontaneous" movement of the workers was essentially trade unionism;

(2) that the theory and practice of trade unionism were necessarily dominated by bourgeois, not socialist ideology;

(3) that the working class could develop no ideology of its own;

(4) that a socialist ideology could be developed only outside the working class.(1)

But he still believed that the achievement of socialism was the historic mission of the working class and so his theory of the party was in a sense the last stage of his theory of the labor movement.

It appears from this that we can get three different pictures of the labor movement from those who accept the general structure of the Marxist dialectic. The first is that which represents the working class as being compelled by force of circumstances to seize power and to abolish private property; the second represents the workers as consciously working for socialism and as having spontaneously acquired a socialist consciousness in their struggles with the capitalist class; the third represents them as being indoctrinated with socialist theory by a party constituting itself the vanguard of the workers. Which of these was most in accord with Marx's views it is difficult to say. Part I of the Communist Manifesto seems to express either the first or the second of these but Part II of the Manifesto is closest to the third.

Solig Perlman (2) presented his theory as an attack on Marxism, but he agrees on a number of important points with Lenin. Perlman quotes with approval Lenin's statement that the working class can develop by itself nothing but a trade union ideology, but the conclusions he draws from this fact are quite different from Lenin's. While Perlman agrees that the trade union is the characteristic product of labor movements and that socialist ideology is the special product of intellectuals outside the movement, he denies that trade unionism is incapable of developing an ideology of its own, and denies the claim of the intellectuals

(1) This argument was developed in "What Is To Be Done?" pp. 65-66.

that they have something vital to contribute to the working class.

Perlman maintains that the labor movement is an independent one, that it develops its own aims and programmes and that there is a fundamental incompatibility between this programme and that of the intellectual. The objects particularly to the notion that the labor movement has an historic mission or, as he puts it, to the notion that the labor movement is a "mass in the grip of an "abstract forces" which will force that movement to adopt and to realise the intellectual's programme. Against this concept of the movement Perlman puts forward the view that the role of labor in society is to be understood only in terms of what labor itself is and does, and that no attention should be paid to any supposed "historic mission". He is thus opposing any attempt to treat anything other than the actual aims of labor as the "real" or "really appropriate" aims of the labor movement. But it remains to be seen whether he himself is willing to cease altogether to distinguish between the "real" aims of labor and those which labor actually adopts from time to time.

Perlman placed the trade union at the centre of the working class movement and so his theory of that movement is based on what he takes to be the attitudes developed within and fostered by the unions. Fundamental to the unionist, he argues, is the "consciousness of scarcity", the belief that the number of jobs is fewer than the number of workers seeking jobs. Combined with this, he argues, is the belief that the group of workers as a whole (the "class" or the "trade") owns the economic opportunity and is therefore obliged to prevent the individual from appropriating more than his rightful share and to protect him at the same time against oppressive bargains. This attitude he describes as "communism of opportunity", which he distinguishes from communism of production and distribution. The aim of the union, he argues, is not nationalisation but "job-control" i.e. control of the terms of the bargain and the distribution of opportunity through the group. He accepts Sombart's characterisation of the "unionist" as one who prefers a secure though modest income and he believes that this provides the key to the programme of unionism. He contends that what the union has always endeavoured to secure for the worker through its job-control is "a fair wage, a reasonable working day and security from unemployment, from injury to health and from unjust discrimination". It is in order to avoid discrimination, he believes, that unions insist on shop-rights "which to the

(1) op. cit. p. 247
working man at the bench, are identical with liberty itself — since, thanks to
them, he has no need to know to foreman or boss at the risk of losing his
job"(2).

Now Perlman's is not a complete or adequate theory of the labor movement.
The major difficulty for him is to explain why the labor movement does sometimes
take the form of a revolutionary movement, and why some sections of the workers
always appear to be revolutionary. His answer to this is the same as Lenin's.
He argues that socialist doctrines and programmes are characteristic of the
intellectuals who attach themselves to the working class and who substitute their
own typical attitudes and wishes for the philosophy of labor itself(3).
Moreover, he argues the intellectual may succeed in in-doctrinating the laborer
with his own mentality and "in numerous cases, the mentality may even become
permanent, showing how early and decisive commitment to a "foreign" philosophy,
reinforced no doubt by a suitable temperament, may block the growth of an organic
labor outlook"(3).

This explanation is far from satisfactory. If he admits that revolutionary
Marxism, for example, can get a footing within working class organizations there
seems to be no reason why he should treat it as in any significant sense a more
"foreign" philosophy than job-control. The combination of facts most favourable
to his theory would be that people who work for their living develop the philosophy
of job-control and that the philosophy of socialism is formulated by intellectuals
who do not work for their living. But if the latter persuades the former to
accept socialism — as he envisages — there is no reason for regarding job control
as the real philosophy of labor. If labor's "native", or "home-grown" philosophy
is job-control but it later comes to accept socialism, then that just happens to
be the course taken by the labor movement and no conclusions can be drawn about
which is labor's "real" programme and which programme does not "properly" belong
to labor. Perlman has attempted to use his theory to oppose socialism in the
labor movement but in fact no policy conclusions can be drawn from it as it
stands. And of course even as a theory of what the facts about the labor move-
ment are, it has been criticised, or is open to criticism, on a number of points.

Perlman's theory is necessarily restricted by the fact that he limits
himself to trade unionism. A much more general theory was stated by John Commons,

(2) Ibid p. 275.
(3) Ibid p. 237.
(3) p. 298.
(a close associate of Perlman's) in an article in the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,(1) Commons, like Perlman, has generally been regarded as primarily an advocate of "Cooperation" in trade unions, i.e., as an advocate of job-control and as an opponent of socialism. A recent book which contains a fairly extensive survey of Commons' work tends to support this view,(2) but it is clear from Commons' own writings that he was in part a theorist as well as a policy maker.

The essential point in Commons' analysis of the labor movement is his assertion that the movement goes through many phases and that the change from one phase to another is the result of changes in the character or structure of the economy. "In all countries it has run along three lines - political, economic, and co-operative. There have not been parallel but have alternated in importance in the same country as have predominated differently in different countries according to differences in institutions and economic conditions.(3) Commons has been subjected to a good deal of criticism for his emphasis on the importance of the different economic situation in different countries,(4) particularly for his belief that the "frontiers" in America had a profound influence on the development of the labor movement there, but such criticism tends to neglect the subtlety of his theory. For although he believed that differences between countries were important, this was only one aspect of a general theory of labor's development. The main influence on the development of the labor movement, he believed, was the stage of development that the economy had reached.

The main outline of this "dynamic" theory are as follows: The first stage is that of merchant capitalism in which the employer is himself a mechanic contracting to deliver the finished product to the merchant capitalist who owns the raw material, while the journeyman, wins the tools and the contractor the shop.(5) In this stage there arises on the one hand the philosophy of anarchism - individual property of small producers combined with co-operation to replace the middleman - and on the other hand the craft unions of journeyman who try with co-operation and other "anarchist" ideals but eventually concentrate on strengthening their bargaining position. In this stage unionism does not make up its mind about the position of the petty employer who is part-journeyman, part-employer. The next stage is that of "employer capitalism" in which there is a very clear distinction between the employer who receives profits and the workforce.

(2) A.D. Curley, "Modern Economic Thought: The American Contribution"
who receive wages. In this stage of employer-capitalism Commons argued, industrial unionism develops and the revolutionary programmes of communism, syndicalism etc., make their appearance. But these doctrines of revolution can be realised only in the long run, and as the workers cannot wait for the complete re-organisation of society, there grows out of this situation the "collective bargaining and trade agreement stage of unionism". (1)

Commons thus divided the programme of labor into "bargaining with capitalism" and "displacement of capitalism" but he thought it possible to give some account of the way these policies alternated. "They follow a time schedule. In periods of rising prices, of increasing profits and growing demand for labor, bargaining with capitalism predominated, because employers can afford to pay and unemployment has no terror. (2) In such periods unions flourish and revolutionary and utopian schemes fall into the background. Political activity is not important. But with the coming of depression, the situation changes and so does the labor movement. In periods of falling prices of decreasing profits and unemployment, the displacement of capitalism predominates as the goal. Political activity, communist agitation and quasi-revolutionary strikes replace the business strikes of unionism. (3) In this way, the "alternative goals" are shown to be different aspects of the same movement. This claim that in the labor movement we really have unity in diversity is of some importance.

Possibly, no other theory of the labor movement is as comprehensive as that of Commons. But the intensive study of trade unionism that has been undertaken by various people has resulted in the formulation of theories relating to this particular part of labor's activities. The work the Webbs (4) and others has resulted in a fairly well established classification of types of unions, and of trade union methods and some attention has also been devoted to relations within unions. Thus the Webbs had something to say about the conflicts between the members and the administrative groups in unions, (5) and, of course, a much fuller study of these conflicts was made by Raphael Michal in his "Political Parties".

There has been little difficulty in formulating a classification of the methods which trade unions generally use. The methods of unionism fall readily enough into the four main groups of mutual insurance, arbitration, political activity and collective bargaining. There has not been much dispute about the

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(1) Ibid. p. 683
(2) Ibid
(3) Ibid pp. 693-694
correctness or adequacy of classifications based on these main divisions.

The conventional distinctions between types of unions have been based on structural criteria—that is, on the unit of organisation. The main types that have been distinguished are as follows:

1. Craft unions—either local, district or national in extent;
2. Federations of craft unions—city or national in scope;
3. Industrial unions—local, district, or national;
4. General labor unions—local, district or national;
5. Amalgamated craft unions.

An important theory of the development of unionism from type to type has been formulated fairly precisely by Commons. We have seen that he in common with most other students believed that the general source of evolution was from craft to industrial unions. In addition, he argued that the local union develops into the district and finally into the national union of the market for the product expand and workers in a given locality are subjected to competition from workers and factories in a progressively wider area. As long as the market and the labor supply are localised the local union is capable of regulating the terms of the bargain, but its monopoly is destroyed once cheap goods or cheap labor can be brought from other areas, organisation, to be effective under these circumstances, is forced to expand with the workers or with the source of the labor supply.

Commons' hypothesis was derived from his study of American unions, the Webbs/simil

lar conclusions for English unionism. (1)

This presents a fairly complete picture of the development of the various types of unions, but the whole idea of basing a fruitful discussion of unionism on structural distinctions has been challenged by H.P. Bowle. According to one of his followers, Bowle's analysis of unionism is characterised by "emphasis on function, the distinction of fundamental types, and a pluralistic causal-inter-

pretation" (2). By "emphasis upon function" he meant simply that bowle regarded the formal organisation of unions as of much less importance than what unions did. He argued that significant distinctions between unions must be based upon policies and programmes, and that such distinctions were not parallel to distinctions based upon structure. Thus, he argued, "craft unionism" and "industrial unionism" are not distinct types because the same kind of policy or programme might be found in unions organised on the basis of craft or industry. To many people, particularly

(1) John R. Commons "American Shoemakers, 1648-1895"—ch. XIV of "Labor and Admin-
istration" Macmillan, New York, 1911.

in the United States, industrial unionism meant the peculiar revolutionary doctrines advocated within the I.W.W., but Roxie could find no causal connection between this policy and the organization of trade unions along the lines of an industry. On the contrary, he contended that the various types of unionism he distinguished occur independently of particular forms of organization, and that no one type of unionism could exist in a single organization.

Roxie listed five types of unionism: business unionism, uplift unionism, revolutionary unionism, predatory unionism, and dependent unionism. His conception of business unionism corresponds quite closely with Parson's theory of unionism in general, but Roxie was prepared to admit that this is the only type of union.

Uplift unionism, in Roxie's theory, is somewhat similar to business unionism except that it places less emphasis on aggressive bargaining and more emphasis on the moral improvement of its members. "Mutual insurance is its main function and brotherhood its preoccupation." (2) Revolutionary unionism, as a contrast to the two previous types, rejects the complete institutional and moral order of capitalism. Its program may be either "socialistic"—i.e., in favor of state ownership of the means of production—or "anarchistic"—i.e., hostile to the state as well as to the capitalist class and in favor of a system whereby the workers, through their organizations, own and control the means of production. Predatory unionism may employ any of the methods of business, uplift, or revolutionary unionism. Its only distinguishing feature is its "ruthless" pursuit of the thing in hand by whatever means seem most appropriate at the time, regardless of ethical and legal codes or effects upon those outside its membership. (3) Dependent unionism is the least important of all; a "dependent" union is one whose existence depends upon the employers or upon other unions.

One of the most important aspects of Roxie's theory is its "pluralism," which consists firstly in the belief that more than one type of unionism can exist side by side in a single union and secondly, in the rejection of the idea that there is a tendency for the distinct types to merge into a single type. "Unionism is essentially a series of independent group manifestations which from the practical standpoint cannot be interpreted, evaluated and judged as a single consistent whole, or as a succession of more or less accidental or temporary variations from a single normal type." (4) He did not place much value on attempts

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(1) Ibid, p. 56
(2) Ibid, p. 57
(3) Ibid, p. 59
(4) Ibid, p. 54.
to relate variations in the relative predominance of various types to economic or political trends. He believed that a given type of union owed its existence to a given group of workers who were distinguished from other groups by a special temperament. It was for this reason that Commons described Horii's theory as a "psychological" theory of unionism.

This brings our summary of some of the major theories to a close. It now remains for us to sum them and to see what the issues are. The first point that might be made is that there is a good deal of agreement on many points among the various theorists. What we get from the theories of the labor movement is a number of important distinctions and classifications, and there is a general similarity in the classifications and distinctions adopted by the different thinkers. This is significant because it tends to support the view that labor movements do regularly adopt certain programmes and certain forms of organisation so that general kinds of phenomena can be recognised by a student of the movement.

The most important dispute with regard to classification is connected with Horii's theory of types of unionism. Horii has shown clearly enough that policies and structural types are independent, and this represents a distinct advance. But his own claim to have distinguished separate types of unionism is something that we might try to verify.

Most theorists seem to accept the idea that the labor movement goes through different stages of development, from craft to industrial and from local to national unions. The most clearly stated hypothesis of the early development of the movement is Commons'. His theory is very valuable just because he does try to indicate the character of an emerging labor movement, and this is what we shall be studying when we come to look at the Australian material. Another interesting part of his theory is that which sets out a certain relation between the policies of the labor movement and the course of the trade cycle. This too is a hypothesis that might be measured up against the facts.

The most common disagreements among labor theorists are about the various policies. Perlman argues that the labor movement proper contains but a single programme, whilst Horii insists that many conflicting policies exist within the movement. And Horii is equally insistent that there is no tendency for those opposed policies to merge into a single policy, and is therefore opposed to those who, while recognizing conflicts at the moment, expect them to be wiped out in the future. With respect to the question of which policy is expected to predominate, Perlman is strongly opposed to the Marxists. Perlman's attempt
to show that socialism has no place in the labor movement breaks down, but there
still remains a dispute between those who expect socialism to develop spontaneou-
ly among the working class and those who argue that socialism is introduced into
the movement from the outside by a group of intellectuals. Here, it should
not be forgotten, is among those opposed to Perlsman and to Lenin on this point.

The various theories of the labor movement provide us therefore with a
variety of hypotheses and counter hypotheses about various aspects of the move-
ment. These hypotheses give us a starting point for the study of the Australian
movement that is to be undertaken in later chapters. But it has to be recognized
from the start that the field chosen for investigation is a very limited one, and
that in consequence we could not expect the labor movement that is being studied
to possess more than a limited variety of characteristics. This means that for
the purpose of testing hypotheses, negative evidence will have to be treated with
a good deal of caution, because some hypotheses will have been formulated for
conditions other than those being examined here. For this reason, it is necessary
to say something about the environment in which the early labor movement devel-
oped in Eastern Australia. This task will be undertaken in the following section.

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It is no longer possible to argue that the labor movement in Australia was created by the gold discoveries of 1851. Isolated examples of action by organised labor can be found in the twenties, and trades unions of a sort existed in Sydney in the early thirties. While we might agree with Professor Portus that unionism, industrial struggles and political action before 1851 seemed "not to have established any distinctively Australian labor tradition", (1) we might still regard the earlier movement as important. The lack of any "distinctively Australian" characteristics of the early labor activity would, after all, be quite consistent with the assumption that a general theory of the labor movement is possible. Brian Fitzpatrick raises the different point that as "serious working class organisation could emerge in a community where economic organisation was for fifty years based on something like slavery", (2) but unions and the system of "assignment" of convict labor did exist alongside each other. It appears to be the case, in fact, that competition between the assigned servant and the free laborer provided an impetus to organization among the latter. The limits to the investigation cannot, therefore, be placed at 1851 and 1860, but the enquiry must be pushed back to 1830 and perhaps even earlier.

The thirty years after 1830 formed a period of great changes in the size and character of the community as a whole. Its population increased considerably, and the basis of its political life was completely altered. At the Census of 1828 the population of New South Wales (including the Port Phillip area) had been 36,000. In 1840, when transportation ceased, it had increased to 130,000. In 1850, just before the separation of the Southern districts into a separate colony, the population of what was to become Victoria was 76,000, whilst that of the rest of New South Wales amounted to 189,000. By 1860, New South Wales had increased to 350,000 and Victoria to 540,000.

It will be seen that the really impressive changes occurred between 1830 and 1860, but growth before 1850 had been steady, especially during the forties. The period before 1850 had been one of the "pastoral extension" - the diffusion of population throughout the colony in grazing occupations - but the farms were growing at the same time. Between 1828 and 1851 the population of Sydney and its


suburbs increased from 10,000 to 53,000. Melbourne was not founded till 1835:
by 1841 its population was 4,500 and by 1851 this had increased to 23,000.

While the population of the colonies was growing, certain constitutional
changes were occurring. The advisory Legislative Council which had been in
New South Wales in 1823 and had been granted extended powers in 1829, was re-
placed by a part representative Council in 1843, the same year in which provision
was made for municipal institutions in the colony. In 1850, the Act which created
the separate Colony of Victoria provided uniform constitutions for the colonies,
lowered the franchise and gave colonial legislatures (still partly nominee) certain
powers to make their own future constitutions. In consequence the system of

"Responsible Government" was put into operation in both New South Wales and Vic-
toria in 1856. In Victoria, the secret ballot was established in 1856, and manhood
suffrage in 1857. Both were introduced in New South Wales in 1859. All of these
changes were relevant to the formation of labor into an independent political force
in the community.

This brief recital of familiar facts explains briefly the background against
which the labor movement developed. But the immediate problem is to distinguish
the class of "labor" in the growing communities. Brian Fitzpatrick, in the
introductory chapter of his "British Empire in Australia" has pointed out the
limitations of Australian statistics from this point of view. A major difficulty
for Fitzpatrick is that the classifications used by the statisticians in the
different colonies were not uniform, so that it is almost impossible to make
meaningful comparisons; moreover, each statistician changed his classification
from time to time as he reviewed his methods, so that it is not always possible
to trace developments through time. But in addition the early statistic compiled
in New South Wales and Victoria often failed to distinguish between employers and
employees in the various occupations, with the result that information about the
class of wage-earners is not easy to find. When this distinction was made, late
in the decade, it was not made in all occupations. The fact that this distinction
was neglected by the collectors of statistics may indicate that it was not a very
important distinction in the community at that time, but the existence of some
sort of working class movement in the thirties seems to imply that the statisti-
cians were overlooking a quite significant development in the economy.

(1) The figures for New South Wales to 1836 are summarized in the Registrar Gener-
al's Report on the Census of 1836 (Notes and Proceedings of the Legislative
Assembly, Session 1857, Volume I). The 1841 figures come from the Census for
1841 (Notes and Proceedings, Session 1859, Vol. III). A summary of the Victo-
rian figures until 1857 is contained in W.E. Archer's For later figures see
the Census of Victoria for 1861 (Notes and Proceedings of Legislative Assem-
byl of Victoria, Session 1862-63 Vol. IV).
The kind of things we would want to know include the following:

(1) whether a class of laborers existed;

(2) whether the laborers were free or bond;

(3) how they were distributed throughout the colony — whether there were accumulations of workmen in one or more places;

(4) the conditions under which they were employed — the industries in which they worked, the structure of these industries and the character of objective employer-employee relationships.

It might also be interesting to know something about the distribution of the national income, but the available statistics are of little use to us for this purpose.

The information about the position of the working class in the early part of the period is fairly vague. The successive Masters' and Servants' Acts of 1829, 1840 and 1845 implied the existence of some class of wage-earners, but it is possible that these Acts were aimed at the regulation of the working conditions of isolated shepherds and domestic servants. By 1841 there were reported to be 10,000 "mechanics and artificers" in the colony, 6,600 of them in the towns and villages, 3,700 of these in Sydney and another 600 in Melbourne. In the colony at this date there were 12,000 persons employed in tending sheep, and 16,000 employed in agricultural pursuits. It is not possible to say how many of these were employees. A separate class of domestic servants was recorded, however, and this consisted of 9,600 persons — 2,600 of whom were in Sydney while 450 were in Melbourne. The "unclassified" group consisted of 72,000 individuals, most of whom were women and children. At this time there were 5,300 male ticket-of-leave holders in the colony, 11,343 male assigned servants, and 1,800 female assigned servants. The Sydney figures were 163 ticket-of-leave holders, 537 male assigned servants and 523 female assigned servants.(1) The vast majority of convicts were apparently in the rural districts engaged in pastoral and agricultural activities.

The separate trades in which "mechanics and artificer" worked were not recorded, but we know from other sources that many of these must have been in the "skilled crafts". Coghlan, for example, quotes rates of the wages paid to workers in the food, building, clothing and iron trades from 1823 onward.(2) Some persons classified in this group may have been employed in the "manufactories" that existed by this time. In 1837, there were 50 of these manufactories in Sydney — 13 tanne-

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(1) These figures are taken from the "Census of New South Wales for the year 1841" (Notes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council of New South Wales, 1841).

ian, 7 woolen cloth factories, 5 soap factories and 4 iron and brass foundries. By 1841, the total had grown to 61 — there were now 13 breweries and 8 foundries but only 4 cloth factories and 11 tanneries. (2) No information is available about how many employees worked at each factory. Evidence relating to similar establishments later in the period suggests that the majority of them must have been very small — employing not more than two or three hands — although a few of them may have been larger. This impression is corroborated by the published figures for total output. (2) The general conclusion we can reach is that in Sydney there were congregated members of the skilled crafts — some of them, perhaps, working in manufactories (3) — and that these might have provided some hands for a labor movement. Outside of Sydney the artisans were probably too scattered to form any effective combination. A class of agricultural employees may have existed, but these were dispersed throughout the colony and many of them must have convicts at this date. A class numerically strong among the employees were the domestic servants, but many of these would have been convicts and women, and we could expect no very vigorous labor movement from them.

Successive censuses were taken in 1846, 1851 and 1856 in New South Wales, and 1854 and 1857 in Victoria. The census of 1846 revealed nothing new of importance. The employment pattern in the various parts of the colony was not substantially altered. The number of factories had grown to 124 — the expansion having occurred mainly in soap and candle factories, tanneries and foundries. (4) The number of grain mills in the colony had increased from 95 (including 29 steam-powered) in 1841 to 138 (including 48 steam-powered) in 1846. (6) In terms of percentages these gains look quite impressive, but there is no reason to believe that they changed the character of the economy in any significant way. Wage rates for carpenters, smiths, wheelwrights, bricklayers, masons, farm laborers, shepherds, women domestic servants and women rural workers were officially recorded from 1844 onwards.

In 1851 the colonies of New South Wales and Victoria began to issue separate statistical reports and they adopted different classifications. Both colonies retained the classification of "mechanics" and both introduced into their tables the new heading of "unskilled laborers" but on the whole their classifications are not readily comparable, and from this point onwards we shall have to consider

(1) "Statistics of New South Wales from 1837 to 1853, compiled from Official Records in the Colonial Secretary's Office" (Govt. Printer, Sydney 1854). p. 13
(2) Ibid
(4) Ibid.
separately the two colonies.

The following table (1) will illustrate the situation existing in Sydney in 1856, five years after the discovery of gold, when the population of the colony was 266,000 and that of Sydney and its suburbs was 69,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION</th>
<th>PERSONS IN THE COLONY</th>
<th>PERSONS IN SYDNEY AND SUBURBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trade and Commerce</td>
<td>6,094</td>
<td>3,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Mining</td>
<td>4,451</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal Mining</td>
<td>371</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificers</td>
<td>17,326</td>
<td>7,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Laborers</td>
<td>15,446</td>
<td>2,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Servants</td>
<td>16,686</td>
<td>5,769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen</td>
<td>2,146</td>
<td>1,018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

502 artificers were resident in West Maitland, and 433 in Parramatta. There were eleven other towns with more than 100 artificers each. Five towns had been 200 and 300 unskilled laborers each. (2) This suggests that by 1856 we could expect to find some stirrings of a labor movement in towns other than Sydney.

In 1856, there were 498 "manufactories" in the colony, including (since 1855) many new classes. But 60 of them were "steam vessels" and 23 were "reaping and threshing machines." The number of foundries had increased to 16, tanneries had increased to 54 and by this time there were 24 soap and candle factories and 19 steam saw-mills - a significant development. On the whole, our previous characterization of these manufactories remains unaffected. This was essentially small scale industry, although there may have been a few individual exceptions.

In the Victorian Census of 1857, employees were distinguished from employers in some occupations. The following table (3) lists the various classes of employees:

- Commercial clerks and shop assistants - 4,357
- Domestic servants - 19,739
- Pastoral employees - 7,856
- Agricultural employees - 16,432
- Laborers - undefined - 8,904
- Wood-splitters, etc. - 1,615

But in other occupations, this distinction was not made, and employers and employees were classified together. Some employees would have been included in

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(1) Extracted from the Table dealing with "Occupations of the People" in the "Census of New South Wales for 1856" (Notes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales, Session 1857, Vol.1)

(2) ibid

(3) Extracted from the Census of Victoria for 1851 (Notes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, Session 1850-51 Vol.1)
the following figures. 

Mechanics and artisans 23,023
Carriers etc. 13,156
Gold Miners 82,428
Tailors and dressmakers 6,276
Persons dealing in food and drink 8,971

It is impossible to calculate the relative numbers of employers and employees in each of these occupations. Some of the miners, would have been independent workers, neither employers nor employees, and there may have been some independent craftsmen or shopkeepers in each of the other classifications.

Information of a rather different kind is conveyed by the division of the group "mechanics and artisans" into several sub-groups. 

(3) General contractors 294
Masons, bricklayers, slaters, plasterers 3,154
Carpenters, bricklayers, road and railway laborers 4,035
Smiths, founders, mechanical engineers 3,694
Cabinetmakers, furniture dealers, carvers 1,005
Coachmakers, wheelwrights etc., 1,590
Tannery, fullers, soap-boilers 615
Printers, coopers others 2,487
Builders, carpenters, sawyers 8,151

Total 23,025

From this table we can get a good idea of what was implied by the term "mechanic". The importance of the building trades in Melbourne in the mid-fifties is clear from the figures given above and it is interesting to see that the metal trades were also of relative importance. But there is no evidence here of the growth of an industrial proletariat, although it is obvious that there were many wage-earners in the colony. If any proletariat was developing it was among the workers in the building trades.

[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.
[3] These would all have been employers.
pastoral and agricultural employees in rural areas, or among unskilled laborers in
the towns. But the class of skilled craftsmen was still relatively important.

In the 1861 census, some important new distinctions were made by each colony,
but these do not render necessary a reconsideration of what has been said so far.

In New South Wales, the occupations in which employees were separately
recorded were as follows—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>SYDNEY AND SUBURBS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artisans</td>
<td>16,260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>20,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grazing</td>
<td>7,221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horticulture</td>
<td>1,488</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine-growing</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>13,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>17,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen</td>
<td>2,297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures do not cover Trade and Commerce (8,460) Food, Drink and Accom-
modation (7,152) Mining (21,352) and a miscellaneous grouping (11,645) in all of
which some employees were to be found.

A valuable feature of the 1861 Census of New South Wales was that it did dis-
tinguish between employers and employees among the class of artificers, in the
several groups. The classification adopted was—

1. workers in superior arts (i.e. processes involving precious
   metals, watchmaking etc.);
2. workers in metal;
3. workers in wood;
4. workers in stone and earth;
5. workers in leather and skin;
6. workers in other materials.

In the colony, the numbers of workers per master, in each of these trades were
4, 8, 13, 5-6, 5-6 and 7 respectively. In Sydney and the suburbs the correponding
figures were 4, 15, 14, 6, 9, 9. The metal trades group (employing 2,748 persons,
1,226 of whom resided in Sydney and the suburbs, the only one showing any signifi-
(2) cant difference between rural and city areas. Nearly a third of all artificers

(1) Calculated from the Table dealing with "Occupations of the People in the
Census for 1861 (loc. cit.)
(2) Ibid.
(5, 151) were employed in the trades whose chief material was wood — and in these trades it should be noted, the employee/employer ratio was high.

Now the main number of employees per master is not in itself a very important ratio. It tells us nothing about the way employees were distributed among masters, and all we can say is that in each group of trades there must have been many masters with quite small establishments. But it is possible that in each trade most of the employees were in one or two establishments. However, it is also necessary to make a distinction between a trade and an establishment. Numbers of more than one trade might be employed at a single establishment, so that although the total number of each trade at any establishment might be comparatively small, the total number of employees at the establishment might be comparatively large. On the other hand, each employer might disperse his workers throughout more than one shop, so that the number of employees average per employer might over-estimate the average number of employees per shop.

But we can supplement the information gained above from some of the evidence given before the Committee appointed by the Legislative Assembly in 1859 to enquire into the conditions of the working classes. (1)

Three builders gave evidence; two of them said that they employed between 40 and 80 men; (2) the third (who admitted that his scale of operation was as big as that of any contractor in Sydney) said that he had employed up to 100. (3) W.B. Allen, a soap and candle manufacturer, had about 30 men on his payroll. (3) Two proprietors of tanneries appeared before the Committee; one said that there were 13 tannery employed at his works; (4) the other stated that his firm employed 80 men "altogether". (5) An ironfounder said that the employees of his firm (who included engineers, blacksmiths, pattern-makers, boiler-makers, cooper-smiths, labourers, carters, clerks and salesman) numbered 200, and that this was the largest establishment in the iron trades in the colony except for the works of the Australian Steam Navigation Company. (6) A foreman tailor spoke of two shops which employed 25-30 hands, and of others with a much smaller complement. (7)

Another person connected with the tailoring business claimed that some years before between 700 and 800 persons had been employed in the manufacture of worsted cloth and that 500 of those had worked at one factory, although the trade had since declined. (8)

A woollen manufacturer said that at the present time woollen cloth factories were operating in the colony, to his knowledge he himself and another manufacturer each employed between 50 and 60 persons, whilst the two others employed between four and six persons each. (1) We can thus see that any single establishment, or any single employer with more than 100 employees was quite unusual and that some "manufactories" were quite small. The employers who gave this evidence, it might be added, by no means represent a "random" sample - they were chosen because they had a wide knowledge of the working class and the labor market - that is, because they operated on a relatively big scale.

Between 1857 and 1861 the population of Victoria increased from 410,000 to 540,000, but the numbers in the various occupations did not increase in similar proportions. The class which included scholars and women employed at home in purely domestic duties grew in the four years by almost 100,000. The numbers in many occupations remained almost stationary. The group of those engaged in manufacturing increased to 33,630; significant changes within this class occurring among "quarrymen, brickmakers, read and railway laborers" (now 8,000) and group of smiths and engineers (now 5,500). The absolute numbers of those engaged in the building trades varied only slightly. Domestic servants increased in number by almost 4,000. But all of these occupational changes were overshadowed by the increase of agricultural employers from 10,000 to 17,000, and of agricultural employees from 16,000 to 23,000. Those engaged in the provision of food and drinks, and those engaged in the provision of clothing, increased in roughly the same proportion as the total population. (3)

Apart from the figures for agriculture there is nothing in this information to tell us about the structure of employment in the economy. But from another source it is possible to get some information about a narrow section of the economy - the manufactories, works and mills of the colony - for the year 1860.

In Victoria in 1860 there were 94 grain mills, 86 of which were powered by steam. The total number of persons employed in the grinding and dressing of grain was 530. In Melbourne, there were ten mills all powered by steam and employing a total of 57 persons. Four mills (all of which were steam-powered) were recorded separately. They employed 2, 3, 5 and 10 men respectively. (3)

In the same year there were 475 manufactories; 185 of them were steam-powered.

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(1) M.A. Campbell, 22416.
(2) Census of Victoria for 1861 (loc. cit).
but 223 used no power other than that provided by manual labor. The estimated horse-power of the plants of all these factories was 2,200, and they employed between them 4,062 men and 25 women. In Melbourne there were 131 factories including 59 powered by steam and 67 using nothing but manual labor; the estimated horse-power was 765 and the employees consisted of 1627 men and 13 women.

This taken as a whole, was certainly small-scale industry. For the counties of Bourke (including Melbourne) and Grant (including Geelong) more detailed information was recorded. The separate figures were given for each trade, and as in some trades there were only one establishment, we can get quite precise details for these. Of 25 individual works so recorded, fifteen had between one and five employees; four had between six and ten; a wool-washing establishment had eleven, a millwright 12, a soap and candle works 35, a boiler maker 29, a railway carriage works 49, a sugar refinery 100. There were more than forty different types of factories, but most of the employees were in a few trades. In Melbourne, ten breweries employed 130 men; ten coachworks employed 150 men and 1 woman; eight iron, brass or copper foundries employed 422 men and two machinists employed 106.

In the remainder of the county of Bourke, 112 of the total of 124 employees were engaged in working eight threshing and reaping machines, and 68 worked in five brickyards. In Geelong, 54 of the 185 male employees were engaged in coachmaking, and 46 were in three foundries. In the rest of Grant there were 168 employees; 42 in three breweries, 32 in three sawmills, 47 in five tanneries, and 32 in two tannery establishments.

The distribution of employees between factories in the same trade was not recorded, but it can be shown that it must have been uneven. The average number of employees per establishment in each trade can be calculated for the various areas, and although this is not in itself a significant measure comparisons demonstrate that there must have been establishments of different sizes.

The following figures illustrate the distribution of factories and employees in the soap and candle industry in the various places which were recorded separately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MELBOURNE</th>
<th>REST OF BOURKE</th>
<th>GEELONG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. House</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. Hands</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see from these figures that the number of employees per factory must have

(2) Ibid pp. 92-3
(3) Ibid pp. 92-94.
varied between 35 and three, and that the range may have been greater. If we make similar calculations for other trades the minimum possible variations are as follows—Breweries between 5 and 14, coachworkers between 45 and 6, fellmongers between 16 and 6, gasometers between 30 and 4, foundries between 51 and 45, sawmills between 21 and 7, sawmills between 22 and 4, machinists between 53 and 2. These were definite variations then, even though there were no very large factories.

This view of things is corroborated by the other sources of information partly covering the same ground. One is the evidence given before the Select Committee inquiring into the Tariff question in 1862, the other is a partial survey of employer/employee relations included in the Census of 1861. Williams, a coachworker who had the contract for making the railway carriages for the colony, told the Tariff Committee that he was the largest employer in the coachmaking trade in Melbourne, but that all but 10 of his 90 employees were at the railway carriage factory and that in coachmaking proper there were probably other establishments as big as his. On the other hand, a journeyman coachmaker mentioned that he had worked in shops where the complement consisted of 6 or 7. Robert Fulton, an ironfounder related that his firm employed 150 men, but that one of its factories was in Melbourne, another in Bendigo.

In addition, the Tariff Inquiry produced similar evidence about trades not included in the survey of "manufactories". This evidence is often of rather a peculiar kind because it was brought forward by people who were trying to make out a case for protection by showing that industry was declining in the colony. We might assume, therefore, that the size of establishments in the past would be over-estimated, whilst their size in 1860 would be under-estimated, but the various calculations are of some use all the same. A bootmaker said that he had once employed 70 men, but that now he had only 16; another said that many employers who formerly employed 40-50 were now reduced to 3 or 4; and that most of the masters worked with only 2 or 3 hands. A saddler said that where as previously some employers had had up to 30 hands, that most shops now averaged 6-8. Another saddler said he had 4 men and one apprentice working for him.

\(^{1}\) Ibid.
\(^{2}\) Progress Report from the Select Committee upon the Tariff, together with the Proceedings of the Committee and Minutes of Evidence (Notes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, Session 1867-1868).
\(^{3}\) Q74-76: Q58-100; (2) George Betts; (3) Q3379-80; (4) F. Burton, Q629; (5) H. Turnbull, Q470.
\(^{4}\) W. Frythorpe, Q1033 (2). J. Clarke, Q889.
whilst yet another had a single hand. A cabinetmaker said that in the
past there had been 8 shops in Melbourne—employing 6-7 hands—but that to now
there were not more than 2 shops employing more than three. Some of the most
interesting information related to the clothing industry. One employer had 30 to
40 employed, another had 15 in his shop but in addition gave out work from time
to time to another 30; a third had six on the premises and gave out work to two
others; a fourth employed 20 women and 9-10 men and the newly established
steam sewing board had 30 employees. The first mentioned tailor said that in
1854, his peak year, he had had 120 working for him. All of this indicates that
there were some employers with only one or two employees; that the system of
employing numbers of men on the premises had definitely appeared but that "putting
out" continued, that the work was not "mechanised" to any considerable degree, and
that even the largest shops did not employ more than about 100. Similarly the
evidence relating to the other trades reveals that at no time did a large factory,
in the modern sense, appear. Even when the number of men employed was relatively
large—as in the case of the 70 shoemakers in the single shop—the character of
production seems not to have been changed. A number of skilled men were gathered
together in a single building, but each was doing the same kind of work as he had
done when employed in a smaller shop or in his own home, and little or no use
was made of division of labor. This accounts for the ease with which the "large"
employer could become a small employer once again—he had to change only the scale,
not the form, of his establishment.

The survey of employers and employees made in 1861 was intended to cover
all persons engaged in gold mining, pastoral, and agricultural activities, and manufacturing. But only a small proportion of employers put in a return on this subject, and
there is no way of knowing how "representative" they were. For manufacturing (i.e.,
all mechanics and artificers) the figures relate to 717 masters and 4,290 employers—a
small section of the 33,000 people in this class. The following is a summary of
the figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Men</th>
<th>Masters</th>
<th>Total Number of Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>1,271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>546</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>515</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) W. B. Sayer, Q1191; (4) J. Hines, Q2697; (5) J. Hembitt, Q1373; (6) E. Leach, Q1477;
(7) J. M. Parrott, Q1480; (8) R. Buckley, Q2321; (9) J. Bernstein, Q279.
(1) The results of the survey are to be found on p. 264 of the Report on Census
of 1861 (loc. cit).


There were 187 masters employing one man each. Over 50% of the men were employed by masters whose total employees numbered 15 or less, whilst only 63 of the 717 masters had more than 15 employees. The pattern was similar in gold mining and in rural occupations, in neither of which however, was there any employer with more than 100 employees. The survey is definitely defective but it does supplement or at any rate does not contradict what we learnt elsewhere.

The final source of information about the position of the working class in Victoria is a series of articles on the subject published in the Melbourne "Argus" in 1863 and 1864. There is no reason to believe that the situation changed in any important feature, 1860 and 1864 so that the material contained in these articles would appear to be relevant to the subject of our inquiry.

The "Argus" reporter suggested that there were between 700 and 800 workmen employed in the metal trades in Melbourne, that nearly 400 of these were in the three largest shops and that some other shops employed 30 to 50 hands. Included in all the larger shops were members of many different trades. In the printing industry, there was a distinction between the five large shops employing 30 to 50 men each, and the 20 or so smaller establishments worked by the proprietor himself. The position of the bakers was similar to that of the printers.

In some of the skilled trades, the Argus contended, many of the journeymen were "workers on their account" rather than employees. The practice of sub-contracting (especially in the building trades) promoted a system in which many but not all of the workmen undertook small contracts or jobs from contractors and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF MEN</th>
<th>MASTERS</th>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF MEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-75</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 or more</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1) A10-10-1863 and A17-10-1863.
(2) A9-1-1864.
(3) A9-1-1864; (f) Stonemasons: A8-10-63; Carpenters: A14-10-63; Plumbers: A3-10-63; Cabinetmakers: A26-11-63.
This system was said to be adopted freely by the plasterers, among whom "any workman may be journeyman today and master to-morrow". But among pointers and paper hangers work was "more and more falling into the hands of the employers" and most of the bricklayers were by this time working for employers.

In this rather extensive outline of some aspects of the structure of the economy during the years between 1830 and 1860 nothing has been brought to light that contradicts existing impressions of the economic history of the period. But it has been shown, I think, that some basis for a labor movement of a limited kind did exist, and did exist before the gold discoveries. There was little secondary industry but this does not mean that there was no distinction between employer and employee or that no conflict of interest between them could exist. There is evidence that a class of wage-earners existed as early as the twenties and that this class grew steadily throughout the period. The wage system was a definite feature of agriculture, commerce, mining and the skilled crafts although in the crafts it had to contend with other forms of industrial organisation.

We could not expect a virile labor movement to grow up among all groups of workers. Domestic servants, and workers in shops and offices, are notoriously difficult to organise, and the scattered and extensive character of agriculture and pasture must have rendered it extremely difficult to organise permanent associations of rural workers. This means that as there would exist the labor movement to be confined more or less to the artificers and laborers of the towns and to be dominated by the forms of thinking of the skilled craftsmen.

How even where one can distinguish the man who pays wages from the man who receives them, this distinction may not be of political significance. The class of wage earners may not feel impelled to organise itself for the purpose of furthering its separate interests. This may well be the case if the wage-earner feels that his present status is not a permanent one, or if the distinct interests and functions of the different classes are not made apparent through economic pressure or otherwise.

During the period up to 1869, many workmen found it possible to advance from the position of a wage-earner to that of an independent worker or an employer. Moreover, the apparently unlimited supplies of uncultivated land fostered a belief that the workmen could escape from his present status by becoming a landholder.

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(3) A 19-10-63
(4) A 31-10-63
(5) A 19-10-63
Thus there were some obstacles to the development of class-consciousness among the Australian workers. But not everyone could hope to escape from the status of wage-earner. There were some workmen who did not desire to own or to work on the land, and those who did desire it found that the land laws favored those who already possessed capital, so that this way of escape was limited, at least temporarily. And again, not every journeyman could advance to the position of a master. A Melbourne journeyman tailor was asked by the Tariff Committee whether "many of the working-men and artisans in the tailoring business rose in society and became masters and employers and make fortunes in the colony?" "Not many," he replied, "the men who have become masters-men in the colony are men who availed themselves of the employment of machines and woman". In the trades in which many of the journeymen were "workers on their own account", independence was often gained at the expense of a fall in income.

One factor contributing to the recognition by the workers of their distinct interests would be the organization of the various establishments. We have been that the structure of industry was such that many employers had only a few "hands", and that some employers had a number of "hands" and that there were a few employers with a hundred or so employees. Now in the smallest shops the master would be working with his men, but once he acquired even four or five employees some of his time must have been devoted to superintendence or even to "administration". Thus in quite small establishments the different economic functions of employer and employee would have been apparent, and it would have been only a step from this to the recognition of the distinct interests of the different classes.

(1) Progr. Report from the Select Committee upon the Tariff (loc. cit.) Minutes of Evidence, J. Dunstone, Q1539.
PART I. TRADE UNIONISM.

I. THE TRADE SOCIETIES, THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AND STRUCTURE

(1) THE SOCIETIES

Australian unionism, it is now recognized, had its beginnings in the decades prior to the discovery of gold. Whatever may be said in favour of the view that all the "real" or significant developments occurred after 1851, the researches of L.M. Thomas(1) and others have brought out the fact that in both Sydney and Melbourne some sort of trade union movement existed in the 'thirties, and the 'forties as well as in the 'fifties. There were numerous "Trade societies" carrying on the functions of trade unions, societies of wage-earners from which employers were excluded or at most to which employers were admitted on some restricted basis. In addition, there were a few societies composed of "workers on their own account" whose status is not easy to determine: sometimes these people appear to be in the position of employees, at other times they appear to be rather tradesmen or contractors. But on the whole there is a fairly clear distinction between the association of the journeyman -- concerned with the price of labor -- and the association of the masters interested in the price of the product.

Even now, despite work by various researchers on this subject, the information about the early unions is very incomplete -- partly because the unions throughout the whole period were very unstable. What follows is largely a resume of histories of Australian trade-unions, but it includes some material which has not yet (to my knowledge) been published.

Perhaps the earliest of these trade societies formed in N.S.W. was the "Shipwrights United Friends' Society" which claimed in June 1861 to be celebrating its 32nd anniversary.(2) If it did exist continuously for 32 years it was an unusually stable organization. Some traces of a Shipwrights' Society in 1839 and 1840 were discovered by Thomas, and some members of the trade were active in 1853(3) and 1856(4) but it is not known whether these formed part of the activities of the United Friends' Society.

(1) L.M. Thomas: The Development of the Labor Movement in the Sydney District, 1788-1848 (Sydney University: Thesis for the Degree of Master of Arts) [The Fisher Library no longer possesses a copy of this work]. References here are to the copy in the possession of Mr. R. G. Butlin. This copy differs in pagination from the original I understand.
(2) S.M. 6-6-1861 advertisements; S.M. 14-6-1861 report of dinner
(3) S.M. 22-2-1853 report of strike; S.M. 25-5-1853 editorial comment
(4) S.M. 16-12-1852, advertisement calling meeting of the "trade"
The bakers unlike the shipwrights, did not succeed in establishing a stable organisation. The operatives in this trade acted together on various occasions prior to 1849(1) but it appears that it was not until that year that an Association was formed. This Association continued to meet until at least May 1851, but was succeeded in September 1852 by another "Operative Bakers' Association". One of the aims of this Association was the reduction of hours, and in 1853 the Secretary (William McLeod) and three other journeymen bakers pleaded guilty to a charge of "conspiracy in attempting to alter the usual hours of working and deterring others from working otherwise than as they deemed right". (5) The society was not mentioned in the newspaper report of this trial, but in 1857 a "Journeyman Bakers' Association" which had been active in 1856 was agitating once more for shorter hours. (6) Like a number of other trade unions, this latter association disappeared during the next few years, and a new body — later known as the "United Operative Bakers' Association" — was founded in March 1862. (7)

Information about the bricklayers is rather meagre. Nothing seems to have been recorded of the activities of this trade before 1854, when meetings of the journeyman bricklayers were called. (8) A house of call for the trade — implying some kind of formal organisation — was conducted in 1855, and delegates from the bricklayers were on the committee of the Labor League (an inter-trade eight-hours league) in 1856. (9) If any trade society existed, it too was wiped out in the next few years, for a new Bricklayers' Union was established in November 1864. (10)

The cabinetmakers had quite a long history of organisation. Lloyd Ross describes the society they formed in 1833 as "probably the first true union", and Hasian traced its activities until 1846. A meeting to form another union was held early in 1851, (12) and whether due to the efforts of this union or not — the cabinetmakers shortened their hours in 1853. (13) Presumably this union died out, because members of the trade were summoned to a "preliminary meeting" to form another society in 1859, (14) and not again for the same purpose in 1862. (15)
The carpenters and joiners were another group with a long history of
organization. Fitzpatrick (1) recounts the story from the Souvenir number of the
Co-operator of 1912 that a Carpenters' and Joiners' Society was established in
Sydney in 1845, was re-established in October 1853, lapsed in 1858 and was re-
established again in 1861. But this is a very incomplete account of what happened.

Miss Thomas discovered the rumoured beginning of a benefit society among carpenters
and joiners in 1831; a Joiners' Society from 1835-40, and the Society of Carpenters
and Joiners 1840-46 (2). There was a "Sydney Joiners' Society" conducting a house
of call in 1849 and a Carpenters' and Joiners' Society in 1854 (3). The date given
by Satiliffe and the author of the article on "Trade Unions" in the Australian
Encyclopaedia for the re-founding of the Society in 1854 (4), not 1853, but carpen-
ters and joiners did succeed in raising their wages and shortening their hours
in 1853. (5) A house of call for the trade existed in 1855 and 1856 (6) which
suggests that the Society had a continuous existence during those years, but a
newspaper account of an eight-hour meeting held by the trade in December 1856,
records that a society was formed at that time. (7) This society continued to
exist during 1857 but the tradition (reported by the Co-operator) that it lapsed
in 1858 seems to be correct. the Sydney Progressive Society of Carpenters and
Joiners was certainly established in 1861. (8)

The history of unionism among clerks is short and unambiguos. The society
discovered by Miss Thomas, the Australian Clerks' Provident Society was established
in 1845 and was dissolved in October 1850. (9) It had not been in a flourishing
condition for the previous eighteen months, its finances being sound but its
membership deficient. In subsequent years there were "ad hoc" meetings of clerks -
fig., during the period of rapidly rising prices 1851-53 (10) but no permanent organ-
ization was formed, although one was projected in 1854. (11) Another group of "white
collar" workers - the shop assistants - were repeatedly, although not persistently,
active over a period of twenty years. The initiative here lay with the drapers'
assistants, who agitated for shorter hours and founded "Drapers' Assistants'
Association" on a number of occasions - in 1840, 1844, 1848, 1855-56, 1860-61. (12)

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(2) L.M. Thomas, op.cit., pp. 39, 41.
(3) SMH 29/6/1849, public notice; SMH 23/1/1854, meeting notice. (4) J.B. Satiliffe
History of Trade Unions in Australia, (5) Article on "Trade-Unionism" in The Australian Encyclopaedia
vol.(p.376). (6) SMH 31/4/1853; advertisement addressing to employers 27/7/1853. (6) SMH 13/9/1856, 22/9/1856, advertisement
addressed to employers 22/9/1853. (7) SMH 13/9/1856, report of meeting. (8) Thomas,
SMH 21/2/1856, report of meeting. (9) SMH 19/10/1939, report of meeting. (10) SMH 19/10/1956, report of meeting. (11) SMH 23/8/1854, mentioned in year re-saturday half-holiday movement. (12) E.G.
The most ambitious of these was the "Australian Drapers' Assistants' Association" of 1848 which conducted a benefit society and a reading room and ran monthly concerts for its members. (1) Its activities seem to have died out by the end of 1849; some of the master drapers adopted earlier closing in 1850 but this may have been a spontaneous movement, not prompted by their employees.

Organization among the shoemakers (the "cordwainers") dates back to 1840, although it is known that a strike occurred in 1831. (2) How long the association lasted is not clear but a Society of Operative Cordwainers existed in 1834 and meetings of the trade were called during that and the following year, as well as in 1833. (3) A new society was established in 1860 (4). Other societies which had their beginning in 1840 were ones of the engineers, and of the painters, plumbers and glaziers. (5) The organization of the painters and associated trades was found by Thomas to have existed up to, and possibly beyond, 1844. There were meetings of plumbers (it is not clear whether these were journeymen or masters) in 1850, and the painters and glaziers raised their wages in 1853. (6) These trades were not included in the eight-hours Labor League of 1856, but a "Painters' Plumbers' and Glaziers' Sick and Accident Society" definitely existed in 1857-58. (7) This was another of those societies which failed to survive the depression of the final years of the decade, for a new "Operative Painters' Society" was established in October 1859, (8) and a Plumbers' Society in 1860. (9)

Societies of "engineers", it appears, also included a number of trades or crafts. The correct limits of such societies seems to be indicated better by the term of "iron trades" which was in fairly common use in the "fifties. There was some organization of "Engineers, Millwrights, Founders and Smiths" in 1830, and the "Millwrights' and Engineers' Benevolent Society" held its first anniversary dinner in 1846. (10) This was presumably identical with a society of the same name dissolved in August 1850. (11) The journeymen smiths were meeting in 1852 and the Sydney branch of the A.S.E. was, of course, established in the same year. The "amalgamated" did not by any means cover all the men in the iron trades.

Meetings for various trade purposes - especially the 1854 reduction of hours -

were held in 1853, 1856 and 1859, but it was not until the latter year that the existence of any society or union was referred to. In 1859-61 meeting notices bore the heading "Australasian Iron Trades Protection Associations" but when the men employed in these trades (mainly moulders) tried to gain the eight-hour day in 1861, this title was abandoned and the men were unwilling to admit that anything more formal than a "strike committee" existed. Nevertheless, a house of call was conducted during 1860 and it is clear that in 1859 and 1860 there was at least a "committee", with a regular meeting place, (the Lighthouse Inn) even if there was no society. The relationship between this committee and the A.S.E. was at no time clarified in any way.

Not much is known about the plasterers' society in existence, (as Thomas found) in 1842. Ten years later meetings of "the trade" were held, and by 1854 a society was functioning. Delegates from the plasterers participated in the Labor League of 1856 and at about this time meeting notices appeared in the newspapers. The tradition relayed by the "co-operator" Souvenir Number of 1912 is that the operative plasterers established their society about 1857, but this seems rather to be the date when the society lapsed. A Plasterers' Society was re-formed in 1861.

The other groups with a broken history of organisation were the Tailors and the Seamen. A Tailors' Benefit Society, it was reported was formed in 1835. If it existed, it was succeeded by another society in 1840, and this in turn was replaced by an Operative Tailors' Protection Society in 1852. At the end of that year, some sort of broadway movement began, but there was still some form of organisation in 1853. What later happened to this society is not known, but in 1861 there was again established a Tailors' Protection Society although this time its name had a different significance — its aim was the substitution of "protection" for "free trade" as a commercial policy. The society established by the seamen in 1837 seems to have faded out fairly quickly. There were, subsequently, numerous strikes on individual shifts — especially during the gold rushes and in 1854, in the course of a general strike of coaling seamen, a "Merchant Seamen's Provident Union" was formed. One of the tasks of this body was

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to help the strikers. It was dissolved in the following year because of lack of support. (1) In 1858, again, there was a short-lived association seeking to stabilise the wages of seamen and to give relief to those out of work. (2) The Australasian Iron Trades' Protective Association on one occasion took some interest in a proposed reduction of the wages of ships' engineers, all of whom may have been affiliated with that body. (3)

The stonemasons seem to have been the only group of building trades' workmen whose society remained virile and active during the period 1837–60. An earlier stonemasons' organisation disappeared completely after a short life (Thomas suggests 1833–46.) The later "Operative Stonemason's Association" was founded in 1848 (4) and was vigorous in furthering the interests of its members during the remainder of the decade. It was perhaps the best-known of the Sydney unions of this period.

The employees in the printing industry had a stable organisation from 1835 to 1844, (5) but they did not form another society until 1851, (6) although the employees at the Herald Office had their own "chapel" from 1846 onwards. The Typographical Association formed in 1851 was functioning in 1852 (8) but a new body with the same name was established in 1854, (9) and this seems to have an interrupted existence from then on.

In some cases, trades which were discovered by Thomas or Rose to be unrecognised in the 'thirties or 'forties seem to have been without any union organisation in the 'fifties. The wool-sheepers (345–497), the weavers, wipers and spinners, (11) and the platers and shinglers (1842–7) are examples of this. It is doubtful, too, whether the Coachmakers' Benefit Society (13) survived until 1850, although it is true that the Coachmakers obtained higher wages in 1853. (14) Nothing was heard of the "United Watermen's Benefit Society" after its fifth anniversary in 1849, but perhaps this was not a union of employees.

A few other trades were unrecognised for the first time in the 'fifties. An ephemeral society was established by the journeymen butchers in 1857. (15) A Society of Journeymen Templetake Workers was active in 1852, (17) as was a society of tanners and curriers, (18) but what was their previous or later history is not known. A

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(1) SMH 26/3/1854, report of meeting; SMH 18/6/1855 report of meeting; (2) SMH 9/12/1858, advertisement; (3) SMH 5/7/1850, meeting notice; (4) E29/4/1853, report of meeting; (5) Thomas, op. cit., p. 43; (6) "Trade Unions", in Australian Encyclopaedia, Vol. 2, 1899, p. 43; (7) "The Sydney Morning Herald--Centenary Volume", 1842–1846 (John Fairfax and Sons, Sydney N.S.W.) (8) N2/7/1852, meeting notice; (9) SMH 10/1854, meeting notice; (10) Thomas, op. cit., p. 32; SMH 11/1854, advertisement; (11) Thomas, op. cit., p. 34; (12) Ibid. p. 47; (13) Ibid. p. 33; (14) SMH 10/1853, advertisement; (15) SMH 2/4/1858, advertisement; (16) SMH 17/1859, meeting notice. (17) There are several references to this society in advertisements and meeting notices. (18) There are several references to this society in advertisements and meeting notices. (19) SMH 17/4/1852, SMH 25/3/1852, SMH 19/1852.
Wheelwrights' Benefit Society or Friendly Society: both names were used — was meeting 1852-53. It may have functioned after this latter date but had disappeared by 1862 when a new "Wheelwrights' Friendly Society" was established.

A "Firemen's and Coal Trimmers' Benevolent Society" was in existence for a while during these years, but was dissolved in 1859. A New South Wales Society of "Brassfounders" was dissolved in 1855 and a Society of Journeyman Bookbinders was formed in 1854.

There is no evidence of the existence of any trade society in Melbourne before 1840, when the famous strike of carpenters and joiners occurred. The society — the Carpenters' and Joiners' Benefit Society — was established in May 1840, and was still holding meetings in November 1841. A further attempt at the organization of these trades was made in 1846, and this new society continued to exist certainly into 1847 and perhaps until 1850. At any rate some "Society of Carpenters and Joiners" existed August-October of the latter year, and conducted a strike at that time. It is not known what were the causes of its collapse, but a "Melbourne Carpenters' and Joiners' Union" was formed in April 1852, and this in turn was replaced three years later by the well-known Melbourne Progressive Society of Carpenters and Joiners which was active throughout the rest of the decade.

In the same year as that in which the carpenters and joiners began their organized activity, the bakers of Melbourne held meetings and entered into a "conspiracy" to keep their wages. But there is no evidence that they formed a society, either in 1840, or in 1847 when the "body" of journeymen bakers was reported to have contemplatedpetitioning against Sunday work, or in 1849 when they were said to have held meetings "protesting against the late hours of labor." The first unequivocal evidence of the existence of a society relates to 1853, although several meetings of the trade had been held in the previous year. Some sort of committee was still functioning in 1856, but in the next year another Association of journeymen bakers was formed with the stated aim of reducing the hours of work. It's efforts were apparently unsuccessful, for in November 1859 the members of the "Melbourne and Suburban Journeyman Bakers' Association" were summoned to a meeting to consider "the dissolution of the present society and the
formation of a trade association having for its object the limitation of the hours of labor. A very weak benefit society was all that existed in 1863.

Organization of the Melbourne printers, as is well known, dates back to at least 1844 when the Port Phillip Printers' Benefit Society was established. But there is a record of a previous attempt (apparently unsuccessful) to organize a benefit society among printers—in June 1844. The "1844" Society survived long enough to celebrate its second anniversary (Oct. 1846) but we lose track of it after that date, and there appears to have been no effective organization of the trade until the Victorian Typographical Association was formed early in 1851. The immediate cause of the formation of this body was a strike for higher wages, but its origins may perhaps be traced to some meetings of the trade in the previous year, when the printers as a group organized a demonstration to celebrate Separation. Ballarat says of this society that "it collapsed as a result of its members leaving for the gold-fields" and that "it was re-organized again in 1850 for a short time" but this account seems to be incorrect. Some record of meetings can be found for every year up to 1860, and then an attempt was made to re-organize it in some way so as to make it more efficient.

Other groups of operatives who first formed some kind of society before 1850 were the brickmakers (1841) the sawyers (1841) the bootmakers (1843) the tailors (1843) the stonemasons (1845?) drapers' assistants (1846) saddlers (1847) and possibly the painters and glaziers. About the Brickmakers Benefit Society or any later organization of brickmakers—nothing further is known. Of most of these others, however, we have a fairly full record. It is not known how long the Mutual Benefit Society of Sawyers (8) survived, but we have references to "combinations" or "strikes" in 1845 and 1850, and to a "Sawyers' Friendly Society" in 1849 and 1853. What continuity of organization existed up to 1853 is not known but it is clear that the Sawyers' Friendly Society of 1853 disappeared to be replaced by the United Sawyers of Victoria which functioned in 1857 and 1858. In the latter year, it is recorded, the "mill-sawyers" sought the eight-hour day. This is significant because up to this time the sawyers had been in an equivocal position. Many of them worked in pairs on contract work, and so it is not clear whether their organizations are to be regarded as unions of employees or rather

(1) A14/11/1859, meeting notices; (2) A10/11/1863, article No. II in the series on "The Condition of Labor"; (3) FPH 1/6/1844; (4) A20/10/1846, report (5) MHR 21/10/1850, MHR 23/10/1850 reports of meetings; (6) A7/1/1850, meeting notices; (7) FPH 9/12/1844, report (8) FPH 27/5/1844, meeting notices; (9) FPH 1/1/1845 reply by sawyers, A27/11/1850, report of comination, A27/11/1850, report of combinations, FPH 1/2/1849, mention of Society in report of police court case A13/9/1853, meeting notice; (10) A26/7/1857, meeting notices; A27/4/1858, meeting notice. (11) A14/9/1858, letter.
associations of independent tradesmen (Their 1845 "combination" certainly appears to have the latter character). But the milliners, with their demand for a reduced working day, were clearly wage-earners.

The shoemakers, like the sawyers, provide us with the problem of trying to decide whether organisation in the trade was continuous or discontinuous. In 1843, 1844, 1849-50, 1852-53, 1856 and 1859-60 a "corresponders" or "Shoemakers" society was in existence, but there is no evidence that any shoemakers' society was dissolved at any time, and no report of the actual foundation of one. It is unlikely, however, that a single society would have existed without any break from 1843 to 1860, and it is probable that in 1849 at least a new society was formed. The actual dates of the foundation and dissolution of the early Friendly Society of Stonemasons are not known. It existed in 1845, but no other reference to it has been found, although it no longer existed in 1850 when that "Operative Masons' Society" — made famous by Murphy's famous description of it as "the precursor of all the labour organisations of Australia" — was established. The traditional view of this, as stated by Sutcliffe, is that "the discovery of gold some ten months after its formation led to its temporary collapse, and it was not until 1855 that it was again re-established". It is true, that the society collapsed temporarily, and was re-organised in 1855, but what is overlooked is that another society was formed in 1853 and continued to meet until the end of that year. The operative stonemasons' society which began its career in 1855 was probably the most important union of the whole period, not merely because of its position as the original eight-hour union but also because of its activity in each of the succeeding years up to 1860, although it began to decline in that year. Its efforts to achieve its ends were so vigorous that in 1860 a "Free and Independent Order of Masons" was formed with the aim of protecting the interests of the stonemasons by milder methods. This was perhaps the only time in the period when two unions existed simultaneously in the one trade.

A strike of the Melbourne tailors was reported to have occurred in 1849, but there is no record of any society until 1843. It is not clear whether or

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not this was the same society as that which conducted a bitter fight with the employers in 1846 and was eventually destroyed in the struggle. Some sort of tradition of joint action remained (there was a house of call in '47, and a meeting of the trade in '49), and another society came into existence in 1850 and appears to have survived until 1854. A further attempt at organization was made in 1856, and the resulting society lasted after the interests of the trade until 1859 when we hear of a "Tailors' Protection Society" and later in the year a "Tailors' Political Association" which advocated protective duties as a remedy for working class problems. The Tailors' Political Association continued to meet until September 1860 when it decided "not to press its objects and claims" until the land question at that time agitating the community had been settled.

The earliest record of organization among the saddlers of Melbourne informs us that a Benefit Society was formed in 1847. We can find reports of action to raise wages in 1849 and to reduce hours in 1852, but a new society was formed in 1853 and became interested in the eight-hours movement in 1856.

Later meetings of the trade seemed not to have been any associated with a permanent organization.

The first Melbourne early closing association of which traces can be found was effective in securing the early closing of drapers' shops during the winter in the years 1846-48. The movement was revived in 1850, and again in 1852. This Early Closing Association flourished for a time in 1853, but the agreement among the drapers broke down and the Association faded out at the end of that year. Similar organizations were formed in 1854, 1855, and 1857 — the latter being known as the "Drapers' Six-o'clock Movement". Earlier agreements had been based on 7 o'clock closing. The drapers' assistants had been the leading spirits in all these bodies, although the grocers' assistants also showed interest, and the men employed by the ironmongers conducted successfully in 1857 an independent campaign to have ironmongers' stores closed early.

Whether or not the journeymen painters were organized before 1850 is not clear. A meeting of painters and glaziers to fix prices was summoned in 1848, but the advertisement does not state whether journeymen or masters were involved.

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it were the former any union they might have belonged to had disappeared by April 1853 when painters, plumbers and decorators were invited to a meeting to form a society. The union they formed—known first as the "Painters, Glaziers and Decorators", "Painters, Glaziers and Paper-hangers", and "Painters and Glaziers" but later as the "Painters and Paper-hangers" was quite active throughout the rest of the period. It appears that the plumbers did not accept the invitation to join in with the other trades, but organised on their own account in 1854 and maintained their separate identity at least until 1860.

Fitzpatrick writes that "on March 1st, 1856, soon after the re-formation of the masons' society, the Society of Operative Plasterers was formed, and almost forthwith, like the masons, it demanded the eight hours' day." But it appears from a meeting notice that the "Melbourne United Society of Operative Plasterers" was already in existence in January 1856, and it is also clear that it was the successor to a previous society in the trade. A plasterers' union was formed in 1853 and in February 1854 was considering a proposal to open another branch; but two months later the members were dividing up the funds. The exact date of the reformation of the society is not known, but the society which demanded the eight hours' day in 1856 was of considerable importance throughout the rest of the period.

The Cabinetmakers' Society had its beginnings at the same time as the masons—December 1855—and was still meeting in 1860. It seems to have collapsed early in that year. The history of organisation among the bricklayers is somewhat similar to that of the plasterers. There are traces of a Victorian Benefit Society of Bricklayers in 1853 and 1854 but this seems to have disappeared and the eight hours' agitation in April 1856 resulted in the birth of a new society which continued to exist up to the end of our period. Three other societies formed in connection with the eight hours' movement in 1856 were the Slaters', the laborers' and the quarrymen's. The Operative Slaters' Society continued to meet at least until 1859, but nothing is known about the "United Laborers' Friendly Society" after 1856, although the laborers took part in the 1857 and 1859 eight-hour processions as a distinct group. A Quarrymen's Benefit Society of 1856-58 was replaced in 1856 by another society (the aim of which...
was to combat attacks on the eight-hour system, and yet another society was formed in August 1860 to ensure that the men were paid regularly once a fortnight.

On 1st June 1857 there occurred the first meeting of the Coachmakers' Society which was engaged in the famous strike at the Williams' coachbuilding works in 1856. It is possible that an earlier society had existed for a time, for traces of combined action among coach-makers can be found for 1852, 1853, and 1855. The events of 1856 in particular suggest the existence of some organization, for it is reported that members of the trade struck to gain the eight-hour day in May and they were represented by delegates at a meeting of the combined trades in July of that year. The society no longer existed in February 1860. The curriers of Melbourne were also interested in the eight-hour movement - they took part in the procession in 1858 - but their society cannot be traced earlier than 1853 or later than 1854. The Tinplate Workers' Society on the other hand, had a continuous existence over the years 1853-58, but as far as is known played no particular part in the eight-hour agitation during those years.

The first recorded attempt at organization in the iron trades was in May 1854, when a meeting was held to establish a Boiler-makers' Friendly Society. Nothing more was heard of this or of any other society until 1858, although the journeymen farrier's held meetings in 1853 and 1856. But in June 1858 some efforts were made to organize the millwrights, engineers, moulders, smiths, and all workers in iron, and by July we hear of a 'United Society of Ironworkers' meeting notice (11), and by July we hear of a 'United Society of Ironworkers'.

But later meetings to support a strike of blacksmiths employed on the railway works were addressed simply to the 'iron trades', and a little later, the blacksmiths' interests were being attended to by the Friendly Society of Blacksmiths, which took some action on behalf of those of its members involved in the eight-hour strike at Williams' coach factory. Whether the Friendly Society of Blacksmiths was identical, or connected in any way, with the United Society of Ironworkers, cannot be determined from the available evidence. The Argus claimed in 1863 that the moulders' society had been formed in 1858 and it referred also to a branch of the A.S.M. which covered most of the rest of the iron trades.

(1) 19/10/1858, report. (2) 21/9/1860, report. (3) 31/5/1852, advertisement. (4) 12/12/1853, meeting notice. (5) 29/5/1856, report. (6) 12/7/1856, report. (7) This was what coachbuilders told the Tariff Committee - e.g. W. Foulds, 9314, C. Botto, 9443. (8) 12/4/1853, meeting notice. (9) 23/2/1854, meeting notice. (10) 21/12/1854, report of 1st anniversary. (11) 3/4/1854, meeting notice. (12) 19/5/1854, meeting notice. (13) 12/12/1855, meeting notice. (14) 14/9/1856, meeting notice. (15) 12/6/1855, meeting notice. (16) 17/7/1858, report. (17) 11/3/1859, meeting notice. (18) 22/9/1859, meeting notice. (19) 10/10/1863. (20) 22/10/1863.
Other trade or benefit societies which are known to have existed in Melbourne in the fifties were a Sailmakers' Society (1854), Woolsorters' (1851), Shipwrights' (1856), Waiters' and Barman's (1856), and Butchers' (1857). None of these was of any special importance, and all appear to have been quite short-lived.

Outside of the main towns in New South Wales and Victoria strikes and unions are known to have existed, but this field has not been investigated to any extent for the present work. Among the many examples of shepherds and agricultural laborers absconding from their work in the country there may have been some agreements or "conspiracies" which amounted to strikes. But in addition there were genuine unions to be found in such towns as Maitland, Ballarat, and Geelong. The most important field for union activity outside the administrative centres was on the northern coal-fields of New South Wales. Fitzpatrick disputes Sutcliffe's account of the formation of the "Hunter River Coal Miners' Protective Association" in 1864, contending that this union dates back to 1854. Sutcliffe seems to be correct in giving the date for the formation of the Protective Association as 21st February 1861; a newspaper report of the meeting stated clearly that "a code of rules prepared by the delegates as the basis of the association and embodying the main principles of the resolutions (reproduced by Sutcliffe) was then submitted and after discussion adopted". But Fitzpatrick's claim that organisation in the coal trade goes back to 1854 may also be correct: the occurrence of strikes in 1850, 1854, 1855, 1856 and 1860 does suggest that some form of organisation existed in those years even if it covered only partially the industry. The hypothesis most consistent with the facts is that "clubs" or "combinations" existed at some of the mines but that there was no single union for the whole district until 1869.

A "shop" union, (similar to a chapel in the printing industry) was reported to have been formed in 1856 by the employees of the Coal and Copper Company's works. The first general meeting of miners of which we have any record took place in May 1858 when the Government was urged to begin a system of regular inspection of the mines to see that they came up to reasonable standards.
of health and safety. The next general movement — that which led to the
formation of the Protective Association in 1861 — was also partially concerned
with health and safety measures. The first meeting (May 1860) was called "for
the purpose of initiating a complete organization, having for its object the
appointment of a government inspector of coal mines for New South Wales".
That the actual aims were more extensive than that statement would imply is
obvious from the report of the proceedings of the meetings. "The first resolut-
ion pledged those present to form themselves into a union for their mutual
protection and the accomplishment of such ameliorations of their present condit-
on as might be found necessary" — The third was in favour of a uniform eight
hour system of working the mines of the colony". The committee appointed
by the meeting as delegates from the various mines continued to meet in
the succeeding months. Its proceedings were mainly concerned with the petition
to the Government, but it seems also to have been involved in a strike at
the Miami colliery, and perhaps in the election of T. Leane (who had been
chairman at the general meetings in 1858 and 1860) to represent Northumberland
in the Legislative Assembly. The meeting in February 1861 appears to have
been the result of a continuation of the activities of this committee of
delegates.

Of the other big towns, only the following information is available
to us, although it is certain that further research would reveal the existence
of numerous other unions. The carpenters of Maitland were reported to have
struck in 1862. What happened in the trade in the meantime is not known, but
a carpenters' and joiners society was formed in 1860. In the same year an
Operative Painters' Society was active, and meetings of stonemasons were held
to consider the eight-hour system. The formation of a Typographical Asso-
ciation at Ballarat in 1857 is mentioned by Satalifko: other societies organis-
ed there were the stonemasons' (by 1859) the Tailors' (1860) and an Early
Clerical Association (1860). In Geelong, there was reported to be "a conspiracy
to raise wages" as early as 1841, and a general strike by stonemasons in 1846.

In the 'fifties it is possible that the Melbourne unions exercised some
influence in Geelong - particularly the Operative Stonemasons' Society which
exercised some control over men employed on the various railway works. An
anonymous mason writing in the "Argus" in 1859 claimed that the Stonemasons' 
and
Society had an agreement with the Builders' Society/that "16s. per day is
by mutual consent the wages of workmen of average ability in Melbourne and
Geelong", which suggests that the Society controlled engagements in Geelong
as well as in Melbourne. In the previous year, when boilermakers in Melbourne
were engaged in a dispute over the eight hour system with the proprietors
of the Port Phillip Foundry, they received financial and other assistance from
the boilermakers of Geelong. It is clear from this and the other information
in this paragraph that some sort of trade union movement existed outside
Sydney and Melbourne, but its nature and extent have yet to be discovered.

(ii) Organisation.

The main features of the structure of these societies are clear from
the various published accounts of unionism in Australia. They were mainly craft
unions although some groupings such as the colliers' unions and the Australasian
Iron Trades' Protection Association were organized on something like industrial
lines. In a few cases - the miners in 1860 and the printers throughout the
'fifties - the primary unit of organization was not the craft but the "shop",
with delegates from the various shops conducting the business for the whole
trade. The membership of most of the societies was probably between 20 and 100;
although the Victorian building unions, after the successful eight-hour movement
of 1856, may have had several hundred members and may have supervised the working
conditions of several hundred more. In the terminology of the weavers they were
"local craft" unions -
the unit of government coincided with the town in which the members lived, with the exception again of the Victorian building unions. The plumbers, carpenters and joiners, and stonemasons of Melbourne introduced some degree of complexity by having more than one branch in their unions. The relationship between the different branches was obscure, but it seems that the method of government was similar to that discovered by Webs in the rather different circumstances of English unionism — viz., that in matters that concerned all the branches one of them should act as the governing branch "or head office" of the whole body.

From time to time organisations extending beyond a single trade were established. It is important here to distinguish between those restricted to workers and those whose membership was open to all. The latter were to be regarded as political organisations rather than trade unions. The associations which were both restricted to workers and designed to cover more than a single trade were usually organised as federations, their affairs being conducted by committees composed of delegates from the various trades. Thus the New South Wales Labor League of 1856, (which conducted part of the eight-hour agitation in Sydney) and the Victorian Eight-Hour Day Demonstration Committee were each composed of delegates from the several participating trades. This form of organisation — a committee of "delegates of the trades" — appeared by the early 'fifties and was favoured throughout the period. But for most part such federations were "ad hoc" organisations like the Labor League, or the Trades' Hall Committee in Victoria. The one inter-trade organisation which acquired (and exercised) general functions was the "Operatives' Board of Trade of Melbourne." This too, consisted of representatives from unions connected with the building trades and was constituted to act as a board of advice to the unions in case of conflict with the employers. It played some part in the trade union negotiations in the late 'fifties. The Melbourne plasterers in Aug. 1859 sought a still closer union — "we the plasterers of Victoria do pledge ourselves to support each other by forming ourselves into one common bond, viz. An amalgamation with all the other trades." A little later the members of that trade were summoned to a meeting "to hear the report from the delegates to the Board of Trade in reference to the amalgamation movement", but the amalgamation movement evidently did not flourish for we hear no more of it.

(1) Fitzpatrick states that this was established on August 18, 1856, and was later merged with the Trades' Hall Committee (British Empire in Australia, p. 295a.) Such an organisation had been foreshadowed in a speech by W. Wink at the first Eight-Hour Demonstration (113/5/1856), and various "committees of the trades" met in the next few years. (2) 24/8/1859, report (3) 24/8/1859, meeting notice.
One interesting feature of the trade federations was that they were not inter-colonial bodies. This is easy enough to understand of course, the distances were too great that there would have been very great difficulty in uniting the members of one or more trades in Sydney and Melbourne into a single society, or even in establishing an interstate committee to consider any common problems. The operation between unions in different colonies did take place, however. An outstanding example of this occurred in 1859, when the Sydney Operative Stonemasons' Society inserted in a newspaper (the following advertisement): "Masons of Sydney, the strikes in Victoria are still pending. By all means refrain from proceeding there under any engagements with agents here."

This notice reveals incidently, that one condition which we might expect to be an incentive to interstate co-operation was present at the close of our period—the practice of attempting to break strikes by importing workers from another colonial centre. Common explains many extensions in industrial organization by reference to the existence of competition between workmen in the same trade in neighbouring districts, and such competition did exist in Australia during the period. One famous occasion on which strike-breakers were successfully "imported" was in 1854, when the miners employed by the Australian Agricultural Company were defeated by these means. But as early as 1845 a Melbourne tailor chose his employees over an strike went to Hobart and brought journeymen back from there. (The reservoir of labor supposed to exist in Van Dieman's Land was mentioned by the Melbourne newspapers whenever workmen were contemplating industrial action). Perhaps the most extraordinary example of interstate competition was provided by the following advertisement published in Melbourne "Argus" in 1846: "The Sydney Society of Carpenters and Joiners beg to inform the employers of that species of labour in Melbourne that owing to the great excess of hands of the employment in Sydney are members of their body idle who would gladly avail themselves of emigrating to Melbourne, but are entirely destitute of the means...........(5) Some meetings of the Carpenters were held in Melbourne at about this time, but no inter-colonial organisation was formed as a result.

(1) A meeting notice of the Operative Bakers' Association of New South Wales (1852) included the following passages: "As communications have been received from Port Phillip it is intended to expand the Association in connexion with that body, and it is hoped everyone will attend when a subject of so much importance is brought before the meeting" (SNH 10/1852) But nothing more was heard of the "intention". (2) SNH 2/1859 (3) J. C. Gilbert, The Australian Agricultural Company, 1826-1872 (Sydney, 1907) pp. 154-55 (4) FPR 3/6/1845, report 3 (5) A244/6/1846.
The general picture we have then, is of small craft unions co-operating through committees of delegates with members of other trades. The significant point that emerges is that questions of organization were relatively unimportant in these societies because with certain important exceptions they could fulfill the conditions of "primitive" or "immediate" democracy. Important decisions could be and were made by meetings of the whole body of workmen in the trade. In these circumstances the "mass meeting" was not merely a summary method of getting the workmen to accept or reject a committee's recommendations. The membership of the societies was small enough to make a general meeting the appropriate place to discuss an important issue. But in the 'fifties some unions began to replace the general meeting by the meeting of the Committee or of the Board of Management. (1) Even the earliest unions had officers to carry out the administrative work of the union, and in both unorganized and organized trades there can be distinguished certain functions of leadership—proposing resolutions—calling meetings etc., and above all the formulating of policy—but until these functions came to be exercised by a permanent and formally established managing committee the differentiation between the officials and the ordinary member was not a significant feature of trade union organization.

In their studies of British unionism the Webbs found many examples of devices by which the "general meeting" of members attempted to maintain their control over the executive of the union, and Weber regarded such efforts (however futile they might prove) as quite typical of corporate groups. But there is little evidence of serious conflicts between the members and the executives of any of the unions being discussed here. There is little evidence either that the management committees went far in the development of bureaucratic or attitudes, or that the existence of the permanent committee was resented by the members. One outstanding example of a union executive which did meet criticism from the ranks, was the Victorian Operative Stonemasons' Committee which was frequently denounced as "tyrannical". The question at issue there was the committee's attitude towards breaches of the rules of the union. The committee insisted on rigid adherence to the rules relating to wage rate and to the "sub-letting" of contracts, and any member convicted of breaking the rules was fined or expelled (as the rules provided). But the critics of the executive could not

(1) e.g. The Victorian Typographical Association called meetings of its "Board", 4 24/4/1857, 25/8/1857 etc.

(2) e.g. A letter in the "Argus" 13/7/1857.
make out a case that the committee administered the rules arbitrarily or inconsistently for their own ends (political or economic). The conflict that existed within the unions society is to be considered rather as a conflict between two parties among the members the committee being allied with the party desiring a strict interpretation of the rules then as purely a struggle between members on one side and executive on the other. The struggle over policy was taking place within the general meeting the "tyranny" was that of a majority rather than of a bureaucracy. It resulted eventually (in 1866) in the establishment of a "rival" union of stonemasons with rules that bound the members less strictly. But in general the problems raised by the fact of organized leadership in the trade unions of the period were not very interesting or important. One device mentioned by the Wobbs the practice of short terms of office was adopted by some members organizations.  

(1) But the exact significance of this in Australian conditions is not clear. The leaders remained "workmen at the bench", no group of professional trade union officials emerged in this period.

(iii) The Union and its Members.

The relationship between the union and its members raises rather different problems. Marx relates the union to a pre-existing group of workers in society rather than to an "artificial" group created by the laws and regulations of a formally-constituted organization. In his union the union appears primarily as a group interpretation of the social situation in which the workers find themselves.  

This view is to be contrasted with the interpretation of a union as a "combination" or "conspiracy" i.e. as the result of a deliberate decision to combine for monopolistic purposes by individual workers.  

In other words Marx is denying that a union is, in Weber's terminology an "associative social relationship", denying that it is a "pure voluntary association based on self-interest", a case of agreement as to a long run course of action oriented purely to the promotion of specific ulterior interests, economic or otherwise of its members.  

(1) E.g. the officials of the "Sydney Morning Herald" seem to have held office for only three months at a time, although they were frequently re-elected.  
(2) "Sydney Morning Herald" 1845-1846 p. (20).  
(3) E. P. Haring, Trade Unions in the United States (1843) 69.  
(4) A classic statement of the "conspiracy" view is to be found in H. H. Mans" article Some Reflections on Syndicalism (Journal of Political Economy, Volume LI, 1944).  
It is not difficult to find examples of Australian Unions which merely “formalised” pre-existing relationships among groups of workers, and it is clear that self-interest was not the only bond between the members of any given group. Perhaps no union would have been formed if the members had not felt that their individual positions would have been better with a union than without it, but the significance of the appeal for “solidarity”, so characteristic of working-class politics, is that it is based on something broader than the self-interest of the individual, something with which individual interests might conflict. The great problem for any theory which bases social groupings solely on individual self-interest is to account for the persistence of the group when group- and individual-interest come into conflict.

The activities of the Australian unions were naturally undertaken with a view to bettering the conditions of the members, but there was often a conscious use of some group-interest distinct from and superior to the selfish interests of some individuals. It was “for the protection of the interests of the trade” that unions were formed, and the concept of a trade whose interest was superior to that of individual craftsmen, was quite generally accepted. This came out clearly in the N.S.W. Eight-hours agitation of 1856, when some of the workmen desired the eight-hours’ day whilst others preferred the higher pay which was to be gained by working ten hours. The latter were denounced as “grievously injuring the best interests of the trade” and as “acquisitive.” The interests of the “trade”, it was held, were that the eight-hours’ day should be adopted, and self-interested individuals were expected to conform to the principles.

Many union rules—those implying the “common rule”—present this kind of problem where the individual member is expected to conform to the rules even though his own interests might be better served by breaking the rules, and, however effective “penalties” may have been, some consciousness of obligation to their fellow-workmen obviously was of some influence in producing conformity among the early Australian unionists.

This brings us to another aspect of non-associative groups—the fact that the members of such groups have some feeling that they “belong together.” Max Weber bases his whole account of these non-associative (“communal”) relationships on “a subjective feeling of the parties that they belong together.”

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1. e.g. The Sydney Carpenters and Joiners, 22/12/1856, report
2. e.g. The Stenographers, MM 10/2/1856, cf. MM 25/2/1856, letter.
and although this is an incomplete explanation of the coherence of social movements the "subjective feeling" does occur in such movements and is quite inconsistent with a utilitarian relationship. Something of this attitude is involved in the addressing of notices to "Brother tradesmen" and in the decision of a meeting of building workers in Sydney that "the disunited state of the workingmen in Sydney demands the formation of a Labor League". Dignity i.e., the state of the labor market treated as natural by individualist theories of society, was regarded as not merely inexpedient but unnatural by the workmen who agreed to this resolution. Expediency undoubtedly played some part in the formation of these unions in Australia and elsewhere and by explanation in terms of expediency alone would be inadequate to account for all their characteristics.

It will be noticed that all these references to the consciousness of taking part in a "movement" relate entirely to the interests of the trade. This is not surprising for craft unions are quite characteristically "craft-conscious" rather than "class-conscious". But the Eight hours' movement - both in Sydney and Melbourne - did bring to light some consciousness of an interest wider than the craft and this would account in part for the formation of the Labor League in Sydney and the "Operatives' Board of Trade" in Melbourne. The demand for an eight hour day was put forward by a number of trades in association and when in 1858 and 1859 the system was attacked by employers in some trades in Victoria the eight hour trades as a group rallied to the defence of their fellow-workmen.

The working-day of eight hours had become a "principle" to be fought for whenever and wherever it was in danger. The Sydney Stone Masons, successful in their own bid for the eight hours day, gave a donation of £30 to the funds of the carpenters and joiners because "the success of the carpenters in the present struggle will materially assist in the furthering of the short hours' movement, and in turn the carpenters refused to accept an offer to negotiate directly with their employers because the matter was in the hands of the Labor League. These examples show that there was some consciousness of a community extending beyond the bounds of the craft - on some issues, at any rate - although the craft was clearly the main unit of organization.

II. Methods.

The methods used by trade unions to better the conditions of their members fall into a number of fairly well-defined groups. The methods of Australian unions fit well enough into the classifications devised for trade union movements of other countries.

(1) The Method of Mutual Insurance.

All accounts of the early unions in Australia stress that the provision of "mutual benefits" was one of their main functions. Many of the societies were formed primarily for this purpose and even though they may have later extended their activities into other fields they continued to be called "Benefit Societies", " Provident Societies" or "Sick and Accident Societies". The workers did not distinguish clearly between the friendly society and the trade union and expected the society formed by the members of his trade to protect him from both the tyranny of the employer and the hazards of sickness and accident. Even the very vigorous Operative Stonemasons' Society of Melbourne apparently felt obliged to "form a sick and accident fund"(1) And the Society of the Sydney Stonemasons, which was formed during a strike for a shorter working week, was described at its inception as a "Provident Society for relief in contingent emergencies, and for the prompt assistance of future arrivals in the colony of members of their craft". (2) It retained its friendly society functions throughout the period, although at the same time it was the leading eight-hour society in New South Wales.

The provision of mutual insurance created no important conflicts or problems in the early labor movement, and it was carried on along orthodox lines. There were individual differences between societies, but the usual practice was to provide relief in case of sickness or accident and perhaps in case of enforced unemployment, to provide funeral benefits and sometimes to make an allowance to members whose tools of trade were accidentally lost or destroyed. (3) The actuarial principles were often rather crude, (4) but most of the societies managed to meet their obligations as long as membership fees were paid.

(1) This was their intention in April 1856, according to James Stephens (A10/4/18 56. (2) 23/4/1853, report. (3) e.g. the early Joiners' Society in Sydney (S1 23/1/1835, advertisement). (4) The Rules of the Port Phillip Printers' Benefit Society provided that "when the funds are above £10 relief twelve shillings, if above £20, fifteen shillings per week". The Entrance fee was five shillings and the dues were four shillings per month (PPP 9/5/1845).
"friendly" benefits and "out-of-work" benefits. The distinction is connected with the fact that "out-of-work" benefits are a means of preventing the unemployed members of a trade from under-cutting the wages of their fellow employees. Unemployed benefits were used for this purpose as early as 1836 in Sydney, and 1840 in Melbourne. The function of such payments was explained clearly by a member of the Victorian Typographical Association shortly after its formation in 1851. He informed the employers and the public that "the compositors have at length taken such steps as will prevent those of their profession out of employment being compelled to work for reduced wages, and will in future make it their study to prove to arbitrary and unfeeling masters that employer and employee are a little dependent on each other." Other societies may have been as aware of the implications of unemployment benefit but most of them did not inform the general public what kinds of benefits they provided.

The Clerks' Provident Society (1845) discontinued its out-of-work benefits not only because so few members had joined it but because however beneficial its operations might be to those who should join it, still it involves principles which might prove unsafe in their results. The Society evidently feared that there was some danger of encouraging idleness by paying relief to those out of work. The clerks were not very interested in bargaining power, and so they had no reason to continue paying these benefits. A different solution to this problem had to be found by the Australian Society of Compositors, which was primarily a bargaining union but which was also unwilling to support the idle and the disorderly. This society tried to distinguish between kinds of unemployment and refused relief to members who "shall through drunkenness or neglect be discharged" or who "shall of his own accord leave his employ without first bringing his case before the committee." Another suggestion of the Webbs was that the English unions used mutual insurance as a means of binding the individual workers to the organizations. There is no direct evidence that the Australian unions used it for this purpose. The workers appear to have believed that the provision of mutual benefits was an essential part of the activities of a "trade society even though the services of general friendly societies were available to them.

whilst out of work benefits were sometimes subordinated to the bargaining
programmes of the unions, the provision of friendly benefits was an independent
part of their work.

(ii) Strikes and Collective Bargaining

Few societies were content to limit their activities to the provision
of mutual benefits. Whatever their declared aim, most of the unions undertook
at one time or another to bargain on behalf of their members. Collective bar-
gaining, sometimes in the form of a strike and sometimes in the form of peace-
ful negotiations, was among the functions of even the earliest societies.

The strikes conducted by the workers of Sydney and Melbourne fall into
two broad groups. Firstly, there were strikes aimed directly at an improvement
in wages or conditions, and secondly, there were those strikes undertaken in
order to establish or to defend some "principle" believed to be necessary to
maintain the bargaining strength of unions and the working class in general.

There were no "political" strikes in the period under discussion.

Traces can be found of about fifty industrial disputes in Sydney and
Melbourne prior to 1860, divided evenly between the two towns and about three-fifths of
them between 1850 and 1860. It is impossible to state definitely how many
of these were for a "principle" and how many were for direct improvement of
conditions. The men were often not able to state clearly what they were striking for,
and their aims were often complex. An arbitrary classification would show that
not less than half of all strikes were aimed at improving wages and conditions.
The "abnormally" high proportions concerned with the establishment of principles
is a reflection of the fact that the whole period was one in which unions were
trying to establish themselves and in which economic changes were rapid and
widespread.

A few of these industrial disputes took the form of lockouts rather than
strikes. In 1858 Henry Parkes announced to his employees that he would be
obliged to reduce his rates for piece work from 1/6 to 1/3 per thousand, and
he said he would have to dismiss those who were not willing to accept 1/3. He
saw a fortnight's notice of the change, saying that each individual had the
alternative of either accepting the lower rate or leaving his employer. (1) He was
most annoyed when as a body the men refused the lower wages and claimed that they

(1) SMH 25/4/1868, report. The position was complicated by the fact that Parkes
could add his man £1,400.

had been locked out. A somewhat similar stand had been taken by the master builders of Sydney when the carpenters and joiners in their employ announced that they would work only eight hours per day. The employers "acting with a view to the conservation of the mutual interest" decided "to employ such carpenters and joiners only as are willing to work the full time hitherto maintained". The men described the dispute as an "employers' strike".

It will be seen that in both these cases the employers took the view that they were entering into wage-bargaining with individuals rather than with a collective group. They were willing to employ individuals who accepted their terms, and they treated a wage-bargain as similar in principle to any other bargain - that is, they assumed that the refusal of an offer left either side free to make an offer to any other party. The workmen, on the other hand, rejected the principle of individual bargaining and rejected the notion that the wage bargain could be treated like any other bargain. They objected to the idea that other persons ("strike-breakers") could accept an offer rejected by the original employees. They believed that they continued to be attached to the place of employment although they were not at the time in work.

Some disputes were restricted to a particular shop or job, but many involved a whole trade. One or two were extended to more than one trade. The technique involved in the earliest strikes seems to have been that of a sudden stoppage - a spontaneous walkout without notice. The Sydney compositors were probably the first to adopt the practice of giving the employers' "Notice" of a rule which they intended to impose upon the trade. But in the 'fifties, notice of a strike became more common. The Sydney masons gave six months' notice of their intention to work the eight hours' day, and the usual practice was to give at least a few days' notice. It is significant that the miners' explanation of their strike in 1854 related that when the men decided to demand a wage increase they gave "the usual notice of a month"; it was only after the month had elapsed that the men stopped work. Thus as the period advanced the relations between employers and employees became more formalised. But sudden stoppages also continued to take place especially on the Victorian railway works where the employers frequently attempted to change one or another of the conditions of employment.

(1) 2/8/1854. (2) SMU. 10/10/1856. (3) SMU 26/10/1826. (4) For example, the eight hours' strikes in Vic. in 1859 involved directly the coalminers and the ironworkers whilst the other "eight hours' trades" displayed a keen interest in the proceedings. (5) Sec 21/12/1827, letter and editorial. (6) The Victorian building trades all gave notice of their intention to begin the eight hours' system. (7) 322/3/1854, advertisement.
It is not always easy to find out how long these strikes persisted, because the beginnings and endings of strikes were rarely reported. Two to three weeks seems to have been the maximum for most of them, and some lasted only a few days. The eight hour strike of the carpenters and joiners which began in September 1896 and was abandoned in February 1897 was quite unusual, although not unique. The strike of the masons on a similar issue began in February 1896 and was not settled until the 2nd of September. Both of these eight hour strikes, it must be added, represented a stage of highly developed organisation in the conduct of strikes, because in each case the decision to settle the dispute was made and recorded in a formal manner. The employers of the masons remitted by a majority, at a specially convened meeting, to accept the terms of the men, and the committee of the carpenters and joiners, when they found themselves unable to supply strike relief any longer, issued an official instruction to the men to that effect. The Operatives' Board of Trade in Melbourne similarly introduced a degree of organisation into the conduct of strikes in that town. Organisation became necessary in order to carry on a strike of some hundreds of workmen over a period running into months.

Strikes of any magnitude necessitate some efforts to maintain solidarity. The most practical measures are strike benefits and some of the Australian unions provided benefits of this kind. The strike relief provided by the carpenters and joiners in 1896-97 has already been mentioned; these trades made special efforts to secure funds while the struggle was in progress. A similar appeal was made on behalf of the trades striking for the eight hours' day in Melbourne in 1898. But for the most part the unions relied on their own funds for this purpose. As part of the general process of conserving solidarity among the strikers, and of getting support from outsiders, the traditional devices of publicity - advertisements, letters to the newspapers and public meetings - were used. In addition, pickets were employed in some strikes. Picketing was not a widespread feature of strikes in Australia during the period, but it did appear occasionally, especially in the Victorian railway strikes.

Some of the pickets were reported to have attempted to "intimidate" those who had not left the job or those who had been introduced as strikebreakers, but

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(1) Details of the strike were given at a meeting reported by the "Empire", 12/12/1896. For the decision of the strike committee, see R12/2/1897. (2) SMH 10/3/1896, report; 31/3/1896, report. On the duration of this strike, see "Featherston (British Empire in Australia, pp. 239-239) and A.G. Tharston (in the "Australian Worker", 30/9/1913)(3) e.g. SMH 16/12/1896, report; 4/10/1899, report, (4) e.g. 27/10/1897, 31/10/1897, letters.
such reports usually came from the employers or their spokesmen and were perhaps exaggerated.

The strike represents an extreme step in the bargaining process carried on between "employer and employee". The building trades' unions both in Sydney and Melbourne want quite some way in developing the alternative method of negotiation and of the collective agreement. In Melbourne it was claimed there was an understanding between the members of the Builders' Association and the stonemasons' union that before any change took place notice of it should be given, and a conference arranged. (1) The plasterers and the painters also had some machinery for conferring with employers when a disagreement arose. (2) In Sydney, similar examples could be found. The first move of the carpenters when they sought higher wages in 1853 was to propose a conference with the employers. Three years later they tried to bring about the change to the eight hours' system through negotiation, but they could not effect an agreement. The stonemasons, however, claimed in 1859, that in their trade "if any alterations in the rate of wages were to be made, the matter might be amicably and properly arranged with a conference of employers and employees" (4) Thus in both colonies the stonemasons introduced the technique of an informal agreement between the masters and the union. In this way they changed very considerably the character of the bargaining process, and approached quite closely to the system of the formal collective agreement.

General Agreement has been reached on what is the character of bargaining carried on by trade unions. "For the improvement of the conditions of employment" wrote the Webbs, "the Trade Unionists have, with all their multiplicity of Regulations, really only two expedients which we term respectively, the device of the common rule, and the device of restriction of numbers" (5) This is substantially the same as the classification set out by Hosie. The early Australian unions made use of both the "device of the common rule" and the "device of restriction of numbers". We shall begin by considering the second of these.

(1) 23/4/1859, letter. For an account of a meeting between the union and the railway contractors, see a letter to John Bright republished in the "Argus" of 8/11/1858. See also the description of the organisation of the stonemasons in a letter in the "Argus" supplement of 21/12/1858. (2) Plasterers: 23/11/1859, letter. (3) Painters: 26/3/1859, meeting notice. (4) 22/2/1853, supplement ad. (4) 25/4/1858, report. (5) Industrial Democracy, p. 560. (6) Hosie describes very fully the functioning of these devices: "(a) If the wages and conditions of the group are not to sink to what can be commanded by its weakest labor bargainer, they must make the strength of the weakest bargainer equal to the strength of the group. (b) If the wages of the group are to be kept from falling or to be increased, and the conditions of employment maintained or bettered, they must constantly attempt to increase the bargaining strength of the group as against the employers of the group and as against other groups" (Trade Unionism in the United States, p. 211).
One of the first services provided by trade unions in Australia was the "House of Call," and this continued to be a feature of many unions until 1860.

The union's house of call is designed first of all as a labor exchange and no doubt it does perform the useful function of providing an employment service to both employers and employees—a particularly useful function in trades in which labor is employed on a casual and temporary basis. But in addition the house of call can be used to control the quality and quantity of the labor supply. If the employers can be persuaded to do all their hiring through the union's labor exchange, then the union can effectually control competition by limiting the numbers, or at any rate the classes, of the persons permitted to place their names on the union's books. Some of the Australian unions used this technique to limit competition from unskilled laborers. One example of this use of the house of call was described in an advertisement published by the Slaters' Society of Sydney.

"Notice to the Public—Notice is hereby given that in consequence of the great imposition practiced by individuals representing themselves as slaters or shinglers, who are nothing but laborers, and offering their labor as very cheap that many are tempted to give them work at shingling or slating, whereby they are eventually at a great loss; therefore, the Shinglers and Slaters of Sydney have formed a Society where none are admitted but men who perfectly know their business. Builders and others can obtain good workmen at moderate prices, by applying at the Society's Room..."

A modification of this device was introduced by the Woolstaplers' Society of New South Wales when this society was formed in 1843, it announced that it proposed to furnish its members "with credentials both of their right to the trade, and of their ability to discharge the duties connected therewith." (It would have been impracticable to expect grantees to hire woolstaplers indirectly by means of the Society's call book). The "Woolstaplers' Equitable and Friendly Society" (Victoria) used almost exactly the same language in promising to provide its members with a certificate to distinguish them from impostors by whom...

\(1\) S & D Webb, op. cit. pp. 437-39. \(2\) apparently all the "regular" members of a trade were admitted to the trade society. \(3\) A.C. 15/12/1842. \(4\) cf. the claim of the Sydney painters in 1859 that they would help both themselves and their employers by "bringing together a class of workmen more reliable and superior to those who were casually engaged when (the employers were) applied for employment (SMH 12/11/1859, report) \(5\) Aust. 9/8/1843.
the character of the Woolsorter of this trade is necessarily injured. It is
nothing of the injury done to the pecuniary interest of the thorough trade
and not less that of the settlers. In every case the society was trying to
demonstrate that the employer, as well as the "regular" tradesman, suffered
from the employment of unskilled labor, but their real aim is obvious throughout.
It is interesting to see that among the trades which feared the competition of the
unskilled were some in which most of the workmen were almost independent jobbers
rather than persons with the definite status of employees.

A rather different attempt to rid themselves of this kind of competition
was made by the Melbourne journeymen plasterers in 1859. They sent to the
Australasian Institute of Plasterers a petition "having for its object the exclusion
of the plasterers' work from the general contract, and the obtaining of separate
tenders from the workmen properly qualified for this particular branch of trade."
The Council of the Institute was sympathetic and promised to recommend to the
profession "to insist on the plasterers' work being let to bona fide tradesmen"
(3)

The distinction between the skilled and the unskilled rests on whether
or not the tradesman has served a regular apprenticeship. But some unions
found that they had more to fear from the introduction of apprentices than
from the employment of those who had no "claims" to the trade. The printers
of both colonies were concerned over this problem, and it was also one of
the issues in Melbourne tailors' strike in 1846. The Secretary of the Compositors' Society in Sydney frankly described its decision to impose a "scale" of
apprentices on the trade as "our endeavour to restrain the bringing up of appren-
tices in such numbers as will entail future ruin themselves and us". But
the employers did not often try to "swamp" the trades with apprentices, and so
the issue was raised infrequently during the period.

One important kind of competition is that brought about by the immigration
of workers from other areas. Attempts to limit the employment in any loca-
ality to those who "belonged" to the locality were among the earliest practices
of English unionism. The Australian unionists — many of whom were immigrants —
could hardly claim that they alone "belonged" to the area in which they lived,
but opposition to immigration was one of the recurrent themes in Australian

(1) 177/4/1851 (2) The Woolsorters of New South Wales explained at length
that their trade was a "mystery" and that the granger could not himself discrimi-
nate between skilled workmen and impostor (3) 177/4/1859, reports (4)This was well
brought out by the statement of a Melbourne stonemason in 1857 that one of the
aims of the Society was "to serve to those who had served their five years' appren-
ticeship, and one also among the benefits of employment" (A 5/2/1851, report) (5)
For the issues in the Melbourne strike, see A 7/4/1851 (advertisement) (6) A224/4/1842, advertisement.
working class politics, and the trade unions played a minor part in the immigration movement before 1850. The composition of Sydney, for example, sent to England, a statement of the wages and conditions in the colony, and the unions of the Stonemasons and the toolmakers of Victoria were said to send reports to the English unions in order to dissuade workmen from emigrating. Within Australia, as we saw in the previous chapter, the societies corresponded with each other on the question of the availability of employment.

The employment of non-union labor was the cause of some disputes but the objection of the unionist to the non-unionist is an aspect of the "device of the common rule" rather than of the "device of restriction of numbers". There is no evidence that those who refused to work with non-union labor were attempting to reduce the numbers engaged in the industry or that they imposed universal restrictions on membership of their unions. It is clear that what they were objecting to was the presence of unorganized workers whose individualism would limit the bargaining power of the group as a whole. These points can be seen from the evidence given at the trial of four Sydney plasterers who were charged with conspiracy because they had refused to continue working for their employer unless he dismissed a journeyman who was not a member of their society. The employer claimed that John Walsh, one of the defendants "informed witness that they were determined not to work along with White (the non-union plasterer) except he joined the Society and that for his (Walsh's) part he would rather walk the streets and starve than work with White unless he became a member of their club". White himself did not attempt to contend that there was any obstacle placed in the way of his joining the Society of Operative Plasterers of which, indeed, he had previously been a member. A similar strike of the Victorian masons was quite explicitly connected with the desire to maintain the "common rule" in the trade. The men struck not because of the rate of wages they were receiving, but because, said the newspaper report "nine men refused to conform to the society's regulations and to submit to a penalty imposed upon them for taking work at 16/- (per day) when the body of masons struck for 18/-".

The members of the society apparently desired the dismissal of those masons who were not willing to submit to the direction of the executive to maintain

(1) This was mentioned by Tyler, Secretary of the Society, in his statement referred to above (T 24/1/1840) (2) See the evidence of A. Leigh (1843) before the Victorian Select Committee on the Tariff. (3) B12/6/1854. (4) A23/11/1859.
the common rule. (1)

Many of the unions tried very hard to establish a standard rate for the trade, a rate below which the wages of any tradesman would be allowed to fall. The desire for a "standard" or "common" rate ran through the trade union movement from 1839, when the compositors tried to find some remedy for the "inequality of prices" to 1850 when the masons working on St. Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne went on strike because some of their members were being paid less than the recognized rate. (3) The masons and the painters were the most prominent of the trades seeking to establish or maintain a standard rate but others were also interested in the question. (4) The point seems to be that it was more of an issue among masons and printers because the employers in those trades were more hostile to the principle. The attempts of the Victorian masons in the "fifties to establish a standard rate for the trade were very strongly resisted. (5)

A typical complaint the society was contained in a letter which contended that the masons instructed a firm "that as they were paying some of their men less wages than the amount deemed fair by the society (which is 16/- a day for every man whether competent or incompetent) all the men employed were directed by this coercive society to cease work until the contractors gave a guarantee that they would pay the society's rate of wages." (6) It later appeared that the union did make allowances for "incompetents" but of course a dispute was always possible as to whether or not a given mason was competent. (6) An apologist for the union claimed that it had interfered with the wages of alleged incompetents only because the man referred to was one of the first to complain that his employers were taking advantage of slack times and a plea of incompetency to pay all low wages and thereby reduce the current rate. (7) This particular controversy died down but it was reviewed in the newspapers at various times, workmen as well as employers being among those who criticized the union for its "tyranny" in insisting on a single rate throughout the trade. The "Free and Independent Order of Masons" which was formed in 1860 supposedly "to get rid of the restrictions placed on the trade, and the arbitrary and undue measures of the old society" expressly abandoned the idea of the standard rate. A fair day's

(1) Some other examples of action for this principle: Sydney wharf labourers (1831/4/1840) Victorian printers (1850/4/1851) Melbourne Shoemakers (PPH 4/4/1843)
(2) This phrase occurred in the 1st Annual Report of the Society (32 7/4/1836)
(3) 18/9/1860, report; (4) Some other trades which tried to establish a standard rate were: Melbourne tailors (PPH 4/10/1843, report), Melbourne shoemakers, PPH 4/4/1843, report; Melbourne timberlappers (18/2/1854, meeting notice; Sydney Shoemakers PA 12/2/1853 meeting notice. (5) 11/7/1857, (6) 24/9/1897, letter (7) 13/10/1897, letter.
wages is expected for a fair day's work, but there is to be no dictation to
employers on the subject of wages to incompetent handymen or masons advanced in
years. The struggle for the establishment of a standard rate among the Victorian masons had it appeared, created some real opposition to the principles among
the masons themselves. However, necessarily it was for the successful conduct
of trade union activities, it required a degree of discipline, solidarity and
militancy that was repugnant to at least some of the workmen.

Closely connected with the attempts to maintain a standard rate were the
various strikes and agitations conducted against piece-work, against the system
of sub-letting of contracts and against "mis-measurement". We have already
touched upon the point that the formulation of a standard price or scale of
prices leaves open the question whether a given workman or piece of work falls
into the class set down in the agreement. This was the case between Parke
and his compositors during the strike at the "Empire" office in 1854, and it
was the cause of a series of strikes on the Victorian railway works in 1858.
The question in both these cases was the interpretation of a given "piece". But
the very system of piece-work was also opposed by the Victorian building unions
which were also keen to prevent what they regarded as a still more dangerous
practice, that of sub-contracting. The unions were capable of policing
individual contracts and believed that the remuneration to be obtained from
a sub-contract tended to be less than the union's daily rate, so that the
union's standard would be undercut if the system became widespread.

This question was raised at the inaugural meeting of the Carpenters and
Joiners in April 1856 (when the eight hours' agitation was at its height) and
the plasterers were also interested in this problem at that time. In the
following year the masons adopted a rule which prohibited both piece-work and
sub-contracting, and in succeeding years they organized many strikes in their
efforts to enforce the rule. The plasterers and carpenters, too, were still
anxious to wipe out the system in 1859 and the former group in a meeting in
that year expressed its intention of using "every legitimate means at its
command to put an end to the system of sub-contracting". But the contractors
were not willing to relinquish the system. At a meeting of the Builders'
and Traders' Association which considered a request "emanating from the Trades

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(1) A25/6/1860, report. (2) The question was whether a given task was "tabular
Hall" to abandon sub-contracting, the union's proposal was rejected and "many arguments were brought forward in favour of an equitable system of sub-contracting as beneficial to both the employers and the employed". The Free and Independent Order of Mechanics was opposed to the rules of the "old society" on this as on other issues, and explicitly allowed its members to sub-contract or to undertake piece-work. This question became the most important one for trade unionism in Victoria in the period, and the final failure of the unions to enforce their rules on this matter resulted in the disintegration of the movement. The railway contractors were victorious in the struggle and the unions which had begun their career by establishing the eight hours' day lost their influence and their members.

(1) Publicity Arbitration and Legal Aspects

One method of forcing settlement on the employers was to turn public opinion against them, to make the public believe that the cause of the employees was just. Some attempts were made to enlist public opinion on the side of the workers during a number of strikes, but this was a subsidiary and probably an ineffective method. But for the various associations of "assistant drapers" formed during the period, this method of publicity and moral pressure was the chief weapon at their disposal. The shop assistants were not willing to strike in order to gain their ends, and in their repeated efforts to reduce their working hours they had no alternative but to fall back on the good-will of their employers and of the public generally. Whenever they put forward some claim for a shorter working day they found that the majority of shopkeepers were prepared to close their shops at an earlier hour, provided that all their rivals were also parties to the agreement; and almost invariably the arrangement was frustrated because a few firms were not willing to commit themselves to any such arrangement.

Faced with this deadlock the Early Closing Associations held public meetings at which they stressed the disadvantages - mental, moral and physical - of a long working day. They urged the recalcitrant employers to begin the early closing system immediately and - perhaps more realistically - they requested the public...

(1) 25/2/1889, report (2) 25/3/1880. (3) In 1861 according to the "Argus" the Operative Stonemasons' Society had less than 50 members. The "Argus" traced the decline of the union to its unsuccessful struggle with Cornish & Brack, the railway contractors, over the systems of piece-work and sub-contracting. (28/10/1863).
not to do any late shopping so that the incentive to stay open would disappear. These tactics succeeded once or twice in establishing early closing for a time but the agreement soon broke down and the whole process began again. The journeyman bakers of Sydney tried to use this same method in 1860 in order to obtain a reduction of their long working day, but they too were unsuccessful.

The shop assistants and the bakers turned to the method of "moral force" because they repudiated the strike. An alternative to both of these in the method of legislation. The idea of regulating wages and conditions by means of the law was not very influential in this period, but it did play some part in the labor movement. The journeyman bakers of Sydney in 1844 sent to the Legislative Council a petition "praying that the practice of Sunday labor might be abolished by legal enactment" and the miners showed some interest in factory legislation in 1858 and 1860, and the Victorian pastoral bakers sought legislation for their trade in 1857. But the most important agitation for legislative regulation of industrial conditions arose in connection with the eight hours' movement in Victoria. The first mention of an eight hours' law seems to have been at a Trades' Hall meeting in 1858, but it was a widely discussed question in the following year. A meeting of carpenters and joiners declared it to be "the imperative duty of every working man, and all who sympathize with them, to vote for no candidate who will not pledge himself to support a bill to make eight hours the lawful and recognized length of the day's labor in Victoria." Later in the same year, deputations went to Board of Land and Works and requested that the eight hours' day be introduced into Government workshops, and that it should be made a compulsory feature of all Government contracts, but the Government was unsympathetic. Following the notorious attempt of William Williams, the railway-engineer contractor, to re-introduce the ten hours' system an "Eight Hours League" was formed with the object of procuring a law "defining a day's labor to consist of eight hours". An Eight Hours' Bill was actually introduced early in the next Parliament, but it was withdrawn for lack of support.

Another alternative to the "coercive" method of the strike is the method of arbitration. Compulsory arbitration found no supporters during the period but there were a few suggestions that disputants might voluntarily submit their

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References:
(1) AWM 27/1860, report. (2) Aust. 23/7/1844, report of proceedings of Legislative Council (3) 28/5/1858, NSW 16/6/1860, reports (4) 18/7/1857, meeting notice (5) 15/5/1858, speech by Rice (6) 11/2/1859, report (7) 7/2/1859 (9) 7/10/1859, report. (10) 30/11/1859.
problems to a board of arbitration. The Victorian printers actually took some steps to set up a board of arbitration, but on the whole we may say that the method of arbitration was only a vague aspiration and that even as much it was not by any means a major force in the Australian labor movement prior to 1860.

(iv) Co-operation

Some unions or groups of workers attempted to better their conditions by co-operative production. These co-operative enterprises of which some records have survived were a timber yard in Sydney in 1847, a tailoring establishment in Melbourne in 1848, a printer's co-operative in Sydney in 1854 and a similar one in Melbourne in 1855, a number of building trades' associations in 1859 the following year, and a baking company in Sydney in 1860-61. The Melbourne Carpenters', during a strike in 1850, tried to establish a system for the formation of partnerships consisting of two or more individuals who unitedly possess the means of completing any building or job of work for which they may contract. This appears to have been a modified form of co-operation, but the scheme did not operate long enough for its character to emerge in any detail. There were a number of other attempts to start co-operatives, but they are more properly treated as part of the political efforts of the working classes and its allies.

None of the enterprises mentioned above had more than a temporary success, but they are not without interest. One thing distinguishing this set of co-operatives from those that will be discussed in the next section is that the former were producers' co-operatives whilst most of the latter were consumers' co-operatives. The producers' co-operative is aimed at improving directly the conditions of the actual (working class) producers of commodities. Its objective is the betterment of the workers through increases in wages or improvements in working conditions rather than through a fall in the price of commodities.

Each of the enterprises under discussion was formed by a group of workers who came together to produce on a co-operative basis. The 'Operative Wood Sawyers' yard of 1847 was opened, so it was stated at the time, because of a dispute with the employers over wages. The founders of the Sydney Co-operative

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(1) 29/7/1859, report. (2) 29/9/1850, report; 17/10/1850, advertisement. (3) SMH 3/7/1847, advertisement.
Baking Company hoped to change their conditions rather than their wages — "the 
ends sought to be obtained by the formation of the said company being to place 
the baking trade in an equitable basis for other trades, for which purpose the 
iniquitous and unjust system of night and day work, of unlimited hours and Sunday 
work to be discontinued; and in lieu thereof day work of twelve hours including 
meal hours; or in other words a fair day's work for a fair day's wages". 
The bakers like the sawyers had been engaged in an unsuccessful dispute with 
their employers, and most of the trade union co-operatives were formed in 
similar circumstances.

The printing co-operatives — and especially the company set up to con-
duct the "Operative" newspaper in Sydney in 1854 — can be contrasted with the 
remainder of those that have been discussed so far. Although the immediate 
aim of the founders of the "Operative" was to provide employment for workmen 
who were on strike, the factor that was stressed most in public discussions of 
the proposal was the potential utility of an organ of working class opinion. 
Those behind the movement — if we can accept their own statements — were inter-
ested not so much in improving the conditions of the workers as in providing 
themselves with a weapon of special importance in political struggles. They 
hoped to "tighten the existing labor market by opening fresh channels for unem-
ployed labor", but they placed most emphasis on the political, not the 
industrial, utility of a co-operative newspaper. Their attitude seems to have 
been shared by all those who during the period tried to set up co-operative 
newspaper companies.

The great problem that arises for a co-operative enterprise is how 
its working class character is to be retained, how it is to be prevented from 
becoming an ordinary partnership or joint-stock concern. The workmen of Sydney 
and Melbourne found no satisfactory solution to this problem, although some of 
them made some efforts to do so. The Melbourne Tailors' co-operative was one 
which soon fell into the hands of a small group of the workmen. The members 
of the Journeymen Tailors' Benevolent Society were locked out by their employers 
because the Society insisted on maintaining rules relating to hours, wages and 

(1) See 26/11/1860, report. (2) They acted in the belief that "the time has at 
length arrived when the position of the workmen must be of the press" (Prospectus, 32/6/ 
1854) Compare the speeches at the public meeting that followed the publication of 
the Prospectus (32/6/1854) (3) 32/6/1894. (4) This problem, as we shall see, 
was also of some importance for co-operatives which were not connected directly 
with the trade union movement. 

the employment of apprentices. Shortly afterwards, in June 1846, the following advertisement appeared in the Melbourne papers:

"To the Public — In consequence of the unreasonable persecution which the journeyman tailors of Melbourne have received from their employers, we, the aforesaid journeyman tailors, beg leave to inform the public that we have opened a house . . . ."

The details of the internal management of this concern are not known, but by October the firm had become "Hughes, Comber and Co". Hughes and Comber were two of the four men who had described themselves as "Conductors" of the enterprise, but they had apparently gained complete control. The whole dispute might be added, ended in victory for the employers.

A real effort was made to keep the control of the "Operative" in the hands of the workers. The Prospectus of the "Co-operative Printing Company" stated that the capital was to consist of £2,500 in 500 shares of £5 each, but this arrangement was criticised at subsequent public meetings. The plan finally accepted was that the capital should be of £5,000, made up of 10 shares. The deposit was to be 10/- per share and monthly calls of 5/- were to be made, and each shareholder was to be limited to ten shares. The continued influence of the working class was to be ensured further by the fact that the Board of Directors was to consist of two or three delegates from each of the trades. But the company could not secure sufficient capital to carry the paper over its initial difficulties and it failed after a few issues.

The Sydney Co-operative Baking Company unlike the Operative, did manage to achieve a measure of financial success, but in doing so it had to abandon most of its original objectives. In this company, the influence of the operative bakers was precarious right from the start, because it was decided "that the taking of shares in the company should not be restricted to the journeyman bakers but should be open to the general public". Some sections of the "public" did invest in the company and the journeyman bakers were soon ousted from its control. Moreover, under its new management it did not bring about the expected changes in working conditions.

Shortly after the company had begun to operate, charges were made that it was continuing night work and Sunday baking and that the journeyman bakers.

1. [FP 25/6/1846] (2) The Port Phillip Herald, which was very hostile to the tailors' society contended: "adopting one of the executive constitutions of ancient Rome, it was understood that each in turn was to enjoy imperial authority — to be lord and master of the shears etc., for one day." 25/6/1846) (3) FP 23/10/1846, 1846, advertisement (4) 14/7/1846, adv. (5) 83/1/1854 (6) 23/1/11/1854, Report. (7) 826/11/1860, report.
society had deluded its sympathisers and had got financial support on false
pretences. The Secretary of the United Operative Bakers' Association did not
deny the charges relating to the company but he did deny that the Association
was in any way responsible for what the company did. "As to the Sydney Co-opera-
tive Baking Company, we deny as a body having any connection with the working
of the said company, our Association having been formed for the purpose of unity,
mutual benefit and social improvement". In so far as this statement implied
that the U.O.B.A. had never had any connection with the Company, it was false;
but it was true that the connection between the two bodies had been severed.

It later appeared that the operative bakers had been ousted from
control of the Company by a number of ironworkers, and that in consequence some
journeymen bakers who had put their names down as shareholders refused to pay
the second call on shares. "With respect to the company itself" said the
Sydney Morning Herald "we have ascertained from inquiries that the company
consists of about 500 shareholders, of whom not more than four are 56 ironmen
bakers... It is clear that the title of co-operative is a misnomer as applied to this company which is simply a joint-stock association".

It is important to understand the events leading up to the final
victory of the members of the iron trades, how it was that they started off by
being merely shareholders who had accepted the open invitation of the bakers to
join their company, and ended up by monopolising control of the company. The
first point was that from the very beginning the bakers were in a minority on
the directorate - two out of six provisional directors were operative bakers.
But the later events were more important. The following is an account given
by one of the ironworkers which seems to have been correct in the essential
points. "The journeymen bakers belong to a trade society (in which as often
happens in such cases the most noisy and designing acquire the greatest amount
of influence) and upon the written recommendation of this body the first manager
was chosen by the provisional directory. This person who, by the by, was
President of the Journeymen Bakers' Trade Society, was completely under the
influence of a few of the leaders of that body, who, no doubt, had their own
view of the code to which their pet manager might be made subservient. This

(1) SMH 9/5/1861, advertisement. (2) SMH 14/5/1861, advertisement. (3) SMH 26/11/1861
report of a meeting called by the association. (4) SMH 27/10/1862, letter. (5)
SMH 1/11/1862, editorial.
individual was tempered with as regards wages, and persons employed, etc., etc. In short, his management was so unsatisfactory to the Board of Directors and they expressed their disapprobation so strongly, that he resigned, and was succeeded by the present manager, upon whom similar attempts were made without avail, and from this time the hostility of the Bakers' Trade Society began to manifest itself towards the company which they themselves had called into existence.

It is clear from this statement that there was a real attempt by the operative bakers (including the employees of the company) to exercise some control over the organizations they had set up, and that it was this attempt which led to the opposition of the directors and shareholders in the company. The members of the iron trade to whom the balance of power had passed were willing to tolerate the bakers and their society only so long as the efficient running of the business was not (they believed) in danger. But the participation of the operatives in the conduct of the company — "workers' control in industry" — was the very essence of co-operation, and this they were not prepared to tolerate.

Thus in so far as the company was intended to be a co-operative enterprise it was a failure. The operative bakers were not the shareholders; and they did not exercise any decisive influence in its management. Its shareholders may have been workmen, but they were not operative bakers.

But this company was a failure in another respect. It had been established with the express object of remedying certain conditions in the industry — long hours (combined with low wages), Sunday baking, and night baking.

Sunday baking was abolished shortly after operations had been commenced. The position as to hours and wages is not clear. The chief critic of the iron-workers claimed that hours were even longer, wages even lower, inside the company than outside. But the manager claimed just as confidently that the reverse was true, and there is no way of distinguishing between the contestants. It was never denied, however, that the Co-operative Company continued to bake at night, and the system of night baking had been one of the chief grievances of the operatives.

(1) SMH 3/11/1862, letter. (2) SMH 29/10/1862.
The important thing about the continuance of night baking, was the excuse offered in defence of this practice. Dodd, the Manager, put it this way: "We worked day work for three weeks, but I am sorry to say that not a single master followed in our wake, and on account of the insatiable thirst in this country for hot bread, our trade would soon have diminished. It was then clearly our duty to save the interests of our shareholders — as it was never contemplated by us to give twelve hours by day against fourteen, sixteen or eighteen by night and day." The reply of the Company's critic to this was simple but conclusive: "This was the objection of the master bakers. But the Company was started at the time to show that they could and would make bread by day and not by night." The operative bakers did assume that a co-operative company could succeed in altering the conditions of employment, and we may conclude that their "interference" in the affairs of the company took the form of efforts to bring about changed working conditions. But their assumption was false.

A co-operative company, like any other, is limited in its activity by competitive and other institutional conditions. As Dodd put it it has a "duty" to the interest of its shareholders; and if it does not look to this duty it ceases to exist as a going concern. It, therefore, faces the dilemma of either accommodating itself to the requirements of the capitalist economy (and thus becoming a capitalist, not a working class institution) or else falling out of existence.

The ironworkers, unlike the bakers themselves, were quite willing to put into practice the maxim of enterprising behaviour.

The history of the Victorian stonemasons' co-operatives was similar to that of the bakers. When the Operative Stonemasons' Society found difficulty in enforcing its rules, fifty workmen joined together to take a large contract on their own behalf. "The basis of the agreement was that the men should draw current wages, and that the surplus profit, after payment of the expenses of management, should be divided equally." This venture was profitable, and two other similar associations were formed. But the success of the scheme was only temporary. "How far they were ultimately successful is to be judged by the fact that only one of the three is now (1863) in existence, and that is the smallest of the trio — one in which a few men joining together have become employers of labor." In the meantime the members of the co-operatives had been

(1) Ibid. (2) SMH 5/11/1862, letter (3) 18/10/1863. (4) Ibid.
expelled from the union because it was believed that they were "unduly monopolising the trade", and they had abolished within the co-operative the system of the standard rate. "There was much grumbling among the associated masons at men receiving good wages who did little work", and finally, while a post office contract was being proceeded with, each article of labor was valued and the men paid according to what they accomplished. (1) Thus the successful co-operative was one which ceased to be a working class business, and in the struggle for existence they all reproduced the old conditions of disguised wage-cutting "to which the stonemasons' union had been so opposed. These facts go to reinforce the conclusion that the "successful" co-operatives were successful in terms of entrepreneurial, not working class criteria, and that the method of co-operation was able to bring about no basic change in the conditions of the working class at this time.

III. Aims.

All the trade union activity discussed in the previous chapter was directed towards the betterment of the condition of the working class. But recognition of this point is only the first step in the discovery of what were the aims of the early Australian unionists. The important question to answer is what these people believed to be involved in "betterment", and as we shall see there were quite different programmes put forward by or on behalf of the working class during the period.

The first and most obvious point to be made is that these trade unions devoted most of their attention to questions relating to wages and to hours of work. It need hardly be stressed at this stage that the level of wages was a matter of dispute on many occasions during the periods. Incidental reference has already been made to some of the struggles that occurred, and to the devices developed by unionists in their efforts to keep up or to increase wages. Other issues connected with wage payments were those raised by the attempts of employers - especially the Victorian railway contractors - to extend the pay-period from two to six weeks and to persuade (or compel) their employees to take their wages in kind, not cash. Irregularity in payments of wages and the introduction of the "truck" or "tenny shop" system were resisted very strenuously by the workers, who distinguished quite clearly between their disc-

(1) Ibid.
satisfaction with the level of wages and their dissatisfaction with the manner in which wages were paid. As one meeting of protest against the truck system put it, "this meeting does not wish to impose any stipulated rate of wages on the contractors, but requires that a fair and adequate rate of wages shall be paid to each workman in cash, leaving him the full power or discretion to spend or apply the proceeds as he thinks fit". The level of wages was the issue raised more freely during the period, but the method of payment was also of some importance.

The eight hours' movement is sometimes regarded as the most important development of the period. Indeed much of the history of trade unionism in the 'fifties can be told in relation to the struggle for a shorter working day. The story of the gaining of the eight-hour day by the building trades of Melbourne can hardly be distinguished from the story of the unionisation of those trades, and the building trades' unions were perhaps the strongest group of unions in the period. Moreover, the situation was much the same in Sydney. The Operative Stonemasons' Society of Sydney was founded during an agitation for shorter hours and succeeded later in establishing and maintaining the eight-hour day, co-operating with the workmen in the other building trades in an attempt to make eight-hours the regular working day in the industry. And in both Sydney and Melbourne other trades became interested in reducing their hours of work, and formed societies or engaged in strikes for this reason. The eight-hour strikes of the Sydney Carpenters and Joiners in 1856-57 and of the Melbourne ironworkers and coachbuilders in 1859 were perhaps the most vigorously fought of the period. Most accounts of early Australian unionism place too much stress on the influence of the eight hour movement, but when we place the whole trade union history of the period in perspective, the ideal of the eight hour day is still seen to have played a prominent part.

Alongside the aims of higher wages and shorter hours we would have to place that of "good fellowship" among the members of a trade. This was given comparatively little emphasis in the statements made in the period, but many unions reproduced the traditional English custom of the union "dinner" or "festival". It is not known whether as much emphasis was placed on these festivals in Australia as in England, but they were common enough here to suggest that the union was expected by its members to perform some of the functions of a lodge or club - to promote friendly scenes, and to provide a counter to the

(1) 82/2/1829, rep.ve.
forces in capitalist society tending towards the breaking up of social bonds.

But it also appears that to discuss working class ideals in terms of wages and
hours — as was done above is still to treat the problem at a superficial level.

But to discuss working class ideals in terms of wages and hours is still to

treat the problem at a superficial level. Within the short time movements, we
find, different aims can be furthered, and it is also possible to distinguish
different kinds of wage demands.

A shorter working day was desired partly because the workmen wanted to
reduce working time and to increase leisure. But in addition two other points
were given special emphasis in the eight-hour movements. The first was, the
belief that reduced hours would result in less unemployment. In Sydney in 1856,
one speaker related that 200 out of 1,000 carpenters were unemployed, and
concluded "If then the 800 would consent to work eight hours per day instead
of ten, the remaining two hundred would immediately find employment". And in
Melbourne in the same year the chairman of the meeting of plasterers
which decided to adopt the eight hours system reasoned in the same way: "there were
two hundred plasterers now in Melbourne, and by adopting the shorter hours there
would be work found for twenty five additional hands". This desire to "share out"
the available employment — which can be linked up with Pocock's view of trade
unionism — was quite important in the eight hours movements of both Sydney and
Melbourne.

The second point, emphasised was that the reduction of the working day
would make available to the workers a certain amount of time which could be used
in a certain way — to bring about his "social elevation" or "intellectual improve-
ment". This was an ideal that was expressed on many occasions during the period.

What was desired was to acquire some of the knowledge and culture from which
members of the working class had previously been disqualified. The protagonists
of the eight hours system argued in Sydney that "the increased requirements of
society in the point of general necessitate a reduction in the hours of physical
labor" in Melbourne that "the advanced state of civilisation, and the demand for
intellectual gratification and improvement call for an abridgement of the hours
of labor". At almost every eight hours meeting it was stressed that the reduction
of working hours would create opportunities for education and at one Sydney meet-

(1) 226/9/1856, report. (2) ASI/4/1856, report. (3) "Their desire for mental improv-
ment and a strong reason which urges them to obtain a reduction in the present hours of labor" (SM 26/2/1856, letter) (4) SM 10/11/1856, report.
ing a sympathetic employer related "that he had seen the Secretary of the School of Arts and was informed by him that since the eight hours' movement had commenced upwards of three hundred members had joined from the working classes".

Other sections of the working class movement appealed to the same kind of argument. Intellectual improvement was the declared aim of the various early closing movements among shop assistants, and the "Australian Drapers Assistants' Association" (Sydney 1843-49) took the positive step of establishing a debating society and a reading room for the use of its members. In the discussions leading up to the foundation of the Melbourne Trades' Hall it was argued that such an organisation "would enable those who were deficient of the benefits of education to make up for the time they have lost". A similar function, it was believed, would fall within the scope of the "Operative" newspaper. One of its founders hoped that it would become "a popular organ where teaching should direct, lead and elevate the minds of the laboring classes", and the Prospectus mentioned that one of its objects was to "elevate the thoughts of the working classes". To some extent it might be possible to discount these statements about the widespread desire for intellectual advancement, because they were aimed partly at an audience outside the working class, but there does appear to have been some genuine (even if numerically limited) tendency in the working classes mining at educational advancement. It must be admitted, however, that the phrase "social elevation" often implied more than were intellectual development.

It included also "moral improvements". Many working class leaders believed that the workers were addicted to certain "vices" (such as drunkenness) and that their own task was to bring about an improvement in this respect. This conception of "improvement" (not very clearly distinguished from purely intellectual or cultural advancement) was also stressed in these various movements especially in connection with the "Operative" and with the Melbourne Trades Hall.

This complex structure of attitudes underlying "short-time" and other demands tells us a good deal about the trade union movement. But perhaps the character of the wage-demands is more significant. There is no evidence that anything resembling the "Right to the Whole Produce of Labor" was claimed during the period.

There was little or no opposition to the demands of the employers as

separate economic class, or to the existence of profit as a separate category of income, however, critical the workers may have been of attempts to obtain what they regarded as extortionate profits. The general attitude was summed up in a statement made by J. Don, the Stonemason-politician, in 1857: "The workers do not wish to take the place of the merchant but they require a fair day's wage for a fair day's work". This, like the popular working class slogan of the period - "the laborer is worthy of his hire" - clearly assumed a continuance of private property, the employment system and profits, and it seems to have accurately expressed current working class ideals.

In a subsequent speech Don stated the aim of the working class in different terms. "It was not a system of production they wanted," he said, "but a system of distribution which would give to the toil-worn workman a portion of the production of his own hands." This appeared to be a more radical claim, but when translated into concrete terms meant no more than any demand for a "reasonable" or "fair" wage. In Don's statement, it will be seen, there is a reference to labor as the creator of all wealth, but no assertion that Labor is entitled to all wealth. The laborer, he believed correctly, was satisfied to demand a share, not the whole, of the produce. What the trade union movement demanded was not the abolition of profits but the maintenance of a given standard of living. To obtain a wage increase "commensurate with the rise in the prices of provisions" or to prevent a wage-decrease when prices had not fallen - these were the aims of strikers throughout the period. The cost of living was accepted by the workers as the standard for remuneration.

The "cost of living" is of course, a quite ambiguous concept, the important thing is the kind of life that is to be maintained. One thing we can say on this point is that the workmen themselves sometimes determined their wage-standard by reference to status considerations. This comes out more clearly prior to 1850 but it seems to be implicit in many attempts after that date, to maintain the "union wage". The skilled workers demanded not merely their standard rate, but a privileged position in the scale of remuneration. The Sydney Painters, Plumbers' and Glaziers' defended in 1840 their wage rate of 8/- per day on the ground that "in rate with other trades (it was) only a fair equivalent for their labour". Similarly in a "warning" sent to England by the Australian Society of Compositors in 1839, the complaint was made that "the compositors latterly could not muster strength enough for a strike to raise their

(1) 23/3/1857, report of nomination (2) 15/6/1857, report (3) 10/19/3/1840, advertisement.
wages to a legal with other mechanics here who may not receive three-fourths of
a compositor's wage at home." The appeal in each case was not to the level of
real wages, but to the relative position of each trade in the hierarchy of
remuneration. Somers described the philosophy of craft unionism so that
the "skilled mechanics who has "invented" years of low-wage apprenticeship for
the sake of an established position and a higher standard of life and yet
seen himself brought down to the level of the lowest by their competition" (2)
This "established position" and this "higher standard of life" seem to form at
least part of what the Australian unionist — members of crafts — desired up to
at least 1860.

When the Australian workers in this period spoke of a "conflict between
capital and labor", they meant that there was a conflict over the level of wage;
but not over the existence of profits or of the wages system. The most vigorous
of the unions were quite prepared to some fairly permanent arrangement with the
employers, some arrangement that would be beneficial to both parties. This
was not merely a matter of performing the method of collective agreement to the
method of strike. The unions (or their spokesmen) believed that there was no
inevitable conflict over wages. They believed that some mutually beneficial
arrangement was in the nature of things possible, however unlikely it might
be that the employers, with their short-sighted greed, could be brought to see
this fact. This attitude was expressed emphatically during the struggles for
the eight hours' day in Sydney and Melbourne. Sprackling, who spoke on behalf of
the building trades at an Iron Trades' eight hours' meeting, put the point in
an especially clear form: "We wished to see capital and labor going together,
and was opposed to strikes. He good could come of them." (3) At this same meeting
other speakers were not far behind him: Tw. Vine, the carpenter, "proceeded to
denounce the principle of strikes, so disadvantageous to both employers and
employed", and made his proposals about some form of voluntary arbitration and
labor, an ironworker appealed for "harmony among themselves and the cordial co-
operation of the employers" urging his fellow-workers that "they must show that
they could do as efficient a day's work in eight hours as in ten". The Sydney
workmen who sought the eight hours day often adopted a communistic reduction
in wages "in order to benefit themselves", wrote a self-appointed

(1) As 9/1/1840, "advertiment" (2) article on "labor movement" p. 633. (Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol VIII) (3) 17/7/55
spokesman, "they have no intention or wish to injure their employers in the least; they wish to act in perfect harmony with them and to this end they are willing to reduce their wages." The Sydney unions of the 'fifties went out of their way to make sure that their demands were couched in "respectful" and not "intimidatory" language, and this was the general approach of unions in the period. Although the workmen were often hostile to their employers, their hostility cannot be interpreted as op position to the existence of capitalists as a class. The "conciliatory" statements quoted above probably represent the views of the leaders whom we might expect to be more "reasonable" than the rank and file, but if any radical or revolutionary group existed within the unions it did not make itself articulate. The unions were definitely committed to "bargaining"; those who sought the displacement of capitalism carried on their agitation for the most part outside the trade union movement.

If there was any anti-capitalist tendency in the unions of the period it was to be found in the co-operatives - particularly in the Sydney Co-operative Baking Company. The organizers of this enterprise were not socialists but they were opposed to some of the existing features of capitalist society. The majority of unionists accepted the distinction between master and servant, but some of those connected with the company explicitly rejected it.

The bakers' Co-operative was established originally in order to remedy what were believed to be temporary hardships, but its aims were later defined in such a way as to contrast one system of production with another. Suggestions began to be made that co-operation was a desirable form of organization for industry as a whole, that it was not merely desirable in the special and temporary circumstances of the baking industry. The original resolution which recorded the decision of the Operative Bakers to set up the company had stated that "under existing circumstances it is expedient that a co-operative or joint stock company be formed"; but a later meeting expressed itself in much more general terms "this meeting, fully appreciating the elevating tendencies of co-operative associations in general, and being firmly of opinion that the projected operative bakery in Sydney is highly desirable pledges itself to give all the support necessary for its success". And after the Company was established its manager,

(1) 826/2/36. (2) SMH 26/11/1869. (3) SMH 27/2/1869.
who had been one of the moving spirits of the enterprise, told a meeting of
workmen: "If men were to combine and turn their labor and capital to
account for their own benefit they would never have to submit to the dictation
of unreasonable employers, or their interests made subservient to a pampered
aristocracy". It appears that although this sentiment had apparently not
been influential during the events leading up to the foundation of the company,
it did appeal to some sections of the workers.

The aim of those who sought to change the social system by means of co-
operation was described vaguely as "social elevation". They were reaoning against
the separation of the laborer from the means of production and they thought that
a co-operative society could raise them to the same status as the masters. "The
object of this co-operation", said one speaker, "is not merely to buy their
bread and groceries cheaper, but it was to show that the bridge across the
stream that divided the capitalist from those whose labor produced capital was
not impossible, and that they might cross it themselves. They did not desire
so much to replace the capitalists as a class, as to be placed on an equal foot-
ing with them.

The workmen hoped that co-operation would bring them not only the
income of the master but also his authority and his education. "If they establish-
ed a co-operative", another speaker said, "they would find that the discussion
and mental discipline it would induce and would be one of the best means of educat-
ion" and a special change made against the manager of the company was that "one
of the first breaches of faith that John Doe committed was engaging a person
not belonging to the trade to keep accounts in that establishment, and also to
drive the bread carts which is altogether wrong according to the principles of
co-operation." The complainant, O'Connor, was emphatic on this point: "It was
intended by this company to benefit the bakers as a body, and to elevate their
social condition to that of other men by employing them of course in the business.
If O'Connor was correctly describing the aims of his fellow-workers, it seems
that what they wanted was not so much ownership as control of the means of
production. And what we learnt about the conflicts within the company seemed to

(1) SHM 17/3/1861. (2) SHM 27/11/1861. (3) F10/13/1861. The Speaker (O'connor) mentioned
also the economic advantages of co-operation. O'Connor, 27/10/1862, letter to SHM
27/10/1862, letter. The following passage in the same letter: "Myself and others
connected with the trade and employed as bakers in it, were clearly entitled to
take part in the management of its affairs but of this inadvisable right we were
deprived".
show that "workers' control in industry" was one of the things the bakers were contending for against their associates from the iron trades.

It can be seen that some of the co-operating bakers were quite hostile to the system in which the worker was neither the owner nor controller of the means of production. But it was no part of their intention to substitute ownership by the state for private ownership. They were "individualists" rather than socialists and regarded co-operation as the next best thing to individual ownership. Their social ideal was that the laborer should be able to "cross the bridge" separating him from the capitalist. That is, they still regarded the natural progression in society to be from journeymen to master, and this process of advancing from one stage in the economic and social hierarchy to another was part of what they meant when they spoke of "social elevation".

It is impossible to say whether all workmen who took part in co-operative enterprises shared the views of O'Connor and those for whom he spoke. In most cases the spokesman for the enterprise concentrated on the special circumstances in which the workmen found themselves, and did not bother to state any general philosophy. But they may have been influenced by this philosophy. It appears to be true, however, that the ideal of producers' co-operation was accepted by the workers only when they were subject to some special economic pressure. As long as their modest demands were satisfied by the existing social structure they did not seek to establish any new kind of society. Co-operation was only a minor tendency of the period, although the type of society which it advocated may have been desired by many workmen during the period.

To sum up the question of the attitude to the employers we can say clearly illustrates Commons' description of the philosophy of an emerging trade union movements: "At first the unions are confused about the position of this petty employer who works along with them and is today a journeyman, to-morrow a contractor and an employer. They admit him to membership because his economic interests is that of a wage earner, then they exclude him because his interest is

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(1) But workers who desired social elevation did not always seek to rise to the economic position of the employer. The eight hours' movement, as we saw, directed its challenge not at the employers income but at his supposed monopoly of educational, cultural and perhaps political opportunities. Richard Driver was cheered when he told a meeting in 1856 that "they would be able by having the two hours allowed them . . . . to elevate themselves to that position in the social scale which the artificers, the mechanic and the laboring man ought and so well deserved to hold" (SMH 28/10/1856). But neither Driver nor his audience was demanding any economic advancement for the workers. Provided that opportunities for intellectual advancement were available to the workers within capitalism - and they believed that this was the case - the advocates of social elevation in this sense were not hostile to existing property relations.
with the capitalists". The Australian unions had not made up their minds about the position of the employer and we can even find some examples of unions which first "included" and then "excluded" the employers. One important union, to do this was the Melbourne Operative Stonemasons’ Society (1850) which "was not confined to journeymen alone, for many masters were on their lists." A few months after this statement had been made the union was taking measures to combat a proposed wage reduction. But the most dramatic example of this successive "inclusion" and "exclusion" was that of the Melbourne tailors in the 'forties. It appears from contemporary reports that the master tailors were partly responsible for the formation of the journeymen’s society, which they had encouraged because they wanted to introduce some "regularity" into the trade. But the system did not work smoothly and disagreements arose, beginning in the workshop of a master tailor named McNamara. The union’s account of its relations with McNamara shows the changes in the workmen’s attitude towards the employers: "McNamara did all he could to assist in forming the Society, and in supporting it afterwards, and when he failed it refused to become his tool in doing his dirty work he turned round and repeatedly threatened to break it up as well as to injure the men." McNamara subsequently went to Hobart and brought back a number of journeymen tailors. On his return he was met in the street by members of the Tailors’ Society who followed him along, jeering and shouting, and McNamara had five or them bound over to keep the peace. The conflict of interest between employer and employee had in quite short time triumphed over their supposed mutual interest. But even when, as in this case, the workers did recognize in some sense a conflict between capital and labor, they did not think in terms of a theory of class struggle. They were aware of a line dividing labor as a class from employers as a class, but the line was often faint, class solidarity was often absent or weak, and the bargaining unions did not hold the view that the conflict between classes should take the form of an attempt by the workers to overthrow completely the capitalist class. They demanded certain privileges from the employers, or from society in general, but their most radical demand was that they should through co-operation and the eight-hour

(1) Labor Movement. p. 693. (2) Several unions admitted employers on some terms. Rule XVI of the Sydney Operative Plumbers’ Trade Society (1862) although not quite within our period, is probably typical here: "That this Society shall have the power to admit any Employer without vote or office; the same Honorary Member to be admitted by a majority of Members present at any such meetings. Honorary Members shall withdraw from the Club Room on all occasions of disputes between Men and Employer, at the request of the Chairman ("Rules," 1862, Mitchell Library) (3) 25/2/1851, report (4) 17/6/1851, advertisement (5) FPP 4/10/1845, report. (6) FPP 5/5/1846. (7) FPP 9/6/1846.
movement share in the privileges of the "capitalist" and they were not convinced
that the employers were hostile to their claims.

Perlman attempts to present a complete theory of trade unionism in terms
of union rules which "parcel out" the available opportunity among the various
members of the group. It is evident from our discussion of the device of
restriction of members that there was in Australia a very real consciousness
of scarcity of economic opportunity. The unions tried to restrict the numbers
of workers because they believed that there was only a limited amount of work
available. But it is more difficult to establish that these unions had any
conscious desire to share the work according to some principle of fairness.

A few clear-cut examples of "sharing" can be found. The point was made
above that this was one idea that was expressed quite frequently by advocates of t
the eight hours' movement. A comparable attempt to share employment opportunit-
ies was made by the Melbourne tailors in 1846. "The reason for shortening hours"
explained the Secretary of their Society, "was to give employment to all hands, t
there being many out of employment". The strike of the coal miners at Newcastle
in 1855 seems to have had a similar equalitarian motive. The miners were dis-
satisfied with the working of the contract system - dissatisfied with it because,
they alleged, it was worked unfairly. They claimed that there was favouritism
in the allocation of working positions, with the result that some miners were
regularly in a better position than others. They demanded that the system
should be revised to bring about a greater degree of equality. This attitude
must have been fairly strong among the miners, because it led in 1861 to the
imposition of the "dang" - the rule that no miner should earn more than a certain
amount for a day.

These examples, while important and interesting as they stand, are
hardly sufficient to provide the basis for a general theory of unionism. But
Perlman argues that the application of a "common rule" is in itself evidence that
opportunity is being distributed throughout the members of the group. The
device of the common rule has been interpreted in these pages as an attempt
to build up the bargaining strength of the members of a trade. Perlman admits

(1) PPH 2:5:1846, Letter.
(2) BM30/6/1855, 7/7/1855, reports from correspondent in Newcastle.
that it has this function but contends that it "at the same time tends to bring
about a distribution of the opportunity to earn a livelihood fairly to all". (1)

This sounds plausible, but that is about as much as can be said about it. There
is not just sufficient evidence to verify or falsify Perlman's proposition.

The evidence provided by the Australian trade unions is not inconsistent with
Perlman's theory - although the latter could at most be a theory of some tendency
in the labor movement - but at the same time it provides no striking confirmation
of the theory.

In so far as we can distinguish any general aim behind the various
bargaining devices of unions it would appear to be the establishment of what
Perlman and Commons call "working rules". According to Commons, "the changeable
working rules of a concern determine more precisely than is done by custom, what
each party to a transaction can, cannot, may, must or must not do". The kind
of working rule given to an individual security of expectations in so far as it
requires, conformity to these expectations on the part of others. In the other
kind of working rule "the one party is at liberty to do as he pleases and the
other is exposed to gain or loss equivalent to the exercise of that liberty by t
others". (2)

In other words, a working rule establishes a right for one party and
imposes a responsibility or a penalty on others. The significance of this for
the Australian unions is that much of their activity was directed towards gaining
"security of expectations" in the form of regular hours and stable wages as well
as protection jobs. They wished to regularise the conditions of employment, to
render them no longer subject to the whim of the employer or to fluctuations in
economic conditions. The struggle to maintain wage-rates was not so much an
attempt to maximise income, as an attempt to bring about a condition in which a
given period (or piece) of work received a definite payment. If the "common rule
apart from its use as a bargaining device, it is just that it does
cut out clearly the right belonging to the worker as such, and does impose
responsibilities on employers. (3) The reason for insisting on a uniform rate, as
we have seen, is that it protects the current rate; but this current rate is
itself made the object of bargaining because it does give the worker a guarantee
that his effort will bring forth a certain reward. This accounts in part for the
vigour with which the worker protected against "misrepresentation of the

(1) Theory of the Labor Movement, p.243. (2) Institutional Economics, (New York,
1934), p.81. (3) As Harry says, "this is what they call industrial democracy, dis-
placing the complete authority of the employer in matters of hiring, discharge,
strike, promotion, demotion and so on". (Trade Unions in the United States,
p.292)
scale" — to use the phrase of the Sydney Composer’s Rules of 1835. All the attempts to establish a "standard rate" or a scale of prices for the trade seem to imply some desire to substitute regulation, with its rights and duties for the uncertainties of competitive determination of wages and conditions. But the disputes over the interpretation of a certain rule illustrate the point more clearly. As already mentioned, disputes about "measurement" caused many strikes on the Victorian railway works, because the men claimed that they were not paid what they were "entitled" to by the work they had done; similarly the strike of the Empire’s compositors in 1854 was the result of a disagreement to whether a minor piece of work did or did not fall into the class of "tabular matter" and was therefore payable at a certain rate. Parkes complained bitterly about the "tyranny" of his employees, but he did not appreciate that what they were trying to do was to remove any arbitrariness from the conditions of employment. In the same way the Melbourne compositors included in their rules the provision "That before the termination of an engagement, the party determining the same should give the other party fourteen days notice of his intention to do so." We can find very few examples of unionists actually stating that their underlying aim was "security", but by looking at the rules relating to wages, apprenticeship, employment and so on we can see that what they were trying to set up was a system in which certain rights were guaranteed to employees. There is a fundamental difference between a labor market in which wages and working conditions are "flexible" and determined by supposedly "objective" market forces, and one in which wages and conditions are regulated by working rules which relate rewards to status. And it was towards the establishment — or perhaps the maintenance or restoration — of the latter condition which the unions who insisted on the "common rule" were striving. Here as elsewhere we should have to admit that the whole trade union movement of the period cannot be summed up in terms of a single aim, but this was one aim which was at least very important throughout the whole period.

(1) 47/4/1854, advertisement.
IV. Types of Unionism.

Something can be added to an account of unionism by abandoning the distinction between "aims" and "methods" and by considering as a unity the various activities of a union. The most comprehensive classification of unions has been made by Horie, who distinguishes five types of unions — or rather of unionism. It would be a hopeless task to attempt to classify in Horie's terms each and every union that we identified in Chapter I. But it will be possible to say something about the occurrence of these types of unionism in Australia, and to say something about their interaction. For practical purposes, only business unionism and uplift unionism were of any importance in the period.

Critics of organized labor might sometimes speak or write as though the majority of the early trade societies were "predatory" institutions, but any contentions of this kind can be ignored. Revolutionary unionism, if that was said above about the aims of unionism is correct, was also unknown. Of "dependent" unionism — "unions whose existence is dependent wholly in part upon the employers" — there is one dubious example. The Free and Independent Order of Stonecutters (Victoria 1860) may or may not have been instigated by employers, but its policy would certainly have been more favorable to them than was the policy of the orthodox Stonecutters Society. The suspicion must arise, therefore, that the employers encouraged or in some way aided the establishment of this "rival" union. But on the information available to us, this Free and Independent Order might be classed as a fairly orthodox example of "uplift" unionism. The chief difference in policy between it and the existing society was that it proposed (no longer) to insist on the various aspects of the common rules it permitted its members to accept piecework and to take sub-contracts, and on the other hand its rules provided for "no dictation to employers on the subject of wages to incompetent hands, or masons advanced in years," It thus gave up an essential weapon for the conduct of collective bargaining. But at the same time all pretensions to virility were abandoned. The union claimed to adhere to the eight-hour system and to demand "a fair day's wages for a fair day's work." It professed to be opposed to strikes — "except in cases where the just rights and privileges of its members have been interfered with an aggravated extent." Whether this meant that it would hardly ever engage in strikes, or that it would strike nearly as much as the other society, is impossible to say.

(1) 127/6/1860.
The "uplift" aspects of the union came out in its strong recommendation of arbitration, and of its rule providing for "the men working on the same job to take the whole or part of it if carried by a majority".

The distinction between "uplift" and business unionism, according to Roxie, is based partly on differences in aim and partly on differences in method. Bargaining unionism aims chiefly at more, here and now, for the organized workers of the craft or industry, in terms of mainly of higher wages, shorter hours and better working conditions; it "accepts as inevitable, if not as just, the existing capitalist organization and the wage system as well as existing property rights and the binding force of contracts. (1) It regards unionism mainly as a bargaining institution and seeks its ends chiefly through collective bargaining, supported by such methods as experience from time to time indicates to be effective in maintaining and increasing its bargaining power." (2) Uplift unionism uses some of the same methods but with a significantly different orientation. "In method, this type of unionism employs collective bargaining, but stresses mutual insurance and drifts easily into political action and the advocacy of co-operative enterprises, profit-sharing and other idealistic plans for social regeneration. (3) Items are less uncompromisingly materialistic than those of business unionism; "it aspires, chiefly to elevate the moral, intellectual and social life of the worker, to improve the conditions under which he works, to raise his material standards of living give him a sense of personal worth and dignity, secure for him the leisure for culture and ensure him and his family against the loss of a decent livelihood by reason of unemployment, accident, disease or old age." (4)

Now there is a difficulty in applying this classification to the Australian unions. Some unions appear to represent one or the other "type" in an unmixed form, but others are more dubious examples. We shall consider first those that seem to fit most plausibly into Roxie's scheme, and shall then discuss some of the possible objections to classifying types of unionism in that way.

The "uplift" tendency was very strong in the Operative Painters Society founded in 1850. According to a report of the meeting at which the society was established, "the purpose for which they were convened was the formation of a trade society of Operative Painters with the view to fostering a good feeling between the members of the craft, whether master or man, as well as for relief in

(1) Trade Unionism in the United States p. 42. (2) Ibid, p. 46 (3) Ibid p. 47. (4) Ibid.
cases of distress or accident. The Chairmen read to the meeting a code of laws drawn up for the guidance of the Association, and disclaimed on behalf of the promoters any intention of making it a means of combination for the regulation of wages. The attitude which Crosser describes as that of the "fraternal" journeyman is expressed here, with its emphasis on mutuality and "good feeling" and this is part of what Horne means by uplift unionism. It is to be observed that the Society of the Operative Painters proposed to foster "good feeling" and to conduct a house of call, as well as to provide Somewhat similar views were involved in the movement of the journeyman bakers a little later. The chairman of one of the first meetings of the bakers explained that the object of the meeting was to form a society of the operative bakers of Sydney, not for the purpose of undermining the employers, but for the mutual benefit of the men. It was explained that the ultimate object of the Society would be to introduce the twelve hours' labor system into the trade in Sydney as it now prevailed in London, Melbourne and Hobart Town. This society denied on more than one occasion that it had any intention of striking: "the journeyman only desired by legitimate means to enlist the sympathy of the master-bakers and the public with a view to remedying the present system of labor" and when the method of publicity failed the bakers turned to the "idealistic" method of co-operation. Moreover throughout their agitation they stressed the "intellectual improvement" side of the demand for shorter hours. The various associations of drapers' assistants resembled the bakers' quite closely; they relied mainly on publicity and on the force of public opinion, and what they said they were doing was to try and secure educational and social opportunities for their members. The Drapers' Assistants Association (Sydney) which was formed in 1848 conducted a benefit society as well as organizing its monthly concerts, its reading room, and its debating society. Other associations in the same trade were more limited, but all of them did aspire "to elevate the moral, intellectual and social life of the worker".

The ideals of "bargaining unionism" were less clearly expressed, but the activities of some unions provide some evidence to show that this type of unionism did exist. The Union of the Stonemasons of Victoria resolutely set about obtaining more here and now for its members and the majority of its activities were directed towards the strengthening of its bargaining power.

showed a preference for peaceful methods of negotiation, but conducted many strikes in order to enforce its rules. And it regarded these rules as of more importance than "uplift" efforts in the form of co-operation.

The Compositors' Society of Sydney was another which might be described as a business union. Its Secretary published in 1840 a long letter in which he justified the stand taken by the union on apprenticeship and other questions. "Without union, he contended, we are completely at the mercy of our employers."

He thus indicated that he regarded the union as above all a bargaining institution, and labor power as above all a commodity. He contended also that his union would be content with making quite moderate demands as long as the wages paid in Sydney, compared with the necessities of life, are comparable to the wages paid in London, we shall be content." (1) The introduction to the rules of the union accepted that "its chief aim is the protection of the wages of labor", and that "the compositors as a body, well know that they can never benefit themselves by exacting higher wages than the profit of capital will allow". These recurrent points that the function of the union was to bargain for higher wages, and that its effectiveness as a bargaining institution would be limited by general market conditions - fit in quite well with Horrie's conception of business unions.

These are fairly clear-cut examples. But for Australian unions as a whole it is not so easy to distinguish two distinct types of unionism. The general problems are the association of mutual benefits with strikes or collective bargaining in most unions. One point made earlier was that in most unions, the provision of mutual benefits was an independent function not subordinated to collective bargaining. But are we to say that the two functions represented different types of unionism? It appears that there was no real hostility between them, so that there is no conclusive evidence that the different methods represented different types; or at any rate, that they represented the different types identified by Horrie. Horrie does recognize that both mutual insurance and collective bargaining can exist in either "business" or uplift unionism, but in the Australian unions there seems to have been almost equal emphasis on both methods. If we were to classify these unions as belonging to one or the other type, either mutual insurance or collective bargaining, we should expect it would be reduced to a subordinate role. One way out would be that of both types but unless we could support this claim in some other way it would be an idle remark. When we look more closely at some of our

(1) AC24/1/1840 (2) AC326 2/4/1836.
earlier examples we can see that some difficulties are involved there too. In the Victorian Operative Stonemasons' Society, collective bargaining was very well developed and there seems every reason to describe this as a business union. But other aims were also involved in the efforts of this union to secure the eight-hour day and it is does not seem to have been the case that these different aims could be associated with different groups in this union. The same people were influenced by the different aims. In the case of the journeymen bakers a slightly different point arises. One fact that supported the characterisation of their union as "uplift" was the declared opposition to strikes. But if the bakers had used a strike to enforce their claims it would not have been possible to classify the union as "business", for Haxie admits that uplift unions do sometimes use strikes and collective bargaining. Now it would be a quite intelligible position to argue that what distinguishes the two types of unionism is the different proportion in which they use the different methods, but this does point to the general problem of stating conditions both necessary and sufficient for the identification of any one type of unionism. We can without undue trouble distinguish different aims and different methods but Haxie's conception of a type goes beyond either aims or methods and attempts to bridge the two together.

Haxie's own collection of necessary and sufficient conditions is reasonably unambiguous, but for reasons which we shall discuss it is unacceptable. He defines a functional type as "a social interpretation and remedial programme held by a group of wage-workers" — that is, as commonly accepted aims and methods. And he argues that to demonstrate that different functional types exist it must be shown that these functional types exist concurrently as conflicting or rival social interpretations and remedial programmes held and advocated by different groups of wage-workers. He also makes the point that it must be shown that, once established, these rival viewpoints persist and exhibit no tendency as such to revert to a single or common viewpoint, but this point that unionism is pluralistic not unitary — in its structure — is not at present in dispute.

It has already been established — in the comments on the Victorian Stonemasons — that the different "social interpretations" were not held by

(1) op. cit. p. 61. (2) Ibid. p. 35.
different groups of workers in Australia. The structure of the eight hour
movements was such that, as far as we can discover, the different views of what
would be achieved by the introduction of the eight hours' system were held by one
and the same group of persons. We can distinguish different aims and tendencies
in the eight hour movement, but not distinct groups of workers. If the applica-
tion of Hoxie's theory of types of unionism depends (as Hoxie
suggests) on the association of different policies with distinct groups, then
we cannot discover such types in the Australian short-time or early closing
movements, nor I would claim, in any other section of the trade union movement
in the period. But we do not in general find that social movements fulfil the
conditions set out by Hoxie for his "types of unionism." It is not true that the
structure of society is such that we find one social movement corresponding
to one set of people, another corresponding to another set of people. On the
contrary, the characteristic situation is that a single person is involved in,
or influenced by different and often conflicting movements - just as we found
that an individual worker was influenced by different conceptions of what the
eight hour day would mean to him. Hoxie, therefore, postulates a rather unusual
condition for the kind of movement he claims to be identifying, and it is not
obvious how he could justify his point.

If we took a less vigorous view of union types - if we attempt to
treat them on the same footing as other social movements - an important part
of Hoxie's theory would lose some of its significance. He takes the formation of
a union (or of a union of a given type) to be a phenomenon that can best be
explained by social psychology: "workers similarly situated economically and
socially, closely associated and not too divergent in temperaments and training
will tend to develop a common interpretation of the social situation and a
common solution of the problems of living. This may come about gradually and
spontaneously, or it may be the apparently sudden outcome of some crisis in
the lives of the men concerned. But whatever the cause the result is the same.
A social group is thus constituted, worked off by a more or less unified and
well-developed but effective viewpoint or group psychology." This would
presumably imply that a given type of unionism is identical with a distinct
group of unionists, but if we took a different view of union types and of
social movements in general we would have to assume that they come to exist
in a manner that differs even, if only slightly, from that described by Hoxie.

(1) ibid, pp. 58-59.
But to admit this would involve a challenge to Hoxie's explanation of how different interpretations of the social situation come to exist. His has been classified as a "psychological" theory of unionism because one of his explanations of the development of different types of unionism rests on the existence of different kinds of temperaments: "For as soon as we concede that the union is in essence an expression of group psychology we realise that it will get its specific character not merely from environmental conditions but from these in conjunction with the temperamental characteristics of the workers concerned, and that consequently union variants are likely to appear with a variation in either of these factors". But if, on the other hand, we reject this notion that the "union" (i.e. type of unionism) is "an expression of group psychology" - that is if we reject the idea that a "social interpretation" will be held only within a given group and will be the only interpretation held within that group - we cannot fall back so easily on "temperamental characteristics" to provide us with a fundamental explanation.

The other character which Hoxie seems to regard as necessary for a given type of unionism is that there should be a certain juxtaposition of aims and methods. The link between aims and methods seems to be simply that of "rationality": the methods appropriate to a given type are those best adopted to realising the aims of that type. It is easy to see, therefore, that methods ill-adopted to aims would not necessarily imply the existence of different types - the unionists might be simply "irrational" or ill-informed about how best they might achieve their aims. We cannot any ally assume the existence of rationality in social life.

These difficulties in Hoxie's views would be less obvious in the type of situation he had in mind - that is, where there was some real conflict between the different types of policies. In this situation each policy would be openly supported by a distinct group, and its influence among those who had decided (or been induced) to throw their weight on the other side would not be obvious. At the same time such a conflict would bring about a closer alignment of aims and methods. But with the information at present available, we can find no important conflicts of this kind in the Australian unions up to 1860. The formation of the Free and Independent Order of Stonemasons may have been due to some such conflict, but the events there are too obscure to enable us to say anything definite. Our

(1) e.g. by Commons, in review of Trade Unionism in the United States, Quarterly Journal of Economics, 1917-18, pp 96-99) (2) ibid, p. 62.
conclusion must be that although Hoxie's theory of unionism is at first sight a most suggestive one there are difficulties in applying it to the Australian unions, and these difficulties may be due partly to inadequacies of formulation, and partly to the fact that only under special conditions (i.e. conflict) could it be verified or falsified. We can certainly identify different aims and different methods, in the early Australian unions, but that appears to be about as far as we can go.

V. The Development of Trade Unionism, 1830–60.

The period covered by the present inquiry is dealt with in two separate chapters in Sutcliffe's "History of Trade Unionism in Australia". The first of these chapters discusses unionism before the discovery of gold; the second covers the next twenty years of unionism in Australia. Of the first period Sutcliffe writes: "Trade unionism made little or no progress until the discovery of gold". And of the unions in the second period he contends that "they maintained but an uncertain existence, often lapsing into a moribund condition or becoming disbanded". These judgements seem to describe fairly enough the whole period, for it must be admitted that the unions whose histories were set out in earlier pages had an unstable existence and that in the majority of cases this instability continued after 1851. The great effort of unionism in the period occurred in the building trades in Melbourne after 1855 but it is important to realise that these unions failed to establish themselves permanently. The so-called "pioneer unions" did not succeed in creating a stable unionism.

But whilst Sutcliffe's assessments are correct, trade unionism cannot be considered merely in terms of the number of organisations in existence. In giving an account of the "progress" or "development" of unionism it is necessary to include a discussion of changes in policy or organisation.

Miss Thomas puts forward an interesting argument that the early development of unions in Sydney was determined by the economic position of the convicts. She argues that for the germ of the labor movement we do not look to the freeman but to the Government convict, particularly to the mechanic with his regular

(1) J.T. Sutcliffe. History of Trade Unionism in Australia (Melbourne 1921) p. 77.  
(2) ibid. p. 25.  
(3) B. Fitzpatrick. Short History of the Australian Labor Movement, ch. 2.
hours, his definite wages and his economic worth. After 1822, the relates, free immigrants began to arrive and with the withdrawal of convicts from the labor market their position in the economy was taken by the freemen. The migrant formed the unions but he did so along lines laid down by his convict predecessor.

Movement, direction and decision were his (the migrant's) contributions, but the peculiar form and color had long been set in convict moulds.

This is quite a convincing argument but for our purposes the question whether unions originated among convicts or free immigrants is of minor importance. The important issue would be whether or not the origins of Australian unionism affected the course of its later development in any special way.

Miss Thomas does seem to imply that "convict moulds" were different from other forms that might have been imposed on the labor movement, but none of the facts so far brought to light would suggest that the Australian unions had, prior to 1860, any typically "convict" characteristics. What emerges from Miss Thomas' analysis is that even while convicts supplied the main part of the labor force there was being developed some kind of working class ideology on which a trade union movement could be built. The point brought out by Miss Thomas is that the labor market was developed earlier than has been assumed and that in consequence the convict as well as the freeman came to hold these ideas of his regular hours, his definite wages and his economic worth. The "convict moulds" were typically convict but were typical of the skilled workman whether bound or free.

Commons' hypothesis that fluctuations in the influence of unions are caused by fluctuations in prosperity, is helpful in explaining the development of unionism in Australia, although it does not cover all the relevant points. At first sight it accounts quite well for the sequence of events in New South Wales. The first phase of union growth in Sydney (to 1843) occurred during the squattting expansion and it came to an end when the squattting boom collapsed. The subsequent revival is difficult to date precisely. Miss Thomas suggests that the turning point came in 1848 and whether or not we accept this precise date it is clear that the movement had begun to get a footing again before 1851. The gold discoveries caused a greater demand for labor, and because of the opportunities for successful organisation a number of unions were formed and

(1) L.M. Thomas op.cit, p.13, (2) ibid p.14, (3) it is significant that there was little difference between the early movement at Port Phillip (which was relatively free of convicts) and that of New South Wales.
flourished in the next few years. The end of this movement came quite sharply in 1857 when unemployment began to increase, and only a few strong unions survived until 1860. But in 1859-61 we can trace another definite, if slow, revival. It seems to be the case that periods of growth were associated with periods of economic prosperity and that periods of decline were associated with periods of economic depression.

But alternative explanations of some developments in the period have been suggested, and some at least of these are quite plausible. It can hardly be denied that the depression in the early 'forties caused a setback to the movement but such things as the 'Masters' and Servants' Acts of the 'forties and the near cessation of immigration at this time may also have been important. Taken by itself neither one of these would have been sufficient to destroy a vigorous trade union movement, but together they may have been quite important. Is the passing of hostile legislation in itself of little importance, but in this case those who administered the law had little hesitation in using it to destroy "combinations". A vigorous union movement would probably have been capable of surviving — and indeed we find that unions flourished between 1840 and 1843 — but one weakened from other causes was vulnerable to attack by means of the law. The lower rate of immigration in the mid-'forties affected the trade unions in a similar fashion. The unions did not depend entirely on "new arrivals" for their members or their leaders, but many of the earlier leaders were by this time moving out of the working class and the whole structure of the labor movement seems to have been shaken by the collapse in 1844 of the Mutual Protective Association. In ordinary circumstances the continuance of the movement would not have been dependent on a steady stream of immigration, but because of the special conditions of the time the decline in the number of assisted migrants coming to the colony did nothing to halt the decline in unionism.

The real cause of the subsequent revival is obscure. Miss Thomas contends that it was due to the re-introduction of the system of assisted immigration, to the fact that "immigration floods over the shallows of the mid-'forties and forces the working classes to think once more". But almost any explanation as consistent with the known facts whilst none can be supported in any very

\footnote{op. cit, p. 35.}
convincing way. It is reasonable to suppose that one factor was the increasing prosperity of the economy in the late 'forties, but the economic history of the period is too vague to give us any real test of when the community would have been sufficiently prosperous to make trade unions profitable for the workers. A further point is that (as noted above) it is impossible to date with any precision the real beginnings of the revival so that it is not clear just what events have to be explained. Miss Thomas' suggestion, again, is quite a plausible one, but it cannot be verified directly. It is not possible to show either that the migrants who arrived in Sydney in the late 'forties promptly formed or joined unions or that those workers already in the colony were forced to organise in self defence against the competition of the newcomers. But it is equally impossible to show that the resumption of assisted immigration had nothing to do with the formation of unions in 1849 and the following years.

The development of unionism in New South Wales after 1851 presents few problems. The only real difficulty is to explain why there was a revival, beginning in 1859. Unemployment and distress continued for several years after 1859, and there is no obvious reason why unions should have been formed at this time. But the events in the earlier part of the decade can be explained quite adequately. The direct effects of the gold discoveries in New South Wales have often been exaggerated, but they did stimulate the trade union movement by creating a temporary shortage of labor. And for an explanation of the disappearance of so many unions after 1856 we need look no further than the changed condition of the labor market at about that date.

The course of development in Melbourne was rather different to that in Sydney, and in discussing it one cannot place so much reliance on Commons' hypothesis. The strength of unionism was not correlated in any simple way with the level of economic activity. Before 1850, the unions were formed in too irregular a pattern to be accounted for in any general scheme, and while unions flourished in the fifties there were almost constant complaints about unemployment and distress among the working class.

The years from 1849 to 1851 formed a period of steady achievement, but a tremendous impetus was given to the movement in Melbourne by the changes that

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It may be significant that a strong "uplift" tendency appeared in the unions at about this time, cf. Haxie of. cit. p.89; "We start with the business type, where this fails the tendency is to degenerate into friendly societies. We have then business unionism as a minor aspect, uplift as the major aspect". But it is doubtful how much of this can be accepted.
followed the discovery of gold. The situation in the two colonies was very different in the two colonies. In New South Wales the social and economic changes brought about by gold were not, after all, of very great, and the general impression we have of the union movement is one of continuity. In Victoria, on the other hand, the old community was in a sense submerged in the new. This is obvious from the changes in population that occurred in Victoria. Within a few years the balance was in favor of the newcomers, not the older colonists.

Thus although the fundamental character of the economy remained unchanged, we might expect that the trade union movement would have been influenced greatly by the large increase in the rate of immigration. What the gold rushes gave to the Victorian unions was a great supply of potential members and, after the community had settled down to some extent, greater opportunities for organization. The great demand for goods and services, together with the tendency for labor to leave the trades for the gold fields, created opportunities for profitable combination. Whether the immigrants who came to Victoria at this time introduced any new features into the Australian unions is a question that will be discussed a little later, but it is clear that the fact that they came in the numbers they did was of great importance for unionism in Victoria.

But the immediate effect of the discovery of gold in Victoria was that Unions collapsed because their members went to the gold fields. The movement remained in a precarious state until 1856; many unions were formed but most of them were quickly dissolved. The "recession" of 1854 may have been responsible for the gap in the organization of many trades between 1853 and 1856.

The period of stable unionism (between 1856 and 1860) was remarkable for the fact that circumstances did not appear to be favourable to the development of a viable union movement. This was also a period of agitation and organization by the unemployed. But the point seems to be that the existence of unemployment did not mean that the Victorian economy as a whole was in the trough of a depression. In Sydney after 1857, the "trades" were very depressed, but this does not seem to have been the case in Melbourne until about 1860. One feature of the situation in Victoria was that although there was constant unemployment and distress, not many individuals were unemployed for long and so there was not much pressure on unions and their standard rates. Moreover, the railway works

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(1) This is true of the community as a whole in New South Wales. (2) Well-known examples of this were the Stonemasons' and the Typographers'. (3) This unemployment seems to have been "structural" rather than "cyclical".
provided employment for many workers, both skilled and unskilled. But probably
most important of all was the fact that even late in the 'fifties the gold
fields were still able to absorb a lot of labor that was "surplus" in the
town occupations and many operatives were prepared to try their luck on the
fields. Thus the unions were relieved of a good deal of competition that might
have endangered their standards. Finally, the building unions in Melbourne had
an unprecedented membership and were correspondingly better organised and better
able to withstand attacks than similar unions in Sydney. Thus on the one hand
economic conditions were rather easier in Melbourne than in Sydney, and on
the other hand the unions in the former town had the membership to build up
more stable organisations than those in the latter.

But if this is true, how can we explain the sudden collapse of the
whole movement after 1860? It is possible that economic conditions worsened
considerably at about this time, and this of course was what most of the witnes-
se before the Tariff Committee were anxious to prove. This then may have been
one factor. But it has also to be remembered that the unions set out to impose
a very comprehensive and rigid set of regulations on industry, and that the
employers were extremely hostile to them. The unions did not simply disappear
they were firstly defeated in the contest with the employers. The victory of
the employers may have been due ultimately to the unsettled economic conditions
of the times, to the fact that they could secure labor below the union's rates or
on other than the union's terms. But in discussing the failure of the workers
to adhere to the union's regulations it is important to realise that economic
conditions were not the only determining factor. The ability of the unions to
withstand the employers depended on the solidarity of the workers, and solidarity;
like economic conditions, has to be treated as a variable. The weaker the solidi-
darity of the men the easier it was for the employers to under-cut wages in times
of distress. And in order to carry their ambitions programme of regulation, the
unions in the building trades had to organise not merely a section of the men but
the whole of each trade. They had to build up discipline throughout each trade to
sense the workers of each trade into a corporate group. In this task they failed,
(1) Most of the working class witnesses before the Select Committee of the Tariff
mentioned this as "unnatural" and as something requiring correction (2) It is in-
teresting to regard this as "unnatural" and as something requiring correction (3) The Argus said
quickly changed from that of a lottery to that of an Industry. (3) The Argus said
quickly changed from that of a lottery to that of an Industry. (3) The Argus said
quickly changed from that of a lottery to that of an Industry. (3) The Argus said
quickly changed from that of a lottery to that of an Industry.
for a large proportion of the men remained independent of, and sometimes hostile to, the unions and their rules. This was revealed when the unions were subjected to serious pressure from the employers and from the general economic situation late in the decade. The unions had over-reached themselves in trying to regulate as thoroughly the conditions of work, and they were forced to abandon almost all of their rules except that relating to the eight-hour day. Their organization was more thorough than that of the Sydney unions, but it was not equal to the strain they imposed on it.

(11) Another group of problems is connected with the question whether or not there were any changes in the character of unionism between 1830 and 1860, or whether there were any differences between the unions of Victoria and those in New South Wales.

The general answer here is that the earliest trade societies were fairly simple in structure and carried out quite simple functions, and that later the unions exhibited a greater degree of complexity in structure and function, but that there was no single line of development from simple to complex in all organized trades during the period. Some unions in existence in 1860 were organized in much the same way and did much the same kind of thing as those of the early 'thirties; whilst some early unions such as the Australian Society of Composers, were quite vigorous in their efforts to regulate the working conditions of their members.

The different types of organization that appeared during the period were discussed in Chapter I, and some of the developments in that aspect of unionism were mentioned incidentally. The point was made that branches, and boards of management, were late developments, whilst the formal "federation" of the 'fifties was the successor to the "committee of delegates" which appeared as early as 1842. But not all unions had formed more than one branch by 1860, and not all of them had gone far in separating the management committee from the general meeting. Such changes in organization as occurred were from "simple" to "complex" but the tempo was not very rapid nor was it uniform in all trades. The same is true of changes in membership figures.

With regard to the aims and methods of unionism the changes were again fairly slight. It is interesting to note that there were very few demands for shorter hours before 1852 in Victoria and 1853 in New South Wales, whereas this was the most characteristic demand of the 'fifties. But this is by no means a
fundamental point. The chief variation in methods was that up to 1850 most reliance had been placed upon strikes and the device of restriction of members whilst after 1850 greater emphasis was placed on the "common rule". But some unions did try to maintain the common rule before 1850, so that again this is not a point of great significance.

There seems to be some prejudice that the pre-1850 unions were mainly but benefit societies that those formed by the Chartists who came to Australia during the gold rushes were genuine trade unions. But some of the earlier societies were far more than benefit societies - the Melbourne Tailors' Society, with its insistence on limited apprenticeship and the common rule, and the Sydney Composers' Society, for example; and some of the latest ones formed in Sydney were little more than benefit societies. The conventional contrast appears to be based on a belief that the pure benefit society was "typical" of the pre-1850 scene whilst the "typical" unions of the period 1851-60 were the Melbourne building unions. Yet we can say is that the balance between benefit society and the more aggressive types of union changed over the period. We can, in fact, distinguish four "stages" in the development of the bargaining union out of the benefit society. The first was the "pure" benefit society, which restricted itself to the provision of benefits such as would be provided nowadays by friendly societies. The second was the benefit society which in addition organised strikes for higher wages or shorter hours; the third was the society which carried out these functions but also tried to regulate industrial conditions to some extent by the use of bargaining devices of the restriction of entry and "common rule" type. The fourth, finally, was the society whose day-to-day activities were directed towards the enforcement of its rules, with benefit functions playing a subsidiary and perhaps complementary role. But these different kinds of trade society do not represent genuine historical stages in the development of the Australian movement, they simply describe different ways in which bargaining and benefit functions were distributed. It is not definitely established that the earliest societies were really of the "first" variety, nor did each and every organised trade pass from one stage to the next. Bargaining became a more prominent feature in the fifties - especially in Melbourne, where the building unions were of the fourth type. But bargaining had already become an important function of the Sydney unions by 1849, the year in which the Masters' and Servants' Act was passed. If the earliest trade societies had been purely benefit
societies that phase of unionism was definitely over by 1840. Moreover, no
significant distinction between types of trade union can be based on the relative
emphasis given to insurance and to bargaining. The point is that once a society
is not a "pure" benefit society it might be a genuine trade union; the
provision of mutual benefits is under some circumstances really a part of trade
union activities, as Hoxie and the Webbs have shown. The existence of "uplift"
aims is obscured if mutual benefit functions are regarded as something to be
cast off by a real trade union.

It is usually not considered necessary to state the important implication
of the bargaining activities of the early Australian unions. This was the rec-
ognition on the part of workmen of their status as employees. The trade union
movement of the whole period is best described in terms of Commons' charac-
terisation of a developing unionism: "They eventually abandon co-operation and de-
vote their energies to strengthening their bargaining power." The contrast
between bargaining and anarchism is of much greater importance than mutual
insurance and bargaining.

On this as on other points, we find, there was a good deal of uncertainty
here too, there was no single trend in all trades. One of the most important
of the co-operatives occurred right at the end of the period, so that we cannot
find a single line of development from anarchism to bargaining. On the contrary,
co-operation appeared quite irregularly throughout the period. But it is
still true that the trade union movement as a whole represents a rejection of
anarchist ideals and an acceptance (if only for the short run) of an employer-
employee relationship. The Australian unions in the period of up to 1860 did
not "eventually abandon" anarchist ideals but they did reject them at certain
crucial points. The vital question here is not so much the attitude to co-
operation as to "working on one's account". The journeymen's societies preferred
their members to be employees at regular wages under stated conditions, rather
than independent workers subject to cut-throat competition. For example, the
formation of the Melbourne Tailors' Society in 1846 did amount to the rejection
of individual working in favour of regular employment. Previous discussion
of the tailors' activities revealed that their society originated in an agreement
with the employers. The terms of the agreement were very significant. "The

(1) Labor Movement (loc. cit.) p. 633. (2) Once we realise fully that unionism up
1860 was in the early stages of its development the question of a single trend
appears to be less important, because it is not surprising that such unions
should be uncertain about the directions they should take. It is not surprising
that they should advance now along one path and now along another.
object has been principally to confine the business to the legitimate part of the trade, a great portion of it having found its way into the shops of certain drapers to the injury of the master tailors and the corresponding reduction of the wages of the journeymen. It has been now determined upon, and the master tailors cordially agree in the arrangement that in future they will provide suitable apartments on their premises in which all the tailoring is to be performed, as no work is in future to be taken home by the men, a scale of prices has been drawn up and mutually agreed to, and the men are not to work for the drapers except upon the same terms. In addition the masters "pledged themselves not to employ any but members of the Society". The Secretary of the Society contrasted this new state of things with that which existed "when each man was his own master". The men and the society had decided to give up the uncertainties and reduced wages which existed when each man was his own master, for the security they believed they would get from bargaining as employees with the employers.

The Melbourne tailors provided a particularly clear example of a preference for bargaining over individualist production, because the issues were stated in an unusually direct way. But a rather more important example of the same kind of thing was the attempt by all the Melbourne building unions to outlaw the system of sub-contracting. Their case differed from that of the tailors in that they were not forced to choose directly between independence and employment for all the workers. But the system of sub-contracting did enable a journeyman to advance to the status of an independent workman, or a small contractor from falling back into the ranks of the wage-earners. Thus in opposing sub-contracting the unions were opposing a system which was quite important in securing independence for many who would otherwise be forced to work for wages. But the sub-contractor endangered the wage standards of the other journeymen, and the building unions, when faced with this situation, preferred bargaining and the union rule to the supposed advantages of independence. They preferred a system in which every workman gained a stable wage, regulated through collective bargaining, to a system which provided many with an independent income. The attitude of these unions to the co-operative formed in their trade seems to have been similar. As soon as the co-operatives endangered the unions.

(1) FPp 4/10/1845, report (2)4/26/1845, advertisement (3) The tailors' Co-operative originated as a device to strengthen their bargaining power, by providing them with some alternative to employment on their masters' terms. They were not rejecting the aims or methods of bargaining unions even though utopian notions may have been brought forward when the co-operative was being organised.
standards they were no longer willing to tolerate them. They recognized that they were definitely involved in a type of society in which the employment system would prevail and they would not willingly permit any excursion into independent ownership which they believed would destroy their rules or reduce the bargaining power of the workers. And they conceived bargaining to be the main function of unionism, although other ideals – particularly uplift ideals did play some part in their thinking.

Thus we find that some unions did abandon "anarchist" (i.e. individualist) ideals and did devote their energies to strengthening their bargaining power. For these unions – very influential unions – the question of the place of the wages system had been answered in a certain way. Other unions, such as the United Operative Bakers' Association of Sydney, answered it in a different way, but the development on the whole during the period was away from anarchism and towards bargaining. We must distinguish, however, between the unions and the workmen. Some of the workmen as we saw were not prepared to submit to the discipline of the unions and for this as well as other reasons the attempt to create a bargaining at this stage proved a failure.
PART II: POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND POLICIES.

I. Organisation and Structure:

It is not possible to relate labor's political activity in this period to a specific group of organisations. Firstly, the political policies of labor were often advocated and promoted outside of any formal organisation, and secondly, (even where an organisation did exist) it is not easy to distinguish between working class and other political associations. Among industrial societies it is easy enough to separate the society of journeymen (in which at most the employer might be admitted as an honorary member) from the employers' association. But membership of political associations was rarely, if ever, restricted formally to a given economic class. Some of these societies were founded by working men, but individuals belonging to other classes were admitted and often exercised great influence. The usual procedure of a group of workmen interested in furthering their political interests was to invite "all those interested" to join with them in bringing about the desired end. The "outsider" or "intellectual", it need hardly be said, has been an important figure in leading and developing all labor movements, and the early Australian movement was no exception here.

A further point is that workers were often members of political associations which were not founded by workers, and which found solid support among other classes of the community. In some of these, there was a definite working class viewpoint and policy; in others, the working-class participants were content to give support to policies formulated by and for other sections of the community. But we can speak of a political movement of labor only when a policy or programme is formulated on behalf of workers as a class. It is not enough that members of the working class should accept, or even initiate a programme if that programme is not directed to furthering the interests of workers or of a section of workers as a separate class in the community. In so far as the working class has and seeks to provide interests indistinguishable from those of the rest of the community it can hardly be said to be participating in working class movement. In the early Australian movement we can distinguish

(4) e.g. The Society of Emigrant Mechanics (Sydney 1833)
The Mutual Protection Association (Sydney 1843)
The New South Wales Land League (Sydney 1857)
situations where the same policy furthered the aims of different classes, other situations where the different economic classes appeared to have identical aims, and other situations, where conflicts over policy can be traced/conflicts between the aims of various classes. Situations of the second kind do not belong strictly speaking, to the labor movement although they might be part of the political history of the working class.

In these associations in which the working class played some part, the organisation was with few exceptions fairly loose. They had officers and sometimes a committee, in a number, membership fees were charged. But the chief political device used by them was the public meeting. In order to make the public meeting effective it was necessary to abandon the distinction between members and non-members so that the function of the membership fee in creating a formal body often lapsed. Sometimes meetings could be managed so that only the representatives of an "official party" spoke, but this was not always possible. In some organisations e.g. the Patriotic Association and the Australasian League - the right to elect, or to be elected to the committee or council of the organisation was restricted to persons who had paid membership dues, but these societies were for that reason less important for the labor movement because such membership clauses were effective in keeping the working class out as no doubt they were designed to do.

As in the case of trade unions, the most common but not the universal form of organisation was a unitary society without branches or local committees, which might correspond with similar societies in other parts of the colonies. But modifications to this pattern were introduced. The New South Wales Land League, for example, established a number of suburban branches in Sydney (as well as "corresponding" with land leagues in other areas) although the original society seems to have made all the important decisions without having modified its constitution to give representation to the branches. The comparable society in Victoria - first known as the Victorian Land League - experimented with various forms of organisation. Following its establishment in Melbourne in 1856, it carried on correspondence with various groups in other parts of Victoria and established some branches in the suburbs. It then

(1) The result was that similar petitions or resolutions were adopted by meetings held in different parts of the country. (2) These branches were in practice little more than agencies. They possessed a degree of self-government but were expected to advocate the "line" of the parent branch. (3) 13/3/1857, report.
limited the towns and districts throughout the colony to send delegates to Melbourne for a Congress on the land question, and when this body of delegates met in July 1851, they called themselves the "Convention". The Land League's organisation of the Convention was somewhat haphazard— for example, it did not specify how many representatives each district should send. But once the delegates were assembled, the procedure was modelled on that of Parliament; Select Committees were appointed to prepare reports on special subjects, and the Convention even formed itself into a "committee of the whole" to discuss matters in detail. The original idea appears to have been that the Convention should meet and dissolve fairly rapidly, but although it adjourned "sine die" after sixteen days' discussion a move had been made to maintain an organisation that would represent the whole colony. On the thirteenth day of its sittings, the Convention passed a motion setting up a permanent committee of twenty "to manage the business of the Convention during the recess". This idea was abandoned, however, and a "corresponding committee" substituted; that is, instead of going on to develop a form or organisation new to the Australian colonies, the Convention fell back on the earlier type (exemplified by the Victorian Land League) as the only practicable form of organisation. This revision was completed shortly afterwards by the amalgamation of the Land League and the Convention into "The Convention Land and Reform League of Melbourne". The full Convention was summoned again in 1859 but was dissolved once more and was replaced in Melbourne by another "corresponding society". This was the end of an interesting attempt to create an organisation spreading throughout the whole colony of Victoria. But the Convention continued to be very influential in Melbourne, and came very near to being a real political party in the elections of 1859.

To deal with this latter part of the Convention's activities it is necessary to discuss the question of elections and political parties in some detail. Many of the organisations of the period tried to make themselves into electoral parties, to influence the electorate in the choice of members and to maintain control over members after they were elected. Perhaps

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the earliest example of this was the Mutual Protection Association which in 1843 and 1844 "endorsed" candidates for the municipal elections. In 1843, so the Association claimed, each candidate so endorsed had been elected, but the control over elected councillors was not so effective. It was resolved that "this Association should pledge itself to give us patronage only to those parties who supported it", and those seeking to be endorsed for the 1844 elections had to appear before a committee and to undertake "to contend for a reduction of the franchise" and to "recognise the Association as politically representative of the working classes of the city."

(1) Miss Thomas sees in this procedure the beginnings of the urbanism in Australia, but while this may be true, an organisation such as the Mutual Protection Association had no means of influencing candidates except to require that they should give an "undertaking" or a "pledge" to advocate the organisation's policy. Therefore, this method of demanding that a candidate should "pledge himself to support" some programme was not uncommon among later organisations. But on the whole this method of control did not prove very effective, and elections continued to be carried on, for the most part, as contests between independent candidates each with his own electoral committee. The existing associations were too weak, and their funds were too small, to make it worth the while of candidates to bind themselves closely to any particular group or sectional policy. The private committee of the candidate's friends and supporters was just as efficient, and the issues before the elections were not clearly enough defined to enable one to classify all the candidates into a few broad groups such as would justify the existence of electoral organisations extending through more than one or two electorates. Loose alliances were sometimes entered into but until late in the 'fifties there did not amount to much. The most effective form of organisation was an alliance between (2) a number of candidates standing for a multi-member electorate, but such coalitions were temporary. There is obviously some similarity between these various arrangements and the more rigid political party of later times although the latter was not developed by 1860. But it has already

(1) G 17/5/1844, Annual report of M.P.A.; G 14/9/1844, report; (2) The most famous example of this occurred in the election for Sydney in 1856 when a coalition of four candidates scooped the pool and were known thereafter as "the Bunch."
been mentioned that the Convention went further than most of other bodies of the period in building itself into something like an electoral party, and some interesting contributions along the same lines were made by groups of Victorian workingmen between 1856 and 1859. These Victorian developments were more elaborate than anything that happened in New South Wales, although on one occasion the New South Wales Land League tried to bring about a union with the League for the Protection of Native Industry for electoral purposes.

It is interesting that while the Convention was still sitting in July 1857, Wilson Gray, (its first President) had some idea of making it into a political party with its own representatives in the Assembly but some other delegates disagreed with him. Two years later, when the Land and Reform League summoned the delegates to Melbourne once again there was no doubt about what the Melbourne leaders were trying to do. The first Convention, it should be noted, had formulated a legislative programme that dealt with subjects other than the land question. Shortly after it had been decided to summon the 2nd Convention, the Council entered into negotiations with other bodies to form a "popular front" with other groups for the coming elections of the Assembly. The results of this were seen when the meeting which elected delegates from Melbourne instructed those delegates "to urge upon the assembled delegates the necessity of drawing up and adopting a programme by which Candidates for elections to the reformed Parliament are to be tested", and the suggested programme included policies on land and protection as well as on a number of other questions. But this idea of the Popular front was not as successful as had been hoped, because many people objected to the linking of the land question and the tariff question, and when the full Convention met it refused to consider the tariff question.

The technique being adopted, it should be noted, was still that of promising to support the candidate who would undertake to advocate the Convention's policy, but an unsuccessful attempt was made to get the Convention to agree to a new principle. The Convention was invited to resolve "That to achieve the objects of the Convention, it is essential to create a united Parliamentary Party, independent and distinct from all other parties in the House, and that membership of such party be a pledge for candidates at elections, accompanying the pledge of concurrence in the Convention land principles". This might really have implied

(1) 12/4/1859, report; (2) 29/7/1857, report (2nd day of Convention); (3) 14/6/1859, report; 11/6/1859, report; 22/6/1859, report; 29/6/1859, report; (4) 16/7/1859, report (5) 13/7/1859, report of meeting at Heidelberg. (6) 21/7/1859, report.
something like the modern Caucus, but the motion was defeated. The ordinary pledge of "concurrence" was considered good enough and the elections proceeded in that basis, although some prominent members of the Convention were themselves candidates for the Legislative Assembly and the Convention did place its programme before the electors on its own behalf. A number of candidates who adopted this programme were successful and formed a cross-bench group in the Assembly. In the meantime, the Convention was again dissolved and the corresponding committee was this time christened "The Land and Financial Reform League", although it was still popularly known as the Convention. It is significant that the new organization promised "a course of persistent agitation, in and out of Parliament".

The relationship between the "Convention" members of the Assembly and the new League was fairly vague, but the latter held meetings and issued instructions to the Nicholson Ministry as though it were a fully integrated party. One of these meetings, for example, was called "for the purpose of awarding a vote of thanks to their supporters in the Legislative Assembly, as well as to utter a warning note to Mr. Nicholson and his party on the subject of the expected Land Policy." This reflected an over-estimation of the strength of the League and of the organization it had inherited, but it does indicate how similar to a modern political party — with organization outside the House but representatives in the House — the League had become.

No other political organization of the period in either colony went as far as the Convention in building up a Parliamentary party, but some Victorian working men made efforts to create a close relationship between themselves and the representatives. At first they simply approved certain candidates as deserving of working class support, but later they tried to form organizations which would not content themselves with "endorsing" or "testing" existing candidates but would bring forward their own candidates who would therefore be bound by their programmes from the start. They did not themselves distinguish between "pre-selection" and "endorsement", but their own procedure was pre-selection whilst all other groups were content with endorsement.

Outrogowski in tracing the development of political parties in England shows how they arose the attempts of the existing parties in the House to

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get control of the electorate. The account given above of Australian developments, however, stressed the role of extra-parliamentary groups to get a footing inside the colonial parliaments. It was sometimes suggested that the political associations which sprang up in Australia were "inspired" by parliamentarians, but on the whole party groupings in parliament were not rigid enough to facilitate this kind of development. The events described by Ostrogorski took place at a time when fairly well defined parties had long existed in the British Parliament, when there already existed groups with a common interest in creating an organization that should go out into the electorate and with sufficient resources to make this practicable. But in the Australian colonies party alignments were of the most unstable kind. Rivalries were "personal" rather than "party" and new alliances were always possible. Parliamentary parties had yet to form and so conditions were not ripe for the initiative in the organization of the electorate to come from within the House.

The Convention and the Victorian workmen's political associations represent the most fully-developed political parties of the period. But in these, as in all of the associations being discussed here the chief problems of structure relate not so much to organization as to leadership. This is partly because of the relation between the organizations and their members, partly because of the kind of thing the organizations were doing. The political organizations were less closely related than the trade unions to any pre-existing cohesive social group. Of course, none of these organizations would have survived at all if it had not had some basic in an independent social movement, but it is true nevertheless that these social movements were very unstable. More important, perhaps, was the kind of thing that the political organization was interested in doing in this period. Much trade union activity as we saw involved the establishment or the preservation of "working rules" or customary ways of behaviour which in their functioning contributed to the stability and achievement of the union group. The collective action of the union was almost co-extensive with working rules of the group and so had the appearance of being comparatively "spontaneous". But the political organizations were not interested in working rules in the same way. The collective action they proposed was the "mass meeting", not the direct formulation of working rules, and the leader was therefore necessarily placed in a much more important position. Although the mass meeting is

(1) e.g. The Australian Political Association (SMH 8/10/1856).
supposed to bind all together into a much closer unity than the ordinary general meeting at which discussion takes place, in fact it makes a much sharper distinction between the masses and the leaders. And that is what happened in the political activity of the period with which the working class was associated.

Throughout the period we can distinguish a more or less distinct class of leaders. The functions of these leaders included the making of speeches, the formulating of motions and petitions to be presented to meetings, the organization (and manning) of deputations, and in a few cases the keeping of books, records, etc. The personnel of the group carrying on these functions in the movement remained relatively stable. The attendance at working class meetings might vary widely, for example, but the speeches would be made by much the same people — and the one person might play a prominent part in more than one agitation over quite a few years. (Three or four years would be a relatively long time in this mobile society with few permanent political organisations). Yet new personalities did come forward at various times. Although there was a distinct "elite", there existed at the same time quite marked "circulation".

In some cases the leadership functions may have been carried out by people who were in Commons' terminology "experts", not leaders — that is, people who were expected to give expert advice or to carry out technical tasks when required to do so by the people who really made the policy. Thus lawyers, it appears, were sometimes hired to give advice about the correct wording for petitions. J.J. Walsh, Secretary of the Convention, seems to have become an executive rather than a policy-maker, and James McNerchorn was dismissed from the editorship of the Guardian because he wanted to make policy instead of confining himself to the management of the paper. A few similar examples could perhaps be found. But the majority of the organizations were so informal, and the duties to be carried out so untechnical, that the functions of leadership and administration did not become differentiated.

The function of leadership, it was implied in the above paragraph, was closely connected with policy-making. This is correct, but policy-making has to be understood in a fairly limited sense. Not all persons who made speeches and put forward a policy at working class meetings, for example, could be regarded as leaders of the working class movement. There were occasions when various prominent people were invited to speak at a meeting, for some special reason e.g.

(1) V. Thomas, op. cit., pp. 72-77.
at short-time meetings it was often considered desirable to have a clergyman
(1) among the speakers, and Henry Parkes and Richard Driver took part in meetings
(2) of the New South Wales Labor League apparently for this same reason of giving
some sort of “respectability” to the proceedings. (Parkes and Driver were clearly
associated more closely with middle-class movements at this time, although they
were prepared to angle for working-class support). Thus again, there were people
who succeeded in speaking at meetings although they were not on the official
list of speakers and did not adopt the official policy. Cramp, who spoke in Sydney
against alienation of land was one of these. Such people did not succeed in be-
coming leaders.

The policy actually adopted was formulated by leaders, but the power of
leaders to make or alter policy was itself limited, despite appearances to
the contrary. Leaders became important, naturally, in times of crisis and
distress when they had some policy or remedy to offer to the mass of the workers.
This created the impression that leaders made the movement, an impression strength-
ened by the general habit of presenting for adoption by public meetings a previ-
ously-prepared list of motions. But the meeting was often in the position to
reject this list of “resolutions” and substitute others, if those present thought
it desirable— as they sometimes did. There existed, therefore, a negative check
on the leaders. A meeting might impose its own policy on the leaders without
disposing them, as happened when the “official” party in the Society of Emigrant
Mechanics (3) (Sydney 1833) wanted to keep the discussion centred around the immig-
ration question but other speakers brought to the fore the problems of competition
from assigned servants and ticket-of-leave holders. Again, leaders who changed
their policy or who proposed an unpopular policy were soon dropped. Thus James
McEarcharn at the Tarar in 1853, opposed the popular policy of “passive resistance.”
He was given a good hearing but the policy he condemned was later adopted, and it
was reported that his visit to the area had made him unpopular with the miners.
(4) W.A. Dunham, recipient of the medal from the trade unions in 1843,
had little support in 1844, when he had only a lead nationalisation scheme to offer.
David Taylor, formerly Chairman of the Society of Emigrant Mechanics, but by 1843
a building contractor, met with a very bad reception when he suggested to a meeting
of mechanics that they would be wise not to allow wages to fall. One quite

(1) SMH 13/11/1854, report (2) SMH 20/10/1856, (3) SMH 20/7/1853, report (4) SMH 4/2/1853, report (5) SMH 4/6/1843, report.
rapid fall from grace was that of John Black, President of the New South Wales Land League. Black, after having been elected to the Legislative Assembly with the help of Charles Cowper, consented a few months later to join the Ministry of Foster. (His former colleagues in the Land League decided to support his candidature in the subsequent Ministerial elections, but denounced him in strong terms when in an election speech he modified his views on land reform. Charles Cowper, too, lost a good many working class supporters because of his reputed opportunism on land and other matters, although he was never, properly speaking, a working class leader. John Robertson was another who found his former admirers turning against him when he modified his policy in some respects. Thomas Leader, M.L.A., an important member of the Convention, was always in a somewhat shaky position because although orthodox on the land question he was known to be in favour of immigration which the workingmen opposed. One feature of these examples is that the characteristic hero-worship of the leader was changed to equally exaggerated denunciation when the Leader became associated with the forces of evil.

This representation of the position of the leader as a rather precarious one might be contrasted with the conclusions of Michels, who sees the leadership-group as largely independent of the masses. In Australia, on the other hand, the masses turned to leaders to provide them with a solution for their problems, but discarded any leader whose "solution" proved to be unacceptable for one reason or another. But Michels' discussion relates to firmly stable organisations in which some sort of a machine could be built up, whereas our Australian evidence does not cover such organisations. In one body which did develop some sort of permanent executive, the Convention, the leaders were able to maintain their position despite criticism both within and without the association, but probably an important point here is the fact that the most prominent men in the Convention, such as Wilson Gray, Bon and Leader, refused up to 1860 to modify their policy of free selection before survey, the popular policy. The critics either wanted them and the Convention to adopt some other policy, or disagreed with Wilson Gray and his associates on some matter of tactics. In the circumstances, it is difficult to see whether the continued predominance of this group was due to the

machine they established or to the character of their policy. An acceptable policy has already been indicated as one necessary quality in a leader. But there were others. The most important condition of leadership was, in fact, the existence of a movement — and in practice this meant the existence of some dissatisfaction with current conditions. A policy thus took the form of a “remedy” of some kind, but as has been argued it could not be just any remedy: “going to the country” was, except in New South Wales in 1858-59 — an unacceptable remedy for unemployment, and land nationalization was an unacceptable remedy for the separation of the laborer from the means of production. Perhaps the workers did accept lower wages and did go to the country when they could not get employment in the towns, but they were reluctant to give their support to anyone who said that they should do these things.

Besides a fairly consistently-held policy, the chief requirements for leader seem to have been some ability at oratory, and the energy and interest necessary for continued speech-making and attendance at meetings. The speechmaker with an appropriate policy could get a hearing — and he could get a following if he were willing to keep it up. Another point here is that it was no disadvantage not to be a workman, even in the later stages when there was an interest in the representation of the workers by workingmen. Middle-class leaders were accepted and acclaimed by the working classes as long as they behaved in the approved manner. Such people were perhaps at an advantage because of their education and of the respectability they gave to movements with which they were associated.

To sum up this discussion of leadership we can say that it was not formalized, institutional or bureaucratic leadership, but relied on what Weber calls “charismatic authority”. The charismatic leader derives his authority from his own personality or personal powers which on the one hand place him apart from his followers and on the other hand secure him their support. The holder of charisma seizes the task that is adequate for him and demands obedience and a following by virtue of his mission. His success determines whether he finds them. His charismatic claim breaks down if his mission is not recognized by those to whom he feels he has been sent. But the success of his mission is determined not merely by the fact that he gains a following to keep the following in the real problem and that, according to Weber,

depends on success in an objective field: "The charismatic leader gains and maintains authority solely by proving his strength in life. If he wants to be a prophet he must perform miracles; if he wants to be a warlord he must perform heroic deeds; Above all, however, his divine mission must prove itself in that those who faithfully surrender to him must fare well. If they do not fare well, he is obviously not the master sent by the gods." (1)

Max Weber's theory of charismas, as we can see, is stated in religious terms; indeed, even the word itself has a religious significance. But this is not a necessary interpretation of the phenomenon. The essential point is that in the absence of traditional or institutional authority — or in times of stress or social disintegration when old established leaders or institutions are losing their authority — leadership takes the form of a personal relation between leader and led, in which the latter play a passive role. "If they recognize him he is their master, so long as he knows how to maintain recognition through proving himself. But he does not derive his "right" from their will in the manner of an election" (2).

The leaders whose place in the labor movement we have been discussing depended for their authority not on "success" in any actual venture but on their willingness to advocate the policy supported by the masses. Otherwise, the facts of leadership in Australia cannot fit into the pattern set out by Weber. The leaders were not those whose authority was traditional or institutional. They placed themselves before the people and were either accepted or rejected; if accepted, they were in a sense treated as people "set apart"; the attitude of their followers towards them is most appropriately described as hero-worship. But on the other hand they were able to maintain this position only as long as they were able to "prove themselves" the advocates of the masses. Deviation resulted in "failure" — in the form of a decline of influence — although it appears that a return to the "right path" we would once more bring authority.

These arose during the period no leader whose personal influence was so great that he could change his mind about any working class policy and carry the working class with him. W. C. Allen, the Sydney protectionist, was one leader who to some extent succeeded in imposing a policy upon the working class, by putting before the workers a programme of tariff reform as a remedy for distress and unemployment. This was in 1859; but it would have

been impossible for Alliance to have reversed the process, if he had been desired, in 1860. The policy about which the working class had been undecided in 1858 had become for a large section of them an article of faith in 1860.

A point which is emphasised by Nicholls is the tendency for leaders to assign relatively large amounts of money to themselves. No such tendency can be discovered in our Australian material. The permanent organisations seem not to have had financial resources of any magnitude, although the Convention, for example, paid the "expenses" of some of its agitators.

An early charge of misappropriation of funds was made in 1844 by one of the critics of the M.P.A., who said that the officers spent the funds of the Association on liquor and on the provision of a salary of £50 p.a. for its Secretary. It was denied that money was spent on liquor or that Sutherland had accepted the salary, but not that the vote of £50 had been made. Perhaps other bodies made similar grants to their officers, but in any case the more exclusively working class organisation had such minute subscriptions

that not much money could have been available for any purpose.

(1) A 1/6/1857 (2) The allegation was in a letter, W.R. 22/6/1844. It was replied to in a long leading article, 29/6/1844. (3) The entrance fee of the Mutual Protection Association was said to be 1/- (R. Fitzpatrick Short History of the Australian Labor Movement, p. 24.)
II. Policies:

The programmes sought by or on behalf of labour through political organization were of a number of different types. Some policies were the same as those put forward within the trade unions whilst others were unconnected with and in some cases hostile to, trade union aims or methods.

A useful classification of working class activity is provided by Commons' in the course of his general characterization of the labor movement: "the two goals which divide labor movements", he writes, "are displacement of capitalism and bargaining with capitalism. Displacement takes the form of voluntary co-operation primarily through producers' cooperations (although Consumers' Co-operatives also had this aim at first) or the compulsory forms of politics, communism and syndicalism. Bargaining with capitalism is unionism".

The distinction between bargaining and displacement is a most important one, but it does not provide us with an exhaustive classification of all working class policies. One of Commons' most important point is that in the development of the labor movement capitalism does not immediately appear in the form of a fully-developed employer capitalism, and the issues do not immediately take the form of a contest between employers and employed. "The issue in the earlier stages of labor movements is between the rich and the poor or aristocracy versus democracy, where later it becomes the issue of wages against rent, interest and profit". Sometimes, then, the class struggle takes the undifferentiated form of poor against the rich, whilst at other times it is a struggle between wage earners and recipients of other kinds of income. But even where the issue is specific and it need not be related to the form of income as such "The propertyless of antiquity and the Middle Ages protested against monopolies, preemption, forestalling and the withholding of goods from the market in order to raise prices. Today the central issue is the determination of the price of labor". In other words, in the original conception the "exploiter" was the merchant, not the employer, and Commons' analysis shows that the opposition between the merchant and the workman continues at least into the stage of merchant capitalism where the line of demarcation between the petty employer and his workmen is still not so fixed.

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marked. But the opposition to the merchant who owns the means of consumption can be distinguished from the opposition to the capitalist - merchant, landlord, or industrial employer - who owns the means of production and thus is in a position to force the propertyless to work for wages (or under the most favourable circumstances to be his tenants). Class struggles do tend more and more to be a contest between the propertyless and the owners of the means of production although the earlier contest between propertyless and the owners of consumption-goods still persists. But even where the propertyless engage in a struggle not with the rich in general but with the owners of the means of production there is a further distinction between those struggles in which the receipt of wages (or of rent) is treated as the central issue, and those in which the ownership of property is what is opposed. And it is also of some importance what factor of production is conceived to be the means of production - whether land or industrial capital is the object of contention.

But to define working class policies in economic terms is to give only a partial account. We can find some policies which are not directly aimed at altering the distribution of income, being concerned with rights of other kinds.

The question of the form and content of the struggle relating to distribution is important, but is not the only question to be asked.

(1) Displacement.

In Eastern Australia in the period under review, both "bargaining" and "displacement" were sought in various forms. The displacement of capitalism by a socialist form of society was not, I believe, sought at any time, but the land movement and the gold fields agitation were clearly connected with a fairly conscious desire to escape from a society in which, it was feared, capitalist forms of production would predominate. In each case the way of escape sought was, in a technical sense, a thoroughly reactionary one.

The vehemence with which the workingman demanded "access to the land" can be understood if we relate their demands to the agrarian movement in England. Beer describes the English agrarian movement as one of the four phases of the radical and working class politics of the period 1760-1825 and he argues that it was prompted by the enclosures and the other changes connected with the "agricultural improvements" of the Eighteenth century.

movement was at the same time a reaction against the wider, although con-
ected, social and industrial changes that were going on at the same time.

What Movell, the historian of Chartism, found to be characteristic of the anti-
capitalist theorising of the early nineteenth century was "the reaction
towards agriculture and the land, the tendency to regard large-scale industry
as abnormal, unnatural and dangerous." In other words, the way out of capi-
talism and industrialism was held to lie in a retreat to the more primitive
organisation of an agricultural society. That retreat could not be made in
England but many immigrants believed—perhaps they were immigrants because
they believed—that in a "new" country, with plenty of available land, the
realisation of their ideal should be possible.

In the Australian colonies the demand for land—which dates back to
the 'thirties, but did not become really widespread until the mid-'fifties
—was clearly a demand for the creation of a society of cultivators, organ-
ised according to the principle of individual proprietorship. It thus follows
the English pattern. There is no evidence that the mass of the people would
have been satisfied with either free competition for the purchase of land on
the one hand, or the nationalisation of land on the other. The auction system
had its supporters, but the predominant sentiment was in favour of a small
upset price for land. The land agitation was considerably dispersed in time,
and had many different aspects, so that generalisation about what the people
really wanted is rather difficult, but it is significant that the proceedings
at the Victorian Land Convention in 1857 represented a decisive victory for
the opponents of auction. Similarly the New South Wales Land League was in
favour of "free selection" and against auction. And there was no large-
scale counter-agitation supporting auction. "Access to the land" meant for
most people the opportunity to purchase land, not the opportunity to bid for
it. From the time of Burke onwards we get repeated denunciations of specula-
tors who bid high prices and thus prevented the poor man from getting a block
of land—"the practice of the ruffian who may pretend to be a purchasor but
who only wishes to make money by being bought off." On the other hand there
was no real support for the one organisation nor for any of the individuals
who urged in this period that "non-alienation" was the proper solution of the
land question. The National Reform Association (Victoria) held a number of

(1) C. Hebb, The Chartist Movement, Manchester, 1919, p. 34. (2) Petition to the
Legislative Assembly New South Wales, from J. D. Green, Chairman of public meeting
at Albury (Notes & Proceedings, 1857.)
anti-alienation meetings in 1858 and 1859, but on one occasion suffered the
indignity of being greeted by a hostile audience which carried a motion in
favour of free selection. The remark of one speaker — "Be your own masters,
have your own lands and enjoy that which God has given you" — was received,
according to the newspaper report, with loud cheering. The Convention Land
and Reform League of Victoria, the centre of the free selection agitation in
Melbourne, was weakened by two or three 'splits', but its influence was not
rivaled by that of the National Reform Association. In New South Wales
the anti-alienation cause was dependent on the energies of a few isolated
individuals (e.g., Thomson in the Constitutional Association of 1849, Gramp
in the later 'fifties) and gained no great support. At one time, S.J. Hawkes-
ley sponsored in the People's Advocate a scheme which would have involved
the ownership of all land by the state, but the programme received no practi-
cal support and Hawkesley turned his attention to other matters.

The land movement is not to be considered as no more than an agg-
regate of individuals each wanting land for himself. The aim was rather one
of a way of life, or a principle on which society should be organized. These
men wanted land for themselves but they also wanted a society in which land
should be treated as of paramount importance and in which agriculture should be
the predominant form of production. Various petitions in New South Wales
and Victoria referred to "the great and lasting interest which the human being
has always taken in the soil which fate has settled him" and to the necessity
for "due cultivation of the soil", for "accelerating the equitable
and profitable settlement of the lands by the people", and for attracting
"the bona fide cultivator and small capitalist and by these means ensuring a
[glorious future to this magnificent country" and even to "the natural right
that man has to work out all his requirements from the land which he inhabits,
as far as it is practicable".

Such statements were normally accompanied by proposals to make the purchase of land conditional upon actual cultivation,
or to subject uncultivated land to a special tax. The development of agricul-
ture was desired by the working-class legislators themselves and by the various

(1) 12/4/1859. And at an earlier meeting (13/12/1857) an amendment that "no
land should be sold at all— if they wanted to absorb the land they were no bet-
tter than squatters" was met with hisses. (2) Petition to the N.S.W. Legislative
Assembly from Albury (Notes and Proceedings, 1856-57, Vol II) (3) Ibid, Petition
from Tamworth (Notes and Proceedings, 1856-57, Vol II) (4) Petition to the Legislative Assembly of Victoria, from Ballarat
N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, Notes and Proceedings 1857, Petition from W. M. 
Lehy, on behalf of the Morpeth Working Men's Association.
sympathisers who provided so much of the support for the Land Leagues in the two colonies. And along with this desire for an agricultural society went the idea of the "the settlement of an enterprising and hardy yeomanry on \(\text{(our)}\) 
broad and fertile lands." The gold miners took the same attitude as the other classes of workers. "They did not want these gold fields to be peopled by a vacant class; but they wanted to have a fixed population, to settle the people on the land, to have small farms cultivated in every direction in the vicinity of the gold fields, and to make this country like that which they had left."

It is this combined ideal of "agriculture and yeomanry" that enables us to describe the land movement as reactionary. For the most part it was simultaneously reactionary and anti-aristocratic, although this latter tendency did not always appear. Carruthers, who spoke many times of the subject of land during the 'distress' agitation of 1843-44, made it clear on one occasion that his ideal society was one in which it was recognised as the duty of "all who are in authority to extend the fostering hand of protection to all who were in distress so that all classes, the operative as well as his richer neighbour, might sit down by his own fireside rejoicing in the ear of a watchful and paternal government." Such authoritarian Tory ideals, although they played an important part in the English labor movement and the anti-Poor Law agitation, are quite inconsistent with Marxian ideas of the working class as an independent revolutionary body. But it is not clear how much support Carruthers would have got from the workmen on this point. Most of them seem to have been in favour of more equalitarian programmes.

The supporters of less restrictive land laws did not directly oppose industrialism. The contrast they saw was not between rural and industrial pursuits, but between an agricultural and a pastoral society. But what they were opposing was the development of capitalist forms of production, in whatever field of production they might make their appearance. At this stage in Australian economic history the factory system had made no real impression on the structure of the economy, but the pastoral system was capitalist in at least one important respect. It involved the relation of master and servant.

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(1) Victorian Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings 1856-57, Petition from Kyonste Boroughs. (2) A21/10/1854, report of meeting of Anti-Gold Licence Association (3) 825/5/1844, report.
and the workmen also feared that the use of big areas of land for pastoral purposes would condemn large numbers of them to a life of employment in the cities. And it is the underlying theme of opposition to the employment system that marks the land movement as anti-capitalist. Thus in 1897 the Victorian Convention adopted a motion which declared that "a land system constructed to create a country of masters and servants... can have no place in a system created for a free people". The same sort of point was made later in the same year by William Blackman, speaking at the meeting which established the New South Wales Land League. Of the Land Militia before Parliament he said, "Its whole tendency appeared to him to be to perpetuate that unwholesome state of society composed of squatters, capitalists and land jobbers, driving and eating into the heart of the country like rats into cheese (cheers and laughter); and on the other a vast mass of working people, utterly severed from the soil, depending for their existence upon daily labor, and therefore, living in a state of vassalage and subservience. (2)

Here we find a clear enough statement of the opposition to a society based upon the relation of master and servant, and to the separation of the worker from ownership of the means of production (in this case land); and the remedy, as usual, is seen to lie in a return to the method of individual agricultural production. This emphasis on individual production, which runs right as we have seen through the land movement, exemplifies the attitude which Commons calls "anarchism" and which he describes as the philosophy appropriate to the merchant capitalist stage of capitalist development. "The anarchist philosophy," he writes, "does not abolish private property—it proposes to make it universal for each individual, conforming to the stage when the contractor owns the shop and the peasant the farm," and this seems to be a fair description of the movement we have just been discussing. To make the ownership of land universal was the motive underlying much of the land movement. It was thus anti-capitalist in tendency, even though the propertyless class was not struggling against an opposed class of employers, even though the issue did not take the form of wages v. profits.

This same ideal of individualism in production was also present on the
gold fields, and it exhibited equally clearly there its anti-capitalist charact-

(1) The reactionary implications of Eureka have been brought out by
Professor Portus and others, and they can hardly be over-emphasised. And
in New South Wales as well as in Victoria the miners objected to the provi-
sions of the respective Regulations and Acts which gave companies certain
rights over relatively large areas for quarts crushing and other purposes.
In both colonies the objection was stated to be to the fact that the intro-
duction of capital and machinery "would be an introduction of the old European
system of master and servant". Or, as a petition from Tambooree in New
South Wales put it, the miners believed that "by subtle machinations and
extensive combinations the effect and object of capital and monopoly will
ever be to supersede independent industry, to subjugate labor to a state of
servile dependence".

One of the witnesses before a New South Wales Select Committee of
1853, made a special plea against companies — "I think individual mining
is much more beneficial to the community" — and his kind of view was
expressed many times before the more important "Commission Appointed to
inquire Into the Condition of The Gold Fields Of Victoria" of 1855.

Companies were disliked because of their effect on the individual miners and
machinery was disliked because it was associated with companies. The indi-
vidual miners believed that companies could not "have the capacity of working
out the ground without encroaching upon the personal industry and enterprise
of the individual miner", and that the result would be the destruction of
individual mining and the substitution of the employment system: "there is a
strong feeling against the master and the servant system on the gold fields,
and each man wishes to be equal to his fellows". Some of the miners argued
that "a man would be satisfied to be his own master at 10s. a day rather than
another man's servant at 15s. a day", and that "few diggers would condescend
to be employed by capitalists", but that if companies were once allowed on
the fields the miners would be given no alternative: "by and by these part-
ies stepping with such an immense amount of capital, as they will do, will

X, no 16, June 1934. (2) Evidence of H. Donovan, (376) before the Commissio-
on the condition of the gold fields, (Vic. Legislative Council, Notes and Pro-
ceedings, 1854-55, Vol II. (2) N.S.W. Legislative Council, Notes and Proceed-
ings 1855, Vol II. (3) Report of the Select Committee on the Gold Fields Man-
gement 1852 Vol I. (4) Report of the Select Committee on the Gold Fields Man-
gement 1853, Vol I. (5) Evidence of H. Benson, Q3661. (6) Evidence of S.
Proceedings 1853, Vol II. (5) Evidence of H. Benson, Q3501. (6) Evidence of S.
Proceedings 1854-55, Vol II. (7) Evidence of H. Hawley, Q3367.
gradually increase, and the consequence will be that there will be such a
monopoly of the ground that if they could not find men to work they will feel
it their duty to say "We will not work the ground until we get labor at a
certain rate of wages". The same witness thought that if the companies
were required by their leases to continue operations they could tap an alternative labor supply — "They might get the Chinese to work. The Chinese are
the greatest curse on earth".

One of the witnesses before the New South Wales Select Committee
explained the attachment of diggers to their method of production by the
fact that "there seems to be a charm in being their own masters and going
about where they like". But a Victorian witness had a slightly different
explanation. Of the Miners' attitude toward the capitalists he said: "They
are not liked throughout the diggings; the diggers think these men are
living with laboring, and living upon the sweat of other men's labors"

This comes very close to a statement of 'the right to the whole produce of
labor'. According to Bovell, a connexion existed elsewhere between the claim
ning of this right and a belief in the desirability of individual production.

"It was held with some degree of justice that only by applying his land could
a man attain the ideal of a socialist theory — the full produce of his
labor. It was supposed that a nation working exclusively upon the land
might thus solve the problem of distribution". That a similar attitude was
present on the gold fields is apparent, but how influential it was cannot
be determined upon the available evidence.

An important point made by Commons about the philosophy of anarchism
is that it aims not only at individual property of small producers, but also
at "voluntary cooperation to replace the middlemen" as an answer to the
encroachments of capital. Cooperation played no part in the land movement,
but the gold-diggers were quite interested in it. Those who believed that the
use of machinery was desirable or inevitable thought that cooperative associa-
tions of workingmen could provide the benefits of machinery and yet prevent
the emergence of a separate class of capitalist. Thus a witness who asserted
that only "among the illiterate and bigoted people is there a strong object-
ion to machinery" hoped that cooperation would be successful; "I have

of every company on the gold-fields ought to consist of practical miners, actually operatives, in order to keep out capital." (1) The same sort of suggestion was made by other witnesses, and the idea had previously been discussed in New South Wales. It was revived by the Diggers' Protection Society at Bendigo in 1859, and again by a Conference of Delegates from various Mining Boards in 1858. "Cooperative associations of working miners" was one of the main aims of the Bendigo Society. Ideologically this anarchist ideal was of considerable importance, although its practical influence on events was negligible.

The skilled workmen in the towns were not so interested in displacement of capitalism as a general aim, but the principle of cooperation played some part in the labor movement of the 'thirties and appeared occasionally at later times. Thomas treats it as one of the major fields of working class activity during the period discussed by her.

Apart from one or two newspaper companies which were formed for the usual political reasons, all the cooperatives of the towns stood for much the same principles. They were established to enter into the production of "necessaries"—mainly flour and bread—but were more concerned with the interests of consumers than those of producers. Most of them did not survive long, and they, like the union cooperatives, had to face the problem of remaining a "co-operative" and not just an ordinary joint stock company. One baking company, established in Sydney in 1834 by N.L. Kentish, illustrated this point. Kentish had hoped for a company in which the ownership would be as widely distributed as possible and (proposed) for this purpose, that the shares should be of £1 each and that each shareholder should be allowed to have only ten shares. But Kentish was overruled, and the shares issued were priced at £5, the limit per shareholder being set at one hundred shares. The company that was formed had no obviously "co-operative" characteristics, but failed after about a year. The proposer of a similar company in Melbourne in 1851—it never functioned because of the disorganisation caused by the Gold discoveries—had this same idea of restricting the influence of wealthy shareholders. His scheme was that the shares should be £2 10/- each (to be sub-

(1) Evidence of A. A. Kentworthy, Q 1358-59. (2) 14/10/1855, reprint from Bendigo paper (3) 27/7/1858. (3) 27/7/1858.
scribed in quarterly payments of 10/- per share) that not more than ten shares should be held by any individual and that each shareholder should have only one vote, and that the employees of the company "be chosen as far as practicable from among the shareholders". It was even suggested that "all consumers should participate in the profits as well as the nominal shareholders" but this principle was not discussed.

The significance of these consumers' co-operatives is that their promoters saw exploitation as something by which the merchants and the middlemen gained at the expense of mass of consumers. This was Kantish's conception of social disharmony when he proposed that "in future we dispense of the services of the middleman to eat for us, and that we buy our wheat from the growers and grind it ourselves instead of suffering them to grind us". Other consumers' co-operatives were established on the same basis and in so far as the workmen shared this view of the character of "exploitation" they were not interpreting the struggle between classes as a contest between wage-earners and employers nor were they taking the division of income between employers and employees to be the only important political question. If co-operation represented their only solution for working class problems - if they conceived this kind of exploitation to be the only important issue in the society in which lived - they were grossly misunderstanding the character of capitalism. But it may be doubted whether the workmen themselves were as interested in consumers' co-operation as Hine Thomas, for example, maintains. At any rate it seems to be a subsidiary tendency in the labor movement after 1850.

A rather different conception of co-operation was put forward by the Secretary of the Operatives' Association of Sydney, (J.D. Bouran) in a statement to "the Labouring Classes" published in the Empire, 1860. Bouran denounced Australian protectionism because it seemed to imply that "the workshop and factory life is alone to be coveted". Industrialism had no appeal to him. "My own opinion is that it should be our primary and principal aim... to obtain possession of the land, and that if subsequent to its tilling or contemporaneously with it, manufactories are to take rise among us— which, doubtless, they will— then that it be our best endeavour to work them not by

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(1) 9/6/1851, (2) 4/6/1851; (3) 23/9/1834.
employer and employed but by joint stock operation, after the manner of the
vineyard companies now forming. I would by the same rule as I object to, as
I abhor, the assured system of landlord and tenant, oppose the introduction
of the factory system as existing in the old country, into this. Bouran's
view, it will be seen, was a fairly well worked out one, but it was not of great
practical importance. The Operatives' Association did not have any distinctive
policy of anti-industrialism. The members were concerned rather with this
question of "free trade versus protection", and Bouran had had great difficulty
in persuading them to sink this issue, to admit both free-traders and protectors
into the Association, so as to concentrate on more fundamental questions.
But the Association achieved nothing of the kind of thing Bouran had hoped for.
Protection was a much more "live" question among the operatives than was
anarchical cooperation, and they displayed no particular interest in Bouran's
proposal.

(11) Bargaining with Capitalism.

"Bargaining in unions", write Commons, but it is not true that bar-
gaining on behalf of the workers is carried on only by trade unions. The
bargaining philosophy played a large part not only in the unions but also
in the associations which were the political organs of the workers. In
particular, the associations which were created by the unemployed working
men illustrate the tendency to seek a better bargaining position for labor,
especially by restricting potential competition. The organizations of the un-
employed put forward two kinds of policies: for the short run they made
various demands for "relief" to provide them with food and/or temporary emplo-
ment, and for a more permanent solution of their problems they requested
energetic measures by the government to prevent the recurrence of unemployment.
Prominent among the proposals for the long term were demands that the govern-
ment should reduce the number of competitors for jobs. This criticism was
directed at the schemes for assisted immigration, at the assignment system,
and at plans for either assisted or unassisted Chinese immigration. The con-
centration of the Chinese on the gold fields gave a rather different character
to the later opposition to Chinese migration, but during the 'forties the

workmen feared that an influx of either Indians or Chinese would result in severe competition in the labor market. In 1843, for example, when unemployment was growing, a public meeting held that the introduction of coolies "would be unjust to the Forty Thousand British immigrants introduced into this colony". And again in 1849 there was similar ill-feeling, although it was less obviously associated with existing unemployment. Then, as now, it was believed that the lower standard of living of Asiatic workers would give them an unfair advantage in competing with European labor.

Opposition to the employment of convicts by either the state or private employers made its appearance at various times from 1831 (Society of Emigrant Mechanics) to at least 1858 (Victorian Social and Political Union), although of course it was less and less important after the cessation of transportation. The agitation leading to the formation of the M.B.A. was characterised by strong criticism of the assignment of convicts and of their employment on the public works. The aim was frankly restrictive: it was argued that there was "an injustice in employing them in such a way as to deprive an equal number of free operatives, with their wives and families of the means of subsistence", and that the result would be "the manifest depreciation of free labor".

Criticism of assisted immigration seems to have been a permanent feature of the labor movement up to 1869, although the motive of restriction was less clearly stated here. It seems true to that only rarely did the workers request straight-out restriction of immigration; but they did object to the efforts made by the government to encourage people to migrate to Australia. The relative importance of assisted immigration into Eastern Australia enabled the workers' spokesmen to claim that all they wanted was the application of free trade principles: "The truth will be able to find its way", said J.C. White to the New South Wales Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Classes in 1859. "When a new gold field is discovered, the discoverers endeavour to the utmost to keep the discovery to themselves, but one tells one friend in confidence, and another tells another till the gold

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(1) Historical Records of Australia, Series I, Vol XXII, p. 596. (Gipps to Stanley) (2) AG 19/7/1843, report and editorials.
field is over-run. And so I say, if there were anything worth coming for here, we could no more prevent the knowledge of it spreading than I could eclipse the sun with my blanket. His conclusion was that if government propaganda were necessary to persuade people to come to Australia, it could be only because the labor market was already well stocked. Supply and demand and it was argued, would regulate the matter, but the government constantly intervened with its propaganda in Great Britain and its assisted passages.

In line with this approach to the question, it was always possible to represent the anti-immigration movement as not so much an attempt to restrict competition, as an effort to inform potential migrants of the real position in Australia. This was the attitude taken up by the Society of Emigrant Mechanics in 1853, and by the Constitutional Association in 1849. It was through the Victorian agitation of the 'fifties, and it appeared again in New South Wales towards the end of the period.

But at the same time it was always clear that what these people were aiming at was the reduction of competition for their jobs. For example, during a speech in 1857, Strickland, the Victorian carpenter denied "that they feared the competition of others", but the whole burden of his argument was that assisted immigration amounted to class legislation and discrimination against the working classes. "What was the good of importing labor unless they expected thereby to lower the rate of wages? That was meant by the scheme and nothing else". Plans for reducing the volume immigration were invariably brought forward as a remedy for unemployment, or distress, and were intelligible only if they represented a demand for a better bargaining position for labor.

A petition of the unemployed sent to the Legislative Assembly in 1859 made no attempt to hide the true position. The petitioners demanded "suspension of immigration, whether of Chinese or of any class of persons, believing that any additions to the existing surplus amount of labor can only have a tendency to foster the prevailing distress and to render employment still more difficult to obtain". The craft union ideal of the "closed shop" was extended to become the concept of the "closed economy".

But the most commonly suggested remedy for unemployment was access to the land, not restriction of immigration. The anti-capitalist, reactionary character of the land movement has already been discussed. But in addition the

land agitation provides a clear example of a policy designed to improve the bargaining position of labor. The fact is that the land movement was characterized by a constant dualism, the same dualism as runs through the whole labor movement. The demand for less restrictive land laws was put forward by two classes of persons: those who wanted land and those who wanted others to take up land and in that way lessen the pressure on employment in the towns. Thus in 1844 the Guardian newspaper supported a land settlement scheme because "it would secure a proper regulation of the labor market by taking off any redundancy of supply". In Sydney in 1857, J.G. White supported the formation of a Land League because "the result of the continued mis-government of the country was that the healthy action of the body politic had been destroyed, trade and commerce languished, and all the sources of profitable employment were overburthened". The "mis-government" he referred to was the passing of the existing land legislation, and he believed that land reform would create employment opportunities. The fact that "hundreds of industrious mechanics were deprived of employment" was what he deplored.

C.J. Don, in Victoria in 1859 made the same point as White: "Working men might organize themselves, they might accumulate money until they imagined they were as rich as Rothschild, and yet they would never be able to maintain a fair rate of wages for their labor until they had a good land law (shears) .... Let the working men, if they wished to preserve their eight hours' movement intact, struggle for the settlement of this question. When settled, as it must inevitably be, in favour of the people, they would have no difficulty in preserving their privileges".

The two aspects of the land movement were not clearly distinguished by those who took part in it. Most of the land meetings which were held in times of unemployment passed motions which asserted that good land laws would be a remedy for current distress, without making it clear whether the remedied state would be one without unemployment or one without employers. The fact seems to be that the motions were designed to get as much support as possible, to create the appearance of unity even though different and possibly conflicting things were being sought. It was not unusual for a meeting to demand

(1) 01/3/1844. (2) 28/12/1857. (3) 1/1/2/1859.
employment at fair wages in one resolution and the settlement of the people on the lands in another, without being aware of putting forward two distinct policies. In one case the two ideals of "employment" and "independence" were put together in the following way: "The best lands of the colony are daily passing into the hands of capitalists, who buy either to sell again at an exorbitant and oppressive advance or else for the purpose of establishing great estates and holding a dependent tenantry; the masses of the people are thus deprived of their most cherished right—the right to settle themselves independently on the soil of their adopted country—labor is deprived of its most abundant source of employment, and lasting injury is inflicted on the colony." The relation between the right to settle themselves independently and the desire for employment was never set out clearly. Perhaps the success of the land movement was due in part to this kind of ambiguity. But however confused the movement was, the importance of the bargaining element is quite apparent.

Along with the acceptance of the method of bargaining goes a rejection or at least neglect of the aim of restoring to the laborer ownership of the means of production. In the philosophy of bargaining the "divorce" between the laborer and the means of production is accepted, and a central position is allotted to employment as an goal. In evaluating the importance of bargaining it is necessary to take account of the extent to which employment was accepted, or even regarded as something desirable.

Those who did not ally themselves with the reactionary movements discussed in the previous section seem to have had no goal other than employment. The restrictive policies which have just been outlined have the creation of employment opportunities as their ultimate aim, and the same is true of other remedies for distress proposed in the period—public works, registry offices and protection. The New South Wales Committee on Distressed Laborers of 1843 believed that the workmen were asking for "constant employment, at remunerating wages in their respective handicrafts", and this neatly expressed the attitude in question.

The general point is that where bargaining policies came to the fore

(1) Ibid. (2) Report from the Select Committee on the Petition from Distressed Laborers and Mechanics—New South Wales, Legislative Council, Journals of Proceedings 1843 (2nd Session).
the conflict was between employers and employees but the issue was the level of wages not the ownership of the means of production. As was the case within the trade unions, the workers who were trying to improve their bargaining position were not greatly interested in the abstract question of the division of income but they were interested in the question of whether or not they would be able to maintain a reasonable wage.

These policies of bargaining in the political field are in a sense the equivalent of business unionism in the industrial field. On occasions the political activity of the working class reflected in a more intimate way the influence of the business union and its philosophy. Commons describes the philosophy of craft unionism as that "of the skilled mechanic who has 'invested' years of low-wage apprenticeship for the sake of an established position and a higher standard of life and yet sees himself unemployed and brought down to the level of the lowest by their competition". This attitude was unequivocally stated by Benjamin Sutherland in 1843. He defended the action of the unemployed in demanding relief from the government instead of seeking work in the country: "The mechanic, having been induced to come here as such, consider it would be unjust to drive them into the interior, where their trade would be of no use to them, after they have been at considerable expense and loss of time to acquire a knowledge of it, and to compel them to work as laborers." There were always complaints that the unemployed would not go to the country, but Sutherland's was perhaps the most frank defence of their immobility, although at other times it was made clear that the workless expected the government to provide "such public measures... as will tend to their being employed in the manner most suited to their respective capacities".

The skilled worker demanded employment, but employment at the trade in which he had invested his apprenticeship. Similarly he demanded that he should be paid the "standard" rate of wages, the rate which the union set as its bargaining goal. Throughout the period, critics of the unemployed denounced the efforts of the men to keep wages at their old level, and were met with the query whether "skilled artisans would like to take 10s. a day after travelling sixteen thousand miles for it". This desire for the standard rate took a very special form in New South Wales in 1843-44, when, Sutherland stated, the men

(1) op.cit.p.683. (2) Report of the Select Committee on the Petition from Distressed Labourers, loc. cit. p.147. (3)AT/10/1854. (4)AT/10/1854.
accepted was very low rates of 1/- and 2/- a day from the Government, "not as wages but as relief", and would have demanded more from private employers. A non-working class witness supported Sutherland's interpretation of the laborers' view: "If you tell the men employed by the Government that 3s. per diem was to be considered as a fair rate of wages, I think everyone of them would leave; they merely take the employment offered by His Excellency the Governor because they cannot see their wives and families in a starving state and they hope to see something turn up to better their condition". This same distinction between a relief rate and a wage rate was frequently made in practice, although never again was it formulated as clearly as in 1843. The influence of craft union attitudes was always present in the political labor movement.

(iii) The Labor Movement and the Government

One important line of working class activity received scant attention from Commons, perhaps because of his tendency to identify political action with revolutionary activity of one kind or another. He tends to neglect the attempt of the working class to use legislation as a means of bettering its condition, although this has been a prominent feature of British working class movements. The aim of using laws to remove working class disabilities appeared at quite an early stage in the history of the Australian Labor movement and the result was that labor's political activity was guided into the channels of pressure politics and parliamentary reform. And it is interesting to note that Commons' fundamental distinction between bargaining and displacement is of little help to us in delineating the character of this aspect of the labor movement. We can trace various changes in the attitude of the Australian working class towards the legislative authority, even in the relatively short period under consideration, but these changes cannot be explained by reference to Commons' distinction. The demand for legislative reform was, in effect, a movement by itself and had its own line of development.

Underlying this movement was a certain belief about the place of the

(1) Report of the Select Committee on Distressed Laborers, 1843, loc. cit.
(2) Evidence of Sutherland, q135
(3) Report of the Committee on Immigration, 1843
(4) New South Wales Legislative Council, Notes and Proceedings, 1843, 2nd Session
(5) Evidence of E. Lewis, q13
state in society - a belief assuming that the state can be an instrument of class oppression but that in its nature it favours no one class and can be made to serve any interest. This belief in the essential neutrality of the state was fundamental, if unstated. Even at Eureka where there was some talk of revolution and the establishment of a republic, the ultimate aim was no more than the changing of a few laws. The miners - or some of them - sought to overthrow the existing government, not to destroy the state. Opposition to the state as such coloured the policies of the Australian working class to only a very minor extent.

A complementary part of this "theory" of the state was a confidence in the power of legislation to alter and ameliorate social conditions. A quite common belief was the "disgovernment" was responsible for the unfortunate position of the working class. In the early stages the general assumption was that without intervention on the part of the capitalists (squatters) the condition of the workers would have been satisfactory. (Although at the same time it was held to be the duty of the government to provide relief for its victims). When this attitude was modified at a number of points, it was still assumed that there was nothing in the character of society that good legislation would not alter for the better. Throughout the period up to 1860 the predominant currents of thought were "voluntarist" and "reformist"; nobody seems to have believed that a fundamental change in social organisation would be necessary to effect any permanent improvement in the position of the working class. This attitude can be contrasted with that of the contemporary Communist "portion of the working class (which) had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change." (1) Communism of this kind, however widespread it may have been in Europe, was of no influence in any of the working class organisations in Australia in the period. The state action desired by the workers was of more than one kind. Trust in the power of legislation was common to those interested in improving their bargaining position and to those demanding the displacement of capitalism. For both groups, some of the conditions which they believed to be responsible for hardship and distress were directly created by laws - assignment, assisted immigration and the

(1) F. Engels in the Preface to the English (1892) edition of the Communist Manifesto.
squatting system, the mining regulations and the legal rights of the master.
Moreover, the workers in this period did look to the government as their
natural protector. In the 1843-44 unemployed agitation, and again in Victor
in 1854-55, there were quite clearly formulated demands for "rights" in
Hunger's sense. At these times it was explicitly held to be "the duty
of the Government to provide employment for each of the people as may requir
(1) These of the workers who adhered to this view turned naturally to the
government in times of distress. Secondly, as time went on, the working class
began to demand more active intervention on their behalf in industrial mat-
a distinct change in viewpoint took place here - although it occurred quite
slowly, and much less fully in New South Wales than in Victoria. The origin-
attitude was very much like that of "laisser-faire" - they did not request
the Government to take positive action to protect the employee from the empl-
er. But in the late 'fifties they did demand more positive measures. The
most obvious example here is protection. Demands for protection were made fo-
tion to time, and in both states it met some opposition among workingmen and
was taken up by others as a regular working class policy.

But protectionism still represents the policy of bettering labor's
condition by improving its bargaining position. (The argument is that labor
will be able to bargain more effectively if employers are more prosperous)
This was about as far as Sydney workers went in demanding government action,
but their fellows in Melbourne and Newcastle tried to use legislation as a
substitute for bargaining methods. It is important that the legislative acts
required were not aimed merely at removing "interference with labor's freedom
to act and organize on the economic field". The objections of unionists to
bring subject to the provisions of the Masters' and Servants' Acts were of
this character, but other demands were directed towards obtaining specific
regulation of the relation between master and servant. The Victorian workers
as we have seen, began to look beyond the collective agreement towards
government regulation, and became involved in the formation of political orga-
izations and influenced the policies of these bodies along the lines of legis

(1) Anton Hunger, The Right to the Whole Produce of Labor, Macmillan, London
1899. (2) Motion at Meeting of Unemployed in Victoria (29/8/1855.)
operative interferences. They believed that the state should do for them what they could not do for themselves. They did not distrust the state, they did not distrust politics. The unusual feature of this situation was that unions and political organisations did not become competitors for the support of the workers. On the contrary union leaders used political organisations as a means of supplementing their efforts of the unions and the interesting thing is that nothing happened to make them abandon this approach.

Restrictive franchise provisions prevented the direct participation of the working class in electoral and parliamentary politics—although these provisions were being broadened during the period under discussion. But it is possible that before the gold discoveries not many workers desired such participation. If one accepts the position that the Government is a parliamentary state is a potential instrument for working class betterment, various attitudes are still possible. It can be held (1) that the Government can be persuaded or shamed into acting in the interests of the working class; the political activity corresponding to this belief consists in the organization of public meetings, petitions and deputations; (2) that only parliamentarians who depend on working class votes will act in the interests of the working class; the corresponding behaviour is the seeking of universal (male) suffrage, or at least electoral laws that will enfranchise many members of the working classes, and (when this reform has been gained) the bringing of pressure to bear on representatives; (3) that only representatives who are or have been workmen can understand the workers' problems and can in practice solve them; the appropriate behaviour here is to seek the recession of laws (such as property qualifications for members) which limit the ability of workmen to enter the legislature, and when this has been effected, to organize workmen's political parties or electoral leagues. The predominant belief among the workers over quite a considerable part of the period seems to have been (1). Some steps towards reform of the kind implied by beliefs (2) and (3) were taken—and proved successful—but the working classes did not keep up a constant pressure for the liberalisation of political institutions

(iv) The Anti-Licence Movements

It would be wrong to interpret all the gold fields unrest as the result of a protest against the introduction of capital. The immediate occasion of such organised violence as occurred in the gold areas was the licence.
fee, which had been opposed from as early as June 1851 in New South Wales and which was extremely unpopular throughout the Victorian diggings. But the reasons for this opposition were not formulated clearly. Some diggers objected mainly to the "digger-hunting" incidental to the collection of the fee, i.e., to the fact that the licence had to be produced on demand to the police who very severely rounded up those without a licence. The licence-fee itself aroused opposition, but many of the requests made to the authorities were for its reduction not for its abolition - although of course some miners did say that it should be abolished altogether. And there were some who appear to have had no grievance at all.

Now this movement cannot easily be fitted in to any of the obvious categories of working class action, and this fact has made it difficult for those who wish to argue that "Eureka" played a special role in the development of the Australian labor movement. The problem has taken the form of trying to show what there was in common between the diggers with their individualist system of production, and the movement among either an industrial proletariat or the skilled workers of the craft.

Fitzpatrick argues that the link between the diggers and the unionists of the 'fifties was that both were inspired by the aim of "citizenship" but when we come down to giving some content to this concept we find that citizenship (if that is what they sought) meant different things to the different classes of laborers. Fitzpatrick mentions "a fair wage and decent working conditions" as forming part of its ideal but it is clear enough that what the tennmen regarded as fair working conditions would not have been acceptable to the diggers - because they rejected altogether the notion of employment and a wage of any description. But Fitzpatrick is getting at quite an important point, as we shall see.

Dr. Evatt sees in Eureka a protest against both "an unjust tax upon labor" and against "harsh and brutal administration of the laws". The miners did say they opposed the fee because it was an unjust tax on their labor, but here as elsewhere "unjust" cannot be taken to have a determinate meaning. The important question is what in fact the miners regarded as unjust - apart from

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the method of collection—about the charge. One claim made was that because of the licence fee the miners were subject to double taxation; but while this point was effectively answered by the contention of the authorities that the charge was a rent for the use of Crown lands—analagous to the fee for a squatting licence—the complainants were still not persuaded to accept the principle of a licence-fee. Whether or not it was a tax did not affect the real objection of the diggers. They took the simple view that the fee was too high to enable them to earn a "reasonable" living and that in consequence it should be lowered or removed. It was ever argued on occasions that if the fee were not lowered miners would be forced to turn to other occupations. Many the same arguments were brought forward in criticism of the gold export duty which was substituted for the licence-fee. The significance of these arguments is that they indicate that what the unionists and the diggers had in common was a certain ideological background—the miner, like the operative, had a real attachment to his occupation, and he believed that that occupation "should" provide him with a living, whatever the actual economic conditions. The diggers were influenced by the same ideology as that of the "fair-wage", although what they were seeking was not a wage.

But it is important to realise that the gold fields agitation must be treated as working class political activity whether or not its objectives were identical—or even compatible—with those of the rest of the labor movement. (The limits of the labor movement cannot be distinguished by the character of its ends). In the first place the diggers certainly regarded themselves as members of the working class and protested as workers against the conditions imposed on them. More important they did belong to the working class even though they were not employees. They were not employees but they were engaged in a field of production in which the laborer had not yet been completely separated from the means of production, in which, in other words, the laborer was not characteristic ally an employee. They were laborers because their income was the product of their own (manual) labor. But at the same time, because they belonged to this "pre-capitalist" stage of production we should not expect any close relation between them and workers in more "capitalistic" industries or sectors of the economy. Putting the same point in

(1) Report of the Commission on the Gold Fields, evidence of W.H. Ritchie, 350 16-19. (2) The assumption that if the fee was too high to enable the diggers to live it should be removed, ran through the evidence of C. Hemington before the N.S.W. Select Committee on the Gold Fields Management Bill of 1853, cf. the Legislative Assembly, Notes and Proceedings 1856-57, Vol. II, p. 159, referring to the Convention (AV/17/1857)
another way, the different stages of development of the different parts of the economy provide us with an explanation of the very different forms taken by the working class movement in the towns and on the gold fields. The account which emphasises technological aspects is superior here to that relies on mere "sentiment" or ideology to establish a fundamental unity.

v. Miscellaneous Movements.

The attitudes and policies discussed so far have centred around the employment system, the level of income, and working conditions. This applies even to the discussion of participation in politics by the working class, because all the stress was placed on the instrumentalist aims of such participation. But some other currents did exist in the labor movement; "the exploitation" against which the workers were protesting existed in forms other than those relating to income and to the position of the laborer in the system of production. As a result, some of the efforts of organized labor were directed towards other goals.

(a) "To counteract the improvidence of an unpropertied class", says Commons, "many devices for thrift and savings have been instituted. It is evident that, however, that wage earners as such only meagrely or temporarily participate in them". Examples of the things Commons has in mind — savings banks, provident and friendly societies, and building societies — can be discovered in the period under discussion. The savings banks and the Australian Union Benefit Society had some success but it is not clear to what extent "wage earners as such" participated. Other similar organizations seem to have been ephemeral. Plans for building societies were put forward from the 1930s onwards and had quite a vogue in Victoria in the 'fifties, although there were suggestions that the management of some of these societies was either inefficient or dishonest. They too appear to have had some success, but they cannot be regarded as a major field of working class activity.

(b) Political reform was sometimes desired for its own sake and not merely for the legislation it would bring. The list of miners' grievances prepared by the Victorian Gold Fields Commission contains the following: "The

want of political rights and recognised status, the mining population of this colony having been habitually in fact an entirely non-privileged body invidiously distinct from the remainder of the colonists, consisting of numbers without gradations of public rank, political representation or system of self-elected local authority; in short, contributing largely to wealth and greatness of the colony without enjoying any voice whatever in public administration. If the Commission rightly interpreted the feelings of the miners, one of the ideas influential at the diggings must have been the belief that self-government has virtues quite apart from its practical efficiency, that participation in political life is itself a good.

Views such as these would explain the coherence with which Extension and similar reforms were demanded by the inhabitants of the goldfields, and they seem to have been of some slight influence among the workers.

This general attitude seems to be part of what Fitzpatrick¹ refers to when he writes of the desire for "citizenship", but whereas Fitzpatrick's account of working class aims seems to imply equalitarianism, one of its points mentioned by the Gold Commission is the desire for "gradations of rank". The Commission was quite right on this point — the miners did demand that official positions open to them should be established on the old (e.g. the "Local Courts", and Carboni's reference to his membership of a body by describing himself as an N.A.G.) But the attitude was at the time equalitarian, in so far as what the worker desired to abolish was social distinctions but the exclusion of members of the working class from such distinctions: "The object of the Reform Bill was to annihilate the marked distinction hitherto drawn between rich and poor. ... The real to be established was to do away with the old aristocracy who had trampling over the people at home for so long". And at the same time, as the illustrative, the demand for political equality was not formulated in a class-conscious manner. The workman did not conceive himself to be dealing with the employers as a class for the possession of these rights of participation. They interpreted the contest as rather one between the

¹ Report, P. 43. (2) Speaker at a reform meeting at Richmond, Victoria.
"courage" and the "people" and this view of the question made possible a
certain amount of co-operation between the workmen, the shopkeepers and the
petty employers. The workmen participating in this movement looked on them-
selves as being among the underprivileged rather than as forming a separate-
class which because of its position in production, was excluded from participa-
tion in political life.

But not much stress should be laid on this factor in giving an acco-
cunt of the political reform movement among the workmen in the towns.
There was in fact not much articulate interest in participation or political
liberty or equality as such, although newspapers such as the Star and Working-
men's Guardian (1844-5), the People's Advocate (1848-56) and to a lesser extent
the Empire (1850-53) brought this kind of question to the fore. The workmen
in Sydney and Melbourne seem to have been far more interested in establishing
particular rights such as the right to free selection or to an eight hour day,
than in seeking liberty in the abstract. The working class movement was not a
liberal movement. The programme for political reform in so far as it had—it
had its origin in the working-class, was based on the desire for land reform
and similar legislative action rather than on liberal ideals.

(c) The desire for equality—in the sense of no social distinctions
based on wealth—also contributed to the policy of equalizing educational
opportunity. This was part of the background to the moves for "People's
Halls" and "Trades Halls" which were discussed on more than one occasion before
the Melbourne Trades Hall was established in 1859. It is not clear whether
these were intended to supplement or to replace the older-established "Mechan-
ics' Institutes"; but they did have a "cultural" or educational purpose as
well as the more obvious one of providing a meeting place for the unions.
It is interesting that only on rare occasions were these educational institutes
used for the denominational of working class propaganda. The lectures and
discussions were mainly "popular science" and literary. The unions were of
some interested in "intellectual improvement" and this general attitude led
to support being given to proposals for a system of public instead of denomina-
tional education. The "national" system was not put forward only by the work
ing class, but it was included in the aims of some working class organisations as was the similar and connected policy of "no state aid to religion".

In Continental political movements, egalitarianism has often been associated with republicanism and nationalism. In 1854, the Victorian Government believed that "foreign revolutionaries" were influential in fomenting unrest in the gold fields, but although the Ballarat diggers hoisted the flag of the "Republic of Victoria" there was not really much sympathy among the Australian working class for republicanism. Even at Eureka republican doctrines were probably less acceptable than the raising of the "Southern Cross" might suggest. During this period Dr. Lang was campaigning for colonial independence and arguing that it would be necessary to "cut the pension", but he failed to build up a popular party of any dimensions. At a meeting protesting against the transportation system in Melbourne in 1854, a speaker was cheered when he said that "if England intended to subject this colony to an influx of criminals it was better to get away from her (England); but another working class meeting a few weeks later concluded with "three cheers for the Argus and three cheers for the Queen". It was usually possible to get a working class audience to give three cheers for the Queen, however much they might object to the Queen's Ministers or her Viceroy. In 1860 the slogan of "NO LAND NO RIFLE" was publicised, and there were "attempts at showing that the workmen of the colony had nothing to fight for, from their being deprived of the only stake or interest they could possibly have in the country, land." But again this kind of argument had no appreciable effect on the course of future agitation, and we can only conclude that the doctrines implied by it were neither firmly nor widely held.


Among both "bargaining" and "displacement" policies can be found examples of the working class goal on which Perlman places so much stress in his theory - the goal of conserving and sharing out a limited amount of "economic opportunity" over which the group as a whole claims authority.

The importance of the group concept came out very clearly in connect-

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(1) A24/49/1854; (2) A7/17/1854; (3) A24/7/9/1860, report of speech by Carlisle at meeting re the "Operative" (E27/5/1854).
for with the anti-chinee agitation of 1843. Among the arguments put forward by the workmen was the claim that "the inhabitants of Great Britain have a right to supply any demand for labor which may be created in this colony"—in other words, the labor market in Australia was held to be the property of the British "group" to the exclusion of all others. The objections of the gold miners to the Chinese have never been made very clear, but in part they seem to represent the same attitude. A common complaint made about the Chinese miners was that they wasted water, that their methods of working were "injurious to petitioners as well as detrimental to the production of the auriferous deposits." Water and gold were regarded as scarce, as things to be shared out "equitably" among the group, and wasteful and destructive methods were consequently condemned. But in addition, it seems, the Chinese were not regarded as belonging to the group at all:—just as there was held to be an "injustice in employing (convicts) in such a way as to deprive an equal number of free operatives with their wives and families of the means of subsistence", so the objection was taken to the Chinese that they were "taking from these fields the gold which would furnish a livelihood to the Colonists for many years to come." Their very presence on the fields, as well as their method of working, was regarded as an intrusion. But why they were so classified is not clear, because the limits to the group were not, on the gold fields, set by reference to the boundaries of the British Empire. One of the criticisms levelled at the New South Wales Gold Fields' Management Act of 1852 was just that all aliens were obliged to pay a double licence fee. The Select Committee appointed to inquire into the working of the Act found it difficult to see why British nationals should object to a provision which lessened competition. One witness said that the miners were afraid that the "alien's license" would rob them of the experience of the Americans, but this did not sound very plausible. The fact was that Europeans were included within the group, and Chinese were excluded from it.

The belief of the miners that they as a group had a right—and an exclusive right—to the gold deposits of the colonies contributed to the formulation of others of their demands. It underlay the persistent agitation for rights to mine on private property, a subject which was raised by M'Easborn.

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in 1852, which was the cause of the so-called "Chinese affair" of 1855, and which was actively canvassed by Don and other members of the Convention in the succeeding years. The point was explicitly stated by a meeting of Ballarat miners who in 1855 supported the stand of the Chinese miners in working on private lands: "This meeting holds the miners to be simply the trustees of the people, and any alienation of auriferous to be simply a fraud on the part of the Government and the grantee of such land against the miners, its legitimate owners".

Part of the opposition to company mining was also based on the belief that the miners were the only legitimate owners of auriferous land. As we have seen, it was feared that if companies got a hold they would reduce all diggers to the status of employees, of wage-earners. But there was also an objection to company mining on any terms: "there ought to be very great caution used to prevent companies and people away in different parts investing their capital here and taking the gold away to the injury of the miner, and to preventing those working in small companies injuring the individual miner." Witnesses on being questioned by the Commission, tried to rationalise this attitude by arguing either that companies wanted to exploit the fields discovered by others, or that the capital reaping returns would be foreign, but what their statements really established was that capital of any kind was regarded as foreign to the group of individual miners: "So long as men will come and be one of themselves they are content that they should come... The diggers have no objection to a man coming in and working like one of themselves, but they strongly object to parties coming in with capital and obtaining a part of the field that they have worked to discover." The discovery of a new field did not claim as a right the exclusive personal enjoyment of this territory but he did claim the right to exclude those who did not belong to the group of individual miners. The miners as a group did regard gold-bearing land as their "birthright", as one witness suggested, although of course this did not imply that there should be a system of communal production and distribution. "Ferdman is quite right in insisting that a belief in ownership by the group does not imply a belief in communism in the ordinary sense."

(Communism might be the logical conclusion, but that is not the point). The miners clung tenaciously to their individualism, although one of the delegates to the convention from a mining district did make a communistic proposal: "the land should be vested under this (Land) Bill in a corporation at the gold fields; with a view to assist those disabled by illness and accident, and for whom no provision existed beyond sending them to the common goal." But this appears not to have implied a thorough-going socialisation of production and distribution, and in any case the proposal was not followed up.

This combination of "communism of opportunity" with "individualism in production" explains what would otherwise be a very puzzling feature of the land movement. The social systemdesired by the land reformers was, it has been argued, one of individualism in production, but the most common justification of reform was that "the land is the property of the whole people" which would seem to justify the unpopular policy of non-alienation (This was the point that the supporters of non-alienation made). But the apparent contradiction is resolved when we see that communal ownership of the available opportunity was normally taken to imply dispersal or sharing of the opportunity throughout the group on an individualistic basis. The assertion of the rights of the "people" in the land was no more than the assertion of the right of the group to allocate the land equitably among its own members. Thus the squatters were called "land-monopolists" although they did not occupy the position of "single seller"; the charge against them was that they prevented the dispersal of the land, not that they were exploiting consumers. When allocation on a wide basis was impossible - when it was believed that alienation would necessarily result in monopolisation - then the rights of the group were protected. As an example, of this, water frontages were to be reserved "as easements common to the whole community." In addition, the whole group was held to have rights over any unalienated lands rights of "communage" on unalienated land were very generally claimed.

Throughout the land movement, as elsewhere, there was some uncertainty as to who should comprise the group in question - whether the interests of future migrants should be taken into account - but this in no way invalidates

(1) A17/7/1857, (2) Petition from Gippsland (Victoria, Legislative Assembly), Notes and Proceedings, 1856-57, Vol III) (2) e.g. motion at meeting of Victorian Land League (11/7/1857).
the conclusion that the land reformers were thinking in terms of the disposal of land among the members of a group which was held to own it.

VIOLANCE AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT

Most political agitation of the working class was carried on along peaceful lines, but the Eureka Stockade has become famous as on one occasion on which violence was used.

Some writers maintain that the Eureka Stockade had a significance for the labor movement quite apart from the particular aims of the diggers. This claim is put forward by R.S. Ross in his study of the revolt: "Of the few special industrial upheavals of our land the Eureka Stockade was the first and foremost — the forerunner of that Labor Movement the miracle of our Commonwealth. The rebellion did sow the seed which in due season germinated and fructified in separate and independent working class political parties — "Belittle the result of the actual recourse to arms as we may, still the Eureka Stockade does remain emphatically an armed revolt. It was an economical impelled appeal to the arbitrament of physical force in an attempt to overthrow oppression and effect a political revolution". E.W. Campbell puts the same argument in a more moderate form: "The tradition of militant struggle created at Eureka has played a valuable role in helping to mould the Australian workers into a 'class for themselves'".

Now what Ross and Campbell are contending is that the events at Eureka created a revolutionary tradition which has inspired the working class to struggle for their aims — that these events contributed to the development of a "myth" of revolution, just as in Soh's theory the violence associated with strikes contributes to the growth of the myth of the general strike. Whether or not the Eureka tradition was in fact important in the development of the labor movement is a question that belongs to a later chapter of the history of the movement, but one point might be made here. The attitude of the rebels was not nearly as independent and revolutionary as the commentators imply.

That it was a genuine revolt, that it had revolutionary aims, cannot be denied. But the point is that at the time of the Stockade — and afterwards — there was a strong line of argument that the armed conflict was really caused by the "provocation" of the authorities, that the Government and not the miners

was really the one acting in an unconstitutional manner. Two important
examples of this tendency deserve to be quoted at length. The first is
part of an account (prepared by J.S. Humphrey) of an interview between the
Governor and delegates from Ballarat: "We thought it right to state that
we repudiated physical force as a means of obtaining constitutional redress,
believing that the British constitution has sufficient natural elasticity
to adapt itself to the wants of the age, and would yield under proper pressure.
But the arming of the diggers at Ballarat, however reprehensible it may have
been in itself, claims to be judged on special grounds inasmuch as they had
special provocatio n. The diggers at Ballarat were attacked by a military body
under the command of civil officers, for the production of licence-papers, and
if they refused to be arrested, to be shot at. The diggers did not take up
arms, properly speaking, against the government, but to defend themselves
against the bayonets, bullets and swords and of the insolent officials in
their unconstitutional attack, who were a class that would disgrace any govern-
ment by their mal-administration of the law". A meeting at Bendigo adopted
a resolution which expressed the same attitude: "That this meeting indignantly
protests against the violent and illegal resort to arms on the part of the
Government against the people of Ballarat, and that hostile attitude assumed
towards the naturally peaceably disposed and industrious inhabitants of the
gold fields by placing them illegally under martial law, and deliberately
records its fixed determination in the event of the Government refusing to
withdraw military from all the diggings, to use every just means within its
power to obtain their sacred and inalienable rights. That in the opinion of
this meeting the late disturbances at Ballarat have been entirely occasioned
by the exasperating and imprudent conduct of the authorities; that the men
who are at present in custody should immediately be liberated and the Govern-
ment alone should be held responsible for the consequences."

Attempts to explain away the resort to violence could hardly have
gone further. It was no very revolutionary point of view that found expression
here. But what the attitude of the diggers really was, is not relevant to a
discussion of Ross's claim that Eureka created a revolutionary tradition.
What later workers thought about Eureka is more important for this issue than
what Eureka really was.

(2) A15/12/1854.
But this leads on to the wider question of the function and character of violence in general for the working class. Working class violence in Australia up to 1860 falls into a number of different categories. Leaving aside Eureka for the moment we can distinguish the following kinds of violence:

1. Violence at meetings, directed usually at interjectors but on one occasion at least against unpopular parliamentary candidates.

2. Intimidation by pickets—usually restricted to threats.


4. Rioting as a protest against some unpopular Government decision—e.g., the anti-transportation riots in Sydney 1849, the protectionist riots in Sydney 1860, the riots in Melbourne 1860 following the rejection of the Reform Bill by the Legislative Council, and the "passive resistance" on the Taron in 1853.

In addition there were at various times threats that, if goaded, the workers would take things into their own hands. One example of this, was a petition from the Sydney Workingmen's Association to the Governor in 1853. (The Governor refused to receive it). It contained the following passage: "We pray your Excellency to hearten to this appeal and save us from the necessity of appealing from the laws of society to the laws of nature from the inhumanity of man to the charity of our Father, for that daily bread which avarice withholds that barbaric gentility may riot in crimson and aordid cruelty remain supreme". This was a direct threat of violence but most agitators who used violent language were satisfied to recommend passive resistance. For example, at an immigration meeting at Melbourne Strickland said: "The Government must be very careful how they dealt with the Immigration question, taking care to avoid class legislation which had been the cause of revolution before now. Not that he advocated physical force, but moral force; they had had enough of class legislation". Passive resistance had been advocated on the gold fields for some time before the Eureka Stockade, although Latrobe feared that what was described as passive resistance—the refusal to tend: more than 10/- for the 30/- license, and the wearing of a red ribbon as a sign of participating in the movement—would result in violence. Significantly, the mete—

(1) A15/12/1854, (2) A9/5/1857, (3) B25/5/1856, (4) A17/4/1857. Earlier in his speech he had said: "The working men would not submit to be ruined by a speech he had said: "The working men would not submit to be ruined by a combination". (4) Latrobe to Newcastle, 12/9/1853 (Contained in Historical Documents relative to The Discovery of Gold in Australia). Further Papers relative to The Discovery of Gold in Australia. Presented to both Houses, February 1854.
ing at Bendigo which adopted this policy decided that "should it come to the knowledge of any of the Committee that any of the diggers pay the sum of thirty shillings, such parties shall have twenty-four hours to leave the diggings."

Characteristic of all this was the desire of the working class — both leaders and led — to deny any responsibility for physical force or to establish that the disorderly were really the ones upholding law and order. The tendency apparent at Eureka was quite general throughout the period (although not everyone took this attitude). The miners on the whole made no secret of the fact that they intended to force the Chinese off the diggings but they tried to represent the Chinese — as "the occasion of disorder" — as the real instigators of such riots as would occur. And when J.P. Arkins was arrested and convicted for having incited the riot following the refusal of the Legislative Assembly to adopt the Report of the Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Classes, his colleague Jennett claimed that the real intention of the crowd was to congratulate those members who had voted in favor of the motion for adoption; but the evidence at the trial suggested that Arkins was urging them to go in and "get" those who had voted against it. A curious example of the legalistic bias of those who proposed violence was the decision of a public meeting at Sebastopol in Victoria in 1857: "That a National Guard should be organised under military discipline, and in the name of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen, to ensure her subjects at home and abroad that Her Majesty's concession of the lands and mines of Victoria to the people of the colony should be truly and faithfully carried into law." This motion was quoted at the Convention, the leaders of which were anxious to mould its agitation into peaceful lines — although some delegates seemed to regard themselves as belonging to a National rather than a Land Convention. The Convention leaders were greatly embarrassed by a motion which declared that "no public faith is pledged to the recognition of any pretended rights that may be claimed under this (Land) Bill should it hereafter become law." They explained that this meant "not in a legal sense".

Most working class leaders took this "responsible" view; that is, they held that working class aims would be best achieved by orderly means.

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But there were some (particularly in Victoria after 1857) who were comparatively indifferent to the requirements of order, and were not very concerned about whether or not they offended the authorities. One of these, W. Osborne, organised a demonstration of unemployed in which some workmen entered shops to demand bread while others formed a procession carrying banners on which were inscribed "We shall have bread". But in addition, nearly all the "respectable" agitators at one time or another used violent language, and it is clear that this kind of talk found an audience. There was in fact a myth of violence — there was a belief that working-class violence (or passive resistance) could be effective, and this myth did on occasions inspire them to action. The myth did not take the form popularised by Sorel — that violence would be necessary to effect a social change, that it should be directed at the complete and final overthrow of the state — but it did exist nonetheless.

Sorel deprecates any comparison of the myth with reality, but comparison in this case is quite instructive. Of course in Sorel's account violence is not itself a myth; he takes it to be something quite real, with quite real qualities and relations. But in Australia violence was the myth, and the character ascribed to it in this connection was very much like the character Sorel supposed it to have in reality. But working-class violence in Australia was in fact very different from either of these things.

The masses were "inflammable" but they had no capacity for persistent violence. For violence to be effective — and this also true of the violence of which Sorel speaks — it would have to be disciplined, class-conscious violence; whereas the violence we have been describing was sporadic mob-violence. In Sorel's terminology it was force, not violence. Discipline would be necessary, above all, for the much-favoured policy of passive resistance. But when passive resistance was tried at the Turon in 1853, discipline was what was lacking; although the miners claimed that "to submit to the regulations... would be a downright degradation and directly (2) at variance with the liberty of the British subject" and expressed their determination to resist, the movement broke down because rather than resist the Government they preferred as individuals to move to the Victorian fields.

Such examples as this and Barkers show that in the period working-class efforts...
to "show the power of the working class" were really rather pitiful. But
the belief that the working class did have reserves of invincible power
was quite effective in creating class-consciousness or in lesser cases the
attitudes necessary to carry on a successful meeting or demonstration. And this
was the function in the labor movement of the myth of working class violence.
III. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

The political labor movement developed against a background of political struggle, and the problem is to distinguish the labor movement from other classes and interests taking part in the political life of the community. It will be necessary to sketch out some of the main features of this background before showing how labor, as an independent force, fitted into the picture.

(1) New South Wales:

By 1830 in New South Wales there were two fairly clear parties engaged in a contest for power. These have been roughly classified as the "exclusives" - officers and wealthy free settlers who desired to monopolize office and power and for that reason opposed the "indiscriminate" granting of legal and political rights - and the "emancipists" consisting not merely of emancipated convicts but also of poorer settlers and of "intellectuals" and others who for various reasons wanted more liberal political institutions. Now it may be true that in an earlier stage of this struggle the two parties consisted of those who wanted large grants of land for themselves, and those who wanted "to plant a peasantry" but this state of affairs did not continue. The "emancipists" and "exclusives" did not form two distinct economic classes; many of the emancipists had, through the economic development of the colony become very wealthy, and it was partly on this account that they demanded to be placed on an equal footing with the exclusives. They sought firstly legal rights but later (perhaps through the influence of W.O. Wentworth) began to demand representative institutions and framed their demands in radical terms. The exclusives, on the other hand were reluctant to see the establishment of institutions which would grant power to their enemies. This was the situation up to the formation of the Australian Political Association - an organisation representing the emancipists' point of view - in 1835.

But after this date the raising of other questions caused a change in alignment. The exclusives as well as the wealthy emancipists believed their interests to be threatened by the new (Wakefield inspired) policy of abolishing

(2) On this and other points in this section, V.A.C.V. Melbourne, Early Constitutional Development in Australia, London 1934.
the cheap labor (i.e. transportation) and cheap land system of New South Wales, and the former as well as the latter began to advocate political reform in order to be independent, in local matters, of the Colonial Office in London. But on the other hand new divisions grew up. The free immigrants were opposed to transportation and to any land system which would perpetuate the rights of the squatters, and so the dividing line was now between the squatters or the wealthy section on the one hand, and the poorer sections - wage-earners and farmers and would-be peasants on the other. In consequence, the demands for political reform emanating from the new combination of wealthy emancipists and exclusives were much more moderately worded, but the older more radical demands were now put forward by a "popular" party. This new configuration of forces had clearly been reached by 1842 when during public discussion of a proposed Bill on Municipal Institutions, Henry Macdowall, a popular leader commented on the strange new alliance between the former rivals W.C. Wentworth and James Macarthur. The popular party attempted some form of opposition but they were not represented to any considerable extent in the partly elective Legislative Council which first met in 1843. They set up an agitation for the liberalisation of political institutions and for the final abolition of transportation. (Transportation had ceased in 1840 but was revived again temporarily in 1849, with the acquiescence - on certain conditions - of the Legislative Council) Concurrently the squatters were struggling with the Governor and the British Government on the question of their rights over the land they held by squating leases. These struggles continued with some interruptions until the passing of the Constitution Act of 1850.

How can we identify a labor movement among these groups? Can we distinguish a movement based upon the interests of the laboring classes from movements finding their support in other social and economic classes? It is necessary here to fit into the background the various working class policies that were discussed in the previous section.

A.C.Y. Melbourne regards the Patriotic Association as declining its force primarily from the emancipist party, but Miss Thomas found an opposition or "popular" party even in this organisation and she points out that the people who

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formed this opposition (such as W.L. Kentish and R. Hopkins) were associated
with the working class in co-operative and other ventures including Mechanics
Institute. It is clear, moreover, that some sort of labor movement had already
made its appearance by this time not merely in the trade unions but also in
working class organisations of a more general character. The Society of
Emigrant Mechanics of 1833 had opposed immigration and assignment (and was un-
decided about the issuance of tickets of leave) because of the tendency to re-
duce wages. The working class was also interested in co-operative proposals, as
and in the activities of the Australian Union Benefit Society (1834) — the origi-
inal aims of which had perhaps been more extensive than than the provision of
friendly benefit. This kind of movement, in which the leaders were outside
the working class proper, continued in the next few years although, as Miss
Thomson points out, the "delegates" of the "trades" began to play a more important
part after 1839. Important events of this kind were the petition of "emigrants" (2)
since 1839 to demand land grants; the attempt to form a "Union Flour and
Bread Company" in 1839 (the shareholders of which were "to be composed of
mechanics, tradesmen, and members of the working classes and such other persons
as would willingly conform to their rules"); the opposition of the "combined
trades" supported strongly by Western Australian Duncan (at this time editor
of the "Australasian Chronicle") to the Masters' and Servants' Act of 1840 and
their simultaneously demand of a representative assembly; the opposition
led by McDermott Moehern and others to the conservative franchise proposals
contained in the petition of 1842 demanding representative institutions and
the contents of a petition opposing the Municipal Institutions Billin
the same year; and the agitation of 1842-43 against immigration, against color,
immigration, against assignment, and in favor of land grants and Government
relief for the unemployed, leading finally to the formation of the Mutual
Protection Association in August 1843.

How we can classify a number of these policies as forming part of a Labor
movement in the sense that they were put forward by workers as a means of
improving their conditions as wage earners. The opposition to the Masters'
and Servants’ Act, to assignment, to immigration, and the demands for relief during 1843 and 1844 were part of a labor movement in this sense. But the schemes for consumers’ cooperation introduced a slightly different principle, although the flour company of 1839 was designed to be strictly more associated with the working classes than the earlier company had been – and the movements directed against the squatters (the “Tory Clique”) on the constitutional and land questions was even less specifically “labor”. In the first place the “popular” party opposing the squatters was led not by workingmen but by “demagogues” such as Macdermott (a spirit merchant), and intellectuals such as Duncan McEachern and Kentish (all three journalists) and Hopkins (said to have been a member of the original Council of the Birmingham Political Union). The fact that these people were in charge of the agitation does not necessarily mean that it was not a “labor” agitation, but it is of some significance. Secondly, the social basis of the opposition to the squatters’ party seems to have been fairly miscellaneous. That there was popular support for it is clear that workingmen were included among those for whom Macdermott spoke. It is also clear. Lynch, Maxwell and Coughlan who spoke from time to time at public meetings were apparently workmen, and a significant statement was made by Lynch on one occasion when, in speaking in favour of a motion of Macdermott’s he expressed the hope “that his fellow operatives would come forward and support (1) those who had all along supported them and their rights”. Also significant was the fact that Macdermott was chairman of some of the meetings in 1843 and 1844 at which the working class stated their policies on immigration and other questions. But to say that a certain policy is supported by workmen is not to say that we have a labor movement in action. In order to distinguish a labor movement we have to be able to recognize some consciousness of common interest deriving from their status as workers, and this we cannot find in the demands for political reform at this time. Demands were made on behalf of “the people” or, as it was put in 1849, “the humbler citizens” – and the leaders of the movement were spokesmen for the people rather than for a distinct class of workman. The members of the working class were not fully conscious of a separate interest in legislation and legislative reform but were content to form part

(1) AC7/6/1842, Report. It is possible that in this context the term “operative was intended to include master-workman as well as journeymen.
of a movement which included other sections of the "humbler classes". The
movement was not as this stage composed of a number of classes each aware
of its own interests while prepared to co-operate with the others; the
separate interests were not distinguished by those taking part. The issue
was certainly not narrowed down to "the workmen versus the employer", nor even
as Miss Thomas suggests "the landlord versus the labourer", although her alterna-
tive formulation of "Aristocracy versus Democracy" may be correct. The land
movement had something of the same character as the political reform movement;
but it is possible that some of the demands for land may have been put forward
with more consciousness of the "special" position of the workingman in the
economy.

To sum up the events to 1843, we seem to have a "popular" movement which
crystallised at times into a separate labor movement. The policies put forward
were partly "re-actionary displacement", partly "bargaining" partly political
reform. The specific labor movement was distinguished by placing greater but
not exclusive emphasis on the bargaining policies, but perhaps this was because
the separate interests of the workmen came into greater prominence and were
distinguished more sharply from those of their employers, when the bargaining
position of the working class was threatened. The anti-capitalist policies
of land settlement and co-operation on the other hand, certainly found support
among members of the working class.

The Mutual Protection Association was a political union whose aim was to
find means "whereby the evils under which we labor may be averted and the
colony restored to that state of prosperity which it formerly enjoyed". The
means it proposed in its prospectus were (a) propaganda; (b) "To foster and
encourage colonial produce and Colonial manufacture as being essentially neces-
sary to the permanent prosperity of the Colony" (c) "To ensure the return of
upright and efficient representatives to the Legislative and City Councils". Its
leadership that it would "watch over and promote the interest and be for
the condition of the working classes" but they invited "all classes of their
fellow-colonists" to assist them in this work. The Mutual Protection Associ-
ation was formed by that anonymous body, "the committee of the trades". Its

(1) op. cit. p.70. (2)27/4/1844. (3) First Annual report, 017/8/1844.
Secretary was a workman and its members were mainly unemployed workmen. The majority of speakers at its meetings appear to have been drawn from the working classes, but at the same time a number of building contractors and newly elected City Councillors were said to exercise some influence behind the scenes. James McCoshern was for a short time editor of the “Guardian”, the weekly paper established by the Association in March 1844. Because of its open (and moderate) platform and because of these non-working-class elements in the Association Professor Portus has described it as being “more like a modern Liberal Association than a distinctively Labour body.” In fact it typical of early working class parties, with its uneasy coalition of workmen, intellectuals and political opportunists.

The chief activities of the Association were the holding of public meetings and the forwarding of petitions to the Government. It was mainly concerned with the question of “relief”; electoral reform received much less attention. The Guardian in its early issues advocated “vote by ballot and a radical reform of our constitution” but the Association itself was more interested in the City Council franchise than in that of the Legislative Council, and was more interested in economic betterment than in political reform. It did not assume that the former was dependent on the latter.

Thomas’s analysis of the internal politics of the W.P.A. is as follows. Designedly or unwittingly, the leading clique of the Guardian (the Association’s newspaper) broke the labor movement by misdirecting and splitting it into two warring factions, the one remaining in support of the Government, the other time weakly playing with Government positions at the same time that it was sympathising with the squatters.” She associates the accession to power of this “clique” with the dismissal of James McCoshern from the editorship of the Guardian and his replacement by Benjamin Sutherland.

Thomas distinguishes between the two “warring parties” by their respective attitudes towards the struggle of the squatters with the Governor. On the one hand she sees the policy of opposition to the squatters, which had been the

(1) WR22/5/1844, letter of Sutherland’s evidence before the 1843 Committee on the Petition from Distressed Laborers, Q69-70. (2) The Labor Movement, p.149, in Australia Economic and Political studies, ed. M. Atkinson, Melbourne, 1929. (3) Quarterly Journal of Economics, 1905-07. (4) 0393/44. (5) op. cit. P77.
the policy of the "labor movement" under the leadership of Hipkiss, Dunham and Mc Dermott, and on the other this new policy of "support" for the squatters against the Governor. These policies took the following forms. Opposition to the squatters meant opposition to their "monopolisation" of the land and to their attempts to get security of tenure; opposition to the Masters' and Servants' Act; and opposition to proposals for a conservative constitution. Support for the mean opposition to Gipps' proposed Squatting Regulations of 1844 and even approval of the demands of the Pastoral Association for security of tenure. Apart from the clauses on the need for renewed immigration — which the M.P.A. continued to denounce — the Guardian expressed its general approval of the petition of the Pastoral Association against the new Land Regulations.

For Miss Thomas, this changed emphasis in the labor movement creates problems of interpretation, not merely because it represents a reversal of previous developments but because the new policy cannot be fitted into her categories of labor action. She writes of "misdirection" because she believes that the true path for the Australian labor movement was along the line of land reform — i.e. by a continued struggle against the squatter-monopolists. This is the policy which she herself approves — she appreciates the development of the laborer into a "union delegate" instead of a "sturdy yeoman" — and she argues that access to the land was what the immigrant laborer himself really wanted. "There is a striking agreement among writers that above all it was land that he sought particularly during the twenties, thirties and forties. Mrs Cheishalm, Samuel Sydney and Talbot are all emphatic in their declaration that the immigrant sought land and not a mere repetition of the wage system in the old land. He came with splendid hopes to better his condition."

What was said above in the section on "Displacement" tends to support what Miss Thomas is saying here. But while it is true that many immigrants came in order to get land, and that the development of the labor movement was fostered by restrictions on access to the land, it is not true that that movement developed no aims other than the "anarchist" one of settlement. Nor would we expect anything of the sort. Commons argues as we have seen that the skilled

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(1) 913/4/1844, editorials; 911/3/1844, editorials (2) op. cit. p. 58 (3) Ibid, pp. 16-17.
mechanics eventually abandoned cooperation and the other ideals of anarchism and devoted their energies to strengthening their bargaining power. This provides the key to the situation in the M.P.A. The real distinction between the uncompromising opposition to land monopolists and the later modified support for the squatters is that the former was an anarchist policy whilst the latter was more concerned with the strengthening of the bargaining position of the workmen. The argument of the Guardian in criticising Gipps was that because of the failure of the Government to relieve distress, relief was dependent on economic revival and that in the circumstances it would be unwise to impose new burdens on the squatters. And it is important that the same stand was taken at a public meeting held in February 1844, a month before the establishment of the Guardian. At that meeting it was stated that the distress of the working class was due to the "general depression of the times and consequent limitations of the means and enterprise of the employers of labor", and this fact led the meeting to approve of the recommendation of the Select Committee on Crown Lands to reduce the price of land to five shillings per acre. Clearly, there had grown up a body of opinion in favour of concentrating on the relation between employer and employee, rather than on seeking to escape from that relation—in favour, that is, of bargaining. This attitude contributed to the character of other policies of the M.P.A., including that of seeking to have public works carried out by contract instead of by labor.

Miss Thomas is thus right in thinking that two sharply opposed policies appeared in the Association, but wrong in thinking that the policy we can now identify as bargaining was arbitrarily imposed by a clique. Its appearance conforms to the pattern Commons has discovered in other labor movements. And the two different tendencies had existed in New South Wales throughout the thirties, although Miss Thomas treats them both as different aspects of the same tendency of movement. The movement towards trade unionism (i.e. the development of the trade societies from benefit societies into bargaining units) must be contrasted with the cooperative and land movements which existed at the same time. Both the latter must be classed as anarchist in Commons' sense, and

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(1) 01/4/1844, (2) SMH 7/2/1844, (3) This was a bitterly contested question in the Association. The influence of the contractors was obvious here. 015/6/1844, letter and editorial, 22/6/1844, letters and editorial, 022/6/1844, letters and editorial, 029/6/1844, editorial and report, 06/7/1844) report and advertisement.
it was these anarchist policies that predominated in the labor movement in the very early stages. But as Miss Thomas herself shows, it was during the early forties that "the delegates from the trades" were beginning to take the initiat-
ive from middle-class or intellectual leaders such as Hicks, Duncan and M'Der-
nett. Duncan was the ally not the leader of the workers in their opposition to
the Masters' and Servants' Act of 1840, and according to Sutherland's account
trade delegates were responsible for the formation of the M.P.A. Miss Thomas
treats the agitation against the Masters' and Servants' Act as evidence that
the trade societies and the contemporary labor political activity were really
part of the same tendency, but all it shows is that the two tendencies might
coincide at some points and that those taking part in the movement might not be
aware of the vital opposition between them. The real significance of the famous
presentations to Duncan is that it is evidence of a growing independence among
the trades, of the development of a capacity to make their own judgments about
policy. And further evidence of this independence was the increasingly
subordinate role assigned to M'Dermott, the orator, and working class meetings.

Even before the formal establishment of the M.P.A., the "bargaining"
policies of opposition to immigration and assignment were predominant in the
agitation of the unemployed, who showed little interest in land settlement. There
is even some evidence that the unemployed were hostile to proposals that relief
for their distress should be sought through land reform, but it was not clear
against whom or what the hostility was really directed. But if Miss Thomas' in-
terpretation of the labor movement as first and foremost a protest against the
separation of the laborer from the land — were correct, the comparative neglect
of the land question would be incomprehensible. The attitude to land in 1843 is
the decisive point.

As economic distress deepened, however, there was a temporary revival of
the land movement, and in mid-1844 the question was taken up seriously by the
M.P.A., although even then there was considerable emphasis on the beneficial
effects of land settlement on the labor market. But the movement did not
prosper, either within or without the M.P.A. The Association disappeared, and
the whole labor movement became demoralized. The earlier attitude of demanding

(1) Duncan was presented with an inscribed medal to commemorate his participation in the 1840 agitation. (V. Thomas, op. cit., p. 69) (2) Smith 25/10/1843, report. (3) G[4]/7/1844, letter. (4) 027/7/1844, editorial. 0/3/1844, editorial. 0/3/1844, editorial. 0/3/1844, report. (The last issue of the Guardian was 5th October.)
relief from the government was replaced by a servile acceptance of private philanthrophy. The character of working class activity at this time is indicated by the proceedings at the final "distress" meeting held in October 1844. This was not a meeting of the working classes and their allies to demand employment from the Governor. It consisted rather of "public-spirited citizens" anxious to help the unemployed by opening a subscription. "The fund was to be used for employing the poor rather than providing them with charity". There were still some signs of working class vitality but these were too weak to be of importance: "although two other resolutions which were to have been moved were read, expressing the necessity of adopting some means of relief for the operatives and of the expediency of setting them upon small farms in the interior, neither of these propositions was put to the meeting". The political labor movement had ceased to exist as an independent force.

Miss Thomas finds the reason for this collapse in the character of the conflict between squatters and Governor: "The squatters' monopoly had grown to such proportions that Gipps must either defeat or die. It was a struggle to the death, and because labour advocated neither side, it was crushed. The power of a monopoly in qn unity, and divided monopolies perish." The final sentence describes the position more accurately than does the first. It was conflict arising within the movement rather than pressure from without that caused it to disintegrate. (Miss Thomas discounts this internal dissension, because she believes that the second type of policy was just introduced into the M.E.A. and was not really an intrinsic part of the labor movement)

The conflict was so destructive because of the stages of development that the labor movement had reached. As we have seen, the early forties was the time when the philosophy of craft unionism and bargains was coming to the fore. This is in accord with Commons' theory of the long-term evolution of the labor movement. But because of the depression, 1843-44 was an especially inapposite time for such a development to occur. The characteristic devices of craft unionism - restrictionism - were quite incapable of wiping out the unemployment resulting from the down and phase of the trade cycle. Unionism and associated policies were destined, therefore, to be strikingly unsuccessfully. As a consequence they

lost the support of the working class. But the workers neither went back to
an ideology of pre-capitalism, nor adopted one of revolutionary socialism; the
movement lost its impetus and faded away. The failure of the land movement to
revive in a really virile form at this point is particularly significant.

During the ten years after the failure of the Mutual Protection Associ-
ation, the clash between employer and employee was stated less, not more sharply
than in the previous period. Towards the end of the forties, immigration
was revived after a temporary lapse, and so the "popular" party was strengthened
in terms of numbers and influence by the time the Constitution Act of 1850 was
put into force". During the progress of the elections which followed the
dissolution (1851), writes Melbourne, "it became apparent that a new political
influence was at work in New South Wales. Wentworth made no effort to conceal
his disapproval of democracy, and the newly-enfranchised voters regarded him
with great disfavor. It was apparent that concerted action by the opponents
of transportation mostly operative tradesmen and mechanics and by the advocates
of republican institutions, including Chartist from the manufacturing districts
of the United Kingdom was sufficient to turn the balance at elections". But
however, many "operative tradesmen and mechanics" and Chartist were not suppor-
ters of the "popular" (or, as it came to be called, "liberal") party, the latter
was even less like a labor party than had been the group collected round Mack-
demott in the early forties. On the other hand, the conservatives party did not
represent all the wealthy elements in the colony. It stood fairly definitely
for the pastoralists - or rather, for those who desired the political, social,
and economic predominance of the pastoralists. Events showed that many wealthy
Sydney merchants as well as the "poorer" classes, were opposed to the propen-
sious of the squatters. Wentworth claimed that he was opposing a "rising dem-
cracy", but he was wrong if he thought that the opposition to him consisted
of just the propertyless. The supposedly "democratic" demands came from more
than one class, and there were demands of more than one kind.

During the years 1844-45 a radical weekly - the Star and Workingman's
Guardian - tried to revive the labor movement. This paper stated quite clearly
the conflict between employer and employee, and tried to build up a working

class political organization on this basis. "The population of the colony" it stated, "is divided into two classes, by one of whom the whole political power lies. "In this state of things the useful classes lie entirely at the mercy of the capitalists, whose disposition to reduce the remuneration of their labour is avowed without disguise". It concluded that the working classes should agitate for the extension of the franchise and that for this purpose they should form a political association the model of the Birmingham Political Union. But the working classes themselves were "apathetic" and political association was formed at this stage.

The question which aroused the warmest feelings between 1844 and 1849 was that of transportation. The squatters - or some of them - were not disinclined for a renewal of transportation but the attempts to re-introduce the system made clear the existence in the colony of a body of opinion extremely hostile to the proposal. In 1851 the party opposed to transportation formed throughout the colonies an Australian League to organize the agitation. But the League was probably a superfluous body, and the great expressions of public opinion took place in 1846 and 1849. The traditional opponents of transportation were the working classes, and their influence was probably still fairly strong in 1846. But as the movement gained ground, less and less emphasis was placed on arguments which referred to the interest of the working classes in restricting transportation. The "Operatives and tradesmen" to whom Melbourne refers may have supported the anti-transportation cause as a means of increasing their bargaining power, but there is no particular evidence to support the supposition. J. McDowall, has suggested that the "middle class" provided one of the strongest political forces opposed to transportation, and this is quite consistent with the character of the agitation. The fear that "responsible" government living would not be granted to a penal colony, as well as an aversion to being among convicted felons seem to have been among the real as well as the stated reasons for opposing the renewal of transportation to New South Wales. Any attempt to associate the movement with labor as a separate interest in the community would not be justified by the evidence. More plausible would be the suggestion because it was believed that this was one question that the transportation question was built up as an issue on which it would be possible to rally the opposition to the squatters and to Downing Street.

The reference above to a possible connection between the final abolition

of transportation and the gaining of responsible government might be taken to imply that workers had a distinct, even if indirect, interest in the agitation. To discuss this question it will be necessary to indicate in some detail the character of the demands for political reform.

The publication in 1843 of the dispatch from Grey in which he set out his proposals for the government of the colonies, provoked quite general opposition to the scheme of indirect election and from this time onwards there were many protests about the successive constitutions, which were believed to preserve the political predominance of the squatter class. The Act of 1842 created some elective members of the Legislative Council but the electorate remained a property-owning electorate. The Act of 1850 increased the number of elected members, but did not greatly alter the character of the electorate or of the Council. The electoral districts were divided up according to "the combined principles of property and population" (whatever that meant) and the rural districts controlled the Council, however influential the Sydney electorate or the more prosperous members of the working class may have been.

These electoral arrangements were plainly distasteful to the majority of the inhabitants of Sydney and an agitation for the revision of the constitution began. In the election in Sydney in 1848 Robert Lowe stood on a programme which included extension of the suffrage, and his committee appealed especially to the "operatives", claiming that his motto was "the greatest good of the greatest number". (Lowe did not campaign on his own behalf — he was "pledged" to another candidate). Lowe was elected, and some members of his committee were among the original Council of the Constitutional Association, which included some people who had been prominent in the Mutual Protection Association. The new Association which hoped "to elevate the masses" through its exertions, aimed at an extension of the franchise and a new land system, and agitated for those ends. The programme of reform it laid before the public was one of an extended franchise and of greater equality in the size of electorates, but it appears that some of its members were in favour of still more radical reform. One member of its Council — E.J. Mackley — was part-proprietor of the "People's

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(1) SNH 17/7/1848, SNH 17/7/1848, advertisement (2) PA 16/12/1848 contains a list of the Council. Among its members, Heydon, Parkes, Stewart and B. McMurdo, none from Lowe's Committee [SNH 25/7/1848] and Sutherland, Coughan, MCPHail, Stewart and Driver from the "People's"

Chartist principles then were being persistently advocated and appeared to be making considerable headway when in 1853 the Select Committee on the Constitution brought down its report recommending no substantial change in the electoral arrangements for the proposed Legislative Assembly and a system of hereditary membership for the Upper House. This scheme — of which Wentworth was reputed to be the chief author — was very severely criticized outside the council, although Wentworth was able to secure a majority for the Second Reading on all major points except that of hereditary Upper House. The popular outcry against the conservatism of the Bill was the culminating point of the radical agitation of these years.

The general picture we have, therefore, is one of a group led by Wentworth and representing the property of the colony attempting to preserve privileges which were being attacked by a radical and perhaps Chartist populace. The organizers of the agitation of the populace, moreover, included men whose associations with radical and working class politics in New South Wales dated back to the Mutual Protection Association of 1843-44, and indeed they still appealed to the working classes to support them.

But it is important at this point to distinguish the character of the demands being made. We have seen that in 1851 a public meeting had demanded radical reform on the Chartist model, but this was an exception, most of the requests for reform went no further than "more Equal" electorate - and a "lower" franchise. The language of the reformers was sometimes more radical than their proposals, and public opinion was often less radical than the organizers of the various radical associations. The character of the agitation can best be summed up by looking at the activities of the Constitution Committee which organized the opposition to the Constitution Bill in 1853.

The early public meetings of the Constitution Committee had the appearance of being quite radical. The speakers protested vigorously against the Bill because it "evidenced a hankering after the old system of preventing the people from having a voice in their own affairs", and because it "was framed so as to give power to a dominant party". Those present at one meeting "pledged themselves to resist, by every means in their power, the formation of any second chamber which was not based on popular suffrage" and explained that the Bill "was calculated to increase that inequality in the representation of which the colonists had so justly complained, which inequality instead of being

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increased ought now to be rectified, so that the representative system might
be established on a just and satisfactory basis" (1)

But the actual proposals were less radical than the expressions of
opinion. This is well brought out by the proceedings at a meeting held on the 5th
September 1853. This meeting declared that the only satisfactory constitution
would be one which "shall secure to the country absolutely and forever, the
right of the representation in Parliament, freed from the proposed brown nomi-
nation and class ascendancy". Yet the same meeting proposed that there should be
an upper chamber composed of members "whose qualifications shall be determined
by age, property and residence," and the seconder of the motion containing these
words made it clear that although a nominee council was being opposed there had
been no demand for universal suffrage. The actual request made was for "popular
suffrage". (2)

The Constitution Committee appointed a special sub-committee to
prepare an alternative constitution. The scheme that was finally agreed upon was
the result of a compromise and was as Flanagan commented "far from democratic".
It included a complicated system for election to the upper house—a system
slyly designed to make that body "conservative". It declared that the franchise
must be based upon the principle of popular election" and that "representation
ought to be regulated mainly by the principle of population", but did not specify
how far the franchise should be extended or the electorates should be equalised in
terms of population. The fact was that different views on reform were held,
and some formula that would appear to include them all had to be worked out.
At the meeting which finally accepted the compromise, different opinions were
stated. G.R. Holden and Archdeacon McEnroe argued that the community was not
yet ripe for representative government, and that it might be more tactful
to omit any reference to the subject. W.R. Piddington was opposed to the system
election for the Legislative Council because it would have given the lower
House some influence over the Upper, and he declared that he would rather have
the Council nominated by the Crown than by the Assembly. Parkes said that
he would rather have had no property qualification at all for the Upper House,
but preferred the present scheme to the high property qualification proposed

9/9/1853, report. (3) HSO/8/1852, report (4) op. cit., p.329.
by Holden.

Now it is easy enough to show that the Constitution Committee opposed represented interests which although opposed to the squatters were fairly conservative and more will be said on this point a little later. But the significant point is that no other more radical agitation made any appearance. (2) It is true that radical agitators such as Hassell and were very dissatisfied with the work of the Constitution Committee but they were not a trustworthy reflection of public opinion. The interests represented by the Constitution Committee seem to have been the interests which were interested in political reform and the moderate character of its plan for a constitution was paralleled in the petitions sent to the Legislative Council by various sections of the community.

The protests of the people of New South Wales against the Bill were contained in sixteen petitions. Fifteen of these desired two elective Houses in the new Parliament; but eight of the petitions advocated that there should of be some special qualification for members and/or voters for the Upper House. Right petitions requested a "more equal" distribution of seats and various others protested against the clause in the Bill which required that constitutional amendments necessitated a two-thirds majority vote against the provision prohibiting ministers of religion from being members of Parliament. The more radical petitions came from country districts. The Scene petition demanded a single House the introduction of the ballot and the extension of the franchise "at least so as to admit 25 householders". A petition from Yass contained a demand for manhood suffrage and for the abolition of the property qualification for membership of the Lower House. That from Kiama proclaimed boldly that "population alone forms the true basis of representation".

We are now in a position to assess the basis of the political reform movement in 1853 and the preceding years. It was a movement directed against the squatters, and it was in some sense a popular movement, but it was not a radical or working class movement. It was based mainly on the middle class although different sections of the middle class had slightly different aims.

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(1) 18/11/1853, (report) Summarises most of the minutes of the Sub-committee.

(2) PA/12/1853, PA/10/1853, PA/10/1853, PA/23/11/1853. As late as 19/11/1853 the People's Advocate had spoken of the anticipated report as "one which we have no doubt will be everything that the true friends of the colony could wish". (3) New South Wales Legislative Council, Votes & Proceedings, 1853 Vol II. There were also five petitions in favour of the Bill: (4) Petition from Morpeth, Sydney, Parramatta, Maitland, Covalburn, Windsor, "New South Wales" (i.e. Sydney), Yass, Parramatta, Maitland, Covalburn, Windsor, "New South Wales" (i.e. Sydney), Yass, Parramatta, Maitland, New South Wales. (5) Petitions from Morpeth, Sydne, Murrurundi, Sydney, and Campbelltown.
We saw earlier how the original conflict between "pure mercants" and "emancipists" had been replaced by conflict between rich and poor. But the combination of the "wealthy" of the colony was not a stable one; it soon became apparent that some of the interests of squatters and of the city merchants were opposed, and a considerable amount of support for the reform movement came from the mercantile interests who were opposed none the less to any reforms that would give the majority of power to the poorer sections of the community. This account is partly for the great emphasis on equal electorates and on the Upper House question in 1852 and for the comprehensive neglect of the franchise question. The interests of the merchants in opposing the squatters was particularly marked in 1852. The Herald's report of one of the early meetings of protest contains this significant sentence: "On the stage were assembled a large number of the most respectable and influential of the inhabitants of Sydney, amongst whom might be conspicuously remarked the leading merchants of the city who have hitherto studiously refrained from interference in political matters." The Constitution Committee began as a combination of politicians, agitators and men well-known in commerce. The growing list of members contained the names of many prominent merchants, and it appears that as time went on these were the people who were influential in the committee.

Moreover, it is clear that their interest in politics was not, as the quotation from the Herald suggests, of recent origin. The rights of commerce had been brought prominently before the Select Committee on Extension of the Franchise in 1844. "I do not consider the commercial and trading interests are at all represented, there is only one commercial man in the Council" Henry Macdermott told the Committee, and Ald. Thomas Broughton argued that "the commercial and trading interests" were not properly represented. And when John Lamb stood as a candidate to represent the City in the Legislative Council in 1848 he was regarded as the representative of the commercial interests. His candidature had been decided on at a meeting "of those favourable to the election of a commercial representative of the city". The merchants feared the.

(1) SMH 18/3/1853, report (2) The original Constitution Committee consisted of a combination, between some "opposed to" members of the Legislative Council, of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" or men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile" of men prominent in City Council affairs, and others connected with "mercantile".
political predominance of the graziers and they desired social equality with them. They objected to being virtually excluded from participation in political life and also to having an aristocracy of landowners raised above them. It was for this reason that they were so scornful of the idea of an Upper House whose members might bear titles which they would pass on to their descendants. Wentworth, incidently, desired that the hereditary classes "only were to include one class", but it was clear from other parts of his speech that he really envisaged a landed nobility.

The mercantile interest formed the conservative wing of the reform movement. What the merchants wanted basically was to share political power with the landed interests, but they found it very difficult to state their demands for the removal of privileges in anything but equalitarian terms, and they needed the support of people who did not desire simply to transfer power from the squatters to the wealthy merchants.

The "popular" section of the movement desired considerable liberalisation of political institutions but not the endangering of property rights. It seems to have been based on the lower middle class - shopkeepers and small employers - who wanted a greater voice in political affairs but who by no means desired economic equality. The important point about the radical agitation of these years is that it failed to rally the working classes behind it - and failed to gain general acceptance for a Chartist programme. It is interesting that, as we saw, the radical petitions in 1853 come from rural areas, presumably districts in which the conflict between pastoralists and agriculturists was acute.

The radical movement in Sydney was carried on mainly by a fairly small group of middle class agitators who appealed to the working classes for support. "It is to place the Working Man in his proper position, to endeavour to obtain for his political influence and legitimate power, that the projectors of 'The People's Advocate' have determined upon the establishment of this paper and to those objects all their best energies will be devoted," said the People's Advocate when it began publication in December 1848. It provided also not to neglect commercial interests "being well satisfied that the interest of the workmen, the tradesmen and the merchant are, when right by considered, 

(1) SMH 16/8/1853. (2) PA2/12/1848, Prospectus.
thoroughly identical", but its main interest was in the political position of the working classes. Hawkesley was particularly keen that the workers should support the Constitutional Association, and he also put forward a scheme for a "People's Hall". But the Constitutional Association which aimed at both electoral and land reform, failed, and not enough interest was shown in the "People's Hall" to justify going on with the scheme. Hawkesley had to admit his disappointment. "Why you have not advanced one step, although the time has been most favourable, and circumstances have almost conspired to force you into operation", he wrote in one of his Letters to the Working Classes. He continued, however, to urge the working classes to take an interest in politics during the next few years.

The Australian League, which was really formed by J. D. Lang as a means of furthering his own schemes for an independent federation of the colonies, did not appeal as directly to the "masses" as had the Constitutional Association, but many of the same people were involved in it. It was very short-lived however, and evidently got no support. Of greater significance was the Political Association which was formed in March 1851. The chairman at the inaugural meeting (Sir Peak) expressed the hope that "by energy and combination the present movement would result in a great amelioration of the intellectual and physical condition of the people at large". The Association decided to seek an extension of the elective franchise both in the Legislative and the Municipal Councils, the ballot, and the equalization of electoral districts.

A few days after it was formed, a meeting was held on the subject of immigration, and William Maxwell, well-known as a radical agitator since the early forties, advised the workers "to keep a lynx eye upon the movements of the employers of labor, and join the Political Association which had just been formed. By this means they would check the evil designs of these gentlemen".

The new Association was reasonably successful for a time. It took part in two meetings in April 1853 which protested against conservative proposals for a new constitution for the colony, and sought acceptance of the principle that population should be based upon population. It also played a considerable part in organizing the elections for the "liberal" parties in both the City and

(1)PA1/1/1849, editorial. The suggestion was followed up in the next four issues. (2)PA1/1/1849, editorial comment, record the won. (3)PA1/1/1850, report and PA2/12/1849, editorial comment, record the won. (6)PA2/4/1850, editorial; SMH30/4/1850, report; (5)SMH2/4/1851, report; SMH 6/4/1851, reports.
Legislative Council and may have been responsible for the meeting in December 1851 which adopted the radical resolution quoted above. It seems to have been at about this time but was revived in May 1852, and contributed to the discussions relating to the abolition of the Municipal Council. After this time, however, it exercised no further influence although it continued to hold meetings until February 1853.

The Political Association was in fact the most successful radical political party that had existed up to that time. It is all the more important then to realise that it was initiated led and supported by people who as far as can be discovered were predominantly lower middle class. There is no evidence that the working class as such participated in its activities at all or indeed showed any interest in what it was doing. Some of its members - Driver, McPhail, Maxwell, Hawkley, Parkes, Wilshire - had been members of the Constitutional Association and even of the Mutual Protection Association but it was obvious by 1851 that these people were now definitely middle-class not working class agitators.

The Constitutional Association was the turning point here. In its beginnings it looked as though it was continuing the tradition of the earlier working class movement but in fact it had been the first stage in the new middle-class movement.

After the Political Association, one more major attempt was made to unite the working classes in a struggle for political reform. This was the Democratic League which was established at a meeting called by James McEachern - at this time in Sydney on behalf of the gold-diggers of Tambaroora - to consider the new constitution and the gold licensing system. The motion which created the League declared that it was "designed for the working classes throughout the land to organise a popular league for the defence of the rights of industry and of free government" and this direct appeal to the workmen was repeated in other occasions. Richard Driver, the President, explained that the aim of the league was "to enable the people - the real working bees of the community - to combine in order to resist encroachments on their liberties by would-be tyrants."

and Hawkley (the Secretary) and McEachern made similar statements. A petition

(1) SMR29/7/1054, report SMR/11/1851, advertisement by "combined" candidates SMR 21/10/1851, reports. (2) PA29/5/1852 (3) PA17/1/1852, PA24/7/1852, reports. (4) PA 28/2/1853 (5) if they did, it was without any consciousness of a separate class interest. (6) G. Thomas (op. cit.p.66) on the movement of 1845 (7) PA16/12/1852, reports. (8) PA13/4/1853.
adopted by the League requested the abolition of the property qualification for members of Parliament, the ballot, payment of members, three-years Parliaments and an elected Upper House. But like its predecessor, the Democratic League, soon found itself without support and had completely disappeared by the time the Report of the Select Committee on the Constitution was presented.

It will thus be seen from this outline of events that considerable difficulty was experienced in working up and maintaining the popular political reform movement up to 1852 and that the working class seems to have rejected all invitations to join in the movement, even though some of the leading reformers—particularly Bagehot and Driver—looked mainly to the workers for support. This explains the ease with which the mercantile interests were able to direct the agitation against the Constitution Bill in a fairly conservative direction. But it must also be emphasised that the popular movement, while more radical than the merchants, was still not a radical movement. The programme of radical reform—i.e. manhood suffrage, completely equal electorates, abolition of property qualification etc.—seems to have been put forward by the agitators and not to have sprung spontaneously from the people. The people or a considerable section of them—genuinely desired moderate but not radical reform. It is interesting to note that the meeting in December 1851 which did adopt the radical programme was attended by only 150 persons, although the meeting, and the motion to be considered, had been well publicised beforehand.

The greater emphasis throughout the agitation, moreover, was placed on the distribution of the electorates, rather than on the suffrage. The lower middle classes—or most of them—had secured the suffrage by 1851 and were more interested in extending their influence by increasing the number of their representatives than in securing political influence for other people or in abolishing the property qualification for members. In so far as they stood for any principle of equality, it was equality of opportunity that they desired. They were opposed to the existence of privileges belonging to inherited wealth. This attitude was expressed quite clearly and on several occasions by Henry Parkes who even at this stage definitely stood for middle-class, not working class, predominance. An editorial in the first issue of the Empire stated: "In a colony like ours, planted in the very lap of nature, we

(1) EM 29/12/1851, report.
contend that all have a fair and equal race before them, and are entitled without let or hindrance to share the benificence of earth and heaven alike.

Even if Parke did not write this passage, his own opinions were very similar. He argued at one of the Constitutional Meetings in 1851. This desire for equality of opportunity was possibly one of the factors that led the "liberal" group to support the "national" (as distinct from the denominational) system of education.

If individual workers participated in the reform movement at all up to 1851 they did so as part of this amorphous "popular" movement which aimed merely at giving individuals an opportunity to participate in political life and at equality of opportunity. There is no evidence that any section of the working class sought the franchise as a means of furthering its economic position. Hawkshaw had hoped for the emergence of a fairly class conscious movement - although he really thought that the basic conflict in society was between the landowning aristocracy and the rest - but that did not happen.

The working class in New South Wales at this time seemed not to have believed that the key to the removal of economic disabilities was the legislature. And it had been much a belief that gave meaning to the Chartist programme in England during the 'forties.

There was not much working class political activity of any kind during the years between 1848 and 1851. In 1848 there was an "Anti-Cookey Society" which requested "mechanics and laborers" to attend its meetings but no more was heard of the society or its activities. At the end of the same year, meetings of unemployed at which Lynch and Marswell spoke, requested the Government to begin public works in order to relieve their distress. In the following year another "distress" meeting was held. This meeting attacked the system of assisted immigration, and Benjamin Sutherland and McPhail (both members of the Council of the Constitutional Association) suggested that "some clever man" should go to England to counteract the propaganda of Immigration agents and of such people as Dr. Lang. A committee was appointed, but the movement lapsed a little later in 1849, a meeting called by the Follmengers and Woolsorters to consider the immigration of Chinese into the colony decided that an association of the working classes should be formed for the protection of their interests.

em interests, but this too came to nothing. In 1851 again there was some slight opposition to immigration and this year saw the beginnings of the anti-
license movement. Protests against the gold regulations continued until 1853. The gold miners of New South Wales were interested mainly in the gold fields
regulations and did not seriously raise the question of political reform. The
Quebecura Alluvial Miners Association of which James H'Eachern was Secretary
and R. H'Eachern his brother was Treasurer petitioned the Legislative for an
extension of the franchise, the establishment of the ballot and for the abolition
of the property qualification, but this was an isolated example. H'Eachern's
visit to Sofala in January 1853 to persuade the miners there to form a political
league (perhaps an extension of the Democratic League) "for the defense of the
rights of free industry and liberal government in the land" was a complete
failure. He was given a hearing but after his departure he visited the
Southern goldfields was also unsuccessful. There was some opposition to
companies in the gold fields at this time but apparently little interest in co-
operation which was one of H'Eachern's pet schemes. Later in 1853 the most
objectionable features of the Gold Fields' Act were removed, and the agitation
died without ever having formed a serious movement.

These few instances of working class action during the period from
1846 to the passing of the Constitution Bill have been quoted in full to demon-
strate how little there was that could be described as a political labor
movement at this time. The attention of the workers seems to have been given
over almost entirely to trade unionism which may at this period have been
quite an effective weapon. These conditions continued during the next three
years. Until about 1857 trade unions flourished but the political movement was
almost moribund. Later in 1854 there were some signs of independent working
class action but these proved abortive. Another "Australian League" was formed
in January
(3) - federation and independence being among its objects - but noth-
ing more was heard of it. The fight against the new constitution bill (which
had been sent to England for approval or amendment) was still being carried
on but the middle class radicals (and not-so-radicals) were still in control
here. A petition sent to the Queen requested "a fair and equitable represent-
ation on the British principle of population and property combined "and the
petitioners included such old campaigners as Parkes, Hawkesley, Piddington,
(4)

Land and Copper. The character of politics at this time was well brought out.

(1)SMH 4/2/1853, SMH 5/2/1853 reports from Special Reports on the Gold Fields Management Bill (NSW 1853) evidence of
(2) Select Committee on the Gold Fields Management Bill (NSW 1853) evidence of
(3) SMH 26/1/1854, advertisement (4) SMH 11/1854, report. King.
during the election for the City, in which Henry Parkes and Charles Kemp
(formerly part-proprietor of the Sydney Morning Herald) were the rival candid-
ates. Kemp's supporters tried to make capital out of the fact that Parkes had
recently prosecuted successfully seventeen of his employees. But Parkes was
able to publish in reply a letter from his employees (including some of the
dependants in the recent case) who stated that "in reference to our relation
with you as an employer, we feel it only fair to inform you that no personal
considerations shall guide us in the exercise of our political privileges."
The liberal group were supporting Parkes at this election, and he polled two to
one against his opponent. According to the Empire's analysis of the result,
Parkes received support from all sections of the community but polled particular
ly well in working class districts. The position was somewhat different,
however; later in the year, after Parkes had imported Eurasion compositions to
work on his paper.

The publication of the Operative Newspaper seems to have implied the
recognition of some distinct working class interest and the paper did propose
"to elevate the thoughts, advance the interests and conserve the privileges of
the working classes". The speakers at the early meetings seemed to have been
most interested in "elevating the thoughts" of the working class and in oppen-
ing cattie immigration but Coughlan states that its objects included "the direct
representation of labor in the legislative and altered immigration system and
the protection of the working class from the depreciation of the labor market."
Whatever its objects the paper soon failed but at meetings at which conductors
of the paper appealed for support the distinct interests of the working class
were quite sharply stated. It was contended that a working class paper was
necessary "to prevent false reports as to the high rate of wages, etc., from
being circulated by other colonial journals, and to protect themselves, the
 operatives of the colony, from having the labor market depreciated by the
introduction of Eurasion and other inferior races". Another speaker went on to
say that "there was sufficient intelligence amongst the working classes to ent-
title them to send members from among them to the Legislature as their represent-
atives, but the millstone of property qualifications stood in their way and
(1) 23/4/1854, advertisement by "A Working Man" (2) 17/5/1854. (3) For example,
1854, advertisement by "A Working Man" (2) 17/5/1854. (3) For example,
(1) 23/4/1854, advertisement by "A Working Man". (2) 17/5/1854. (3) For example,
Pp. 708-09. It is doubtful whether Coghlan actually saw a copy of the paper.
Some mention was made also of the desirability of opening the land — a remunerative field of employment for the working classes.

In December 1854 Parkes reported to his constituents, and his old colleagues from the Constitutional Association expressed their gratification with his behaviour as the people's representative, but several workmen attacked him on the "Eurasion" question. These events seem to indicate that a "labor" sentiment was reappearing in the political life of the community, but when one of the Sydney seats became vacant in the following year, J.R. Wilshire was put up by Parkes and his friends as its "people's representative" and was elected unopposed. Wilshire had been the candidate supported by the Constitutional Association in 1849, and had been in most of the radical movements since that time, but he was an employer of labor and a property owner — by no means a working man.

The position that had not changed in any essential feature by 1856. The New Constitution Electoral Association appeared — and disappeared. The combination of Cowper, Parkes, Wilshire and H. Cumball—"the Rumbly" — was successful at the election for Sydney in the first Parliament under the new constitution, and the same people appeared again as the "Australian Political Association" which had, however, no more success than its predecessors.

But in 1857—coincident with the decline of the import unions—a more active part in politics was taken by some working-men, and the demands made were more radical. The working-men acted in alliance with the "radicals" or "liberals", but were more aware of separate working-class interests. The important developments in 1857 were the formation, and continuance, of an Electoral Reform League demanding straight-out radical reforms; the formation of a Land League; and the establishment of a League for the Protection of Native Industry. And as the depression advanced definite Working Men's Associations were formed in 1858, 1859 and 1860. The petitions sent to the Assembly from Sydney during the discussions on the Electoral Bill of 1858 were correspondingly more radical than those of 1853 had been, and working-men began to play some part in the elections, although it is impossible to distinguish a party of working-men's candidates. Another interesting feature of this period was the appearance of political associations in the country districts — Liberal Politics.
Associations, Electors' Corresponding Committees, and one Working Men's Political Association (at Morpeth)

The Electoral Reform League was not a working class organisation nor were its leaders members of the working class. It was founded at a public meeting which adopted motions in favour of universal manhood suffrage and the "working men" but during 1858, its prominent members included Carlyle and Landrith the masons, David Morrison (one-time Secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers) and J.C. White an engineer. The Address of the League included a direct appeal to the working classes. The Address claimed that its principles of political reform were "the sure guarantee of the humbler classes in society the full enjoyment of the fruits of their labor" and Morrison in speaking in support of this address contended that "the wealth of the country had been created through the industry of the working classes and the man who would not acknowledge their right to a voice in the government did not deserve the confidence and support of the country". These statements would not be significant in themselves but it can be shown that sentiments such as these did make an appeal to the at least some sections of the working men in 1857.

Various candidates from this time onward claimed to be the "workingmen" rather than "the people's" candidates — probably because of the new classes enfranchised by the Electoral Act of 1858. The working classes turned up in great numbers at public meetings to approve or disapprove of the sentiments of politicians and they demanded radical measures. But in the elections of 1858 and 1859 they divided their support among the candidates in a curious way. Cowper had lost a great deal of support because of his Land Bill, but in 1859 he and the Bunch still had the support of most members of the Electoral Reform League, and Carlyle said on one occasion that "the working classes had elected their representatives (i.e. the Bunch) at the former election and he was certain that they would return the same men on the present occasion no matter who was in the field". As it happened only Cowper and Robert Campbell out of the previous four were elected. J.C. White bitterly opposed Cowper (on the Land

(1) B 24/2/1857, report. (2) B 24/3/1858, report (3) SMR 1/1/1858, report.
question) throughout the campaign and other candidates got working class support. At a meeting held by W.A. Allen for example, it was resolved that, "Mr Allen's explanation is satisfactory, and he deserves the support of the working classes." In this period the various Leagues were making a real effort to exercise direct influence in the elections but they did not succeed in imposing any order on the campaign of 1859, the first under the new Act.

It is impossible, in fact, to make any generalisations about the 1859 elections in which allegiances were given to "measures" and to "men" in a most confused way. At this stage definitely no idea of a workingman's party had emerged and the Workingmen's Associations of 1858 and 1859 were content to agitate for relief for the unemployed without taking any direct part in the electoral contests. The working classes were aware to some extent of separate interests but they had not clearly worked out what role they wanted to play.

A somewhat different emphasis was given in 1860. The previous Workingmen's Association had disappeared although the unemployed agitation continued under the same leaders. But at a meeting held in May, one speaker, J.D. Bouran, urged the formation of a more permanent organisation and another speaker, "concluded by urging those present to elect at the next general election, representatives from amongst themselves and pay them." At about the same time J.G. White told those present at a land meeting that he was disgusted with them because "they had power in their hands in the exercising of the ballot and they foolishly threw it away by placing it in the hands of Mr. Broughton the possessor of 125,000 acres of land". Shortly after this Bouran "succeeded in forming the Operatives Association" for the promotion of general progress in all matters respecting labor and for the discussion on a broad basis of questions affecting the interests of all operatives - unskilled or otherwise." It appeared that the Operatives' Association might become a real working class party, but it achieved little or nothing. In the elections of 1860, however, some of the members of the Association were among the supporters of J.G. White who stood for West Sydney. White's programme consisted of free selection before surgery, the abolition (or at the very least the liberalisation) of the Upper House,

payment of members and prohibition of extensive Chinese immigration, as definitely claimed to be the workingmen's candidates. White was defeated, but J.G. Dalgleish, another candidate "brought forward to represent the working-classes in Parliament" was successful in W. Sydney, much to White's annoyance. Dalgleish may have been an employé rather than a genuine workman, but it appears that his campaign was organised by the committee of the ironworkers who asked whether he would support the Bakers' short time movement he replied that he did not "think it a fit subject for legislation", so it can be seen that he was not an extreme representative of working class opinion. At these same elections, T. Lewis, a miner, was returned for Northumberland, and Miners' Committee was formed to support him. The miners had a real interest in legislation at this time, because they were agitating for an Act to impose health and safety provisions on the owners.

The land agitation was connected in many ways with the political reform movement of these years. The Land League included many of the leading members of the Electoral Reform League and for a time the former body devoted most of its energies to agitating for political reform in the belief that this was necessary before a satisfactory land law could be expected. We have seen that land reform was one of the things discussed at the "Operative" meetings in 1854 and in December of that year there was some attempt to establish a Land League. This did not succeed and although the Select Committee on the State of Agriculture (1855) was assured by several witnesses that there was a real desire among workingmen to take up land, it was not until 1857 that the agitation really got under way. This agitation was continued by the Land League and later by the Land Law Reform Alliance until 1860, but for our present purposes it will be sufficient to point out the connection of the working class with the movement.

The middle class reformers were active in the Land League but the initial steps in its organisation were said to have been taken "by a few respectable mechanics who nevertheless may be taken as representing a very important section of the community". Workers such as White, Douglas and Riley

were very active in the League and its successor and placed considerable emphasis on the interests of the working class in the land. Both "bargaining" and "displacement" viewpoints were expressed at this time, and some of these were quoted in the previous chapter. The unemployment existing at this time gave point to the pleas that the land should be opened to the working man. (1) The land leagues argued this way, and the workmen's own associations also advocated land reform as a means of improving their position. (2)

The protection movement was related to the working class in a somewhat similar fashion. The chief advocate of protection was W.B. Allen, the Soap and Candle manufacturer. Allen seems to have set out deliberately to gain the support of the working classes by associating his name with the agitators for an eight hour day, for access to the land, and for political reform. It is clear that not all sections of the workers supported the policy of protection, although from the beginning of the campaign undertaken by the "Protective League of Australian Industry" some workmen were associated with it. But when the unemployed began to demand relief Allen placed himself at the head of their movement and began to steer it in the direction of protectionism. (3)

He persuaded the meeting which formed the working Men's Association in 1858 to adopt a Memorial which stated that the existing distress was "chiefly owing to the very heavy importation of articles that could very well be made in the colony", but he was not successful when he stood for Sydney in 1858 and E.Sydney in 1859. A Trades Union Protection League was established in July 1858, but disappeared. (4)

The Protection League continued its advocacy of tariff reform despite setbacks, and in the riots that followed the refusal of the Assembly to adopt Parkes' Protectionist Report on the Condition of the Working Classes, Arkles and Wost (officers of the working Men's Association in the past two years) were arrested as ringleaders of the disturbance. It seems that the unemployed at any rate had definitely adopted protection as a policy. (5)

The Working Men's Associations had no policies other than those which have just been discussed. It can thus be seen that the political labor movement was still in a very rudimentary stage by 1860 in New South Wales. The workers had become conscious of class interests in political matters and wished to protect the interests of their own class, but they had (1) SMH 29/7/1859, report (2) SMH 3/1859, report of meeting of unemployed; (3) SMH 29/7/1860, report of meeting of operatives; (4) SMH 21/6/1858, report; (5) SMH 1/7/1858, report of meeting of operatives; (6) SMH 21/6/1858, report of meeting of operatives; (7) SMH 21/5/1860, "Notes of the week". 1857.
not gone very far in formulating the issues involved. That is, they were clear about their own grievances but not at all clear about how those grievances might be resolved. They were prepared to collaborate with anyone who said he was willing to help them and to be guided by others in their choice of remedies. The chief development we can trace in the labor movement during the fifties is the slow emergence of a belief that the representation of the workers (in some sense) was necessary. But even here working class efforts to secure representation were very tentative and the policies coming from the working class were such that they could be put into effect by the middle class "liberal" party which the workers tended to support.

On the more important questions of the general tendency in the development of policies, little can or need be said. C.F. J. D. Bourne rightly perceived the general inconsistency between an anarchist labor movement and Allen's protectionism but few others shared his insight. It is impossible to say just what the mass of the workers thought about the employment system by 1860. What can be said, on the other hand is that they did not yet conceive the main conflict in society to be between employers and employed. The political labor movement in New South Wales at this time was much less mature than the trade union movement. It had no policy of its own and was constantly being caught up in into movements dominated by other classes.
The first period in the development of the labor movement at Port Phillip can be said to end at the separation of the colony of Victoria from New South Wales in 1851. In this period the political movement did not attain such dimensions as it did in the parent colony, but labor action of various kinds was reported.

The political issues in the Port Phillip area were not the same as those in the "Middle District". The emancipist question seems to have been of little importance, and class divisions were not at all clearly reflected in political life. After the establishment of the Town Council in 1842 there were fairly definite "parties" or "cliques" in the community but it is difficult to associate any one of these with a particular social interest. The term "clique" seems to be the better description of these groupings—they were little more than combinations for personal advantage. William Kerr, newspaper editor and later Town Clerk, and in his way an outstanding figure in the early history of Melbourne, passed at times as a leader of the "people" but in terms of actual policies he had no greater claims for this role than some of his opponents. The differences were often "personal" rather than "sectarian" rather than strictly "political". The main question of the period was "separation", and there was a tendency for otherwise different groups to come together on this issue against the Government in Sydney. The ubiquitous John Pascoe Fawkner was always in favour of "yeomanry" and against the squatters, but the squatter question—so important later in Victoria—did not appear to be very vital until the conflicts over transportation brought about a recognition of the distinct class interests.

The first known example of working class activity was the formation in May 1839 of the Melbourne Union Benefit Society allegedly on the model of the Australian Union Benefit Society of Sydney. The Melbourne Society was formed so it was said "by the congregated wages of the town", but it was possible that it was not restricted to workers. The Mechanics Institute was established shortly afterwards (at a meeting of master builders) to cater for the working class but there were periodic complaints that the workers in fact exercised little influence in the Institute. In the following year several

(1) PPG 29/2/1839, report (2) PPG 9/10/1839, Address of Congratulation from MUBS to Latrobe. (3) PPG 16/10/1839, advertisement.
al meetings were held in connection with the formation of a co-operative bread company "in order to frustrate the unjust designs of the bakers". It is possible that some workmen took part in this movement but it was just a general consumers company and in any case the scheme was carried no further than the calling of tenders for the supply of flour. If these events formed part of a labor movement it was a labor movement of a most elementary kind.

Political action of a more sophisticated kind did occur, however, within the next few years. In 1843 and 1844 unemployed workmen requested relief. These were mainly requests that public works should be commenced, but in 1844 a proposal to bring "Pentonville exiles" to Fort Phillip was denounced by the workmen on the ground that this would increase unemployment and distress. A meeting which was alleged to have been arranged secretly by the squatters voted in favor of the proposal to bring the Exiles to Fort Phillip, but a miscellaneous group of persons (including Fawkner, Kerr and a blacksmith named McCulla) organized a rival meeting which denounced the squatters and their measures. In the district of Belfast a meeting of "squatters and others" was swamped by "a large reinforcement of the working classes" which amended the original motion and protested against the bringing of skilled mechanics from Pentonville to compete in an already over-stocked labor market. In the nearby town of Portland a "meeting of mechanics laborers and others" denounced the whole scheme. Later opposition to transportation was much more broadly based, the situation in Victoria resembling that in Sydney, but the importance of keeping up working class bargaining power was occasionally mentioned. The Melbourne "Daily News" described anti-transportation meetings as "essentially" a high wages or trade-union meeting - not an anti-prison labor meeting but an anti-any-labor at all meetings" but this was an exaggeration. Not more than one of the speakers can be identified as a workman, and the "bargaining" question was mentioned only incidentally. It seems that the "Daily News" was merely trying to depreciate the "respectability" of its opponents. The fact was that the speakers at this meeting included John O'Shamassy, J. S. Johnston, Fawkner, Kerr, R. Heales and Henry Langlands the ironmaster, all of whom were prominent middle class politicians in the following decades. The working classes may have participated in this movement but

(1) PPH 10/11/1840, PPH 11/11/1840, reports. The abandonment of the project was admitted in comment on the price of bread, PPG 28/9/1843(2)PPG 1/3/1843, report of Town Council's proceedings; (3)PP23/10/1844 report (4)PP19/12/1844, report (5)PPH 4/12/1844 (6)PPH 1/2/1845, reprint from Portland Examiner (7)PPH 4/1/1849, reports.
by this time it was in the control of people whose main policy was to stand
for the middle class against the squatters.

In the meantime, the Masters' and Servants' Act of 1845 had been
announced as "ill-adapted to the circumstances of the free population of the
District of Port Phillip and wholly opposed to the principles of British
law and justice." (1) This agitation—which was initiated by agricultural
and farm servants—soon died out and it was not for some years that an
identifiable working class policy was put forward. In 1847 at a meeting which
considered the level of the suffrage for the City Council, an amendment was
moved "embodied a recommendation for universal suffrage and vote by ballot"
but it was defeated and there is no evidence to warrant the belief that it
originated with the working classes. The first working class request for a
lower franchise seems to have been made at a meeting in 1849 which demanded
separation. The official motions (formulated by Fawcett and Kerr) asked for
Separation and Representative institutions but did not specify what kinds
of institutions they desired. But a solitary workman "declared that no good
could be done until the working men were enlisted in the cause" and advised
the workers "to go to the Governor in a body and make him lower the franchise
He was persuaded to sit down and got no support at this meeting. But when
the separation of the colony was finally announced, there were very strong
expressions of working class demands. A meeting was held "for the purpose
of considering the best method of commemorating the joyful news of Separation,
and for the working classes to adopt the best means for securing the future
enjoyments of the same". The chief speaker at this meeting was Mr. Tankard
who claimed to be a workman but was a few years later the proprietor of a
"Temperance Hotel". Tankard said that "he for one did not look with so joyful
an eye on this separation as many did; he could not perceive as he wished to
have been the case, that the glorious boon of the franchise was to be bestowed
on him and his fellows". And as well as an extension of the franchise he
demanded vote by ballot, and a People's Hall was also suggested by another
speaker. This meeting seems to have been the turning point in the development
of the labor movement in Victoria.

(1) PP# 25/12/1845, report (2) PP# 17/12/1845, advertisement (3) PP# 17/12/1847,
(5) A289/1850
Tankard was again one of the speakers at a meeting held in 1851 to discuss the constitution of the colony. This meeting was presented with a set of motions which firstly declared that "population is the only true and safe basis of electoral power", and which demanded the ballot. Most of the speakers were the same middle class politicians who were accustomed to speak at such meetings in Melbourne and not all of them were prepared to support such a radical scheme (which had apparently been formulated by William Kerr). O' Shanassy, in particular did not approve of representation based solely on population, "and sooner than see it adopted he would rather support the claims of property to representation". But Tankard once more spoke on behalf of the working classes: "If ... they gave a preponderance over labor, they would witness the same scenes here as they had done there (i.e. in England) They would find the working classes reduced to misery in order that the squatter might obtain cheap labor; and so, by the work of their representatives they would become daily richer and richer whilst the working classes became poorer and poorer, until they had the same scenes of distress as they had witnessed in England". This statement was significant in that it expressed the belief that the franchise and similar questions were important because of the relation between them and working class incomes.

A meeting at Geelong also resolved that "population is the only just and safe basis of legal representative", but this, like the Melbourne meeting, was not associated specifically with the working class. The other interesting happening at this time was the attempt to form a Bread and Flour Company, which was forgotten after the subsequent gold discoveries. Political life was almost completely disorganised and it was not until the following year that the new configuration of interests began to appear.

A Victorian Gold Mining Association was established in March 1852, allegedly because of "the want of protection of life and property at the gold diggings". Latrobe had already reported to Gray that the Legislative Council disapproved of the licensing system and that public opinion was hostile to it. In August of the same year, Kerr, O' Shanassy, Pawson and

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Westgarth led an assault on the squatters, requesting the Government to "suspend the issue of leases to the squatters." And in November, the first important political association, the Colonial Reform Association, was formed at a meeting chaired by Falconar.

It will be seen that the middle-class politicians were active in what they conceived to be the struggle against the squatters but some members of working class had already begun to take an interest in these matters. The middle class did not remain in undisputed control, as they did in Sydney and so we find that a genuine labor movement was functioning by 1854. Even in the Colonial Reform Association some members of the working class were quite active. The Secretary of this body was Thomas Beales who in 1850 as in 1860, was an officer of the Cordwainers' Society. Rankard was a member, as was J.D. Bouran — (Secretary of the Melbourne Carpenters' and Joiners' Society at this time), and John Cathie a cabinetmaker. The programme of the Association was (a) a "thorough revision of (the Victorian) Constitution making it thoroughly representative" and (b) the unlocking of the lands of the colony, and (c) the abolition of transportation. It proposed representation based solely on population, the abolition of state aid to religion, establishment of the ballot representation for gold diggers and the device of the "recall" of members of Parliament. Its chief activity was to get up a land petition which, it was claimed, was signed by more than 14,000 people, and Bouran said that "the ultimate plan of operation was to form as many branch associations as possible throughout the country . . . and that a conference should be held in the city every half year." At least four branches were formed but the Association died out. The position it described took up was by Bouran as opposition on behalf of the people to the pretensions of an aristocracy, and this is a good enough characterisation of its general approach to political questions. It acted to some extent in collaboration with the People's Association, a similar organisation in Geelong.

In the latter half of 1853, the centre of interest was transferred to the gold fields. The diggers were by now demanding representation and the

unlocking of the lands as well as reduction (or abolition) of the licence fee, and political societies began to spring upon the various fields. The idea of having an organization extending throughout the diggings was already influential. The Anti-Licence Association of Bendigo made some attempts in this direction and the Diggers Congress Society aimed at its name implies, a meeting of delegates from all the gold fields in order "to abolish the licence-tax altogether, and to obtain the enfranchisement of the digger". They did not succeed in uniting the miners in 1853 but their efforts were symptomatic of the trend of political opinion among some sections of the diggers. The anti-licence Association was later absorbed into the (2) Gold Fields Reform League of Bendigo which was really more influential than the famous Ballarat Reform League. The Gold Fields Reform League was interested firstly in gaining representation for the diggers in order to abolish the licence fee and to enable the miners to get "a little bit of land". The immediate effect of the Eureka Stockade was to intensify the agitation of the diggers but it did not introduce any new elements into this agitation which became gradually more sporadic as the excitement died down.

In the second half of 1854, while the diggers were becoming more and more dissatisfied over their political condition, the growth of unemployment in Melbourne resulted in political action by the working class in the city. In October a meeting of unemployed demanded the unlocking of the lands and appointed a committee to prepare a petition. The committee, however, presented two petitions to a subsequent meeting, one of which demanded that the Crownlands he leased out in small farms whilst the other requested that the Council should "take such public measures to be adopted as will tend to their being employed in the manner most suited to their respective capacities". Both petitions were adopted. Thus while some workmen were demanding the opportunity to escape from the employment system, others received seemed to be quite satisfied with it. The demand for land was made explicitly on behalf of the working men and at this time there was a general indisposition to complete with the "capitalist" for the purchase of land.

At the conclusion of this "petition" meeting a permanent committee of nine was formed and this committee proceeded to extend the scope of the movement. As remedies for distress it suggested (a) the establishment of a

(1) 22/12/1853, report re handbill put out by the Society (2) 31/10/1854, report (3) 12/10/1854, report (4) 10/10/1854, report.
Labor Exchange (b) leasing of Crown lands, with the right of purchase and (c) "a fair representation of the working or productive classes of Victoria in the Legislative Council" – as your committee feel confident that had labor, the capital, been fully represented the public lands of this fine province would long ago have been thrown open to private enterprise, and many a happy home would have been new in existence, surrounded by agricultural prosperity and affording abundant employment, with fair remuneration, to every working man in the colony".

This was a most important expression of opinion. It was concerned solely with working class interests, it put forward the two ideals of anarchy and of employment at a fair wage, and it demanded representation on behalf of the workers. It was the opinion of the committee – some members of which were not workers – but it was received with great enthusiasm by the unemployed. Moreover, the plans of the committee did not stop there. They proposed also a working class newspaper, (on the model of the "Operative" of Sydney) and a more permanent organization "for the opening of the lands and the general reform of abuses". The name of the Association was to be "The Victorian General Reform and Agricultural League" and what was contemplated was "an organization for the purpose of securing the return of good men at the next election".

This scheme for a working class party seemed to have come to nothing at this stage, but this was only a temporary setback. In the early part of 1855 the employment position improved somewhat, but when later in the year distress again became widespread, the agitation of the unemployed was revived. And in the meantime a middle-class reform movement had made its appearance.

There seems to have been little or no direct working class influence in the People's League (July 1855) the Victorian Land League (August 1855) the South Bourke Reform Association (August 1855) or the Richmond Political Association (September 1855). Workman may have been influential in these bodies but their supporters appeared to be very similar to the people who were carrying on the radical reform movement in Sydney at about this time. The Melbourne organizations, however, were rather more radical than those in Sydney. The programmes of the People's League included the abolition of the property qualification, payment of members, universal suffrage "for all persons of European descent", direct taxat-

(1) 17/11/1854, report (2) Ibid (3) 11/12/1854, report.
tion, land reform, national education, conscription and legal reform. Certain of its constitutional proposals—including the granting of a restricted right of veto to the Governor and restrictions on the voting and speaking rights of Cabinet Ministers—were possibly derived from American sources. The Richmond Political Association was a straight out Irish Republican organization the principles of which included all six "points" of the Charter as well as non-alienation of the land and a few other topical demands. The People's League and the Victorian Land League were very closely associated, and they organized some very large meetings in Melbourne as well as sending delegates to the gold fields. They appealed to the working classes for support and claimed to speak for "labor" following their initial success they tried to put up a candidate (Mooney) for the election to the legislature but this seems to have brought about their downfall. The associations ceased to exercise any influence and Mooney withdrew from the contest.

The agitation of the unemployed in 1855 contained much the same elements as that of the previous year. The workmen demanded public works, restriction of immigration, the unlocking of the lands and improved representation for the working classes. The committee they appointed was interested mainly in securing employment at current rates for those out of employment and did not attempt anything on the scale of the "General Reform and Agricultural League". In fact, it appeared that no further contributions to the labor movement were to be made by the distressed and unemployed and when prosperity increased in the following year the political movement as a whole almost disappeared, and functioned only through the Eight Hours' League.

But after the successful eight hours' agitation there was a most important change in the direction of the movement. The trade unions intervened directly in the political life of the community. A committee of "the trades and other associated bodies" called of the working classes in September 1856 "to determine upon two candidates to represent our interests in the House of Assembly." The meeting adopted a resolution in favor of the ballot, universal suffrage and representation based on population and chose the two "liberal" employers, Richard Beales and Henry Longlands as their candidates for Melbourne.

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In this way some real link was established between the growing trade unions and the political side of the labor movement. The constitution of some of the unions forbade the use of the organizations for "political purposes", but the informal "committees of the trades" continued to be an important part of the labor movement. It was on this basis that the political activity of labor was carried on in the next few years.

The period 1857-60 was one of unprecedented activity in the political life of Victoria. In this period the organized workers seem to have been well aware of their own separate interests and they made several attempts to form political associations on their own account. But in general they found either that they were not strong enough to stand by themselves, or that their interests co-incided too closely with those of other people that more was to be lost that gained by insisting on labor's own organizations. They did not have sufficient strength to unite all the "liberals" under their own banner and as were forced to be the subordinates when they collaborated with the comparatively radical middle class reformers.

The political programme of the Victorian Labor movement between 1857 and 1860 consisted of land reform, political reform, public works for the unemployed, partial prohibition of immigration, industrial legislation (Eighth Hours' Bill and Lund Bill), and protection to exportative industry. In addition there were a few attempts at consumers' co-operation and a few abortive schemes for a worker's press, and on the goldfields the anti-Chinese agitation was growing and the diggers were trying to establish the right to mine on private property. Thus at the peak of its activity the working class was seeking both to increase its bargaining power and to escape from capitalism.

It is impossible to say which strain was most important. The land agitation was the key factor, because rightly or wrongly land reform was believed to be the solution of almost all questions, and there is just no way of finding out whether free selection before survey was supported mainly by people who wanted land or mainly by people who wanted employment.

Because of the importance of the land question, the Convention was the most important radical organisation in these years. The Victorian Land League, which called the Convention together, was not founded as a working

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class association, and many of the leaders of the Convention were not working
men. It tried, in fact, to make its appeal as wide as possible but in
practice its programme approximated pretty closely with what the workman were
demanding.

The first Convention met in Melbourne in July 1857. But already in
that year there had been attempts by the working class to participate in
politics. Meetings opposing assisted immigration had been followed by a
large meeting which expressed its approval of the policy of the O'Shanassy
Government. And then a smaller meeting of the working class laid down a
general political programme and chose C.J. Dobie as a candidate to contest the
Melbourne elections. Most of the speakers at this meeting were well known
unionists and Dobie argued that "they would never have the interests of the
labouring classes properly looked after before they had a labor representative;"
The principles which he pledged himself to support included the usual
Chartist brand of political reform combined with land reform, opposition to
assisted immigration a national system of education, and mining rights on
private property. Labor had definitely entered the electoral field.

Dobie was easily defeated by the previous representatives, Mitchie and
Moore but in the meantime a "Victorian Operatives' Political Association"
was formed and the agitation against assisted immigration was continued.
More important, the introduction of a fairly conservative Land Bill had aroused
opposition and it was at this stage that the Land League invited the various
districts to send delegates to a Convention.

Men of all classes and of many creeds were delegates to the Convention
but a number of unionists, including Dobie and four members of the "committee of
the Trades" of September 1856, were among those chosen by the five Melbourne
districts. The programme finally adopted by the Convention included not only
free selection before survey but in addition political reform in the Chartist
model and mining on private property, opposition to assisted immigration and
to Chinese immigration. This programme was almost identical with that which
the working class meeting had formulated for its candidate before the Melbourne
election. The Land and political reform movements were almost indistinguishable

(1) 12/12/1856 (report) gives a list of the members of the original committee.
(2) 11/4/1857. This is not to be confused with the early Victorian Land League.
(3) 22/4/1857, report (4) 25/5/1857, report (5) 14/5/1857, report (6) 27/5/1857, advertisement. (7) The four were Peter Sherwin (coachbuilder), Edward Strickland (coachbuilder), James Morgan (stonemason) and James Cutlack, (cooper). For the full list of members of the Convention, the resolutions, proceedings and documents of the Victorian Convention, resolutions, proceedings and documents of the Victorian Convention were almost indistinguishable.
during these years but the attention given to these other matters indicated that the Convention leaders were hoping to bring together the various radical groups under its leadership. It succeeded in this aim to a considerable extent in the next few years, although other working class organisations did arise.

The first of these was a Working Men's Association formed by unemployed immigrants who had brought out to Australia with the help of a fund raised in England. The stated aims of this body were simply to inquire into the causes of unemployment to request public works and to send to England correct figures relating to wages prices etc., but it was very quickly lined up with the Convention and the trade union agitators and soon it was denouncing the land laws and the political system of the colony. Equal electoral districts and repayment of members of Parliament were now seen two of the great obstacles in the way of the extension of the political influence of the working class, and it was these things in particular which the Working Men's Association requested.

The main burden of agitation in the rest of 1857 and 1858 was borne by the Convention, but in March 1859 the Working Men's Association was re-organized as the Victorian Social and Political Union which was designed to supplement (not to supplant) the Convention. It was formed "especially with a view to the more practical treatment of the unemployed question".

It had no distinctive programme and in general simply echoed the Convention's policy of land and political reform, although it did take some steps to secure relief for the unemployed. But the main organ for working class political action remained the Convention, although a few other associations with similar platforms had been formed.

In 1859, however, some new questions were introduced. The workmen employed by the railway contractors wished to have established the practice of regular fortnightly or weekly pay but they were finding it difficult to impose this rule on the contractors. At the same time they were anxious to have enacted a Mechanics' Liens law (in order to protect the interests of workmen when their employers went bankrupt) and they had discovered that

(1) For example, many of the petitions to the Legislative Assembly during this period dealt with both the land and political reform questions report (2) 15/9/1857, reports (3) 15/9/1857, reports (4) 123/3/1858, report.
the Masters' and Servants' Act could still be used against workers who struck to maintain the eight hours day. Moreover, the working class was cautiously moving towards protection. All of these questions influenced the course of events in 1859.

The Convention was still maintaining that the opening of the lands was "the only permanent remedy" for distress" but its orators and supporters were turning their attention to these other matters. The "Trades Committee" called a meeting in January 1859 to support for the men employed on the railway works who were striking against the system of sub-contracting. The unions were by this time finding it difficult to carry on the struggle, and it was contended that the government was supporting the contractors by the appointment of a committee. The decisive step taken by the meeting in January was a committee to draw up a code of resolutions for the formation of a monster organisation of labor to secure its proper representation in the next Parliament. In the following March the "code of resolutions" was approved by a public meeting and a political organisation — known as the "Political Organization of Labor" or the "Labor League" and the appointment of a committee — was formed. Its platform contained the following provisions: (1) Land and political reform according to the Convention pattern and a land tax. (2) The right to remission on private property and the abolition of the export duty on gold. (3) The abolition of the Masters' and Servants' Act. (4) Eight hours to be the recognized day's labor between employer and workman, and to be established on all Government works from this date, and in all Government contracts, and as such, the workmen to be able legally to sue any employer in Victoria; (5) prohibition of sub-contracting, an act providing that "all persons shall have a lien on the produce of their labor till their wages have been paid"; (6) any agreement made with individuals for labor out of the colony to not binding on the parties and of no effect till the said parties have resided 30 days in the colony of Victoria, and the agreement re-signed after the said 30 days. The meeting which formed the Political Organization of Labor was remarkable also for the speech made by Rice, a printer. Rice stated the political situation of the workers more sharply than ever before: "the existence of a class interest was the greatest curse which could afflicting a nation, causing oppression, robbery, and distress."
effect of this class interest was the creation of what were termed the upper classes, with whom the next great class - the mercantile class - had considerable sympathy, but very little with the masses, by the conjunction of these two classes laws were passed injurious to the mass of the people. It was in this spirit that the new party was formed.

This, it can be seen was intended as a full-scale working class or trade union political party, but it did not achieve what its originators had hoped for. It did not succeed altogether in maintaining its separate identity and it did not succeed in getting a party of workingmen into Parliament. It held a number of meetings on familiar topics (such as payment of members) but it did not develop any satisfactory electoral organisation. It was one of the bodies united by the Convention to form a "popular front" coalition and was apparently in favour of the idea. When the coalition broke down on the tariff question, the Labor League seemed to fade out of the picture. Its last important action was to endorse Don as its candidate for the seat of Collingwood. At this meeting it was stated plainly that "the great disadvantages under which the working men had suffered in the late struggle between capital and labor, in regard to the railways, rendered it necessary that they should be properly represented in the House of Assembly. Don was elected, but he was the only candidate put up by the League and he of course allied himself with the Convention group and was one of the supporters of the Healds Ministry when it was formed. The distinctive trade union policy of the Political Organisation of Labor was adopted by other associations such as Dr. Hunter's "National League of Progress". The Eight Hours League was formed to advocate the legal limitation of the working day to eight hours and this was later incorporated in the Convention's programme. The Eight Hours League was little more than a propagandist agency and was quite incapable of succeeding in the field in which the Labor League had failed.

In 1860 the independent labor movement lost some of its vigour. The questions agitated were payment of members, the formation of a workmen's newspaper, land reform and protection, but it was already becoming clear...
that the working class could not yet organise a political party on its
own account and that it would have to collaborate with other classes and
interests. The land movement was still quite virile (as the riots outside
Parliament House in August 1860 demonstrate) but labor was coming more and
more to give its support to the policy of protection advocated by the town
employers. In 1860, protection fairly definitely became the policy of the
labor movement.

There had been sort of protectionist sentiment among the working
class since 1857 when the Workingmen's Association had requested "encourage-
ment" for colonial manufactures. Doubts had been raised about the wisdom
of imports during times of unemployment, but some difficulty was found in
distinguishing Protection from the unpopular Corn Laws. Don compromised
in his election speech in 1859 by advocating "duties on luxuries". The
Labor League's programme did not include tariff reform, but after the
elections the Tariff Reform League began campaigning among the various
trades and other protectionist bodies were also active. In the following
year many workmen gave protectionist evidence before the Select Committee
inquiring into the question and Don declared himself a complete convert to
the doctrine.

The evidence given by the workers' representatives was
very significant because some of them described tariff reform as more
important than land reons: "Very few of the cabinetmakers know much
about farming. It is out of their lives altogether. They are generally
brought up in those large towns and have no connection with the land." The
evidence also revealed that some trades were turning to protection because
they believed unionism had failed. The journeyman tailors were a very
active protectionist group and their spokesman told the Select Committee:
"I believe, if we could get every man connected with the trade into a com-
bination our trade would be dispensed with altogether - this would be the
only result."

Without protection others of the witnesses argued,
prosperity in their trade was impossible.

(1) A29/8/1860, report. (2) Many employers gave protectionist evidence before
the Select Committee on the Tariff. (3) A11/9/1857, report. (4) A11/1/1859,
report of meeting on the Import of Italian Marble. (5) A5/8/1859, report. (6)
A13/3/60, report. It is interesting that at an early meeting of the
"Labor Protection and Tariff Reform League", Don had not been at all enthuis-
astic about a protective tariff: "let them have the broad surface of their
own country and they would require no protective duties at all as against
other countries or America. We should wish to know whether the Associ-
ation would be willing to pay any protective duty on corn?" (441/5/1859) Don had apparently
misjudged the strength of the anti-Corn Law Sentiment in Victoria. (7)
Evidence of Milne, Q1599.

(bly Votes and Proceedings 1859–60 Vol 3 ) evidence of Milne, Q1599.
In the second half of 1860, the Convention was very active on the land question but the meetings of the Tariff League and the Protection Conference continued. The workers were supporting these societies but the leadership was in other hands as it was to continue to be for many years to come.

The important developments in the political labor movement in Victoria had in fact come to nothing. The distinctive feature of the Victorian movement was that not merely did the working class seek political power but they sought to create a political party which would carry out trade union policies. A tremendous impetus was given to the demand for political reform in Victoria by the early interest in the land question but in addition the unions had already decided that their bargaining policies could best be furthered through the state. It is important that this belief - supposedly so characteristic of the Australian labor movement after 1890 - should have appeared at such an early stage in Victoria. It did not appear before 1860 in New South Wales in any clear form and this is one of the most striking differences between the movements in the two colonies.
I IDEOLOGIES AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

(1) Theories and Ideologies.

Before entering into a discussion of the ideology of the
working class in Victoria and New South Wales up to 1860, it will be
necessary to say a few words about the nature and function of ideologies.

The concept of ideology was brought into prominence by Marx,
but later discussion of it has not advanced very far beyond what Marx
had to say; however unsatisfactory that may have been. Later Marxists
have used, but not greatly developed the theory of ideology.

Marx's treatment of ideologies as is well known, rested on
no propositions. Firstly, he supposed that theories cannot be explained
or understood apart from the society in which they are formulated (or
popularised) and that in fact they depend upon the economic structure
of that society. Thus he contended, the whole system of ideas can be
explained by reference to the stage of economic development that has
been reached. But secondly he supposed that particular theories or
ideologies can be related to particular classes, in the form that different
theories and doctrines represent the demands or interests of different
classes and are determined by those interests. Thus we can speak of
bourgeois ideology. - which, whatever it claims to be, puts forward
the demand of the bourgeoisie - as opposed to a proletarian ideology
which puts forward the claims of the proletariat. These two distinct
propositions of Marx are often combined together in the form that at
any given time the dominant system of ideas will be that which embodies
the demands of the dominant class, and that changes in the distribution
of power will be reflected in changes in the character of ideas.

Now it is not proposed to accept this theory of ideology in
its entirety or at any rate it is not proposed to accept it in the form
in which it has been developed by later Marxian thinkers. The most
valuable part of it is that which brings to our notice the fact that
many theories which claim to be setting out "matters of fact" do
contain, in various forms, demands about how society should be construct-
and that these demands are concerned with furthering the interests of
certain social classes or interests. The recognition of this, or the
recognition of how many theories can be shown to contain such demands
was one of Marx's most important contributions to social theory.
The aspect of Marx's theory that has been of most interest to his disciples has been that which represents all theory and all knowledge as determined by or as no more than a reflection of class interests. Attempts to work out this doctrine in a precise way have not been very successful, even though it is regarded as a most important part of the "economic" interpretation of history. One difficulty that arises is common to all parts of this economic interpretation of history, if the latter is stated in a strict form. If no determinant is admitted except the forces of production then nothing else can be a determinant. As we have seen, Lenin for one was unwilling to exclude ideology as a determinant force. (It is said that the forces of production form only the ultimate determinant.) This strict interpretation of the theory is not now accepted however, so this is not a major issue for where — although the fundamental question whether any alternative formulation of the theory (e.g. that in which "forces of production" appear as the ultimate, i.e. only undetermined factor) would be capable of supporting the general structure usually placed upon "historical materialism", still remains.

Another obvious problem in showing how theories are to be explained solely in terms of class interest arises in connection with an attempt to give a precise explanation. It is easy enough to point it in vague terms that there appears to be some relation between classes and theories to show for example that theories do change with appearance and disappearance of classes and that the theories which pop out of the picture are those which contain the demands of disappearing classes. But it is more difficult to set out conditions forming part of the class struggle, which are both necessary and sufficient for the rise of any given doctrine. And it is more difficult to set out conditions in terms of a person's class position which are both necessary and sufficient to account for his adherence to a given ideology. What we quite often find is that the ideological defence of class is undertaken by people who do not belong to the class.
But the major difficulty of the "orthodox-Marxism"
theory of the relation between ideology and class has arisen from
the tendency to state it in such a way as to involve its protagonists
in a theory of "relative" truth. The attempt has been made to treat
theories as being no more than demands arising from particular classes
or as being completely determined by class interests, and this does
seem to push any conception of absolute truth out of the picture, as
contended by many of those who adopt this approach. Yet at the same
time the disciples of Marx have shown no genuine desire to jettison
absolute conceptions of truth altogether and so have been involved
in trying to maintain absolute and relative positions at the same time.
At a superficial level this has come out in the familiar disputes
about whether the "proletarian" ideology—which is identified with
"scientific socialism"—is absolutely true or if true from the
proletarian point of view or is just an incident in the class struggle.
(1) More rigorous "relativists" (such as Horka) seem equally unwilling
(2) to abandon absolute statements in the long run. But without a
consistent theory of relative truth the attempts so far made to work
out a rigid doctrine explaining the whole character of theories in terms
of class interests break down. Perhaps the difficulties would have been
as if those who were interested in this part of Marx's thought had
content to show how class interests cause the formulation and
selection of certain theories, but they seem to have been more concerned
to show that theories are "reflections" of class interests and in this
matter they have not been successful. In general not much can be
told about the determination of ideologies but something can be said
out their functioning.

Enough has been said then to indicate, if not to defend,
be position being taken up here. The ideological aspect of theories
that they often put forward demands which favour one class or
other and even if there is nothing "ideological" about a given doctrine
class or interest might distort the theory for its own purposes.

(1) S. Horka "Towards the understanding of Karl Marx" London 1933.
(2) This of course may be a necessary feature of any such theory.
Mannheim distinguishes between "ideologies" and "utopias" according to whether the given theory tends to maintain or tends to destroy existing society. This distinction seems to be concerned with how theories are used rather than their actual structure. One kind of theory which Marx regarded as ideological was that which demanded a certain right on behalf of everybody, whilst only some people were in a position to claim the right. But equally characteristic is the kind of theory which explicitly places some class or interest in a special position in the social structure—which attempts to show, for example, that the welfare of the whole depends on the freedom, prosperity, or power of this special interest, or which represents one particular class as a special repository of power, authority or virtue, or which simply judges things from the point of view of the welfare of one class while pretending to be interested in the welfare of society as a whole. However specialised the interests it is furthering, any ideological theory has to make some show of being quite general in its application, and this means that in practice theories can sometimes be put to uses other than those for which they were intended. We thus often find a "radical" and a "conservative" interpretation of the same theory. Again, the necessarily general formulation of an ideology often prevents the advancement of some demands consistent with the purposes of those who put forward the theory. Thus ideologies help to justify some demands but at the same time limit the kinds of demands that can be made. They are a factor, if only a minor factor, in the situation. It is not proposed, however, to discuss at any length how ideologies functioned in the early Australian Labor movement. The task to be undertaken is simply to set out the ideologies which were used by, and which influenced the working class in Australia up to 1860, and to see whether any distinctive "working class" ideology was developed. And the emphasis will be placed far more on what was actually said than on any general classification of the techniques used to cloak demands with theories.

(11) Ideologies in Australia.

In practice, it is not always easy to identify working-class ideologies. The mass of the workers, had little opportunity to make known their own views on any subject, but were forced to allow a few people — not always workmen — to do their talking for them. This means that we have little or no evidence as to what the workmen themselves were thinking. One point we might take into account is that some doctrines were put forward many times by various people belonging to or closely connected with the working class. We can also assume that spokesmen for the working class, and other politicians looking for support, would try to make use of doctrines which did appeal to workmen. But neither of these points would carry us very far, and the procedure adopted here will be to discuss any doctrine used to support radical or working class demands, without contending that all these doctrines necessarily influenced the workers themselves.

The most striking feature of the body of theory which was pressed into service on behalf of the working class was that it derived mainly from British sources. Except on minor points — of which, Australian independence is a dubious example there was no growth of any "distinctively Australian" tradition, and little of importance from non-British sources. Theories formulated to deal with the circumstances of British town or country life were not always very suitable for dealing with the problems of the working class in Australia, but due to the high rate of immigration during the period, most of the population had had almost no opportunity to develop theories capable of supporting the efforts of the organized working class in Australia. But at the same time the position of the working class in parts Australia was not so very different from the position of the same class in England, and so the conflict between theory and environment became obvious at only a few points.

One British line of thought whose influence in Australia has been discussed by various writers is that of Chartism. It is generally accepted that Chartism was very influential in Australia after 1851 in mining and gold fields and H.L. Harris has brought to light examples of Chartist influence before that date. But there is a necessary vagueness in most discussions of the influence of Chartism. The Chartist movement was in the first place conceived with a certain programme, with certain explicit
demands, and it is fairly easy to find out whether these demands were made in Australia. In fact, many of them were — and this includes not merely the demands made in the Charter itself but also other demands relating to land reform and the position of labor. But in addition the Chartist movement brought together a whole mass of theory, and the more important question here is whether this theory — as distinct from the demands it was supposed to support — was influential in Australia. But when we try to sort out the ideas involved in Chartist we can see that the question of its influence in Australia takes a new form. In the first place there is no single line of policy that can be regarded as Chartist. Almost the only common to all Chartist was the fact that they were protesting against existing conditions: doctrinal differences and disputes were exceedingly widespread. It is extremely difficult to find any consistent body of thought that constituted Chartist as a system. It may be true, as Beer argues, that Chartist was dominated by the idea that the well and woe of society depends in the last (1) resort upon the character of the laws of the state, but Briere's analysis of the proletariat suggests that this belief regularly occurs in the early stages of labor movements and was not in any way peculiar to Chartist. It is also difficult to find any doctrine which was specifically Chartist. Chartist as a movement brought together most of the radical thought of the early nineteenth century. Therefore, it is not easy to distinguish Chartist thought from the general radical tradition of Britain, and the question of the influence of Chartist loses most of its point. To say that Chartist was or was not influential gives us only very vague information about the kind of thought that flourishes in Australia. And in fact, even when we do identify theories which appeared both in Australia and in the Chartist movement there is no guarantee that these were not both derived from some common source, although it is quite plausible to argue that any such doctrine would have been brought to Australia by people who actually participated in the Chartist movement. It is well known that a number of people who claimed to have played some part in Chartist agitation did come to Australia. James Stephens and Henry Parkes were two of these — and these two, with their very different

(1) H. Beer, History of British Socialism, Vol 1, London 1919, p. 298
views on trade unionism effectively show the diversity of type and of opinion that could be found within the movement. However, no attempt has been made for the present work to discover the actual extent of Chartist emigration to Australia, and any detailed account of the contributions of these people to Australian life must await such a survey. But the influence of Chartism is not quite the same as the influence of Chartism, and it is the latter question that is of greater importance for the present discussion.

The general conclusion about "influences" is that various elements in contemporary radical thought were brought to Australia by British immigrants, including Chartists. One important influence is that thought, as Max Beer pointed out, was the version of the theory of natural law propounded in John Locke's Second Treatise on Civil Government (Locke is an excellent example of a theorist whose work can be interpreted in different ways by different groups of people). These of Locke's doctrines which Beer found it to have been used by later radical thinkers were: (1) the theory that legitimate political authority was created by a compact between originally free and equal individuals who brought into society certain natural rights (2) the theory that the land was originally held in common (3) that labor was the real title to wealth. These doctrines, especially the first two, appeared in one form or another in Australia and were quite important although Locke's theory of natural law was not by any means the only type of thought that existed and flourished.

Claims to natural, indefeasible and individual rights were quite common in the period. The right to participate in government was the most usual object of such a claim; but other things were from time to time held to be the natural rights of individuals. Sometimes it was maintained that natural rights expressed a Divine purpose, or were actually decreed by God, but for the most part people formulated their claims to such rights in terms of the language of nationalism, in terms of which rights are seen as "self-evident." But more frequent, probably, than either of these formulations was that in which the claim made was stated in terms of the rights of British subjects rather than the rights of men. This belief that

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(1) M. Beer op. cit. p. 409.
Certain rights were guaranteed in the British Constitution as the "birthright" of all Englishmen, going back at least to the time of the Civil War, and perhaps considerably earlier. Which part of the Constitution contained this guarantee was not discussed, but the rights which were supposed to be guaranteed were in general the same as those rights which were supposed to be guaranteed as a "birthright" by natural law. The result of this dual conception of birthright was that any thinker could slip from one form of his theory to another, because on the whole it was believed that there was no conflict between the two. A meeting in Victoria in 1848 protested against Grote's Constitution Bill as altering and abridging their natural rights as British citizens. Taken literally this claim is absurd, but it did mean something to those who made it. If it became inconvenient to claim the Rights of Man, the Rights of Britons were readily available, although in most cases there seems to have been no special reason why one form should have been adopted rather than the other. In 1842 Henry McDermott preferred to demand the right of British subjects rather than to answer James Macarthur's criticisms of a doctrine of "indefeasible" rights, but it was not often that radical speakers or writers were forced onto the defensive as McDermott was. Perhaps those who consistently referred to the abstract rights of men had come under American or French influences, but it should not be forgotten that more nationalist strain in Lodge was re-iterated in England at about the time of the French Revolution and gained some influence through the writings of Paine and Gadwin.

Paine, and especially Gadwin illustrate how a radical interpretation can be placed on the doctrine of natural rights, with its theory of State of nature composed of originally face and equal individuals. But in practice the doctrine has been used mainly to justify formal equality before the law rather than economic equality. Lodge was no exception when he turned the theory of natural rights of men into a property holder's ideology. Sabine argues that the so-called Levellers went no further than to demand legal equality, and although his interpretation of their position has been disputed, it seems pretty clear that it is correct for Lilburne at least. While maintaining the right of the men of small property and of the propertyless to participate in government, Lilburne was not disposed to

1. PP 1849/3, 1842, report (2) A 627/7/1843, letter. McDermott's original statement was made at a public meeting in the previous year. (PP 17/2/1842, report)
dispute that individual property was itself a right. This was the traditional form that the theory took on, and so except in constitutional discussions it was often of more use to the propertyed than to the propertyless. We therefore find that when the working class was interested in claiming something other than representation its spokesmen tended to talk in terms of quite different theories of the character of society.

An older tradition in English thought that individualism is that which sees the community as an organization composed of a number of interests held together by customary privileges and rights. This view is in fact much closer to the historical "British Constitution", and it also is more consistent with the medieval tradition to which Locke, through Hooker was nominally appealing. Now this theory that the community is the union of a number of different interests has always provided a support for conservatives wishing to preserve the power of property. It had been used for this purpose by Ireton and by Burke, and in Australia conservatives seized upon it as a means of defending their position against the claims of the "democracy". The most able Australian exponent of it was Wentworth whose famous speech on the Second Reading of the Constitution Bill in 1851 is especially notable from this point of view; but others too, such as John O'Shanessy and Colin Campbell in Victoria, made use of the same argument. Even the middle class of squatters were sometimes willing to admit the claims of "property" and other interests to representation, although it is apparent that they were not clear about the status of these interests. These examples show that in Australia as in England, the theory of "interests" was used mainly by those who feared attacks on property rights, but it could also be turned to radical purposes. Wentworth was willing to admit that the lower classes formed an interest which had "an equal right with all the rest" and it was always possible to argue that the constitutional arrangements proposed by the conservatives would have deprived labor of their equal right. This was the argument in one petition sent to the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales in 1852: "Your petitioners agree in the demand for the representations of interests, as they are assured by the opponents of popular rights, t

(1) July 17/8/1851, report of proceedings of the Council (2) 12/3/1851, report (3) 16/4/1849, report (4) e.g. in the Constitution Committees "Address to the Colonists of New South Wales 12/3/1851".
but disagree and condemn their unfair exclusion of the labor interest, the great interest that maintains and moves the world\(^{(1)}\). This attitude seems to have been shared by W. A. Duncan, a spokesman for labor in the early forties. While he was a journalist Duncan had been foremost in demanding extended rights of representation, but his "Plea for the Constitution", published in 1853, was an appeal that the balance of interests should not be disturbed and that not too much weight should be given to "numbers" Duncan did not repudiate his earlier activities, and said, that he had not changed his mind. But, he asserted, the balance of power had changed since 1842 and the time for changes had now passed. The belief that there were a number of interests in society, each with privileges belonging to it as a group, could thus be used sometimes on behalf of the working class in Constitutional disputes. And the Christian view of the structure of society also provided workmen with an ethic in terms of which they could formulate some of their demands. Beer points out that a legacy of Christian communism came down from the Middle Ages to later socialist thinkers. But quite apart from that, the social and political ideas of the Church which were formalized by Aquinas gave to the laboring classes certain privileges, and so the worker was not making any special innovation in political thought when he claimed the "rights of labor" rather than the rights of man. Moreover, the English workman did not have to appeal simply to the "moral law". Many of these supposed "moral rights" had in fact been transformed into positive rights in the course of time and the workmen probably did not distinguish at all clearly between the rights guaranteed to him by Aquinas' law of nature and the rights guaranteed by law and custom.

With its theory of the just price, its emphasis on moral limitations on the exercise of power and the rights of property, its emphasis on the moral obligations of the upper ranks of society (including employers and governments) this form of Christian thought provided quite a formidable justification for the claims of labor or of the poor. Crozier comments on the inadequacy of this theory to take account of a permanent conflict between labor and capital — and its consequent inadequacy to analyze the position of labor in a capitalist society — but he makes another point of equal importance. "Until general secular education was introduced towards the end of the

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\(^{(1)}\) Petition from Narrabundah (New South Wales, Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings 1853, Vol I)
nineteenth century", he writes, "the mass of the populations in Europe and America was ideologically educated solely in the principles of the Church". The medieval tradition was not only one to which they were introduced, but it was nonetheless an important influence in their lives. Many of the migrants to Australia - and for that matter many of the native-born Australians - shared in this particular tradition and that fact was reflected in the manner in which they formulated their demands.

The other great English tradition which was of some importance in Australia was utilitarianism. But its influence did not rival that of natural law. Considerations of expediency were introduced into various arguments, but usually in association with arguments from "natural justice" and not always with ethical intention. The more specific doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number, and the familiar arguments in terms of which Bentham and his associates worked out the necessity for a widely-based representative system, were referred to comparatively infrequently in Australia. Not "interest" but "right" was the main argument used to justify wider representation, and Bentham's defence of radical reform was pushed more or less into the background.

These broad theories - natural law in both its secular and Christian versions, and utilitarianism - were supplemented at a number of points by doctrines of a more special kind. The political reform movement made some use of the concept of the sovereignty of the people, which was nominally derived from Rousseau. The land reformers appealed to the idea that the land was originally the common property of the people and quoted various arguments resembling those of the Physiocrats to support their claim to an early settlement of the land question. The long period during which the land had been of great social and economic importance had facilitated the development of ideologies in which the land was placed in some special position. Wage labor possessed few similar traditions but various attempts were made none the less to show that labor was especially entitled to a satisfactory income or to a voice in the community's affairs.

It now remains for us to set out in greater detail how the various theories and ideologies mentioned above were combined and developed in relation to the major policies of the labor movement. Each policy was

supported by different kinds of arguments, and the rival traditions were often combined in the speech or writings of a single agitator. One result of this was that arguments were rarely pushed to their logical conclusions. Those who used them were inclined to "hedge", to restate their claims in ways that would appear less objectionable to their audiences, even though the real basis of the claim may have been abandoned in the reformulation. The ways in which the great bodies of theory were modified and re-interpreted in the stress of actual struggles will be indicated in the succeeding chapters.
The predominant ideology among those persons demanding political reform was nominally Locke's natural law, but this was sometimes combined with utilitarianism and was often presented in a form that made the original doctrine barely recognisable. For the moderate reformers, natural law often "proved too much," and consequently they were forced to avoid abstract statements as much as possible. A general point we might make is that the moderate reformers were in a very difficult position. In attacking the privileges of the squatters they tended to state their case in general terms, to attack privilege as such; but on the other hand they did not desire the abolition of all political privileges and were therefore hard put to it to justify their actual demands. One device they adopted was mentioned in the preceding section: this was an attempt to establish that population, wealth and intelligence were all "interests" in the community and as such were entitled to representation. But there was complete confusion as to what this might mean — it would have been extremely difficult to show that "population" and "wealth" were "corporations" in a similar position in society. Once the claims of "population" (i.e. of individual men) were admitted it would have been difficult to account for the rights of any other interest at all — and of course we regularly find that thorough-going individualists are inflexibly opposed to the political influence of "corporative groups in the community". The moderate reformers frequently put out phrases like: "so as to defend the idea that representatives should on the whole be men of intelligence and standing in the community, and that electors should at least be intelligent. This is very different from the claim that wealth and intelligence should be separately represented, and it is not really consistent with a theory which treats representation as an actual right of all men, but it is nevertheless quite plausible as it stands. People who quite genuinely desired universal male suffrage were prepared to admit that some sections of the community were not capable of an honest and intelligent disposal of their vote, and for this reason advocated a literacy or low property qualification as a temporary measure. One thing that comes out of the various discussions is that nobody had an adequate theory of representation: nobody had any real idea of how the character of the represent-

(1) e.g. Hare, "Letter to the Working Class (2nd Series) No. V" (3/1855)
natives is actually related to the character of the electorate; and all
were equally vague about what they expected a representative assembly to do.
A consistent demand could well have argued against the sup ortors of
a conservative Upper House that to give men of wealth a special right to
election would have meant giving them an opportunity to further their own
interests at the expense of the rest of the community. This, in fact, is
how the extremists argued. But most political reformers (in New South
Wales at any rate) did not consistently think of the legislature as being
the battle-ground for conflicting individual - or group-interests. They
thought of it rather as a body for administering the affairs of the community,
and it was therefore fairly easy for those who opposed the influence of the
populace to claim that they were merely taking measures to prevent "hasty"
or "ill-considered" legislation. The middle-class radicals were unable to
present any well-considered criticism of this conception of a legislature.
But working class agitators such as Don brought the conflict of interests
well to the fore: "until the working men rose up and asserted his own
heaven-born dignity and met the high man of the earth face to face in the
council halls of the nation, and vindicated himself and his class, there was
no hope of justice for him" (1) 

The radical claim was based first of all upon the natural right of
a man to participate in Government, secondly on the rights of British Cit-
izens, and thirdly on the rights of the citizen to consent to the laws by
which he was bound; and fourthly on the sovereignty of the people.

C.J. Don, at the hustings in 1857 contended that "self-government"
was a natural right: "I maintain it to be the undoubted right of every
man upon whom the image of God is stamped, who shall be of sane mind and
untainted by crime, to have the privilege of self-government". A petition
from Bathurst to the New South Wales Legislative Council in 1853 likewise
claimed that the people possessed "an indefeasible right" to a certain
weight and authority in the management of their own affairs. But other
radicals were satisfied to refer (like the meeting which formed the Gold
Fields' Reform League at Ballarat) to "those political rights to which, as
British subjects they are entitled". J.B. Darnall, in his speech on the

(1) 14/2/1860, report of Testimonial Dinner to Don. (2) 18/5/1857. (3) New South
Wales Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings 1853 Vol II. (4) 21/10/1854,
reports.
the Second Reading of the Constitution Bill in 1853, relying partly on this
argument, stating that Wentworth's critics "only asked what all free
Englishmen had a right to demand — the right to govern themselves — the
power to make laws for themselves". A peculiar variant of this argument
was formulated by a meeting of miners at Bendigo which pledged itself "to
secure justice to the people and the full and free rights of our adopted
country — Australia. This shows the special difficulties of immigrants
who were trying to adjust a national tradition to new conditions. There
was in fact no reason to believe that citizens of Australia had any special
rights at all, but the residents of Bendigo apparently did not realise
that by altering the wording of the claim they were accustomed to make,
they were destroying its whole basis.

The right to representation was often claimed indirectly, as a derivat-
ive from the right to consent, or from the sovereignty of the people. The
notion that the people were sovereign, that the government was responsible
to the people, had a place in the medieval tradition, but the forms of
the doctrine which were popular in Australia seem to have come mainly from
Locke and his immediate predecessors who formulated a new theological
theory of natural law, or from Rousseau. The theory that laws were not not
binding unless the government had consented to them was frequently expressed,
as was the familiar cry of "no taxation without representation". Not many
people would have been willing to follow the former of these to its logical
conclusion, but a great many found it a convenient justification for their
demands, although not everyone interpreted it in exactly the same way. The
main points are that it was held that consent was necessary to render a law
binding, and that consent was more or less identified with possession
of the franchise. This identification of the franchise with consent is one
way of solving the problem of "virtual consent".

Another convenient catch-phrase was "the sovereignty of the people"
(Part of its convenience arose from the fact that it did not commit anyone to
a particular view of who constituted the "people") It was assumed that
Rousseau had proved satisfactorily that sovereignty rested with the people,
and reference was made from time to time to the necessity for government in
accordance with the will of the people. But no one seems to have been

(1) SMH 24/8/1853, report of proceedings of Parliament. (2) 15/12/1854, report
of meeting at Castlbegin. (3) On the origin of the doctrine of consent,
acquainted with Rousseau's own views on the conditions under which the sovereignty of the people could be realised, or to have been aware of any possible conflict between a theory in which first place is given to will and one in which first place is given to natural rights. Rousseau was simply grafted on to Locke and it was usually supposed that the will of the people would be sufficiently expressed by a majority decision.

Radical newspapers, such as The Star and Workingman's Guardian and the People's Advocate were very fond of asserting that "all power emanated from the people". And they sometimes quoted Rousseau's views on the matter. A meeting in Sydney in 1853, organised by the opponents of Wentworth's Bill, adopted a resolution (moved by Parson) which described the principle as "the great maxim of just and enlightened Government", but did not go on to demand universal suffrage. The People's Advocate, on the other hand, did interpret "the people" in the widest sense, and connected the principle with its own advocacy of the six points of the Charter. But at least the principle was an ambiguous one and more reliance was placed on other arguments.

A very clear statement of the theory of consent was given by James H. Bache in an editorial in the Press in 1841. "Where the people are not governed by laws which they themselves have either made or consented to, there cannot be a competent enjoyment of public or genuine liberty."

H. Bache did not keep consistently to this (or to any other) line but he was expressing the views of many of his contemporaries and the same cry was taken up later by some of the gold diggers. "That as all men are born free and equal", resolved a meeting called to sympathise with the diggers at Bureka, "this meeting claims their rights to a voice in the forming and passing of laws which they are called upon to obey". Earlier in 1854 a meeting had referred to "the hardship of being subjected to laws they had no voice in making, particularly when the question was the forming of a constitution", and others restricted "consent" to the forming of constitutions rather than the making of every law.

3 Sometimes coupled with the abstract doctrine of consent, but often stated independently, was the famous maxim of "no taxation without representation."

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(1) e.g. PA2/12/1842, editorial; PA23/12/1854, letter to Working Class No. 1
(2) e.g. SMH 24/9/1843, editorial. (3) SF6/9/1853, report (4) PP6/9/1843
(5) 19/12/1854 report of Castlemaine meeting (6) 47/2/1854, report (7) eg.
SMH 8/9/1853, speech by Robert Johnson.
Wentworth, when opposing the Municipal Institutions' Bill, had been pleased to claim that the power of taxation belonged, under the British Constitution, only to the representatives of the people duly elected by the people. But Wentworth was not advocating anything more than a broadly representative system of government, as opposed to the nominated Legislative Council that existed at that time. He was contending that only a representative authority had the power to tax. But other people took the principle to mean that political authorities had the power to tax only those whom they represented — that the unrepresented could not legitimately be taxed, and that those who were taxed ought to be represented. What the radicals were claiming was "the great fundamental maxim of the British Constitution: taxation and representation should go hand in hand." As Hawkeley put it when giving evidence before the Select Committee on the Sydney Corporation Bill in 1852, "every citizen has a right to choose the people who tax him." As this example shows, incidentally, even the radical version of the principle had a conservative aspect. It could establish no right to representation for any person who was not taxed in some way or another, and so Hawkeley and his friends in the Political Association opposed the extension of the municipal franchise beyond "householder suffrage." But this restriction did not apply to the general political franchise and in general the principle that representation and taxation "should go hand in hand" was equivalent to the claim that no law was binding on those who had not consented to it through their representatives. The former was usually stated to be a part of the British Constitution, whilst the latter was derived from the abstract rights of men, but as usual the two were not strictly separated and the right to elect one's taxers was occasionally declared to be a natural right. The right to consent was more especially the demand of the Victorian goldfields, and thus may be an indication of American influence.

A full and concise statement of the natural law theory current on the gold fields was given by S. Denysan, a leading agitator on the fields, in his evidence before the Commission appointed to inquire into the political and social views and conditions of the diggers. Denysan was asked to give his
opinion on the subject of representation and replied as follows: "I hold that all men are born with free and equal rights they are all entitled to the exercise and enjoyment of those rights. . . . . We think that the whole of the community of the Gold Fields, not only diggers, but all, should be put into possession of their rights of representation. I disapprove of the right of any portion of my fellow men to represent property instead of men. I think it is the man who should be represented, and not property, and wherever I find a good citizen called upon to pay taxes and obey laws, those laws should be the expression of his own voice and those taxes should be levied by his own representatives." Most of the elements of the conventional individualist theory are contained here: the conception of society as an aggregate of free and equal individuals all possessing equal rights; the rejection of any theory that political influence to property or to anything other than individual men; the assertion of the right to consent and the coupling of this right with the right of taxpayers to representation; the assumption that the "conditions" for "consent" would be satisfied if manhood suffrage were introduced; and through it all the obvious influence of rationalist modes of thought in such conceptions as the rights of men and "an abstract principle of justice". But it is significant that Denovan did not really believe that all men were born free and equal and possessed equal rights. Here rejected distinctions which were based on property (emphatically enough) but he wanted to make distinctions between men on the other grounds. The Commission shrewdly questioned him on this point, and the gap between his theory and his programme was well brought out.

"Q3787. Would you give the right of representation to Chinese? - No, certainly not.

"Q3788. Then your universal rights of mankind are (4) knocked on the head immediately? - I mean a civilized community.

Denovan had no real answer to this criticism.

We have now seen that labor relied to some extent on theories which denied the existence of distinctions between men. An alternative method of supporting labor's claims is to make distinctions along lines which seem to justify special privileges and rights for the laboring classes.
distinctions of this kind appeared within the labor movement in Australia by 1860.

It was claimed that labor was entitled to representation "inasmuch as
the wealth of a nation abides in and results from the skill and industry
of the toiling classes". Labor was described as "the great interest that
maintains and moves the world", and as "the germ and support of every
rising state".

The workers' contribution to society was held to be partly economic -
"they alone were producers of the wealth that alone made their rulers superior
to them" and it was also argued that the rise of the working class to
power would result in increased prosperity to all: "Gradually as your
demands are yielded so also will this colony progress in power and riches
and with your riches will Advance Australia". The working class was even
represented as the class which held the key to the improvement of society: "They
might become in their full share of ruling power able to watch over the
development of the national resources and the improvement, in all respects,
of the individual man". In these ways labor was given a special position
in "the social scale" and was held in consequence to be entitled to at least
a share in the representation of the community.

No few attempts by propagandists to present a systematic account of
their political beliefs added little that was original. In the political
conditions of the time, the suffrage and the distribution of electorates
were placed in the centre of discussion, and political writings did not
often wander far from these topics. Radical journalists and pamphleteers
placed great emphasis on the value of the suffrage, both in itself and as
a means to reforms of other kinds. There was occasionally some recognition
of the fact that political power is not simply a function of the suffrage,
but such views were not incorporated into a proper analysis of political
power. Most of the people who were interested in expressing any theoretical
views on Australian politics were "voluntarists", and were not disposed
to emphasize any parts of their own theory which seemed to limit the poss-
abilities of reform. Land reformers sometimes represented the distribution
of power in the community to be dependent on the distribution of land,
but when they discussed reform they tended to assume that the people's

(1) A23/8/3895, report of meeting organised by People's League. (2) Petition
from Hurry and Hurry. (3) SG23/7/1835, letter by David Taylor. (4) A28/9/1859, report
representatives were all-powerful.

A good example of the political thinking of the time was The Manifesto of the Electoral Reform League of New South Wales, which was based mainly on Locke's ideas. The Manifesto claimed to be 'the security of the persons and of the property of the people, which are held to be sacred and inviolable'. The Manifesto did not explicitly refer to a social contract but it did take over Locke's principle that the purpose of political authority was security and the protection of individual rights, and this in particular was what Locke had hoped to establish by his use of the device of the contract. In a supplementary Address to the Industrious People of New South Wales, the League used the language of the more radical form of natural law, declaring that it stood for 'perfect liberty and perfect justice for every man'; but it is pretty clear that the League was aiming at no more than political equality and in fact when the Electoral Act was passed in 1856 the League dissolved because its work had been accomplished. The familiar doctrines that "the man who was not actually represented was a slave", and that "it was unjust and impolite that men should be called upon to subscribe to laws in the making of which they had no voice through their representatives" were argued by one of the speakers at the meeting which adopted the Manifesto and Address. The Manifesto itself espoused its programme of universal suffrage by reference to "constitutial right", ancient practice of the realm of England and "especially the constitution granted by our glorious Queen" but it was a major appeal was to natural right, not to custom. It can authorized a "truly elected" legislature, and "the collected will of the colony" and as "having the sole power and authority to enact laws to determine the necessity for contributions and their appropriation for the common good" and although the language may have been James's his conception of the role of an elected Assembly was Locke's.

Frederick Vinne, the pamphleteer from Victoria was a theorist who gave slightly different accounts of political power in different parts of his works. "The history of the world", he contended, "shows that those who have obtained a monopoly of wealth have been able to seize upon power".

But he deduced from this not merely that "it is unsafe for society

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(1) 22/3/1856, report of a meeting which adopted the Manifesto. (2) 21/12/1856, report.
to permit a system which will lead to a monopoly of wealth", but also that "it is unsafe to delegate exclusively the power of making laws, or of giving a veto to them, to those only who possess property". It appears that Vines believed that the real way to power was through control of the legislature and that the power of wealth in the past had been deprived from its privileged position with regard to the election of representatives. He gave no other account of possible ways in which "wealth" or "property" could gain power, and his account of how the representative system worked was extremely naive. It derives apparently from Bentham, although it is doubtful that Vines would have accepted utilitarianism in its entirety if he had understood it correctly. He explained that "good government consists in procuring the greatest good of the greatest number" and that "under a completely representative system of Government, it is the majority of a community which governs and are responsible for the laws and systems by which the interests of the general community are controlled". How that left the way open for him to argue that complete representation could be achieved only if wealth were equally distributed or some other such condition were realised. But the examples he gave of the things which prevented the development of a truly representative system were property restrictions on voting or on membership of the legislature. If the community had a free choice, he thought, "the parties whom they elect will reflect the aims of the nation. If the community exalt the possession of riches of money, of houses, or of land, this fact would be exhibited by the men they elect for their legislators". This was an extremely simplified view of the relation between electors and representatives but it enabled Vines to assume that there was no insuperable obstacle to the transformation of Victoria into an agricultural community. Despite his appreciation of the political importance of wealth, he had no conception of economic development nor of necessity in political life. The fact that he more or less identified "wealth" with "property in land" is significant.

Vines' pamphlets are interesting also because of the different treatment given to the right to the franchise and the right to property. The former he discussed as an "alienable" natural right; the latter as a right derived conditionally from society. On the first point he argued that "society

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(1) Our Lands and How to Get at Them (Melbourne, 1856) p.46. (2) Ibid., p.10.  
(3) A Glorious Future for Australia (Melbourne, 1858) p.9 (4) Ibid., p.43.
cannot justly deprive any member from the right of exercising a voice in the making of the laws; on the second, he declared that it was not a sound argument that the landholder ought to be at liberty to do as he pleases with it, and to hold it on a profitless and unprofitable state; and that society’s interest was more important. He did not try to adjust the different conceptions of “right” to each other. Another writer who tried to combine an abstract theory of rights with an apparently contradictory doctrine was James M’Eachern, whose views and activities have been mentioned from time to time. The general structure of M’Eachern’s theory has been described as “adherence to natural rights on the one hand and to the greatest good of the greatest number on the other.” This explanation was not intended as a criticism, but it does indicate the complete confusion in his thought. Like many others who were interested in promoting “the greatest good of the greatest number,” and who expressed some admiration for Bentham, M’Eachern seems never to have read Bentham’s own views on the theory of natural law.

M’Eachern’s method and doctrine were well, if briefly, set out in an early editorial in the “Free Press” on the subject of freedom of thought. His primary characterization of this freedom was in the best tradition of rationalist thought—he described it as “a right inseparable from our nature and capacity as rational and responsible creatures.” This deduction of the right from man’s “nature” would, one supposes, have committed M’Eachern quite definitely to the view that it was “inalienable.” But he was prepared to admit that circumstances might arise in which it would be inexpedient to permit everyone to exercise the right. This admission was implicit in his contention that “it is only where the expression of our thought is incompatible with our duty to society that any restriction or impediment can be warrantably imposed on the exercise of so important and essential a natural right.” Thus he really placed “duty to society” above natural right and it is difficult to see that his theory of rights had any independent significance whatever.

The full complexity of M’Eachern’s thought is indicated in the editorial in the first number of the Guardian. He was nominally explaining the views and intentions of the Mutual Protection Association but in fact he was writing only for himself. He said that the Mutual Protection Asso-
In expanding his account of Constitutional Radicalism he tried to demonstrate the moral basis of laws: "Right is older than human law. Law ought to be its voice. It should be based on the principle of justice in the human breast and have as the test of its expediency and the evident warrant of its legitimacy—the greatest good of the greatest number". Thus at least he was persistent in trying to combine "natural rights" and "the greatest good of the greatest number" into a single theory, and they did have a common element of individualism. But he then introduced the completely different notion that what was required in society was "a legitimate and wholesome equilibrium between the constituent interests of the Colony" which he identified as Land, Labour and Capital—and he developed this idea at some length: "We contend that there does not exist a legitimate balance of power between the constituent interests of the Colony. These interests are not equally represented and therefore not equally assured. They are not coincident but in a greater or less degree they are mutually dependent on each other". This adherence to a theory of "constituent interests" seems to have been no temporary aberration, for in 1852 and 1853 he was interested in securing greater representation for Labour as an interest, and claimed that "the equity of political representation essentially requires that the three great elements in the economy of society, to wit Labor, Capital and Property should be equally represented by persons not only of their own choosing but connected and identified with their respective interests". To complete this outline of McEachern's theoretical assumptions it must be added that he believed that many of his claims merely expressed "the privileges and rights of the British constitution." There seems to be no way in which those various theories could have been combined into a consistent whole. In some ways McEachern is the most interesting of the early radical journalists, but although he was interested in abstract "theoretical" formulæ it is clear that he had no grasp of political theory.

(1) Memorial to the Legislative Council from members of the Tambaroora Association of Alluvial Miners, (New South Wales Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings, 1852 Vol. II). I assume that McEachern, as Secretary of the Association, drew up the Memorial of McEachern's "Appendix" to the Petition of the Democratic League (PA/1/1853) (2) 016/3/1844.
The impression to be gained from M’Eachern’s published beliefs is that he was interested primarily in the rights of men and only secondarily in the rights of laboring men. The reverse is true of E.J. Hanksley who used the mechanism and theory of natural rights rather more consistently than M’Eachern.

Hanksley adopted a fairly orthodox view of political rights although it is interesting that he did not make use of the idea of a contract. He contended that the right to election “that is the right of having a voice in the persons who are making the laws” was inherent in every man and that government was established “solely for the benefit of the people who are governed.” But he did not confuse the “true” (i.e., metaphysical) end of government with the aims of those who originally set up the government and he did not try to bind the governors by any original agreement to which they were supposed to be a party. He tried to demonstrate the moral basis of power not from something that happened in the past but from “first principles.” He held that the essence of power was that it was delegated authority and he assumed that the people were the only ones capable of delegating such authority “Government is but a delegated power held by a few individual in the community for the benefit of the whole. It is quite true that the power of government has often been acquired by force and co-optation, instead of by delegation, but wherever this has been the case the right of the people to delegate authority to govern has not been destroyed, it was only for a time annulled and the people have generally seized upon the first opportunity of re-assuming their right. “From this he deduced the right to resistence “so long as (the government) governs for the benefit of the people, it is not lawful to resist or change it; but when it ceases to be beneficial or abuses its trust it is perfectly lawful .. . . that it should be resisted or changed.” This trust was 

\[ \text{(3)} \]

not created by a contract

\[ \text{(4)} \]

It will thus be seen that Hanksley’s theory of government bears greater formal resemblance to Rousseau’s than to Locke’s although at the same time Hanksley did from time to time make use of Locke’s theory of natural laws. He accepted, however, the usual naive theory of representation and

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(1) PAS/1/1555, letter to the Working Class No V. (2) PATC/1/1943, editorial. (3) PAS/1/1555, letter to the Working Class III. (4) The question Hanksley asked was, how can power be justified, and the answer he gave was that it was justified only when it was derived from the people.
apparently knew nothing of Rousseau's theory of the general will. He believed that ever was "delegated" once everybody was allowed to participate in the choice of representatives. This then is the theory of Representation—As all the people cannot themselves meet to make laws, they choose from amongst themselves men whom they deem most fitted for the purpose. He therefore placed great emphasis on the franchise — "the exercise of that privilege which alone distinguishes the free man from the slave." (1)

But the real interest in Hanksley's work derives not from his views on these abstract questions but from what he had to say about the existing state of society. For Hanksley stated more emphatically than anyone else in New South Wales the view that society was going through a social revolution which would bring "the People" to power, and he more or less identified the People with the working class. This was the theme of the first editorial in the People's Advocate and it was repeated many times. The following formulation of his ideas is an interesting one: "Old things are rapidly passing, a new empire, the empire of right is about to be established; and in this new state of things the artisan, the mechanic and the laborer must prominently stand forth; they cannot be longer downtrodden by the idle, the assuming and the unproductive aristocrats." (2)

Now this view that the aristocrat is the real enemy of the laborer is a pre-capitalist one, but what distinctive about Hanksley was that he interpreted political conflicts primarily in economic terms— as struggles over distribution between laborers and their exploiters. "It is impossible to suppose that the old state of things with regard to production and distribution can much longer continue. Men have grown too wise to labour continually for others and not at all for themselves; besides which the very pressure of circumstances will force the wealthy to consider the matter, and for their own sake, they must consent to some different arrangements by which the laborer shall at all events receive his fair share of the comforts as well as the necessaries of life." "The vast majority of men are doomed to earn subsistence by the labor of their hands... The question of remuneration, or in other words, "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work" can no longer be shirked." (3)

(1) PA 29/9/1849, Letter to the Working Class (1st series)(2) PA 9/12/1848, editorial. (3) PA 2/12/1849 (4) PA 9/12/1848, editorial on Land. (5) PA 13/1/1849, editorial. (6) Ibid.
But although Hawkesley tended to identify economic and political conflicts, he had no economic theory and through none necessary because he shared in the belief that the condition of the people depended on the laws of the country—and that the workers' conditions could be remedied by a properly constituted legislature. "The extension of the franchise, and the exercise of the ballot will achieve all that you can desire." The only actual economic reform he advocated was the re-casting of the land laws. He had no real theory of society or of power apart from government; the functioning of the government was the only part of political theory in which he was interested.

Hawkesley firmly believed that the rise of "Democracy" could not be impeded. This belief came partly from a metaphysical belief that "right" must in the end be victorious. "Democracy, as we have said, must advance, for it is founded upon the eternal basis of truth." But in addition he believed that the working class were an active force that would bring about the "empire of right." "The people are now everywhere clamorous for power; they are everywhere seeking for political rights; and their united voices will not break resistance." The failure of his agitation led Hawkesley to complain about the apathy of the people, but he fell back on the belief that the power of the people, when they were united, was irresistible.

Hawkesley went quite some way in developing an ideology in which the working class was described as entitled to representation by "their intelligence, their worth, their perseverance, and their continuous industry." His most extreme statement of this ideology was contained in his 24th Letter to the Working Class. "Everyday, too, I am still more convinced that it is the working men, and they alone, who can work out the political salvation of this country." But in the development of his ideas it became obvious that he was uncertain as to whether he could ascribe a virtuous character to the workers. About the extent of the workers' contribution to production, he imagined there could be no doubt, but it was not so clear that the working class contributed in like degree to the morality of the community. Thus on the one hand he argued that only those who labored (in a broad sense) were truly moral. "The men who labor, as a class, we regard with greater respect.

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(1) PA27; 10/1849, editorial (2) PA20/1849, report (3) PA1/2/1849, editorial (4) PA2/12/1849 editorial (5) PA3/12/1849.
than any other class. In the hard laborers, mental and corporeal, all the nobility of our nature is possessed. The idle it is impossible to respect—impossible not to condescend. On the other hand he himself reproached the workers for not making greater efforts to improve themselves. "The laborer has forgotten his true dignity and by giving loose to his groveling desires, and indulging his animal passions, he has almost ceased to be a man!"

In order to overcome the moral inadequacies of the working class, Hawkesley advocated a "political education." This, he supposed was one of the functions of the "Constitutional Association" and of the People's Hall which he tried to set up in 1843 and again in 1849. What he meant by a political education was "an education tending to elevate and ennoble," not "an education from which all questions of political science have been excluded, an education carried on merely to subserve the interests of states and state-paid churches"; rather, an education "such as to teach (every man) self-dependence, and not as it hitherto has been, a simian fear and looking up to others." What he demanded of an education, therefore, was that it should make reality consistent with his theory, and thus his view of the role of education is quite similar to Lenin's view of the role of "theory".

Hawkesley's importance as an ideologist of the working class derived from the fact that he realized more clearly than other radical journalists that political questions could not be considered apart from economic questions, (including distribution) and that the distribution of power in society was changing. He wished to ally himself with the working class and tried to formulate a theory which would assign a favored role to that class. He was thus in a sense the most "advanced" of those who sought political power for the workers. But his concept of class conflicts was hazy and in practice he tended to associate himself with middle class reformers such as Parnell. His insight into the importance of distribution led him no further than to advocate land reform and in general he treated all political questions at the level of the franchise. This meant that although he was prepared to support workers engaged in industrial struggles he did not fully understand the importance which the men themselves assigned to economic organizations and collective bargaining.

His was an ideology about the working class rather than the ideology of the working class.

(1) PA22/3/1849, editorial on "The Glory of Labor." (2) PA2/6/1849, letter to the working class. (3) PA2/12/1849, editorial on "The Constitutional Association." (4) PA25/12/1849, editorial on "Prospects of Democracy."
The land reformers in Australia brought into prominence one argument of Locke's that was not greatly stressed by his immediate followers although the British agrarian reformers appropriated it and gave it a radical twist. Locke had argued that land was originally common property, but he justified existing property rights in terms of his other argument that labor gave one a title to property. Now Spenney took over the former argument and used it as a justification for a modified form of communism. But in Australia some attempts had to be made to state the people's right to the land in some way that would justify individualism. On the one hand it was desirable to avoid any argument that would tend to justify continued occupancy by existing landholders, and on the other hand it was necessary to make out some claim for people who certainly had not "mixed their labor" with the land. In general it was assumed that common rights to the land gave each man a more or less equal right, although this argument was not worked out fully, and in practice no attempt was made to impose complete equality. Nobody calculated the total amount of land and worked out what each man's share was — it was assumed that there would be sufficient to satisfy everyone's demand if only the monopoly of the squatters could be destroyed.

Not all discussions of land reform were concerned with the question of rightful ownership. Many other theories were advanced in order to support the demands of the reformers for an immediate settlement of the land question. Land reform was regarded by many people as the most vital problem facing the community, and this was reflected in what they said about land. Attempts were made to show that the land was in a special position in society, and that the other interests and policies were dependent upon a satisfactory solution of the land question. Some of the arguments used resembled those of the physiocrats in making the prosperity of the community depend on land, others tried to demonstrate the dependence of labor on the land. Here, more than in any other field a real attempt was made to present some kind of a theory, and a few of the pamphlets and articles dealing with land reform are not without interest from a theoretical point of view.

The most abstract statements of the right of the people to the land were formulated as attacks on the existing occupiers of land. The latter were represented as a separate "class", who, through luck or chicanery had robbed their fellow countrymen of their share in a common inheritance.
land was the inheritance of the people as a whole and not that of any particular section or class of the community—and neither the people nor their representatives could partake this right away... any more than the government could deprive them of the air they breathed" said W.B. Allen. His objections were watched by those at a meeting of Bendigo gold-diggers who resolved that "the public land belong by right to the people, and were given by the Creator for the use of men and cannot with justice be alienated from him". In both these statements there appeared the claim that the people as a whole had an inalienable right to the land. This provided a sufficiently emphatic attack on the squatters but it involved a real difficulty in showing how land could be appropriated by and alienated to individuals at all.

An important question here is what kind of a group one assumes "the people" to be. The "free selection" land-farmers in Australia were always vulnerable to theoretical attacks from the "anti-alienation" school just because they did not formulate clearly the assumptions in terms of which they were arguing. Ogilvie and Faine had interpreted the common rights of the people as the right of each individual to an equal share in the land, and provided that one accepts the premise that "the people" is nothing but an aggregate of free and equal individuals this is consistent with the general apparatus of natural law. But propagandists in Australia did not state their premises and did not reveal that they thought of "the people" in these terms. One commentator claimed that "if (the land) belongs to the people at large every one has a right to share in it" but this, as it stood, was no answer to those who argued that if the land belonged "to the people at large" no one had a right to any separate share of it. The opponents of alienation interpreted the group as having an independent existence but neither they nor the advocates of free selection seemed to grasp that they were arguing from different premises. The latter group did not support their programme with an explicitly formulated individualist and equalitarian theory of society. They either abandoned the field of "rights" to their critics or else simply put forward the rights of individuals to the land. The second alternative was the more attractive, but it left unexplained what had happened to the rights of "the people at large". One land meeting in Melbourne chose the

individualist formulation when it deplored the loss by the masses of the people of "their most cherished right - the right to settle themselves independently on the land." But not everybody was prepared to take that step. In 1855 the question was discussed by the Richmond Political Association which was working out its programme in open debate. Against alienation it was argued that "the State possessed no divine moral or natural right to create in an universal right individual right and monopoly". In opposition to these views it was contended that even if the first principles were admitted to be just the advantages to be gained by a prevention of the sale of land were doubtful, if not absurdical. In other words they found it impossible to establish the right of individuals to the land and had to fall back on questions of expediency. The Richmond Political Association was not itself an important organisation but this debate gave each side an opportunity to develop its case and the free selection school were badly defeated at the theoretical level.

The difficulties of those in favour of some form of alienation were not completely overcome once they had made it clear that they were claiming individual rights. They still had to explain how the inalienable rights of some individuals were to be provided for in a society in which not everyone actually held land, and how the rights of future generations were to be protected if the land were to be alienated at the present time. Their problems are well illustrated by a statement of C.J. Don's: "I maintain that the land belongs to the people who inhabit it and not to any particular section unless they bought it from the proper quarter and paid for it." If his premise had been correct it would have been impossible for him to show how these could have been a "proper quarter." Other attempts to grapple with this problem were made by Henry Parkes and W. B. Allen at a meeting in Sydney in 1857 but their efforts were hardly more successful than Don's. Allen began by saying that he "considered it was an inalienable and indefeasible right of the people to become holders of the public lands." This was a radical enough statement but he proceeded immediately to modify his demand to reformulate in a less offensive way: "On the land question (Allen said) he was a perfect radical; he went back to the inherent right of men and contended that in accordance with that right no power invested in the hands of any man or body of men to sell the land in such a manner as to create a large landed aristocracy." Allen could have found any number of things that were not provided for in the conventional

(1) 1/2/1859, report (2) 2/10/1855, report (3) 18/9/1857, report of Nomination (4) 18/24, 11/1851, report.
theory of natural law but to investigate the question more closely might
have made it impossible for him to justify his own programme. Parkes adopted
the same tactics of stating the rights of the individual and of their interpreting
them for his own purposes. His initial statement was as radical as Allen's:
"You have all, unquestionably, an inalienable right in the department of the
lands of a country recently taken possession of, and yet to be peopled by the
people of your nation. "But without any pause he indicated that he did not
really mean what he said: "I do not of course mean by this my wild idea of
socialism such as it exists on the continent of Europe. I only mean that in
the making of those laws by which the wild lands of the colony are to come
into private occupation and freehold holding you, all of you, are interested."

It is significant that the Australian land reformers did not propose anything
like Paine's pension scheme in order to recompense the individuals who, though
having an equal right with the rest, did not actually occupy or possess land.
But Paine was to some extent a theorist interested at least in maintaining
the formal consistency of his programme with the doctrine of natural rights,
the Australian reformers were interested entirely in policy and were unwilling
to let their requirements of any theory limit their policy. Whereas Paine
tended to deduce his policy from his theory, they tended to modify their theory to suit their policy.

A problem common to all those who held that there existed a right to
property was the task of explaining how men came to possess this right. This
provided no difficulty for those who were prepared to argue from the "natural
state" or from the alleged fact that the land was made "for the general use
and maintenance of the whole human race." But the discussions at the
Convention revealed that some sections of the community were unhappy about this
form of argument and tried to and found their claim in positive law rather than
natural law. While some delegates spoke of the "natural and just rights" of the
people, or of their "inheritance", others were prepared to base the
claim on the fact that "the Queen" had given control of the public lands to
the people (or rather, to their "representatives" in Parliament). This
practice of trying to buttress a claim to a natural right by reference to a
positive right appeared elsewhere during the period.

To say that "the people" rightfully possesses the land is still to

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(1) 18/12/1857, report. (2) 24/8/1844, report of speech by Currie. (3) 17/7/1897
report of Convention proceedings. Money was one delegate who used the
report of Convention's proceedings. The address from Sebastian also used the other
formulations.
leave some questions unsettled. A decision has to be made about who is to be included and who is to be excluded. If the right to property were derived from nature nobody could be excluded but the traditional device was to suppose that the British land belonged to the British people, the French land to the French people and so on. But to whom, on this analogy would the Australian land have belonged? The propagandists were a little uncertain about this. Some of them recognized that perhaps the prior claim was held by the aborigine but they argued that this claim had been superseded: "They had only to say that they wanted the land for it was their own. They had by their vices driven off the natives and they now stood as their successors". But the claim that had been justified was that of recent arrivals in the colony of people who can hardly yet claim to be "Australian" and for this reason it was contended that the land was the property of "the whole British people". This weapon however, proved to be untrustworthy, for it was used by advocates of an auction system to defend the rights of those who had not yet arrived. "We hold the lands of the colony to belong to the British people", said the Portland Guardian, "and this fact argues quite so much against the scheme of the Land League as it does against the squattering system". Nobody had any particular answer to this point and it was just ignored, even at the Convention where an unsuccessful amendment to a motion urged the auction system "in as much as the unsold lands of the colony are the property of the people of Great Britain as well as the inhabitants of the colony".

Before leaving this question of ownership we might consider one other formulation. At a meeting organized by the New South Wales Land League, "Mr. Lucas spoke mainly in favour of the claims of the poor to a just and equitable consideration in the settlement of the land question" and this opinion that the poor, or the working man, had a special right to the land was not uncommon. Sometimes this seems to have reflected a belief that only the laborer could use the land productively and that, in consequence, his claims were superior. That was apparently the argument in a Memorandum prepared by the Victorian Land League. "We submit that the actual cultivator should be enabled to enter upon his land the moment he has selected it at a known uniform price, without auction. We submit that the auction system should be retained merely as a means of determining a prefer-

(1) It was obviously inappropriate to claim - as Hawkesley did (PA9/12/1848) - that it was obviously inappropriate to claim. (2)A8/4/1853, report on behalf of immigrants their rights to their "native soil". (3)A11/7/1857, reprint. (4)A23/7/1857, report of proceedings. (5)B16/3/1858, report.
Once when capitalism competes with capitalism. But on the whole, the claim seems to have been put forward in the simple form that the poor, as such, had a special right to the land. How the claims of the people and the claims of the poor could have been reconciled is not clear, but that did not seem to worry any of the Australian reformers.

Apart from these various doctrines about ownership, the predominant ideology relating to the land was summed up in J.C. White's simile: "As the mainspring was to the watch, so was the core to society." The importance of the land to society was traced to its influence on social organization on labor, on prosperity. An early land meeting in New South Wales declared that the occupation of the first state lands of the colony was necessary for "the establishment of those political, economic, and religious institutions which are the pillars of a free and happy state." Henry Parkes, during his association with the Constitutional Association argued in similar vein: "the land was so divided that political power was placed in the hands of the few, and he was of opinion that all our social and political evils might be traced to the unequal distribution of the land." These were the clearest expressions of the view that the desired organization of society was dependent on a desired distribution of the land, but numerous other examples could be found.

Another line of thought represented the land question and the labor question as identical. This viewpoint was essentially that of the reactionary—finding no place for industrialism or for wage labor, and seeking a solution for economic conflicts in a society of "yeomen." Free selection was described as a means "to secure to labor its just and natural reward and to the masses of the people their proper independent position" To emphasize here on the reward of labor is important because of the obvious reference to the fact that the claim to the whole produce of labor would be satisfied in a landed society. A similar reference can be found in the statement of W.B. Allen that he wanted "a country where every man tilled his own soil, and reaped his own reward" and in Cramp's picture of "a numerous happy and contented people each regulating his rate of wage by the fertility of the soil." It was believed that if, on the contrary, the land were permitted to be

fall into the hands of the few - "the poor man would then be forced hence to be prostrate at the feet of capital." That the people prevented from taking up land would "around the towns and cities where they live at starvation rates of remuneration, and the slightest error or caprice throwing them out of employment the result is destitution starvation and unemployment."

To correct this state of affairs, it was argued, "it will only be requisite to have free access to the land. Everyone able and willing should be allowed to aid in the work of production and progress to the best of his ability, but no one should be allowed to appropriate what he does not want. Monopoly of the source of all wealth - the land - we should not tolerate on any account."

Employment in the towns was regarded as unnatural and at best as a hazardous and temporary affair because of the impossibility of absorbing all the available labor. The attitude expressed here was not merely one of hostility to industrialism; it reflected a partial failure to recognize the economic importance of industrialism. The land was regarded as "the most abundant source of employment", and agriculture was regarded as the most natural occupation for man: "Agriculture is the normal pursuit of mankind and those employed in it are in the condition man were intended to be, for the earth was given to men to till it, and by the sweat of their brow they are to eat bread. Agriculture is the soundest and best foundation of a nation's greatness" - though it is not one of the most money-making occupations it is one of the moral and humanizing of employments, and one best adapted to man's nature.

Employment in the towns and even in the crafts was treated in the ideology of the land movement as a very secondary thing.

Agriculture was treated also as the most important form of production. Hovell has suggested that the physiocratic tradition influenced Ogilvie and other English reformers and we certainly find something similar to it in Australia although it is not necessary to assume that there was any direct denomination from the "Economists". The claim that only agriculture is productive is much older than the physiocrats and seems to arise spontaneously in agricultural societies threatened by commercial and industrial developments. In Australia, it was commonly argued that agriculture was the only productive industry and that the land should bear the full weight of taxation; if, however, the doctrine of "product net" was understood and accepted at all, it was

expressed in a very clumsy form. Sometimes the agriculturalists were not
prepared to put forward a general theory of the social importance of agriculture
they were satisfied to point to agriculture "as the prime cause of cheapening
the necessities of life", or as of particular importance to Australia at
its particular stage of development. But the more general claim was also
made. In its least sophisticated form it was simply a demand that the produc-
tion of foods should be given priority in the economy. "The tilling of the soil"
contended a pamphleteer, "must be looked upon as the main business of our lives,
to supply us with the necessaries of existence. Mining as a business of
secondary importance to supply us with foreign luxuries and increase the wealth
of the country. Agriculture will be the mainstay of this as of other countries.
(2) Compared with it all other pursuits will be fluctuating and uncertain." In
a few of the more sophisticated versions some use was made of the distinction
between productive and unproductive labor. A fairly full account of this
distinction was given by the Rev. Robert Ross, a witness before the Select
Committee on Distressed Laborers in 1843: "The population of the Colony
essentially consists of two classes, producers of wealth and exchangers of
wealth; the producers are farmers and graziers etc., the exchangers are
merchants and shipowners and shopkeepers; the exchangers can only exist
as a body in proportion as the producers produce wealth; they are nothing,
absolutely nothing unless there is something for them to exchange within the
colony; and I think that the only way to raise this Colony is to increase
the number of producers, instead of the number of exchangers of wealth." It
will be seen that Ross in line with the tradition from Aristotle included
graziers among the "productive" classes whilst the more usual classification
in Australia was to regard only agriculture as "truly" productive. (The social
conflict in Australia appeared to take the form of pastoralists v. agricultural-
ists). Another feature of Ross's argument was that he did not take account of
manufacturing in any way; he did not classify it as productive and yet could
not have described it as merely "exchanging" wealth. An attempt to fit
industrial developments into an agricultural ideology was made in a pamphlet
published in Melbourne in 1854. S. Wekey, the author of this pamphlet wrote

(1) Petition from Castlemaine on the Land Question (Victoria Legislative Assembly
Votes and Proceedings 1856-57, Vol III)(2) An Old Colonist (Land and Labour in
Victoria, p.15 (3) F.B. Report from Select Committee on the Petition from Dist-
ressed Laborers (New South Wales Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings,
1843 (2nd Session) 214-
that manufacturing industry, \textsuperscript{(1)}

Commerce, although it may in a great measure act to the welfare of a country, can be looked upon merely as the agency of either agriculture or manufacturing industry, and is entirely dependent on both.\textsuperscript{(1)} He therefore appeared to place manufacturing on an equal footing with the land but in the long run he thought that the land was really \textit{essence}; it is still maintained that the husbandman is the most useful productive organ of the Commonwealth. He furnishes the materials to the manufacturer who converts them into articles of luxury; this individual prosperity increases the real wealth and prosperity of his country; whilst his existence in the community does not interfere with the prospects of his neighbour.\textsuperscript{(2)} It actually forwards the interest of the merchant, of the manufacturer and of all those dependent on the produce of the soil.\textsuperscript{(2)} This formulation illustrates very well the structure of an ideology. Those activities connected with the land form in a sense the first steps in the productive process. But this fast is transformed into a demand that such activities should be regarded as of special importance – and more particularly into a demand that some of these activities should be especially encouraged. Chronological order is taken to be identical with order of importance. A similar transformation of fact into demand is to be found in those theories which begin by asserting that men must eat to live and conclude from this that each nation should concentrate on the production of foodstuffs.

Despite the great interest in the land problem, there were only a few concrete proposals advanced for its solution. With the mass of opinion apparently so solidly behind the programme of free selection, there was little need to work out alternative schemes. It should be pointed out that the opponents of alienation were not on the whole in favour of commercial working of the land. It is significant that the request contained in the petition of the National Reform Association was that "the new Land Law for Victoria should recognise the unalienable right of every colonist to use a sufficient portion of the Public Estate as would enable him, by the application of his labor, skill and available capital, to produce therefrom the necessaries

\textsuperscript{(1)}S. Weakey: \textit{The Lands Importance of its Culture to the General Prosperity of Victoria} (Melbourne 1856) p.3. \textsuperscript{(2)} \textit{Ibid.} p.9.
of life for self and family, without purchase, subject only to an annual rate proportionate to his just share of the local and general expense. This scheme for a land tax was the usual solution for the problem of adjusting the claims of "the people" to the demands of individuals. Such a solution was developed over a number of articles in the People's Advocate and this particular plan is of interest because it brings together a number of the points that have been mentioned previously.

Hawkesley seems to have begun as an advocate of individual proprietorship—of individual rights in the land. In an early editorial on the subject he also argued that "Reason, humanity, even science; all say the workman, the cultivator should be the proprietor." This seems to be an oblique claim to the whole produce of labor.

But shortly afterwards he published an article called "Land, Common Property" which was an extract from "The Land for the Laborer" edited by Thomas Cooper. The subject considered in this article was "how and by what means we can carry into practice the joint ownership of land," and the solution offered was that each occupant should pay to the State a certain rental. In this way it was hoped, aristocracies and idlers would disappear, taxation would no longer be necessary "the rental of the land doing ample to meet the expenditure of any cheap form of government." The expenses of government being met out of the land rent or tax, "each person and each generation would thus be participants, inheritors of man's Natural Inheritance."

This pamphlet, reflecting perhaps the influence of Spencer as well as the general natural law tradition, was obviously formulated for English conditions but it seems to have impressed Hawkesley considerably and the People's Advocate later took up the scheme proposed by Cooper. To the question "To whom does the land belong?" the People's Advocate answered: "To the People." The land was made for the People; it belongs beyond all doubt to the People, and though it has been wrested from them by the strong arm of power...... there is nothing to prevent its restoration to its right-ful owners. The right of the individual to be a proprietor was now denied.

(1) Victoria, Legislative Assembly, Votes and Proceedings 1854-59, (2) PA 12/1848, editorial on Land, (3) PA 12/1848, editorial, (4) PA 1/1849.
why the law of nature individuals can have no property in land, and the acquisition of such property by individuals is an usurpation and a robbery. Its perpetuation to the present day has led to all the misery we now witness in the world. The arguments used to support this position (derived perhaps from Cooper) represent an interesting manipulation of Locke's principle that the title to property comes from labor. The problem here was to show how the land differed from other things because the People's Advocate had no desire to propose the abolition of private property altogether. The distinction drawn was that the land was not produced by anyone, whereas most other things had been produced by the labor of men. "Land water and air, there can be no doubt, are the common inheritance of every child of man, and no one individual can have the right to usurp these to his own use to the prejudice of his fellow creatures. The fruits which are produced by cultivating the earth, the flocks and the herds which are reared by the attention of individual, are most undoubtedly such individuals' property and cannot be taken away from them without wrong being committed. But the land was not produced by man. No man therefore can have a better claim to it than another."

This theory that the land is the gift of Nature, and that no man had any hand in its production, is familiar enough to those acquainted with the origins of the theory of economic rent. And it is interesting that the idea of the land tax set out by the People's Advocate resembles the doctrines of the "single taxers" rather than those of the physiocrats. The latter had argued in favor of a tax on land because, they believed, the land alone was productive and could bear the tax; the former had desired a tax on land because it would wipe out "unearned increment" and yet not interfere with the process of production. The view of the People's Advocate was closer to the second of these: "The land is the proper source from which the State ought to be supported. Industry ought not to be taxed. But the reverse is now the case; the land having been concentrated in the hands of a few individuals they have been enabled to secure nearly all political power and have laid the burdens of the State upon the shoulders of the working classes by taxes on food.

(1) PA19/5/1849, (2) A Letter by "Hphro" PA20/1/1849, PA27/10/1849, editorial on Land.
on clothing and all the other necessary articles of life. It was argued that taxes
should be abolished and that rent as a form of income should cease to exist. The
payment of rent, whether for land or tenements, must ever have the effect of
keeping the masses of the people poor and miserable. This belief led
to the advocacy of building societies which would enable the worker to own
his own home and thus avoid having to pay rent to a landlord.

The belief that the State should rent the land to individuals arose out of the rejection of any form of communism. The People's Advocate was explicit on this point: "though we believe the land is the common property of all mankind, we do not belong to that class of persons who imagine
that a community of goods, whether in land or any other property, is the
perfection of the social system." Something much more like communism was
advocated by W.A. Duncan during his editorship of the "Weekly Register". Duncan too, it appeared, was directly influenced by an idea that had
recently come under his notice. He presented in the Weekly Register a plan
for "Agricultural Working Unions for Unemployed Labor." He proposed that
workmen might be provided with tools and with rations for six months, and that
by co-operative labour they might become self-supporting in this time. At the
expiration of six months, the society would have an abundance of crops
harvested and the sheep and the oxen of the station would have increased in
size so as to require no further outlay for animal and vegetable food.

Duncan did not stop there—he set out a detailed plan for the organization
of such bodies. The government of the association was to take the form of
an elected board, and new members were to undergo a novitiate for three
months before being admitted by ballot. A member who broke the rules or
failed to perform his allotted portion of work would "render himself liable
to fines... or even to expulsion and forfeiture if incorrigible." Each
member would be bound to perform his allotted portion of work. Such
associations were regarded by Duncan as a means not merely of
employing the unemployed but also of providing a new social framework. His ideal was in some
ways similar to that contained in other co-operative and syndicalist pro-
granims in that he hoped to see the workers themselves in charge of, and
profitting from the instruments and forces of production. "The members might

(1) PA27/10/1849, editorial on Land (2) PA31/3/1849, editorial on "The
Workingman's Home" (3) PA19/5/1849, editorial (4) He referred (WR30/12/1843)
to an article on the subject by L.de Holières, in "Nouveau Guide d'Agriculture"
(5) WR30/12/1843. (6) ibid.
be classed according to their respective powers in sections upon separate allotments, each taking the profit of its own labor and skill. He did not specify in detail the method of remuneration but it is clear that he was reserving strongly against the wages system with its treatment of labor as a commodity: "Prizes should be awarded to the most meritorious individuals out of the common fund. It is not proposed to reward superior skill alone, but merit, industry and orderly conduct." Duncan included this in his scheme as a protest against the failure of the price system to reward "merit" rather than with any clear idea of how merit was to be recognized.

The economic side of Duncan's scheme was definitely weak. In the first place, like many other co-operative socialists he greatly over-emphasised the productivity of labor, especially in a newly colonised area: "The hoe and the spade, with a few hatchets and saws, are the chief instruments required for an undertaking of this kind. Belgian farmers support their families with great respectability on about six acres of ground with not other instruments." And besides this faith in primitive methods of production be proposed to limit the output of all workers to the level of the least efficient: "The regulation of these societies should be so constructed that the able-bodied and industrious should not be obliged to perform a larger amount of work than can be obtained from the men of smaller power." This was an interpretation of utilitarianism more rigid than is usual in communist schemes. Curiously enough Duncan did not recognise that this would have an effect on production; he thought that through division of labour the unions could secure the advantages of large scale production and thus increase output. But secondly, he did not give any clear account of the economic organization he proposed for the associations. The general impression we get is of common ownership and consumption but this would be incompatible with the division of the association into economically distinct sections; such a division might imply exchange relations between the sections. More important still, he did allow some scope for individual ownership and production: "The tasks might be so allotted as to leave the members a portion of the day for their own separate establishments or for their experimental studies, it being..."
sufficient for the general object and for agricultural tenancy that the labours of the members for joint stock purposes should be limited to a part only of the day", How these separate establishments were to be fitted into the scheme was not explained.

Duncan's scheme then was not of any real theoretical value and it had no influence on events. Its interest lies in its aspirations, in the implicit assumption of its author that the remedy for unemployment and for the unsatisfactory state of society was to be found in co-operative agricultural production. It forms part of a body of thought which in England was brought to maturity by Winstanley, and whose main representative in Australia was William Lane. Duncan's plan for political organisation of the agricultural unions was in fact quite similar to the relevant parts of Lane's Constitution for New Australia. But Duncan seems to have established no tradition in Australia, and most of the ideology of the land movement in this period was developed along the other lines that we have discussed.

(1) Ibid.
IV. LABOR IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Some of the current views relating to the place of labour in society have been mentioned in previous sections. The emergence of an economic system based on wage-labour is a fairly recent phenomenon, and in the Nineteenth Century the wages system could not easily be accounted for in any of the existing ideologies. P.K. Crozier has distinguished three ideologies in which a place has been found for the wages system and for the notion of a price for labour. He contends that wages can be judged in terms of three formulae — the just price of labor (Aquinas) to a natural price of labour (classical economics) and wage slavery (Marx). The "natural price", is the only one of these that requires any explanation in the present context.

Crozier's own explanation of the natural price is somewhat obscure. He implies that the natural price has some ethical significance but he distinguishes it sharply from the "just price" of the mediaeval tradition. What he seems to mean can perhaps be explained as follows: If we start off with the notion of an equilibrium price — i.e. — a price which is brought about by the forces in the market — we have no particular criterion by which to judge the morality of this price. It may be either just or unjust; all that is implied by the notion of (stable) equilibrium is its inevitability. But this theory can be given an ideological twist once we recognize that under different conditions different prices will result; it is then possible to represent the price that will result in one set of conditions as having some special moral value. And this is what was done by some of the classical economists, who regarded the conditions of free trade and perfect competition as more "natural" than other conditions and who believed that in consequence the price formed under those conditions was the natural price. It is in this manner that the concept of "equilibrium" taken from physics has been transformed by some economists into a justification for certain policies for the organization of the market.

Now Crozier seems to believe that anyone who does not connect the process of wages determination with exploitation ("wage-slavery") is infected with the ideology of the natural price. He thinks that the philosophy of

(1)P.K. Crozier, Ideologies and American Labor, New York, 1941, ch.9.
of business unionism is a leading example of this type of thought as it
abandons the idea that the unions can hope to maintain a just price and yet
it does not go on to develop a theory of exploitation.

But it is important to realise that the natural price can be
interpreted in more than one way and that one's interpretation is a function
of the market conditions which one accepts as "natural." The natural price
of classical political economy if one which is determined in a free market
without the interference of combinations; the natural price of the bargaining
unionist is one determined in a market in which strong unions are functioning.
This business unionism does not merely accept the ideology of the natural
price of labor, it transforms the ideology of for its own purposes, and
unless we recognize this, the significance of this ideology for the labor
movement is lost.

Some of the early unions in Australia made an effort to formulate
their demands in terms of an ideology of natural price. They said very little
that was new on the subject, but they did try to develop a doctrine which
would contain some element of a theory of natural justice and yet which
would not aim at simply imposing a price on the market from the outside.
Their statements along these lines were expressing a separate kind of ideology
which is neither that of the just price nor that of wage slavery. The
theory of the just price however did play some sort in supporting the
economic claims of the workers. The notion of wage slavery was of less impor-
tance than either of these types of thought. Some kind of a theory of
exploitation made its appearance but it was not put into a very systematic
form. It was a sentiment rather than a theory, and it was not backed up by a
vigorous labor theory of value, although occasionally the return to the
capitalist was regarded as a "subtraction" from the produce of labor. One
aspect of this is that the more radical ideology and the more radical demands
were associated particularly with the land movement. Something approaching
the right to the whole produce was claimed, as we saw, by some land reformers
but a like claim was not often made on behalf of the class of workers in the
crafts. Radical land reformers such as Fawcett and Duncan were much less
radical when they came to support the demands of wage-labourers; it is
significant that Duncan was interested in agricultural co-operation, and that

(1) Ibid., ch. 14.
Locke's view on the origin of the title to property was not extended to the town economy. The relative moderation of the ideologies of the wage system may have been due to the inadequate theoretical equipment of the ideologists of the labor movement, but possible a factor of equal importance was the persistence of the system in which the master still worked with his own and was looked upon by them as a laborer as well as a capitalist.

These three ideologies of the just price, the natural price and exploitation form only part of the arguments used by labor to justify its claim to be in a special position in the community. Not all of the economic demands of labor related directly to wages, and consequently various other theories were referred to from time to time. As usual, the gold-diggers stood apart from the rest of the working class. They justified their opposition to the licence-fee and to the gold export duty on the grounds that these "were taxes on labor". I consider that the proper subject or basis for taxation is neither labor nor capital itself, but the profits of both labor and capital and the produce or income of property. W. Waghorn told the 1852 Select Committee on the Gold Fields.

(1) It is doubtful whether the miners would have shared his liking for an income tax, but they did share his objection to a tax on labor. The theoretical basis of this objection is not known. It may have been in the minds of the diggers with Adam Smith's section (2) on "Taxes upon the Wages of Labor" but there is nothing in Smith's argument that would have been of much use to the diggers. The latter did not go to any trouble to explain why they thought that taxes on labor were unjust and so this remains an obscure aspect of working class ideology.

The theoretical background of most of the other working class claims on the government is fairly clear. In times of distress working class spokesmen argued that it was the duty of the government and the wealthier sections of society to do something for the unemployed and the hungry. They were sometimes arguing more or less loosely in terms of an "organic" theory of society, especially that theory which we have traced to Christian sources. One of the fullest explanations of this point of view was given in a letter to a Melbourne newspaper in 1844. "The mechanical portion of a community being in fact the most important and with the agricultural, the class which

(1) 1852 N.S.W. Legislative Council, Votes and Proceedings 352, Vol II.
possesses the most paramount claims upon the government it is not to be supposed that the ruling powers can look with indifference upon a state of things which require immediate consideration. It is also the bounden duty of the wealthier sections of society to betrench themselves at alienating the grievances of the lower classes as forming one great whole in themselves, like the belly and the members, who if one suffer any distemper the other is sure to be affected in a proportionate ratio. Here we have a very clear exposition of an "organic" theory, which binds the government and the wealthy arsehold to have duties towards the distressed. Most of the demands for relief seem to have been based upon this theory rather than the individualist theory of natural rights, although in many cases the basis of the rights claimed was not stated. There was in fact some uncertainty among the workingmen as to whether any "right to support" or "right to employment" did exist. J. J. Ben for example, admitted that he did not "believe for a moment that the Government were in any way bound to find employment for the people," but a Melbourne meeting four years before this had cheered a speaker who argued that "every working man in the colony had a right to obtain work." This same meeting, however, adopted a motion which brought out very well the uncertainty of the working-class leaders on this question. The motion stated "that it is the duty of every government to provide employment for each of the population as may require it, more particularly in the colony of Victoria." It thus appears that they were not really prepared to claim unconditionally the right to employment but wanted to support their claim by reference to the peculiar and local conditions of the colony, whatever these may have been.

A similar uncertainty was very marked during the agitation of the unemployed in New South Wales in 1843-44. In 1844, Councillor Richard Brinsley was cheered when he maintained that "the working classes had always a right to support," but in previous petitions a less general position was taken up.

The usual argument was summed up in the following extract, from the second of the petitions organised by the Mutual Protection Associations: "the unemployed free man in the colony have an undoubted claim upon the local government for maintenance and support in consequence of promises that were made to induce

many or them to come here by agents acting under the sanction of the government. For the most part the right was held to be derived from the "promise held out" in England. The desire of the operatives to remain in their trades was verbally supported in the same way. "The mechanics having been induced to come here as such, consider it would be unjust to drive them into the interior where their trade would be of no use to them, after they have been at considerable expense and loss of time to acquire it" But it is clear from our discussions of trade unionism that these workmen brought up to a trade believed that they had an unconditional right to that trade, and so this claim for a conditional right need not be accepted as the individual view of the workers.

Another argument that was sometimes used by the unemployed resembled quite closely those parts of the Keynesian analysis of the trade cycle which stress the role of the "consumption function". Driver seems to have had this in mind when he described the working classes as "the bees which brought honey to the hive and spread the means of wealth through all branches of the community." A less picturesque version of the same theory was given by Rice, the Victorian printer, fourteen years later: "He considered shipkeepers and storekeepers were the men who in this colony should stir themselves because when day after day they found their returns falling off, they should inquire into the cause and they would then find it was owing to the dearth of employment amongst the labouring classes." These statements were not supported, of course, by any real analysis of fluctuations in the level of effective demand, or of differences in the consumption function for different classes in the community. They were simply the results of a desire to invalidate working class claims by showing that working class income were of peculiar importance to the rest of the community. But besides making claims on the government, the working class were also demanding improved wages and conditions from employers. The simplest arguments used to support high wages were those which represented the rights of the poor as more important than the profits or convenience of employers: "it so far be that a master should want a servant than that a servant should want a breakfast." More specific were those which based their claim on the economic importance of labor to the community - on the fact that "property..."
was the accomplished result of labor, while on the other hand labor was
incipient capital". As has been stressed several times above, the Australian
working classes did not demand the whole produce but they did regard themselves
as the producers of all wealth and as therefore entitled at least a subsistence
level of wages.

Throughout the whole period we find attempts by workers to show
that their demands for wages and conditions were just. For example, the Sydney
Labor League began negotiations "having a settled conviction that our
cause is just and being determined not to maintain anything contrary to
the rules of justice or the light of reason". Unions often took great care to
place their causes before the public in order to demonstrate that they were
demanding no more than justice. They attempted to demonstrate the justice of
their demands in a number of different ways.

One source of the argument that a given wage was just was the
theory that there existed a just price for labor and that the employer had
a duty to pay this price. Hawksley was one who argued sometimes along these
lines, maintaining in one editorial that "the employer of labor is not permitted
by (Christianity) to grind and screw his workers down to the very lowest
rate of wages upon which he can barely subsist" that all the profits of labor
are not to go into pockets of employers but that the men whose hands actually
execute the labor has no right to be excluded from his full and fair share of
such profits". The workers themselves, apart from an occasional appeal
(4) to the Biblical injunction that "the laborer is worthy of his hire" did not
make as much of this argument as might have been expected. The skilled work-
men, tended to appeal to the "rights of the trade", and this seems to have
been based on customary procedure - an a conception similar to that of the Common
Law - rather than on any of the academic theories of justice and right. On
a few occasions rationalism was appealed to, as when in a speech by Landeth
at an eight-hour meeting "the term of eight hours was further contended for
as a rational proportion of working time in our climate". But it would have
been very difficult to deduce many of labor's claims from self-evident first
principles and whether for this reason or others very little was said of any

(1) Legislative Assembly, A15/1/1867, report of public meeting (2) SMH 22/11/1858,
advertisements. (3) PA24/1/1869, Leader (4) e.g. A7/6/1852, advertisement by
journeymen timber workers. (5) SMH 25/11/1858, reports
"rational" scheme for the regulation of the relations between employer and employee.

A special ideology of wages which made its appearance in New South Wales was that of the "real" price of labour, in which an attempt was made to give the notion of the just price some objective meaning without accepting altogether the primacy of market prices. The Sydney Joiners' Society complained in 1840 that its members had "by necessity been compelled to offer their labour for below its actual value," and the Guardian claimed that the sum offered by the Government to the unemployed had to be regarded as not the "full price of labour," but the price which approaching destitution has forced the laborer to accept. J.C. White tried to explain this concept to the Select Committee on the condition of the Working Classes in 1859, but did not succeed in explaining how labor had an "intrinsic" value. "Does not cheap labor mean unrequited labor? I define cheapness as buying a thing for less than its value; if you give more than its worth for an article you buy it dear, and you are a loser; if you give less than the value for an article you buy it cheap and somebody else is the loser; but if you give the intrinsic worth you buy it neither cheap nor dear." This and other accounts of the real price of labor were inadequate in that they did not establish the "reality" of the conditions which would bring about the real price. But they were none the less effective as ideology for this reason. The workers themselves believed that the wages existing in times of prosperity did represent what their labor was "really" worth and were not interested at all in theoretical. Perhaps the most realistic attempt to show that the price demanded had some real existence and was not being arbitrarily imposed was that of the early Australian Society of Compositors. The rules of this Society stated that "the compositors as a body well know that they can never benefit themselves by exacting higher wages than the profits of capital will allow" but at the same time argued that the men "have a right, if possible to secure to each member such fair remuneration for his exertions as shall prevent him being a mendicant and dependant on the other classes of society." In 1840 this Society conducted a strike and its Secretary was careful to argue that it still recognized the importance of market conditions. Having combined to raise the price of labor it will be

seen that we have not combined to raise it above the market value. And we never shall, and the guarantee we give is this—that we are sensible to know that immediately we raise our wages above a fair standard we shall have such an influx of hands as will leave us in a worse state than before. Thus they were willing to recognize as the "market" price only that price which they could not hope to alter, and considered themselves justified in combining to demand any price up to that level. But their critics believed that any combination to raise wages was an interference with the market price.

The theory that there is a real price of labor involves some recognition of the fact that labor in capitalist society is a commodity and subject to market conditions. But a common feature of labor's ideologies is a reaction against the commodity view of labor and the presentation of some argument that labor is a human factor of production and as such should not be subordinated to the laws of supply and demand. The classic statement in Australia of this view was given by C.J. Dunn: "They (i.e. employers and newspapers) have estimated the workmen and his labor by the same rule as that by which they valued a barrel of treacle. They said that the value of each was regulated by laws of supply and demand. But he would show them that this was not so. There was a difference between a carpenter and a barrel of treacle. The one was a man capable of feeling wrong and of resisting that wrong, and of suffering during the progress of that resistance. The other was merely inert matter and cared not who possessed it." Such an attack on the "commodity" view has in theory an obvious appeal to workingmen, but in fact the practical requirements of bargaining somewhat limited its influence in Australia where the unions were willing to admit that wage rates were influenced by conditions of supply and demand. This came out during the eight hour struggles in Victoria where on several occasions it was decided "that the question of wages and hours be left to rule itself by supply and demand". The unions were involved in bargaining in a market and had to make the best of that fact however comforting "escapist" statements such as that of Dunn may have been.

One ideological device of the "bargaining unionist" has not yet been mentioned. This was the treatment of some contracts as being in a special position as being in some moral category that exempted them from the ordinary conditions of an agreement reached through bargaining, as being "sanctified". The

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(1) 1624/1/1840, advertisement. (2) 195/1/1859 report. (3) 12/4/1856 report of eight hours' meeting.
idea that the level of the basic wage was sacrosanct found favour with late-ideologists of the labor movement, but in the period under discussion it was the eight-hour system which was placed in that category. Landreth for example, said of the system that it "had become the legitimate rule of the trade and a breach of such rule would imply a moral and social breach of contract, as existing between the employer and the employed."

The Melbourne Carpenters and Joiners" were in 1859, even more emphatic on this point: "this meeting looks with abhorrence and detestation at the mean despicable artifices resorted to by the railway contractors to infringe on the eight-hour principle, as an act of injustice to all other contractors of the colony, as a breach of faith in the usages of competition, and as an unprincipled scheme to enrich themselves at the expense of the working portion of the community." What Landreth and the carpenters were doing was to try and show that a rule which had been imposed on the employers by bargaining had somehow or other been transformed into an obligation, or, as Landreth phrased it that an existing rule had been transformed into a legitimate rule. The theoretical basis of this transformation - if any such existed - was not explained. What we are presented with is the pure ideology of the transformation.

Among the statements and explanations of Australian unionists were some which were intended to justify the process of collective bargaining itself. A meeting of the Government printers employed in Sydney in 1854 described "the privilege of meeting together in order to arrange the price at which they will dispose of their labor" as one of the most sacred rights of freedom but this was an unusual defence of combination. The right that was most often claimed in this connection was the right "to stipulate for the conditions most favorable to their physical welfare and moral improvement" - "the workman's incontestable right to state some of the conditions on which he engaged himself." Combinations were defended also in terms of a sellers' ethic that the salesmen has a right to do the best he can with his commodity. Such an ethic is inconsistent with some of the other ideologies ascribed to the Australian labor movement but it was influential none the less. Sometimes, this was stated in a form that emphasized the workers' dependence on his wages. "We say that we have formed ourselves into an association for the protection of...

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Footnotes:
1. 1859, report of eight hours' meeting.
2. 1859, report of eight hours' meeting.
3. 1859, report of eight hours' meeting.
4. 1859, report of eight hours' meeting.
5. 1859, report of eight hours' meeting.
our trade", wrote a shoemaker in answer to a critic: "This is right and who
(1) can blame us for protesting that by which we earn our sustenance". But,
equally common was the view expressed several times by Hanksley in the People's
Advocate: "His labor is his capital and he has a right to make the most of it.
(2) How the difficulty with this argument was that it would tend to support the
activities of monopolists, and the unionists were not always aware of this.
Example of this is to be found in a letter written by another Melbourne
shoemaker. He set out that the wool grower, the merchant, the doctor, the
(3) lawyer, and the newspaper proprietor all strive to get the highest possible
price for their wares, and concluded: "Who would be held enough to deny that
the shoemaker has an equal right to demand adequate remuneration for expanding
the sweat of his brow". He did not seem to realize that in fact he was asking for
unequal rights yet he obviously did not include "combination" among the
(4) legitimate rights of merchants, and wool growers. This problem like the
question of the "market price" was taken seriously by Peter Tyler, Secretary
of the Compositors' Society in Sydney. Tyler admitted that "in general matters
of business combination is a great evil," but claimed that skilled craftsmen
were in a special position. "We admit the rule but claim our case to be the
exception. We have no capital, or none but our labor, and that must be
sold immediately - there is no waiting for a good market. Our labor, too, as
if that kind which is only available in a certain way, we have been bred up in
large towns and cannot resort to agricultural or other pursuits. We have,
besides, but a limited number of buyers of our labor, and they are in such a
position that the loss of the services of a unit of our number is to them as
nothing. They, too, have the means of procuring laborers from other sources;
while we, having once come, must remain here - we have none other to whom we
can sell our labor. Without union we are at the mercy of our employers"

(1)PP122/4/1843; (2)PPA307/12/1843; (3)PPA283/5/1853; (4)A2/6/1846, letter by "Snob".
This discussion of the various defences of collective bargaining enables us to see in what sense the unionists accepted a theory of exploitation. They believed that there were tendencies in the economic system which would enable the employers to force wages down indefinitely, but they did not believe either that the receipt of profits by the employers was a sign that exploitation existed, or that the downward tendency of wages was inevitable. Some of their statements suggest that they thought the union was an effective answer to the tendency for wages to fall faster than prices but we know from their other activities that they were prepared to supplement trade unionism by "reformist" political activity of various kinds. They did not develop a philosophy of "unionism pure and simple", but equally they did not develop a theory of an inevitable downward trend in real wages. The one statement I found which resembled Marx's theory at all closely was, it is true, made by a Stonemason but it seems to have been an isolated example of this type of thought. The mason (W. Kirkland) in a letter to the Argus asked his fellow workmen: "Why do you work ten or twelve hours and with the produce of your over-exertion keep a set of idle imposters, a curse to yourselves and your country? — Why not curtail your working hours and expel the superfluous consumer?" He also referred to the employers as "a class of men nearly defunct". But if many of the masons shared his views they took great care to keep them concealed when they made statements at public meetings.

The theories of exploitation developed outside the trade union movement were not of great importance and were directed as much against the landlord as against the employer. Hawkseye quite often referred to the inadequacies of a system in which the "rich", the "idle", lived off the workingman but he did not build on these ideas in any way. One version of the idea of exploitation was given in a pamphlet entitled "Homesteads for the People" by Peter Popinesu. Popinesu described his view of production and distribution in the following terms: "I see a lottery in which the worker's interest draws all the prizes, and the working classes draw all the blanks" — "I see a banquet served and the working classes paying the reckoning and waiting respectfully at table sucking its fingers while property dines" — and so on. He did not state the opposition to be between worker and employer, on the con-

(1) 25/9/3857   (2) p.26.
trary he stated specifically that he was opposing "the landed and moneyed interest." Moreover, his theory is hardly superior to Hackett's in that he did not explain in detail how it was that the moneyed interest was able to secure preferential treatment in distribution. To explain this was the task undertaken by another pamphleteer who signed himself "An Old Colonist."

This writer believed that in existing forms of society the prime requisite of freedom — "the power profitably to use his natural or acquired gifts of man and body" is missing, and that this enabled the landlord or the capitalist to secure "part of the produce." Man is not free to apply his labor as he chooses. For permission to work he must give a large portion of the produce of his labor to the proprietor of the raw material. If a farmer or agricultural worker, it goes to the landlord in the shape of rent. If a manufacturer or workman, it goes to the capitalist; all are affected alike. Thus the real exploiter was identified as the owner of the raw material but it was the worker who was described as bearing all the burdens. "The pressure for work is so great that more is offered for the use of labor or capital than can be paid without the strictest economy, and to prevent less advantage must be taken of the competition for employment among the laboring classes. The employers must get from them the greatest possible amount of work at the lowest possible rate of wages."

In this way, by assuming the existence of something like a reserve army of labor, "An Old Colonist" accounted for the unfortunate position of the laborer in society. The striking feature of his theory is the fact that he distinguished between the employer and the owner of the means of production and held the latter to be responsible for the misery of the workman. This distinction was apparently based on the structure of English farming, with its different classes of landlords, tenants, and laborers, but "An Old Colonist" tried to apply it to manufacturing as well. His opposition to the owner of the means of production resembled William Thompson's to some extent, but he did not as Thompson did eventually favour the establishment of a co-operative commonwealth. He concluded that labor's freedom would be secured if individuals had access to the lands, and he believed that this would be possible.

(1) Land and Labor in Victoria, p. 12. (2) Ibid. (4) His treatment of the functions of the "employer" was closer to the orthodox economic concept of "entrepreneur" than to the Marxist concept of "capitalist." (5) V. I. Lenin, History of British Socialism, pp. 221-5. (6) op. cit., pp. 14-15.
in a new colony. Thus, like all in Australia who believed that capitalism was unjust, he was able to find no real place for industrialism in his theory. His analysis of capitalism and the wage system was in effect a by-product of the land movement.

A different kind of question is connected with the ethical views held within the working class movement. It has sometimes been supposed that the ethics of the working classes is distinct from, and hostile to, current or "bourgeois" ethics.

Now various of the attitudes that have been mentioned here form part of a system of values different from that of most of the employers. To treat labor's income or political rights as the most important in the community is to reject the scale of values in which the return to capital is given the highest place. In this sense every ideology represents a distinct value.

But workingmen in Australia did not reject completely the ethical or moral beliefs of the employers, even when they did give them a different emphasis. One ideal that working class agitators placed before their audiences was that of "sociability"—something like the later ideal of "mateship"—Rice for example, appealed at a Trades' Hall meeting in Melbourne for "a truly social action, a truly political action which he contrasted with the "money-grubbing" activities of shop-keepers. (1)

Carlyle, at a meeting called in connection with the "Operative", made a similar point: "There was not that degree of sociability existing amongst us that ought to have existed, and until men's minds are cultivated, a high state of feelings cannot supersede them. The aim of the Operative, it will be recalled, was to "direct lead and elevate the minds of the laboring classes". But these pleas for moral reform formed no part of a rejection of Bourgeois moral prejudices. (Rice may have been an exception here, but it is impossible to say just what he meant) What the advocates of "elevation" aimed at was explained most fully at the Melbourne Right Hour Demonstration in 1859: "It would be easy to show that protracted hours of labor is, the prolific source of social disorder, domestic discord, juvenile delinquency, mental imbecility, religious apathy and indeed all the long train of evils which result in the indulgence of the most immoral and debasing pursuits." That is to say, the unions accepted bourgeois standards of what was right and what was important.

(1) 23/3/1858, report (2) 27/6/1854, report (3) 27/6/1854, speech by Cresalay (4) 23/4/1859, speech by Davey.
and their "uplift" activities were aimed at raising the working class to bourgeois levels. They certainly did not take up any distinctive, working class point of view on these questions. Nor did they reject a "consumer's" ethic and replace it with a "producer's" ethic. It is true that the skilled trades raised questions of the quality of workmanship when they were protesting the use of unskilled labor, but this, like other activities was aimed basically at increasing their incomes and their consumption.

(1) Of. Statement by Downey, in his Introduction to Horie's Trade Unionism in the United States: "Uplift unionism accepts, along with the wage system, the whole existing social order. Its mission is the diffusion of leisure-class culture and bourgeois virtues among the workers." (p. xvii)
CONCLUSION.

Commentators on the Australian labor movement up to 1860 are unanimous that it contributed little that was new to working-class ideologies or techniques. Nothing that has been said in the foregoing chapters casts doubt on this judgment. The standard histories have failed to do justice to the variety of trade union practices introduced by the early unions in Australia but they have not erred in supposing that these small craft unions differed little in their aims and methods from their counterparts in England or in the United States. Conventional classifications of trade union techniques and programmes are quite adequate for a study of this early Australian movement.

The outstanding fact that emerges from a detailed study of the trade unions is that (especially in Victoria) they made great efforts to impose the traditional kind of regulations on the employers but that despite a temporary success they failed to achieve their aim. The energies of the leaders of the important unions were directed towards the establishment of a stable, mature and effective bargaining unionism but events proved this to be impracticable and for the most part the unions fell back on the (equally traditional) method of mutual insurance. The failure was more striking in Melbourne, where the initial achievement had been greater, but it occurred also in Sydney.

The political policies and organizations of labor did not form so closely-knit a movement as the trade unions. Interest in the political field was far more sporadic, and veered quickly from one policy to another. There were no well tried and proven political techniques which labor could adopt, and so to some extent its efforts in Australia were experimental—and relatively unfruitful. It took up from time to time bargaining programmes and displacement programmes and political reform programmes but lacked at all times the power to implement these programmes on its own account. The success of working-class political policies was always dependent on the building up of a suitable form of organization and this was beyond the capacity of the workers in Australia. The problems here were partly administrative and financial but a more fundamental factor was the attitudes and beliefs of the workers themselves.

A quite common feature of labor movements has been the appearance of socialism, communism and other doctrines hostile to the existence of the institutions of private property. The absence of such doctrines is one of the
most striking features of the movement in Australia before 1860. Furthermore,
we repeatedly come back to the points that workers participating in politics
were not always interested in furthering distinct working-class interests and
that they did not always conceive political struggles to be industrial struggles
translated into political terms. In practice, labor's political activity was
always dependent in one way or another on the middle class. One important theme
in the labor movement was political reform, but even this had only a limited
appeal and the reform movement had its basis at crucial times in the middle
rather than the working classes. It is significant that the success of the
reform programme in the late 'fifties was not followed by the appearance at
the polls of a vigorous working-class party in each colony. The projected "monster
organization of labor", and the various working-class candidates of this time did no
succeed in contributing very much to the political influence of the working
class.

The interesting thing about the political activity of the late
'fifties is not its achievement but the fact that in Victoria it arose partly
because of the desire of the trade unions to supplement their ordinary bargain-
ing devices. The linking of the political movement with the trade union move-
ment appeared likely to provide the former with a set of organized working-
class supporters, but the collapse of the Melbourne building trades' unions
in 1860, and the growing importance of the tariff issue, prevented the full
development of a labor movement of this kind. The political party based on
protectionism because a "radical" rather than a working class party; in this,
of course, it resembled many of its predecessors. Putting it crudely, the worke
as a whole were not very "class conscious" in the period and no attempts to
organize them along class lines into political or industrial associations were
bound to strike trouble when the strength of the organisations was tested in
any way.

To sum up the position, there had been a great deal of activity
along familiar lines by 1860, but this had not resulted in the establishment
of a strong stable, or steadily-growing movement. This picture is distorted
somewhat by the fact that in the year marking the late limit to the present
inquiry, the labor movement was weaker than it had been for some years, but this
fact merely emphasizes the point that if growth was continuous it was "cyclical"
rather than in accordance with a straight line trend.

When we come to look at the Australian movement in relation to their
ies of the labor movement, we can see that not very much of the programme set out above in the Introduction has been accomplished in the intervening pages. Very few of the facts that have been related about the Australian labor movement either raise or settle theoretical issues. But on the other hand some of the theories do contribute considerably to the understanding of developments in Australia.

The most widely discussed theoretical question is the place of socialism—theories and ideologies in the movement, but the Australian evidence is of no assistance on that point. The course of development of the labor movement in Australia is quite consistent with the theory of Lenin and Perlman that socialist ideals are formulated by "intellectuals" rather than by workers. But because of the rudimentary character of urban industry in Australia at that time, this conclusion is of no special significance. However, it is significant that the Australian evidence is broadly consistent with Perlman's and Commons' positive theories of the content of trade union and (in Commons' case) other working class activity. This suggests that these theorists succeeded at least in formulating correct generalizations about some tendencies in the labor movement.

The theory which has proved of greatest use for the present study is that formulated by Commons. This theory deals more adequately than others with a labor movement in the earliest stages of capitalism. Whereas other theorists, (especially Marxists) have tended to neglect the past history of the movement, and to concentrate on its present and its future, Commons went to some trouble to discuss briefly, if seriously, its earlier forms. He took care to bring out the presumptions of early craft unions and the character of the reactionary programmes that flourished alongside craft unionism.

A point that might be made about the use of theories in these pages is that the classifications have been found to be more useful than the explanations of causal sequences. It is true that the most ambitious classification of trade unionism has been rejected, but on the whole it has been possible to accept standard classifications with only minor reservations or amendments for Australian conditions. But supposed explanations of the historical development of trade unionism have proved less serviceable.

Some methodologists, anxious to model the social sciences on the physical sciences, have criticized theorists who content themselves
with merely classifying situations instead of going on to give some account of causal relationships or of "laws of development". Now, any classificatory system is likely to meet difficulties. It might involve an implicit assumption that phenomena dealt with are static and unchanging, or it might amount to no more than the attachment of names to things that are already known. But it is also true that not every classification is built up on static assumptions and that the classification of a set of phenomena is not necessarily just a matter of giving names to things already known and recognised. A classification is informative and adds something to our knowledge when it points out distinctions which were not previously recognised or appreciated, and to point out that a particular thing falls into a given class might also represent an addition to our knowledge. Theoretical contributions of this kind may be much less spectacular than the achievements of the modern physical sciences, but there is something to be said for the view that some of the social sciences owe their present confused position to an undue emphasis on questions of causality and predictions.
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<th>Author(s)</th>
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<tr>
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**B: Works on Australia.**

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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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4. CONTEMPORARY REFERENCES.

(1) Newspapers.

The main source for the present work has been files of newspapers located in the Mitchell and Public Libraries, Sydney. The information these papers contain is in the form of advertisements, reports (usually hostile) of strikes or proposals to strike, reports of public meetings and (less frequently) of union meetings, and letters to the editor. The files that have been consulted are as follows:

NEW SOUTH WALES:

1. Australian (1843-46) Opposed to organised labor at this time.

2. Australasian Chronicle (1840-43) Catholic newspaper but edited at this stage by W.A. Duncan.

3. Colonist (1835) J.B. Lang's influence on this paper's policy was most apparent in its readiness to engage in sectarian controversy than in its political viewpoint.

4. Empire (Dec. 1859-1861). Not published between August 1859 and May 1859. Under Parkes' editorship (to 1855) the "Empire" was the unofficial organ of the radicals. But it was not a working class paper and was hostile to trade unionism.

6. **Guardian** (1844) Published by the Mutual Protective Association.

7. **Maitland Mercury** (1844-55; 1860-61).

8. **People's Advocate** (and **New South Wales Vindicator**) (1843-56) Advocated the principles of Charles and Henry Brougham, its editor; had been for a time editor of the Chronicle, but in politics he was one of Lang's supporters.

9. **Star and Working Man's Guardian** (1844-45) A Radical workman's paper until October 1845, when it was re-christened "The Star".

10. **Sydney Dispatch** (1858).

11. **Sydney Evening Mail** (1859).

12. **Sydney Gazette** (1829-42) Opposed to organised labor.

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14. **Sydney Times** (1834-35) Edited by F.J. Kentish, one of the early radicals.

15. **Weekly Register of Politics, Facts and General Literature** (1843-44) edited by F.A. Duncan, after his dismissal from the Chronicle.

**VICTORIA:**

16. **Argus** (1846-48, 1850-60) This paper is useful for much the same reasons as the Sydney Morning Herald. It was considerably less conservative than the latter paper.

17. **Melbourne Daily News** (1849-51).

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(11) **Parliamentary Papers.**

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**New South Wales Legislative Council**


2. Report from the Select Committee on the petition from Distressers and Mechanics, 1843, with Minutes of Evidence, V & P, 1843.

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4. Report from the Select Committee on Distressed Labourers, 1844, with Minutes of Evidence, V & P, 1844.

5. Report from the Select Committee on the City Corporation Bill, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendices, V & P 1852, Vol II.


7. Report from the Select Committee on the Gold Fields' Management Bill, with Minutes of Evidence, V & P 1853, Vol II.

8. Report from the Select Committee on the State of Agriculture, with Minutes of Evidence, V & P 1855, Vol III.

New South Wales, Legislative Assembly.

9. Report from the Select Committee on the Condition of the Working Classes, with Minutes of Evidence and Appendix, V & P, 1859-60 Vol IV.

Victoria, Legislative Assembly.


(iii) Pamphlets and Other Publications:

1. Anon. The Indefensible Rights of Men (Sydney, 1842). A reprint from the "Free Press" of 3rd March 1842 setting out James McEcharn's views on this question.

2. "All Old Colonist". Land and Labor in Victoria: Can We Have Cheap Bread with High Wages, Part I. (Melbourne, 1856)

3. Australian Clerks' Benefit Society. Rules. (Sydney 1845)


8. Coster, Frederick. A Land System for Victoria: Embodied in a Letter to Archibald Nichol Esq., in which the land system of British North America, slightly modified, is shown to be applicable and necessary in this Colony. (Melbourne, 1857)

9. Duncan, W. A. A Plan for the Constitution. (Sydney, 1856)

12. Land League of New South Wales. Manifesto. (Sydney, 1859)


15. "Papineau, Peter". Homesteads for the People, and Manhood Suffrage in a Series of Four Letters (Melbourne, 1855)

16. The Victorian Convention. Resolutions, Proceedings and Documents (Melbourne, 1856). This does not contain a detailed record of proceedings, but it brings together the decisions of the Convention in a consolidated form.

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22. Wyndham, George. The Impending Crisis (Melbourne, 1847) An attempt to establish that the right to land is established by "occupancy" and not by either "labor" or as a "birthright"

Copies of all the above pamphlets are in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.