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The Career of Class: Intellectuals and the Labour Movement in Australia 1942-56

Sean Scalmer

This thesis charts the wave of mobilisation, reform, demobilisation and eventual decline that marked the Australian labour movement from 1942 to 1956. Rather than understanding this process as part of the inevitable modernization of Australian society, the rise of the affluent worker and concomitant decline of working class consciousness, a more political, actor-centred approach is sought. The series of transformations the labour movement experienced are explained in terms of the interactions between 3 actors - classes, intellectuals, and institutions. These interactions occurred in 5 analytical stages. Firstly, the second world war opened up a division between the State and capitalist elites, increased the political opportunities of the ALP, and gave space for Labor and Communist unity. As a result, the political institutions of the labour movement grew in strength, and the disciplined mobilisation of the working class occurred. At the same time, the demands of war also increased the need for educated experts, and the Australian intelligentsia emerged as a powerful force. This was reflected in the burst of cultural activity, and in the large number of suggestions for post-war reform. Thirdly, the labour movement attempted to extend the unities of the war into post-war around concrete proposals for full employment and post-war reconstruction, which achieved only imperfect results. Fourthly, the combination of world economic instability, the emergent cold war, the declining demand for intellectuals, and the beginnings of a strike wave fed the conflicts and broke apart the alliances around post-war reconstruction. Because of these conflicts between and within labour movement institutions and the intelligentsia, collective action for socialist advance became impossible. This was a process of demobilisation. Finally, because of the way labour movement institutions and intellectuals responded to the subsequent period of defeat, conflict and repression, this process of demobilisation was interpreted as the decline of class. The thesis is offered not only as an interpretation of this period in Australian history, but as an attempt to widen class analysis and direct labour history towards new questions such as demobilisation and the role of intellectuals.
SEAN SCALMER

THE CAREER OF CLASS: INTELLECTUALS AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT IN AUSTRALIA 1942 - 56

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JULY 1996
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## Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Australian Archives</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABS</td>
<td>Australasian Book Society</td>
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<td>ACCL</td>
<td>Australian Council of Civil Liberties</td>
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<td>ACP</td>
<td>Australian Communist Party</td>
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<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
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<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
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<td>APC</td>
<td>Australian Peace Council</td>
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<td>ASIO</td>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation</td>
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<td>BLP</td>
<td>British Labour Party</td>
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<td>CAS</td>
<td>Contemporary Art Society</td>
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<td>CBD’s</td>
<td>Current Book Distributors</td>
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<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Central Committee of Communist Party of Australia</td>
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<td>CPA</td>
<td>Communist Party of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPGB</td>
<td>Communist Party of Great Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPSU</td>
<td>Communist Party of the Soviet Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPWR</td>
<td>Department of Post War Reconstruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>FE</td>
<td>Federal Executive of Australian Labor Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>ML</td>
<td>Mitchell Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>NLA</td>
<td>National Library of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC</td>
<td>Political Committee of Communist Party of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMC</td>
<td>Professional Middle Class</td>
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<td>POS</td>
<td>Political Opportunity Structure</td>
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<td>SMH</td>
<td>Sydney Morning Herald</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEA</td>
<td>Workers' Educational Association</td>
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PART I:

A NEW APPROACH

TO LABOUR HISTORY
1. The Career of Class: an introduction

In 1942 the Australian labour movement was on the march. Trade union membership was in the process of expanding to a post-war level of 54%.

The Australian Labor Party was in Federal Government for the first time since the Depression, and was already embarking upon a program of radical reform which would come to include economic planning, state enterprises, and the construction of a welfare state. The Communist Party of Australia had attained a new respectability, and recruited almost 8,000 new members between May and September alone.

While the Australian nation dug in against the Japanese, the Australian working class rose to a position of national leadership. Amidst the darkness of world war, transformative hopes were nourished. The career of the working class was ascendant, and many radicals saw the events around them as an historical watershed, signalling the final combination of socialism with a mass labour movement.

Only 15 years later, almost everything was different. The forward march of labour had been halted.

The Australian Labor Party had split into two, and would be out of Federal Government for 23 years. The Communist Party was an outcast and largely spent political force. The institutions of the labour movement were in sharp retreat, and the reforming wave of the 1940s had crashed and ebbed. Perhaps more significantly, the concept of the working class was now severely muted as a theme within labour discourse. The career of class as a narrative within Australian political life was now in twilight. Even with the later renaissance of the ALP and with related bursts of reform, class would never again illuminate Australian politics with its past brightness.

This decade and a half of war and post-war struggle clearly contained a pivotal transformation in the Australian political landscape. This was not merely a setback for the labour movement. The nature of the setback, and the way that it was interpreted by intellectuals effectively pushed 'socialism' and 'the working class' off the political agenda - as quaint, old fashioned legacies of a colonial past. Whether this was true or not, there would be no going back.

In Australia, as in England and the United States, the labour movement which emerged from post-war defeat would be of a different nature - more 'responsible', 'expert' and practical, less threatening to the social order. This work attempts to understand and explain this transformation. In so doing it aims to contribute to debates of both national and more general significance. Such an analysis has few precedents.

Class Analysis and Working Class Decline

Somewhat surprisingly, class analysis has generally avoided this terrain, and offers few examples of successful studies. Indeed, the history of class analysis as an intellectual enterprise is tightly intertwined with the history of working class mobilisation and political struggle. As a result, theories were themselves often calculated and measured political interventions - concerned to promote the labour movement as much as understand it. To

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1 Sheridan, T. Division of Labour: industrial relations in the Chifley years, 1945-49, Oxford University Press, 1989, 53
2 Davidson, A. The Communist Party of Australia: a short history, Hoover Institution Press. 1969, 82-3
3 Campbell, E.W. History of the Australian Labour Movement: a Marxist Interpretation, Current Book Distributors, 1945, 35
countenance defeat would be counter-productive; to understand it would therefore be impossible.

That seminal document, *The Communist Manifesto*, set the pattern for later class analysis. It declared confidently that the proletariat was the essential product of modern industry, that age and sex divisions within the proletariat would increasingly disappear, and that working class unity and organisation would continually become "stronger, firmer and mightier." Whether or not this was believed unreservedly by either early or later class analysts, such a vision of working class development was a valuable political weapon which class-based political and industrial *institutions* were not anxious to forgo. Theories which attempted to explore the economic and political development of the working class movement were therefore often frozen in this narrow, celebratory mould.

Of course, historical research has moved considerably beyond this point. Since E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* was published in 1963, a more historically-based, sensitive analysis has been available for reference and emulation. Thompson rejected the idea of class formation as a determined process, where "steam power plus the factory system equals the working class", focusing instead upon the role of active class struggle and self-organisation in the development of a unified, collectivist, proletarian actor. The relationships between the development of the economic structures of capitalism, the experience of ordinary people, and the formation of a politically active working class were understood as *problematic* relationships, and studied with real rigour.

This was clearly a large step forward for theories of class formation, but it did not signal an equally nuanced approach to the problems of political demobilisation and declining class identity which were then shaping Thompson's own period. On the contrary, it fostered a whole generation of similarly exciting studies, nearly all of which remained narrowly focused on the birth and golden age of working class mobilisation. The equation between the formation of the working class and its later political victory was not directly challenged, and few recognisably Thompsonian studies have attempted to follow the working class and its own institutions through the processes of war, parliamentary politics, competition with each other, and political demobilisation. 

Rather, attempts to explain the halting of labour's forward march have bypassed Thompson's meritorious focus on institutions, politics, and active class struggle. They have instead remained highly abstract and simplistic, drawing analytical lines between the spectacular growth of post-war economies, changing working class consumption patterns, alleged changes in working class consciousness, and the halting of labour's forward march. Such arguments dominate discussion of labour's failure, and have been given both economic and cultural inflexions. As presented in Eric Hobsbawm's *The Age of Extremes*, the economic argument focuses upon the rising level of working class affluence over the 1950s, upon how this set "the mood" against the Left, and how it eventually fractured the identity of interests between a once propertyless and unified proletarian collective. The more cultural variant has been dubbed the 'dominant ideology thesis', and stresses the role of mass culture, its

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5 *Ibid.*, 310
relationship to ruling class hegemony, and thereby to the declining political radicalism of the working class.  

In both its economic and cultural forms, this argument essentially identifies working class politics with working class consciousness, and working class consciousness with working class consumption. Political struggles and institutions are the output rather than constituent elements of this imagined process. The pre-war variety of working class identities and interests is not acknowledged; the attempts by labour movement institutions and intellectuals to manage and negotiate this variety is ignored; the possibility that working class consciousness is influenced by anything other than consumption is not addressed; the disjunction between the golden age of working class affluence (in the 1960s) and the golden age of conservative political dominance (in the 1950s) is acknowledged," but left unexplained.

In sum, such forms of class analysis which have dealt with the halting of labour's forward march have treated the process as one of economic, cultural, and therefore political transformation. The possibility that more complex interactions may have occurred, involving labour movement institutions and intellectuals has rarely been broached. The possibility that two analytically separable processes may have occurred (one of cyclical political demobilisation, the other of a longer-term decline of class-based discourse) has not been broached at all. The advances which Thompson brought to the study of the making of the working class - a focus on agency, institutions, and political relationships, have yet to become part of a study of the unmaking of the working class.

Working Class Demobilisation and the Forward March of Intellectuals

Rather than attempting to understand the causes that have halted labour's forward march, many intellectuals have been more concerned with promoting their own political mobilisation. Indeed, the combination of labour movement decline with the increasing size and importance of intellectuals as a strata has promoted a veritable explosion of ideas concerning the class status and the transformative capacities of intellectuals. This explosion has produced two primary sorts of ideas, both of which have marginalised the question of the labour movement's demobilisation.

Firstly, there has been a wave of ideas reevaluating the class structure in terms of the place and centrality of intellectuals, thereby elbowing the working class out of frame. In the 1970s there was Alvin Gouldner's theory of the 'New Class'. Here the 'new class' of "intellectuals and the technical intelligentsia" was presented as a collective with all of the virtues of the old working class - an embryonic new universal class, the most progressive group in society." There was also the theory of the Professional Middle Class or PMC developed by Barbara and John Ehrenreich. Here the PMC was defined as that group of salaried mental workers employed in the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class

11 Hobsbawn, E. The Age of Extremes, 283-4
14 Ibid., 7
15 Ibid., 83
relations. The PMC was presented as increasingly important, as politically radical, but as often anti-working class. Intellectuals and working class militants, it was affirmed, should come together in struggle—but, for the Ehrenreichs, they would now be coming together on the basis of a 'Marxian' theory which no longer privileged the working class.

In the 1980s, the repudiation of working class politics, and the focus on intellectuals as societally central seemed to accelerate. In 1982, Andre Gorz discovered the new revolutionary subject - the "non-class of non-workers" - who experienced work as an imposition, and who heralded the post-industrial society of the future. Gorz bid the working class farewell. Similarly, Alain Touraine and other proponents of the new social movements theorized the decline of the working class as a culturally transformative force, and the complementary rise of new post-industrial conflicts. Post-industrial politics were typically presented as involving two primary actors - ecological movements and technocratic-modernising elites. They foretold a future when class conflict would be marginal, and in doing so, they represented a political intervention of great importance. They offered intellectuals a "promising theoretical foundation for their own political ascendancy" - both a social vision of a time and place in which they would be central, and a practical means of creating that centrality now.

The second set of ideas which have reflected the mobilisation of intellectuals have been those ideas concerning the power and importance of language. These ideas have shifted attention both away from class, and away from the quest for historical explanation. The class analysis of E.P. Thompson dwelt on both the evolution of the capitalist economy, its consequences for ordinary people, and the way they understood and responded to such changes. That is, it rested upon a distinction between the real and the representation of the real by workers. It was precisely this philosophical realism which the linguistic turn was to attack. The linguistic turn questioned the idea of a clear distinction between 'representation' and 'the real'. It illuminated the ways in which language shapes social reality, and how the concept of an unmediated social experience prior to its linguistic construction could therefore not be accepted. The structuring power of political language was affirmed, and the role of such language in the construction of actors with agency opened up for analysis. This insight has marginalised class because it has led successively to claims that oppression was a linguistic construction, that the employment relationship was often non-conflictual (because

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17 Ibid., 42
18 Ibid., 45
19 Gorz, A. Farewell to the Working Class, Pluto Press, 1982
20 Touraine, A. The Workers' Movement, Cambridge University Press, 1984
21 Eder, K. 'A New Social Movement?', Telos, 52 1982, 16
23 Joyce, P. The Imaginary Discontents of Social History: a note of response to Mayfield and Thorne, and Lawrence and Taylor. Social History, 18 (1) January 1993, 84
26 Vernon, J. 'Who's Afraid of the 'Linguistic Turn'? The Politics of Social History and Its Discontents', Social History, 19 (1) January 1994, 84
27 Laclau, E. and Mouffe, C. Hegemony and Socialist Strategy, Verso, 1985, 154
it was constructed in that way) and that class was not the primary political identity of industrial countries like England. This movement not only challenged the primacy of class, it also threatened the very quest for historical explanation and historical knowledge within which the concept was deployed. This quest had already been attacked most effectively by Michel Foucault - an inspirational figure for most post-structuralist historians. Foucault wrote a destabilising history, based around what he called the genealogical method. It refused "the certainty of absolutes", opposing histories based upon reality, identity and continuity, and replacing them with a history that was parodic, dissociative and sacrificial. According to such a view, an effective history "confirms our existence among countless lost events, without a landmark or a point of departure".

In a series of genealogical studies, Foucault has documented the interrelations between knowledge and power. He has demonstrated how intellectuals can act as agents of power - how the will to know and the will to power have practically fed into each other, nourished each other. When intellectuals have claimed to speak in the name of someone or something other than themselves, they have been embroiled in networks of power - they have become agents of systems of power. In his most spectacular studies of madness, of sexuality and of delinquency, Foucault shows how the knowledge of the 'human sciences' has been accompanied by interventions, by productions and by discriminations made and enforced practically. The knowledge of the human sciences rests upon a 'Panopticon power', where the scientist looks down into the lives of his or her subjects, and where surveillance is followed by disciplining and isolation of the abnormal. So, for example, the production of a knowledge about the question of 'sexuality' was accompanied by the surveillance of the parent-child relationship, the urge towards normalization, the diffusion of psychiatry and psychoanalysis, and so on.

The implication of all of this is that the intellectual is not innocent. The knowledge which the intellectual treasures is wrung from systems of domination, and feeds such domination. As Foucault argues in Intellectuals and Power:

"Intellectuals are themselves agents of this system of power - the idea of their responsibility for 'consciousness' and discourse forms part of the system. The intellectual's role is no longer to place himself 'somewhat ahead and to the side' in order to express the stifled truth of the collectivity; rather, it is to struggle against the forms of power that transform him into its object and instrument in the sphere of 'knowledge', 'truth', 'consciousness' and 'discourse'."

This unveiling of the power and interests of intellectuals has entered into the historiographical debates of the present. The order and objectivity of historical explanation has increasingly been treated as a fiction, and the role of historical discourse in imposing that order has been

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26 Joyce, P. 'The End of Social History?', Social History, 20 (1) January 1995, 86
28 Ibid., 93
29 Ibid., 89
highlighted by writers like Roland Barthes \(^5\) and Joan Scott.\(^6\) The role of historians as intellectuals who construct the actors that inhabit their narratives has been opened up to critical scrutiny, and the concept of a commonly accessible 'experience' attacked as a damaging barrier to the examination of difference.\(^7\)

However, the impact of such scrutiny has not meant only, or even primarily, that the order and objectivity of historical explanation has been questioned. On the contrary, there has been a dual movement, involving a rhetorical commitment to the questioning of such order, but an actual maintenance of ordering categories in the writing of history. As critic Raphael Samuel has persuasively argued of the linguistic turn: "...though it claims to be a science of the particular, (it) thrills to the idea of the generic - the paradigmatic instance which will serve as a microcosm of a large whole."\(^8\) Indeed, even a post-structuralist like Ann Curthoys admits that the much vaunted Foucault has produced 'totalizing' accounts in influential works like Discipline and Punish.\(^9\) However, both the subject matter of this history, and the form of its totalizing categories have shifted. The linguistic critique of historical order and objectivity has increasingly been used as a cloaking device - used to undermine the meta-narrative of class, while others were installed covertly in its place. In this two-step process, class analysis is repudiated through arguments about multiplicity and diversity. An alternative, equally ordering, but non-class explanation is then put in its place.

This is the case with recent histories produced by post-structuralist scholars like James Vernon. Vernon's work is typical, in that it takes up the critique of objectivity by claiming that it is merely one possible narrative among a "multiplicity of other readings".\(^10\) But from this point, it uses a focus on discourse to argue that class action was not part of the struggle for parliamentary reform,\(^11\) to highlight the role of 'culture brokers' (or intellectuals),\(^12\) and to construct a grand, pessimistic narrative that the struggles for democracy in Britain actually closed off the constitution's radical-libertarian, democratic potential.\(^13\)

A similar approach may be distinguished in Lynette Finch's recent work The Classing Gaze. This attempts to write a history of the Australian working class without the working class. For Finch, the idea of the 'working class' was imposed by social engineers in nineteenth century Australia, when intellectuals divided the population into the 'respectable' and the 'non-respectable', treating the former with social policy and sociology, and the later with medicine.\(^14\) According to Finch, it is the way in which these imposed boundaries are treated differently which produces "border wars and class struggle",\(^15\) and which produces a class structure. Although she admits that workers could give the term 'working class' their own meaning, she affirms that it is the middle class construction which has priority, which "politically,
historically and philosophically overlays that constituted by the working class themselves."

There is no place in such a work for an analysis of the labour process, of political and trade union organisation, of the process by which workers made themselves a collectivity to change the world. That collectivity was apparently forged by the middle class for their own ends, is accepted by workers almost out of necessity, and is closer to a label on an inert subject than a call to arms and self-organisation.

Certainly, there is no doubt that the ideas which have accompanied the forward march of the intelligentsia have many strengths. In pointing out the role of language and of intellectuals they have both performed a very useful function and highlighted key silences in traditional class analysis." However, rather than attempting to explain the forces and interactions which caused labour movement decline and which propelled intellectuals into independent action, they have effectively imagined backwards the present state of working class demobilisation. Whether this is presented as an interpretation or a meta-narrative, it is little help in trying to make sense of the trajectory of labour's popular struggles - they never existed, so there is no need to comprehend their cessation. Since this study is concerned to understand the very real mobilisation, demobilisation and decline of class over the 1940s and 1950s, the linguistic turn represents a barrier rather than a helping hand to our analytic aim.

Understanding Labour Movement Decline

Clearly, any attempt to explain labour movement decline needs to make space for intellectuals and for language, but it also needs to combine rather than counterpose this with the materialist approaches to politics and history used by scholars like Thompson. This is possible when political ideology and articulations are brought into the analysis, but when it is also accepted that such articulations are not independent of material conditions or of class forces." This does not lead only to the obvious but somewhat abstract point that the socio-political order shapes the context of communicative interactions, and thereby shapes language.~ Nor does it merely illuminate how collectivism creates a different context for the development of concepts and ideas." It also leads to Ludwig Wittgenstein's more subtle yet often overlooked insights.

In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein argued that language and context are not separated in everyday existence, but that together they are fused in a 'form of life';" and he introduced the concept of the 'language-game' to express this fusion.~ This indissolubility of language and context does not only mean, as the post-structuralist may argue, that language saturates all experience. It also means that to separate language from context, or to look for the meaning of a word, rather than its use in a practical situation, is therefore an error." It is this error that the philosopher makes when he or she abstracts from real situations, and

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"Ibid., 145
"Hanagan, M. makes the point that the linguistic turn cannot help understand the traditional agenda of labour history in 'Commentary: For Reconstruction in Labor History', in Berlanstein, L.R. (ed) *Rethinking Labor History*, University of Illinois Press, 1993, 183
"Ibid., S.7
"Ibid., S.138. S.197
searches for the essential meanings of concepts like 'word', 'truth' and 'experience', as if those meanings were something more mysterious than 'lamp' or 'door'."

Wittgenstein's approach was to show how apparently philosophical concepts should be brought back to the actual terrain in which they were used, and the practical tasks with which they were intertwined. As he put it: "What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use." Where philosophy posed the question of consciousness, Wittgenstein argued that this question was most practical when someone was faint and may have collapsed." Where philosophers speculated about the nature of thought, Wittgenstein suggested: "Look at the word "to think" as a tool." This approach was anti-philosophical. It corrected the philosopher's search for the mysterious when no such mystery existed, and it privileged the everyday knowledge of ordinary life.

Wittgenstein's insights are not only useful for philosophers. Some sociologists have noted how Wittgenstein's concept of a 'form of life' may be broadly equated with the term 'social structure', and how this work may be useful for the study of society." Others, like Anthony Giddens, have focused on the concept of the language-game, and how the notion of practical game-playing expresses the 'recursiveness' of social practices in a constant process of production and reproduction." However, historians have yet to recognize the usefulness of Wittgenstein's contribution. This is unfortunate, since it has an obvious application to any attempts to reconcile class analysis with the linguistic turn. This is because proponents of discourse analysis effectively make the same mistake as Wittgenstein's philosopher. They attempt to explore the trajectory of concepts like class, socialism and democracy without placing such concepts in the context of the practical struggles and experiences of working people. Reference to Wittgenstein suggests that if we are to understand such concepts, then we need to place them in the practical situations in which they were used. That is, we need to look at those who did the articulating - the labour movement intellectuals, and we need to place them in their practical contexts - the labour movement institutions. We need to look at what intellectuals were practically trying to do inside institutional locations if we are to make sense of just what they are saying about themselves and the world. In this sense, if we are to understand labour discourse, then we need also to understand labour intellectuals, labour movement institutions, and the broader class structure. That is, the study of labour discourse, of labour movement institutions and of classes may be complementary and mutually supportive, rather than the stark alternatives they are often portrayed as." In this sense, if we are to listen to post-structuralism, and to take the emergence of concepts like class as something to be explained historically," then we must synthesize discourse analysis with materialism in search of our explanations.

33 Ibid., S.97
34 Ibid., S.116
35 Ibid., S.416
36 Ibid., S.360
39 This view is broadly comparable with the recent claim of Ira Katznelson that the 'three pillars' of a renovated labour history should be class, identity and institutions - Katznelson, I. The "Bourgeois" Dimension: A Provocation About Institutions, Politics, and the Future of Labor History', ILWCH, 46 Fall 1994, 9
A labour history that adopted Wittgenstein's approach would therefore need to understand the interaction of three actors: intellectuals, institutions, and classes. It would also need to recast our understanding of each of these actors in a number of significant ways. This is the approach adopted here.

This study integrates a concern with political mobilisation, political demobilisation and discourse through a narrative which traces the interactions of three primary actors. Firstly, it is a narrative concerned with classes. The approach to class analysis adopted by Ira Katznelson is used, so that class is thought of as a concept with four connected layers: those of structure, ways of life, dispositions, and collective action. This sort of approach makes it possible to explore both the political economy of capitalism, the experiences of working people, working class culture, and political mobilisation without making any assumptions about the relationship between each of the levels. It rejects the notion of a 'true' working class consciousness necessarily being a revolutionary consciousness, as it does the idea of the crude economic determination of working class politics and culture. It thereby makes class analysis a more subtle and less deterministic and bulky part of the narrative.

The narrative complements a focus on classes in the four sense used above with a focus on intellectuals. This study defines intellectuals as 'truth-producers', and brings them firmly into the orbit of labour history. In doing so, it rejects the view associated with Karl Mannheim that intellectuals transcend class categorization. Mannheim delineates the historical myth that with the demise of intellectuals as a priestly caste, they became free-floating, infinitely malleable and flexible. They are hence apparently capable of choosing their own political and social affiliations, and therefore transcending the boundaries of a specific class outlook. The same argument presents intellectuals as capable of seeing more than others - of rising above the fray to appreciate the knowledge of others, of seeing the whole of the social and political structure, of being sceptical and independent.

While containing a germ of truth, this way of treating intellectuals has three unfortunate analytical repercussions. Firstly, it denies the status of 'intellectual' to those thinkers who are obviously tied to the working class, and who are in no sense 'free-floating' - thereby also implying that the ideas of such thinkers are self-interested and crude rather than disinterested, independent and complex. Secondly, by denying that truth-producers are involved in political and material relations, it begs those central questions which deal with the degree and nature of the autonomy which intellectuals have from other social forces. Thirdly, it sidesteps the increasingly apparent fact that intellectuals can exist as a politically powerful collective with their own self-defined interests and networks of mobilisation.

However, if the Mannheim approach to understanding intellectuals is rejected, then so is the leading approach which attempts to place intellectuals in the context of class and politics - that developed by Antonio Gramsci. In The Prison Notebooks, Gramsci also argues

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5 Mannheim, K. Essays on the Sociology of Culture, RKP, 1956, 121

6 Mannheim, K. Ideology and Utopia: an introduction to the sociology of culture, RKP, 1936, 141


8 Mannheim, K. Ideology and Utopia, 143

9 Mannheim, K. Essays on the Sociology of Culture, 149

10 Ibid., 170

11 Williams, R. Culture. Fontana, 1981, 222
that the claims of the intellectual for objectivity, for disinterestedness, for universality and for classlessness are false. In his conception, intellectuals do not hover above the clang of political battle - on the contrary, they are some of its primary participants. He argues that two sorts of intellectuals participate in this battle. Firstly, there are those 'traditional intellectuals', those writers and ecclesiastics who claim universality and so vocally protest their own political innocence. For Gramsci, such intellectuals are not at all autonomous, they are actually tied to dominant classes, and they practically fulfill the functions of social hegemony and political government. In addition to such traditional intellectuals, a second group of intellectuals participate in the political struggle. These are intellectuals "organically" produced by those classes, such as the working class, which perform "an essential function in the world of economic production", and are therefore deemed to be historically progressive. Such organic intellectuals serve to give their class a "homogeneity and an awareness of its function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields." They organise, they educate, they propagate and they lead their own class on the political battlefield. So, in this conception, intellectuals are neither free-floating, disinterested nor politically innocent. They are participants in a class war, and they fight it to win. Organic intellectuals, in their struggle for their class, struggle to conquer ideologically the traditional intellectuals. They do this particularly through political parties. More specifically, the revolutionary party of the working class - its "Collective Intellectual" or "Modern Prince", attempts to weld together its own organic intellectuals with the traditional thinkers of the liberal intelligentsia and the Church. In doing so, it promises the 'capture' of traditional intellectuals, and the class hegemony of the workers.

Clearly, this analytical treatment is a highly prescriptive one, intimately tied to Gramsci's own political project in the Italian Communist Party. It offers suggestions for a certain sort of Communist political practice, rather than a way of understanding the complex and changing relations between intellectuals, classes, and labour movement institutions. Its analytical benefits are uncertain in the Australia of the 1940s and 1950s, where two collectivist political parties competed for a working class audience, and where the intelligentsia was a political force anxious to obtain benefits for itself and yet separate from the ruling class proper. It offers us a blueprint for bringing intellectuals and classes together, rather than the tools for an exploration of how they have actually interrelated during a given period in Australian history.

In opposition to the approaches of both Gramsci and Mannheim, this study treats intellectuals as actors in two senses. Firstly, it studies the action of intellectuals as a distinct collective or as an intelligentsia. The constituency of the intelligentsia is made up of all those who produce ideas and knowledge, but like any active group, the intelligentsia rarely mobilises the whole of its constituency. As a group, it possesses a certain set of common interests, level of organisation, opportunity, and mobilisation, and its existence and changing form can be tracked historically.

Secondly, if (as Wittgenstein suggests) their articulations are to be tied rigorously to their practical context, then intellectuals must be treated as producers - truth-producers involved in an intellectual labour process. There are a number of important precedents for this

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1 Gramsci, A. Prison Notebooks, Lawrence and Wishart, 1971, 10
2 Ibid., 5
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., 12
5 Ibid., 15
attempt to treat intellectual work as a labour process. Indeed, there is a whole tradition of such work. It is a tradition marked, at its beginning, by the ability of Walter Benjamin in 'The Author as Producer' to ask a different question of the literary text. It was here that he stopped asking "What is the attitude of a (literary) work to the relations of production of its time?", and started asking "What is its position in the relations of production of its time?" This question ushered in a new approach which has largely been developed in two distinct directions.

Firstly, a stream of literature has been produced which attempts to understand the effects of the market upon intellectual production. Benjamin himself, in his study of Baudelaire has opened up this field of study." Others, like Pierre Bourdieu, have attempted to replace the vulgar Marxist idea of direct economic determination of intellectual production, with more nuanced and subtle versions. Bourdieu's concept of the 'intellectual field' insists that economic and social forces only impact upon intellectuals by being reinterpreted into the relatively autonomous world of cultural institutions and creative projects. Within this 'intellectual field' itself, authors, publishers, critics, publics, cultural and political associations, and so on all struggle for cultural legitimacy. It is like "a magnetic field, made up of a system of power lines." An almost infinite number of relationships of power criss-cross the intellectual field, and it is through these that the public meaning of an intellectual's work is mutually constructed. A similar approach is evident in Terry Eagleton's Criticism and Ideology, where a whole manner of concepts, including the 'literary mode of production', are developed in order to grasp literary production in its relationship to capitalism as a whole. The work of Adorno and Hokheimer on the development of mass culture may also be placed in this context.

There is no doubt that this a powerful and important stream of analysis. However it is not directly relevant to our purposes. This is because it largely takes over unexamined Mannheim's conception of 'the intellectual' as an independent, sceptical thinker, and only introduces the material context in a later analytical step as a sort of constraining or degrading force. It is a form of analysis principally directed towards understanding the tensions faced by cultural or 'high art' intellectuals. It therefore replicates the elitism which takes the great artist as its unit of analysis, and sees both politics and working class intellectuals as inhabiting a separate conceptual universe from that of art and thought. Its concern with the relationship between the market and culture causes it to miss the sense in which intellectual production largely occurs within cultural and political institutions. As a result, intellectual production is therefore not so much negatively blocked or twisted by outside forces like the market, as much as it is positively produced within a given institutional setting.

It is this latter approach to understanding the intellectual labour process which is developed by writers such as Edward Said, when he focuses on the 'affiliation' of intellectuals

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8 Benjamin, W. 'The Author as Producer', Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings, Schocken, 1986, 222
9 Benjamin, W. Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Age of High Capitalism, Verso, 1983
11 Ibid., 161
12 Ibid., 173
13 Eagleton, T. Criticism and Ideology: a study in Marxist Literary Theory, Verso, 1978
to particular locations in the social body," or by Robert Brym in his account of the shifting ties between radical intellectuals and social groups." For the purposes of our study, such an approach implies a focus both on the institutions of cultural production, such as journals and publishing houses, as well as a focus on political institutions as locations where ideas are produced. In particular, it suggests both that labour movement institutions need to be understood as authentic sites of truth-production, and that those who produce such ideas may be rightfully described as labour movement intellectuals.

This sort of conceptual approach to understanding intellectuals suggests a quite subtle treatment of the narrative's third primary cluster of actors - labour movement institutions. Labour movement institutions have typically been treated in two sorts of ways. Firstly, they have been the subject of highly empirical, institutional analyses, which tell a simple and often 'official' story of growth and development. Secondly, in the case of histories of political parties, they have been the subject of work which (in line with Gramsci's dictum) writes the history of a political party as the history of a social group." Of course, there has been dispute about which political party may be equated with which social group. Humphrey McQueen, for example, wrote a history of the Australian Labor Party as a history of the petit-bourgeoisie, while others like Bede Nairn have seen it as embodying the history of the working class. Given that this study is concerned to establish the historical and changing links between classes, intellectuals and institutions, neither of these approaches is satisfactory.

Instead, this study analyses both the Australian Labor Party and the Communist Party of Australia in detail, and seeks to understand them in three senses. Firstly, drawing principally from secondary literature, it aims to establish the place of both of these institutions in the history of class formation. Secondly, it aims to explore how this history led to a specific sort of political practice, with certain characteristic links between party and class, and certain forms of discourse privileged. Thirdly, the implications of this political practice for affiliated intellectuals will be illuminated, with special emphasis on the power of such 'ruling discourses' within institutions.

These ruling discourses are understood as flexible limits within which institutionally-bound intellectuals must work. Such discourses operate in the way in which Wittgenstein understood a dogma to operate:

"...a dogma is expressed in the form of an assertion, and is unshakable, but at the same time any practical opinion can be made to harmonize with it; admittedly more easily in some cases than in others. It is not a wall setting limits to what can be believed, but more like a brake which, however, practically serves the same purpose..."

Of course, the centrality of a certain brand of Marxism within the Communist Party makes the identification of its ruling discourse or dogma quite simple and unambiguous. Likewise, the importance of the Christian religion in political associations like 'The Movement' of Roman Catholics in the 1950s is also obvious. However, institutions like the Australian Labor Party also possess such ruling discourses, which are equally important, if less flamboyant and doctrinal. In the ALP of the 1940s and 1950s there was a quite dogmatic insistence on the

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" Brym, R.F. Intellectuals and Politics, George Allen and Unwin, 1980
" Gramsci, A. Prison Notebooks, Lawrence and Wishart, 1971. 151
" Wittgenstein, L. Culture and Value, Basil Blackwell, 1980, 28
identity between the Labor Party and the labour movement, the maintenance of solidarity, and
the need for practical, realistic policies. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, any
intellectuals who aimed to influence the constituency of the Labor Party needed to adhere to
these dogmas.

This insight concerning the power of ruling discourses implies that much of the work
produced by affiliated intellectuals consists in the manipulation of ruling discourses or
dogmas in support of certain strategic ends. Such an intellectual does not create the dogmatic
power of the discourse, but uses the discourse, and reproduces it in an altered form. Clearly,
contemporary Marxist intellectuals did not invent 'the theory of over-accumulation', but
intellectuals affiliated to the Communist Party could use this theory to justify a changed
attitude of opposition to the Labor Party in the middle 1940s. Equally, 'the glory of God' could
be used by Catholic intellectuals to promote anti-Communist organising, and the need to be
'realistic' could be used within the ALP to foster both more or less radical policies on different
occasions. These examples contextualise the dual insights that it is only through their
institutional location that we can hope to understand intellectuals, and it is only through their
function as sites of competing intellectual production that we can hope to understand
institutions. Class analysis is strengthened through both of these insights.

A study based upon the three pillars of classes, intellectuals and institutions offers a
new approach to labour history. The focus on class as an unpacked concept allows reference
to the structure of the economy and the make-up of the labour force without predetermining
what the political implications of such a structure will be. It also allows flexible reference to
the form of life, dispositions and collective action of workers. The focus on intellectuals as
actors allows abstract statements about the power of discourse to be replaced by a concrete
analysis of those agents who actually did the articulating, and who did not operate in a
material vacuum. The focus on institutions allows us to come to grips with the sites from
which most labour movement intellectuals produced their ideas, and to understand the
imperfect mechanisms which the working class used to secure its interests and to remake its
world. The discontinuous career of class is understood as a product of the interaction of these
three actors.

The Structure of the Study

This study attempts to chart the rise and decline of the labour movement in Australia between
1942 and 1956. This was a period of great amplitude in the strength of the labour movement,
great variety in class discourse, and a great passage from class to non-class collective action.
These changes will be surveyed and explained through a narrative which focuses upon the
interactions between classes, intellectuals and institutions, and thereby attempts to widen the
explanatory scope of materialist approaches to history.

The study is organised into nine chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 are attempts to explain
how their differing historical relationships to the process of class formation in Australia
helped to shape both the Australian Labor Party and the Communist Party of Australia. It then
becomes possible to analyse the specific political practices of each of these parties, their
relationship to their working class constituency, and their role as sites of intellectual affiliation
and production. Together with this introductory chapter, they stake out the originality of the
approach adopted here, and its analytical differences from previous work.

Once this has been understood, it is then possible to explore how the leading labour
movement institutions and intellectuals both acted as imperfect vessels for popular claims,
and pursued their own peculiar interests over time. This is the task of subsequent chapters, which trace out the path of development which working class politics traversed during the war and post-war years. They form Part 2 of the study. Chapter 4 deals with disciplined mobilisation of the labour movement during war time. Chapter 5 explores the simultaneous rise of the intelligentsia. Chapter 6 analyses how labour movement intellectuals attempted to construct unity with the intelligentsia around joint proposals for post-war reconstruction. Chapter 7 explains how this unity collapsed, and Chapter 8 explains how labour movement retreat was interpreted by intellectuals as the 'death of class'. In Chapter 9 we review the significance of the whole study for class and class analysis in the future.

Together the nine chapters of the study aim to do five things. Firstly and primarily, they provide a narrative which explains both labour movement growth and decline in Australia, culminating in the apparent death of class in the later 1950s. Secondly, they also offer an historical reinterpretation of the forces which shaped post-war Australia, a reinterpretation which touches on substantive issues and controversies like the creation of the welfare state and the rise of the cold war. Thirdly, the study also offers a reappraisal of the political parties of the working class, and an attempt to understand their links to class and to socialism in a more sensitive and historicized manner. Fourthly, the study also represents a quite thorough materialist history of intellectuals over the 1940s and 1950s, placing both scholarly and creative movements in a more adequate political and institutional context. Finally, the study also aims to widen both the focus and scope of class analysis, by shifting historical attention to the process of labour movement decline, and by attempting to make a fuller focus on intellectuals and institutions a legitimate part rather than a polemical alternative to a materialist history.
2. The Australian Labor Party

Given the political impetus behind much labour history, it is not surprising that most appraisals of labour movement institutions also contain implicit visions of the Australian working class. This is particularly true of institutional portraits of the Australian Labor Party and the Communist Party of Australia. These typically divide up the labour movement into a labourist bread-and-butter majority and a socialist, revolutionary and crankish minority. According to such accounts, the former are concerned with full bellies, the latter with ideas and utopias. The former find their institutional home in the ALP, and begin to pursue simple wallet-filling aims, while the latter join the CPA, and become concerned only with winning the world to the insights of Das Kapital. Institutional biography and a sort of thumbnail class biography are interwoven, so that portraits of the Labor Party are portraits of the working class, and analyses of the CPA are studies of how socialist ideas could never flourish among a moderate working class.

This widespread approach reproduces the division between intellect and labour, abstract and practical within labour history itself. It reifies both individual institutions and the labour movement as the bearers of ahistorical, almost personal traits. It offers little to those concerned with a discontinuous history of advance and retreat, of changing institutional stances and practices, of evolving relations between the working class and its political parties.

Both this Chapter and its successor will address the labourist/socialist antinomy. This Chapter will be concerned with the Australian Labor Party, or with the labourist side of the division, while its successor will focus upon the Communist Party and its supposedly rarefied, theoreticist and foreign approach to politics. This Chapter aims to demonstrate that the concept of labourism, with all of its implications about anti-intellectualism and practical politics, is not a useful tool for the study of the ALP. In place of labourism, it aims to posit an alternative model with which to understand the practical functioning of the Labor Party. This alternative seeks both to explore the historical relationship between working class formation and the foundation of the Labor Party, to analyse how this established a certain sort of collectivist political practice (with characteristic ties linking party and class), and to explain how this opened a practical and discursive space within which intellectuals could manoeuvre. In a sense, both this Chapter and its successor represent analytical stepping stones to the later analysis of the labour movement’s growth and decline. Both Chapters 2 and 3 attempt to demonstrate that a biographical picture of the labour movement in which intellectuals are marginalised does not correspond to the historical record. From this point, they attempt to provide the means with which it is possible to understand the place and the opportunities for action which intellectuals possessed inside the Labor Party and the Communist Party. It is only when the constraints, the tensions and the resources intellectuals possessed inside these institutions are understood, that it is possible to chart the progress of their interactions over historical time, and for this to become part of a wider history of class mobilisation and demobilisation.

In order to perform this dual task of knocking down ‘labourism’ and building up an alternative, this Chapter will be organised into 5 broad sections:
1. The concept of labourism will be introduced, and its treatment of intellectuals delineated.

2. The concept of labourism will be rejected, and the reasons given.

3. An historical account of the emergence of the Labor Party and its specific institutional form will be advanced.

4. The space for intellectual manoeuvre inside this structure will be explained.

5. The importance of labour discourse in this structure will be explored, and the strategic reasons why it took a specific form will be explained. As a result, reasons for the apparent persuasiveness of the concept of labourism will emerge.

The Chapter will then be organised so as to orbit around the concept of 'labourism', and previous contributions to the literature concerning the Labor Party. But the fundamental concern of the Chapter is elsewhere. It aims to build a framework within which it will be possible to understand the resources and constraints which intellectual interventions inside the Labor Party were likely to face. It thereby lays the foundation for the heart of the thesis - the historical analysis of the mobilisation and demobilisation of labour which occurred during the 1940s and 1950s.

The labourist thesis and the marginalisation of working class intellectuals

Intellectuals seldom tire of asserting that the Australian labour movement is anti-intellectual. Such dismissals are sold at the rate of a dime a dozen. They may be found on the pages of cultural and political journals, of established newspapers, and of (where else?) the private papers of Labor Party intellectuals. A citation from each of these sources will be sufficient to document the ubiquity of this view. According to the journal Overland, the Australian labour movement "spurned ideas" like no other movement in the world.1 In a similar vein, the Sydney Morning Herald complained that intellectuals were repulsed by the culture of the Labor Party. They were apparently "left out upon a limb and given little chance", constrained by barriers to the freedom of thought, uninfluential. The Herald further contended that intellectuals were desperately needed by the Party, as it was unable to form anything but a "hand-to-mouth policy" with the brains of its own members. It was to be lamented, the Herald further opined, that intellectuals were prevented by the unions and by grubby power-plays from giving it the guidance it so needed.2 The same sentiments were also held by Labor intellectuals. Even old labour movement hands and pamphleteers like Lloyd Ross were known to complain about Labor's "anti-intellectual" approach to the problems of "pragmatic gradualism”.1

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1 Editorial, 'A General Demand for Art', Overland, 14 Autumn 1959, 19
2 The Party Struggle II: Labour's lack of Thinkers', Sydney Morning Herald, 12/7/43
This equation of the ALP with a practical, anti-intellectual politics is something which labour historians have propagated with great gusto. Classic accounts of the Labor Party are united in their depiction of the dominance of 'practical men' over 'idealists' in the formation and the early history of the ALP. It is always the practical men who have the power, the practical men who share the aspirations of the bulk of Australians. It is always the idealists who form a small minority - either a befuddled and motley minority, or a spiritual and high-minded minority - (depending on the sympathies of the historian), but always a minority.

The major texts of Australian labour history have argued that the dominance of the 'practical men' inside the ALP has structured its culture - producing a lumpen, extremely commonplace ideology - a 'labourist' ideology. This term has a number of subtle shadings and connotations. Most simply, it signifies that the Labor Party was overwhelmingly economistic, dominated by a trade-union consciousness. Drawn from Lenin's distinction in *What is to be Done?*, it could be argued that the Labor Party evolved on the back of trade unionism, never attained the intellectual leadership or the discipline to reach an authentic socialist consciousness, and thereby remained pragmatic, moderate and prone to the 'concession strategy'. This was a view developed by Tom Nairn in relation to the British Labour Party, and was enthusiastically taken up by Australian labour historians. Over the 1970s and '80s the term 'labourism' became a neat shorthand for the politics of the ALP - its reliance on trade unions as the best means of advancing the interests of workers and its emphasis on concrete demands of immediate advantage. Labourism implied that the ALP had no interest in developing the political consciousness of workers, nor any need for intellectual debate. It was a trade union Party, concerned to see that the State maintained a favourable legal and economic framework within which unions could bargain with a free and powerful hand. At its most ambitious, it suggested that the Labor Party would expand employment, 'particularly through the public sector, where Government may directly influence employment conditions.'

Labourism was practical. The historian influenced by the 'labourist thesis' has consistently presented the ALP as concerned with the "here and now needs of the workers" and not with some socialist commonwealth in the future. Pragmatism and socialism were

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7 Clark, C.M.H. *A History of Australia IV*, 191
8 These are surveyed in Irving, T. 'Labourism: a Political Genealogy', *Labour History*, 66 May 1994, to which I am indebted.
counterposed in such analyses - fighting for a better life now was interpreted as implying necessarily that those fighting would be content with the basic structure of capitalist social relations. This is most extreme in a work like Bede Nairn's *Civilising Capitalism* - in which a decision to be reconciled with capitalism is simply imagined into the heads of working people:

"Labour people weighed the confused promise of an alien earthly paradise against its high price, which included the constriction of the human spirit, and decided to continue their efforts for betterment in the society to which they belonged."

The concept of 'labourism' is used in an ahistorical manner - the struggles over the meaning of 'labourism', the variety of labour thought, the contestation with the ruling class, the sense of reforms being part of a movement directed towards the supersession of capitalism - all of this is ushered out of view. What is left is a false continuity - the concept becomes an ahistorical essence mobilised to explain the eternal nature of Labor. To the extent that 'labourism' mutates from a description of implemented Labor policy to an historical explanation of why that policy is non-socialist, it is a functionalist explanation. The Labor Party is described as non-socialist, Bede Nairn explains, because its fight for a better society may have prevented a revolution from breaking out. In Bede Nairn's own words, it constituted "an essential safety valve to facilitate the development of a harmonious and tolerant society."

The Labor Party practically works to hold capitalism up, it is argued. It accepts the rule of law, the impartiality of the Crown, the independence of the judiciary, the importance of a non-political bureaucracy. In its quest for full employment it habitually emphasises adequate profitability, and therefore wage restraint, "minimal" controls, and assistance to private investors. It is a Party calculated to serve the needs of business with the modern techniques of liberal capitalism.

To the extent that such work rises from polemics to historical explanation, it is argued that participation in parliamentary politics forever marks the culture of the Labor Party, ensuring its labourist nature. Whether this is the biting of the forbidden fruit, and the original socialist sin, or whether it is the path to liberal enlightenment is something that labour historians of different political hues argue about. What they generally do not argue about is its fundamental significance. Robin Gojljan's assessment of the Labor Party as 'primarily an

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14 For example, Murphy, D.J. *T.J. Ryan: a political biography*, University of Queensland Press, 1975, 257, denies that the Labor Party is 'socialist' or 'trade union', asserting that it is "...more rural and pragmatic in character."
15 Nairn, B. *Civilising Capitalism*, 7
16 This is a point made in relation to the B.L.P. and the concept of 'labourism' in Samuel, R. and Stedman Jones, G. 'The Labour Party and Social Democracy', in Samuel, R. and Stedman Jones, G. (eds) *Culture, Ideology and Politics*, RKP, 1982
17 *Ibid.*, 131
19 Clark, C.M.H. *A History of Australia IV*, 324
21 Catley, R. and McFarlane, B. *From Tweedledum to Tweedledee*, Australia and New Zealand Book Company, 1977, 1
organisation to fight elections." is one with which most concur. It is further asserted that the Party's electoralism in-turn has dictated the rejection of extra-parliamentary action, such as 'political strikes', as well as the organisation of demonstrations or intervention in other movements such as the peace movement. It has, in short, robbed it of the power to oppose the social and political logic of the State apparatuses. It has been reconciled with capitalism. It has had no lively branch structure and no systematic, independent means of working class education for the bulk of its life.

Rather than a comprehensive and hegemonic world view, the Labor Party projected pragmatic reform and parliamentary fetishism. It not only trusted as to the malleability of bourgeois democracy, it sought electoral victory at all costs. Even the folkloric working class beliefs of the trade unionisms were sacrificed and diluted in an attempt to appeal to the middle class at election times. Moderation proved a temptation, and labourism became progressively more liberal and less hostile to capitalism. This 'middle class dilution thesis' remains one of the primary planks of the 'labourist history' of the Labor Party, and its adherents are manifold. In its most innovative formulations, it is the urge to appeal to 'the people' rather than to the working class, and to liberalist rather than socialist discursive traditions, which ensures the triumph of middle class hegemony, and therefore the maintenance of capitalism.

As Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones have argued, 'labourism' is an ideal type, used by historians in a circular manner. Historians scan the history of Labor Government policy and internal Labor Party conflicts to form an "analytical concentrate" - labourism. But they then use this concept to explain why the Labor Government implemented particular policies, and why the Labor Party was beset by particular conflicts. A convenient descriptive term thereby becomes an historical explanation - the Labor Party failed to achieve socialism because it was "merely labourist". Anyone who asks what the concept of "labourism" actually explains about the historical process is quickly silenced, and the 'descriptive' side of labourism is emphasised once more - of course, the Labor Party must be labourist, look at its policies! Symptomatically, Peter Beilharz uses the concept of labourism,
then dispatches objectors with the phrase: "It may be possible to argue that the Labour Party is wedded to some conception of socialism, but the record of Labour Governments suggests a different story." 11

More generally, this illustrates a common trait of labourist-based histories - the tendency to present the policies implemented by Labor Governments as the essential expression of Labor policy. Any glimmer of something more is dulled, any Labor rhetoric which promises something wider is muffled, reduced to the dimensions of achieved Labor policy. Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley pledged his allegiance to 'the light on the hill' - a world where all would be safe and secure. He made it clear that his politics were about more than a few extra shillings, but were spiritual, a "political religion", in fact. 12 As we shall see, the Chifley Government of the 1940s attempted many things, and provoked widespread ruling class mobilisation, but its most successful and enduring reforms concerned the construction of a genuine welfare state in Australia. For the labourist historian, this does not mean that Chifley may have been concerned with building a new social order, but have only himself achieved the foundation of a welfare state. On the contrary, it means that 'the light on the hill' was nothing more than welfare. 13 There is no room for an exploration of the historical genesis of Labor policy in these accounts, 14 no room for the possibility that reform was ongoing, a movement towards the abolition of capitalism. 15 The whole idea that there may have been contestation, struggle with the ruling class is absent. The Labor Party is not a fighting, dynamic organisation concerned with social change. It is a collaborationist, static organisation concerned with the maintenance of capitalism. 16

Repudiating the concept of labourism

The concept of labourism provides a distorted vision of the history of the Labor Party, and it must be repudiated. Its legitimacy and usefulness can be attacked from a number of directions. Firstly, it must be pointed out that the policies of the Labor Party are not merely practical, empirical, and ad hoc. They are informed by ideas, by arguments, by intellectual labour. 17 When these ideas are treated with respect and not dismissed as 'practical', it can be

31 Beilharz, P. 'The Australian Left: Beyond Labourism?', 218
32 Chifley's major speeches are collected in Chifley, B. The Things Worth Fighting For, Melbourne University Press, 1952.
33 Beilharz, P., Considine, M., and Watts, R. Arguing About the Welfare State, Allen and Unwin, 1992 state 'Chifley's logic here, under the image of the guiding beacon, was that socialism essentially meant social security.' 37
34 For example, Rob Watts argues that the Labor Party's commitment to full employment was adopted in the 1940s, and that this made it "the major proponent of Keynesian liberalism". The idea that full employment may have been a Labor policy pre-Keynes is inconvenient to his thesis about the influence of the bureaucracy and thereby of liberalism. It is therefore ignored - Watts, R. The Foundations of the National Welfare State, Allen and Unwin, 1987. The discussion of full employment and the 'White Paper' is around pages 117-8
35 For example, Carol Johnson argues that Labor reforms are "merely designed to improve capitalism" The Labor Legacy, 108. Her evidence for this appears to be twofold - firstly we have had Labor Governments, but we still have capitalism. Secondly, the Labor Governments of the 1980s have been increasingly conservative. The concept of 'labourism' is thus used to accommodate both radical reforming Governments of the '40s and '70s and conservative Governments of the '80s. All share in the essence of 'labourism' - and the static nature of Labor's reforms is thereby both fixed immutably and 'proven'.
36 The latter view is criticised most effectively in Maddox, G. and Battin, T. 'Australian Labor and the Socialist Tradition'. Australian Journal of Political Science, 26 (2) July 1991, 195
argued that there is not a contradiction between 'labourism' and 'socialism', but a harmony, a family resemblance. Many historians of socialist thought agree that the Australian Labor Party's Platform and policies have as much right to be called 'socialist' as anything else. As a set of reformist ideas produced by both wage labourers and the intelligentsia, they represent a reaction both to the injustices of capitalism and to the strictures of bourgeois individualism. They thereby meet George Lichtheim's criteria for the term 'socialist'. Similarly, Labor Party policies and the ideas which have informed them fit R.N. Berk's typology as a socialism of the 'moralist' variety. In short, there is no sense at all in denying that labourism is a set of ideas, and still less in denying it the 'socialist label'.

Rather than a wasteland of theoretical discussion and a tribute to a 'More Sir, Please' mentality, the Labor Party is the heir to an eclectic and varied socialist tradition. Even critics of the Labor Party admit that the movement which produced it was home to a diverse socialist current. The class mobilisation of the 1880s and '90s was informed not only by socialist and anarchist thought, but by the political tradition of mid-19th Century radicalism, and by a closely allied populist tradition. Karl Marx was widely read at this time, as were English ethical socialists like Robert Blatchford, Cooperators of the Owenite variety, Christian socialists, and others such as William Morris. There were a range of Fabians, Republicans and even proponents of Henry George anxious to remake the world. The Labor Party which emerged from this environment was anything but atheoretical and practical-minded. It is the heterogeneity, the vitality and range of ideas which impresses. Labour rhetoric was marked at different times by rural populism, by liberal parliamentarism, by the ethos of municipal machine politics, and by more radical variants of socialism. At other times, the ideas of 'developmentalism' and modernisation seemed to dominate. Others still have focused upon the anti-banker sentiment and the 'people versus parasites' conflict which the utterances of many Labor members attempted to summon up. These are confused, contradictory and often incoherent ideas. They are also utopian, energising and important in the formation and the growth of Labor as a political presence.

The intellectuals who disseminated and produced such ideas were tremendously important to the birth of the Labor Party. As early as the 1860s, the working class was

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34 Lichtheim, G. A Short History of Socialism, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970. x
35 Berk's arguments broadly equate 'moralism' with what he calls 'social democracy', but the equation with what Australian scholars call 'labourism' is equally valid Berk, R.N. Socialism, J.M. Dent and Sons, 1975, 101
36 Burgmann, V. 'In Our Time': Socialism and the Rise of Labor, 1885 - 1905, George Allen and Unwin, 1985, 5
38 Burgmann, V. 'In Our Time', 6
developing its own intellectuals." They were much needed in the unions, the workplaces and soon inside the State itself. There were hundreds of labour, cooperative and socialist newspapers. The editors of the _Worker, Tocsin_, and the _Daily Standard_ in particular played an important role of theoretical guidance and mass conversion." More broadly, there were lectures and tutorial classes needed to educate the movement in labour's ideals, history and theory. There was a need to advise leaders, to fill the seats of parliaments and local councils, to staff arbitration tribunals. There were, in short, plenty of spaces from which working class intellectuals could spread their messages.

These were not outsiders with souls to capture, but working people anxious to wake themselves up. They were not practical labourers with grasping hands and empty heads, but often skilled workers with a genuine thirst for ideas. They recognised lack of education as a serious impediment, and they sought the union of 'learning and labour.' They patronised the Mechanics Institutes. They founded the Workers' Educational Association in 1913. By 1918 the WEA was running 37 classes in New South Wales, and was educating workers in social and political issues, and in particular in Economics and in Industrial History. Ideas and learning were sought as aids to labour mobilisation - inspired by an urge to serve the labour movement. They allowed the mystifications of the ruling classes to be rejected. As a Labor Minister of Education put it, they aimed "to educate the populace to play our part in revealing the defects of a particular scheme on the part of vested interests." It is well known that poets and writers like Henry Boote and Vance Palmer were Labor Party supporters. It is a little known fact that Labor leaders John Curtin and Doc Evatt were part-time poets, that Labor intellectuals like Brian Fitzpatrick and Lloyd Ross were poets, and that Trotskyist intellectuals and Labor Party members like Guido Baracchi were poets. These men may have been practising politicians, but they were also idealists in many respects, who regarded their reforms as assaults upon injustice and political crusades. To dub them 'labourists' is to misunderstand them.

Indeed, any historical analysis of the Labor Party's formation shows that socialist ideas played an important part in working class mobilisation. Although it is true that few were

48 Connell, R.W., and Irving, T.H. _Class Structure in Australian History_, 196
49 Murphy, D.J., T.J. Ryan, 3
52 Stewart, D. 'Workers' Education', _Australian Highway_, 33 (3) August 1951, 34
53 Heffron, R. 'Address to Proceedings of NSW Students' Conference', _Australian Highway_, 26 (5) October 1944, 68
54 Stewart, D. 'Pioneering the WEA in Australia - VI', _Australian Highway_, 29 (6) December 1947, 87
55 Lane, E. _Dawn to Dusk: reminiscences of a rebel_. William Brooks, 1939, 321
members of socialist organisations, the persuasiveness of socialist ideas to workers should not be denied. Socialists encouraged wage workers to conceive of their identity as separate from that of their employers, they facilitated the growth of working class consciousness, and they developed a real following. Men like William Lane in Queensland consistently preached cooperation and mateship, thereby creating the mood of the '90s, and wedding the labour movement in Queensland to the socialist ideal. Socialist ideas justified the mood of apocalyptic change which swept through a strike torn Australia, and helped to free workers from their ties to liberalism. Without the class consciousness which the agitator had nurtured, a separate Workers' Party could not have been established and so rapidly grown - there would have been no Labor Party.

It is certainly true that there were no great works of indigenous political theory written as the Labor Party was in formation. It is equally true that in the period after the Great War only V.G. Childe's How Labour Governs ranks as a work of real intellectual stature. But this does not imply that either ideas or intellectuals were unimportant. Ideas from Britain and the United States in particular received a vigorous and enthusiastic reception. They were reworked in Australian conditions and soon spread through the network of worker newspapers. Likewise, we should not be too quick to look for the ideas of workers in the form of political theory. It is rather in Australian literature that the working class first learns to speak for itself. The early realist stories of Henry Lawson, in which 'character narrators' like Jack Mitchell or 'the Oracle' grab hold of the short story, spin yarns of their experience, and tell of the reality of their surrounds, are political interventions of undeniable power and resonance. These first stories were printed in worker newspapers, and spoke from and to the working class the way few literatures did and few theorists could.

Indeed, even a brief glance at Labor's leading personalities over the 1940's and '50's is enough to belie the equation of Labor with a practical, anti-intellectual politics. These were working class intellectuals to whom ideas were enormously important. John Curtin was educated inside the Victorian Socialist Party at the feet of Anstey, Ross and Mann, and made his name as a socialist firebrand in the Conscription struggles of the First World War. Ben Chifley attended WEA and Technical School classes 4 nights a week for some 15 years. His house was littered with an array of books on economics and public finance, and he kept in close touch with developments of political thought in Britain. Doc Evatt was a brilliant graduate from a State selective high school and from Sydney University. Arthur Calwell speaks of walking to the Public Library as a youth, and then of buying socialist pamphlets from around 1913 onwards. Other leading figures like Eddie Ward lived in fear that they

56 Burgmann, V, 'In Our Time', 2-3
57 Ross, L, William Lane, Published by Lloyd Ross, Printed the Forward Press, Ltd, n.d., 77
60 Ibid., 36
61 This is a point popularized by Cultural Nationalists and Communists of the 1940s and '50s - e.g. Pizer, M, 'Introduction', in Pizer, M, (ed) Freedom on the Wallaby: Poems of the Australian People, The Pinchgut Press, n.d.
62 Ross, L, 'The Education of John Curtin', Australian Highway, 26 (4) August 1945, 49
63 Crisp, L.F, Ben Chifley: a biography, Longmans, 1960, 6
64 Ibid., 86
66 Calwell, A, Interviewed by Mel Pratt, 20/5/71, Oral History Collection, National Library of Australia TRC 1217, Session 1, 2
would be ridiculed for misusing a word, and regarded self-education with a manic, almost obsessive glee." These people struggled with ideas and concepts in a quest to remake their world. To think of them as practical and anti-intellectual is both historically misleading and a gross disrespect.

The historically formed and reproduced structure of the Labor Party

So, the 'labourist thesis' must be rejected. Its implications about the anti-intellectualism of the Labor Party are historically incorrect. Its ahistorical nature is a barrier to a genuine study of Labor. Rather than patronising generalities about practical unionists or New Left homilies about trade union consciousness, we need an historically grounded account of Labor Party formation. Such an account does not claim to unveil the essence of 'labourism', but to explain the nature of interactions inside the Labor Party, the constraints and opportunities of such interactions, and the room for manoeuvre that this afforded Labor Party intellectuals. Understanding the how and the why of the range of interactions inside the Labor Party is a first step toward a genuine historical analysis of the mobilisation and demobilisation of the working class in the 1940s and 1950s.

But for now, what is needed is an account of the structures of the Labor Party, and an historical explanation of how it is that such structures emerged. And this historical explanation itself is impossible without a prior history of working class mobilisation in an Australian context, however impressionistic it may be. Drawing from secondary literature, the place of the Labor Party in the history of working class mobilisation can be briefly sketched. Put simply, wage workers had begun to mobilise and to unify themselves in crypto-trade unions two generations before the advent of the Labor Party. Throughout the 1820s (and especially after 1839, when the supply of convict labour to private employers was abolished in Eastern States), there was an increasingly organised conflict in Australia between employees and employers. Between 1828 and 1850 workers established about 100 trade societies, engaged in both collective bargaining, political lobbying and unilateral control. Such associations also served to extend mutual insurance schemes amongst members. There were strikes and open conflict. Indeed, strikes occurred in this period not only among the skilled artisans or mechanics who formed the trade societies, but amongst wharf labourers, whalers, merchant seamen, rural workers, and government employees.

Trade associations and later trade unions formed in given localities and workplaces. They drew upon the sense of community that working people had established - their resources of cooperation and solidarity. It is this local, practical unity which formed the bedrock of fuller, grander unities. Over time unions began to pursue wider and more ambitious claims, and therefore linked up with other unions. In particular, the '8 hour day' movement

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70 Quinlan, M. 'Early trade union organisation in Australia: 3 Australian Colonies, 1829-1850', Labour and Industry, 1 (1) October 1987, 76
71 Ibid.
72 Connell, R.W. and Irving, T.H. Class Structure in Australian History, 193
encouraged inter-union cooperation and wider working class unity. It was out of the 8 hour day movement that the first calls for a Trades Hall building were uttered. Unity engendered unity. As Labor Party Minister John Dedman argued, the process could be presented in the following way:

A single union desires shorter hours.
More unions in the same industry combine.
A demonstration is held.
An Anniversary Committee is formed.
As a memorial to the unity achieved a Trades Hall is built.
A Committee manages the Hall.
A Trades Hall Council meets.
A Labor Party is formed in the '90s by the Trades Hall Council.

Of course, this is a long way from an historical explanation of the causal links between each moment of mobilisation. But that is not the purpose, nor the need I am addressing here. All that needs to be accepted is that the Labor Party was heir to an historically prior and institutionally based trade union unity - that from the 1820's, through to the 8 hour movement of the 1850's and onwards, there developed among workers "wider and wider circles of understanding". Such circles of understanding were greatly widened with the formation of the general or mass unions of the 1880s and later. They were to widen even further with the emergence of a Labor Party. This chronology is important for our purposes because it dictated that the Labor Party emerged as an institution in which multiple, independent trade unions came together for common aims. It swept up such unions into a larger family. It needed the unity which such unions expressed. But it did not and could not participate directly in the making of such unity. It did not because it was formed after the craft and general trade unions, and by craft and general trade unions. It could not, because any attempt to do so would have been interpreted as interference, and have alienated the independent institutions upon which the Party was based. It was a condition of the Party's unification that it did not and could not tamper with the integrity of its separate constituent parts.

It was not control or direction of the trade unions that the founders of the Labor Party immediately sought, but affiliation. It was the affiliation of trade unions to the Labor Party which justified its claim to be "Labor" and to represent the interests of working people. The health of the Labor Party required the affiliation of trade unions - the funds, the energy and the prestige that this represented. And affiliation was not something that could be garnered 'en masse' from an already centralised and homogenous union movement. The Australian trade union movement was, even by the 1940's, still relatively decentralised and autonomous. Simple and exclusive affiliation by a peak union body was not viable. A multiplicity of unions, with most frequently small memberships and diverse politics (or 'apolitics') had to be attracted to affiliate and therefore participate in the ALP.

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23 Howard, J. 'The Urban Tradition', *Overland*, 9 Autumn 1957, 33-4
24 Dedman, J. 'Outline of a Speech (file under "Labour Day", not used)” n.d., John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 9, Series 7, Item 3145
25 Ross, L. 'A Glance Backwards - and Forwards', *Australian Highway*, 23 (6) December 1941, 93
26 This point has become increasingly apparent with the long term decline in trade union affiliation over the last forty years. It has been suggested that in the mid-1950s, Labor's affiliates probably represented more than 75%
Heightening the complexity of mediation which the founders and proponents of the Labor Party faced was its federal structure. In each of the colonies relatively autonomous Parties had been independently established. These often possessed sharply divergent cultures and organisational practices. In particular, oligarchies with specific interests and nicely feathered nests often existed at the level of State branches." Even a cursory examination of the first Party Platforms in New South Wales and in Queensland shows the narrow focus of the former to contrast with the broad 'ratbaggery' of the latter." A successful Federal Party needed to find a place for all of the tendencies and power structures which had been established at the level of individual colonies or States.

Overlapping with this history of labour movement institutions was a history of working class interactions with the State. This too fed into the Labor Party, and structured its internal interactions in a number of important ways. Indeed, there was no 'turn' to politics inside the working class in 1890, symbolised by the formation of the Labor Party. On the contrary, the labour movement grew and developed through its interactions with the State and its participation in the broad public sphere. Even a cursory historical sketch, once again drawn from the secondary literature, will confirm this. It was the Chartist movement, imported from Britain, which formed the ideological antecedents and the rallying cry for an Australian labour movement in the process of infantile mobilisation. The Chartists were wage workers in Britain during the 1830's and 1840's, who struggled for the extension of democratic rights to 'the people'. The important thing for our purposes is that the Chartists, under the influence of the 'Norman Yoke' theory of British history," believed that with the extension of democratic political power to all Britishers, economic independence and prosperity for the people would also emerge." The State was here clearly central to the mobilisation of wage workers around both discrete 'political' and 'economic' issues. Economic and political justice were indivisible. This remained true in both Britain and Australia. Indeed, when Australians had their own 'Chartist' struggle for parliamentary democracy and political citizenship in the early 1850's, the compounding of the economic and the political remained dominant. Australian workingmen who participated in campaigns for 'responsible government' sought not only political rights. They believed that they could achieve economic independence through reform of the mining and the land laws."

This is important for our purposes because in these campaigns there were several occasions when popular mobilisations challenged State power in the name of democracy. The most spectacular of these was, of course, the 1854 rebellion of miners, known as the 'Eureka Stockade'. But there were other moments of 'dual power', which had important implications for working class conceptions of democracy and representation in both the unions and in the

of all unionists in Australia, but that this has fallen to around 50% of all unionists today - Scott, A. Fading Loyalites: The Australian Labor Party and the Working Class, Pluto Press, 1991, 28
77 Jaensch, D. The Hawke-Keating Hijack, makes the point about culture on 19-20, and about oligarchies on 104.
78 Rawson, D. 'For Whom were Labor Parties Founded?', in Easson, M. (ed) The Foundation of Labour, Pluto Press, 1990, 27
Labor Party that they formed. The legacy was an ambiguous one. It was never a question of the workingmen rejecting parliamentary democracy; rather they had learnt that 'representation' in a bourgeois legislature and with sympathetic liberal members was not enough. The trade unions which were formed in the following decades inherited this understanding, as can be seen by the way the inter-colonial trade union congresses were referred to as 'Parliaments of the People'. Eventually at the end of the 1880's this tradition of radical democracy fed into the Labor Parties formed in the 1890's, and shaped the form that interactions would take inside such institutions.

Indeed, the collective structure of the Australian Labor Party was the product of both the need to mediate between the demands of a broad constituency, and to supplement the narrow, 'representative' nature of bourgeois democracy. To this end, a highly democratic and participative structure was developed. Labor 'Caucuses' or 'Party Cells' were established in each electorate, and these interacted with the trade unions which had affiliated to the Party, to form Labor policy at the Party Conferences. The Conference - the "artisan of the Labour Movement", jointly drafted the Labor Party Platform, which the politicians of the Party would implement when in Government. Party members were "pledged" to obey the determinations of the Party's democratic machinery, and to loyally carry them out to the best of their ability. Politicians were particularly targeted and controlled by 'the Pledge' - observed and monitored by the politicians' own "Party Room" Caucus, as well as by the whole of the Party apparatus.

Between Conferences, Party Executives represented the apex of the Party's structure, and were both responsive and supervisory in a similar sense. The Party had a Federal structure. The Federal Executive was elected from the States, and controlled (with a few exceptions) the State machinery and policies as well as the policies of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party. The States retained control of preselection, however. This was the machinery of the Labor Party - democratic and disciplining. It allowed sentiment to filter upward from trade unions and Party branches. It also ensured that democratic sentiment was enforced. If, for any reason, the Parliamentary or Executive branches of the Party consistently ignored the sentiments of members or union affiliates, they could be democratically overthrown and replaced by others. Such a Party structure ensured that the views and independence of affiliates and members would be respected, and that a unity within autonomy and difference could be preserved.

More fundamentally, this was a Party structure which could be seen as a challenge to the prevailing logic of bourgeois democracy. Whereas bourgeois democracy had been concerned with the representation of a constituency by a member of parliament, the Labor Party ushered in the era in which a member of parliament was concerned to advantage his class. The whole apparatus of pledge, caucus and the like was understood by observers precisely as an attempt to secure this." Indeed, V.G. Childe went so far as to label it as the 'Labor theory of democracy' - as the means to self-government of the "proletarian democracy" of Australia. No longer was the working class reliant upon the whims of liberal representatives, passive and powerless. No longer did it merely choose between Party policies formed by Party leaders on their own responsibility. Through the entry of the Labor Party into

\[\text{\textsuperscript{1}}\text{Curtin, J. 'ALP Official Report of Proceedings of the 16th Commonwealth Conference December 1943', ALP Papers. NLA MS 4985. Box 118, 26}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{2}}\text{For example, Hancock, W.K. Australia, 179}\]
parliament the time in which "the issues to be submitted to the people" could be "determined by the people" had finally arrived." The promise of the Eureka stockade could be fulfilled.

The Labor Party did not challenge bourgeois democracy by overthrowing it, or by disciplining the working class for action informed by a qualitatively new, 'socialist' consciousness. It did so by unifying the working class politically, and opposing a genuinely collectivist logic to a logic of representation and liberal autonomy. The accent was not on the Party disciplining and controlling its members, nor on representing them passively, but on embracing their contributions and expressing their desires. And the class nature of the ALP is reflected not only in the machinery it developed to control politicians, to express trade union desires, and to maintain unity, but in its day-to-day operations themselves. The Labor Party relied for its successful functioning upon the action and energies of its working class members. It was freely conceded in an ALP office organisation report that; "The basis of the ALP is and must always be the devotion and enthusiasm of its members who give their services voluntarily." Ben Chifley similarly acknowledged the importance of the "tens of thousands of men and women over the decades who have worked for the Labour movement." It was practical and local activity by Party members and sympathisers that represented the Party's only defence against the superior resources which political enemies possessed.

At least partially, the contributions of Party members were financial. But more broadly, it was the personal and voluntary sacrifice of members that provided the backbone of the Party, and allowed the ALP to gain election victories. A study of instructions by the Victorian Central Executive to local branches during the election campaigns of the 1940s emphasises the importance of such local action, and the autonomy with which it was conducted. In contrast to the action of a disciplined and hierarchical Party, the Labor Party emphasised individual initiative and local action. It is true that standard 'Speaker's Notes' and copies of speeches were distributed from the centre to the localities. -but they were free to be used or not used as local activists saw fit." Organising Secretary Dinny Lovegrove emphasised that propaganda material should be principally generated in the localities themselves, and that the Party's supervisory apparatus should act only as a filter. He stated that: "Material on which it is desired to obtain an opinion may be forwarded to our office at any time, and advice obtained. It is most desirable however that Branches themselves take the initiative in interesting people with technical qualifications to take an active part in the Labor Party and help us in presenting our case.""

This formed part of a pattern in relation to the production of Party propaganda. For example, over the year 1948, the Victorian Central Executive produced only some

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84 Childe, V.G. How Labour Governs, 15
86 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 22
87 In Victoria, a member whose contributions were one month in arrears was deemed unfinancial, and six months in arrears was 'struck off' the Party membership roll - Central Executive Meeting 15/12/50, ALP (Victoria) Papers, NLA MS 4846, Box 11. An additional contribution of $5 for each Party sympathiser was typically expected for Federal election campaigns. This was the sum suggested by Party Secretary Kennelly, in letter to Secretary of Federal Campaign Committees 5/9/49, ALP (Victoria) Papers, NLA MS 4846, Box 11
88 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 17
89 Kennelly to all Country branches 4/10/49, ALP (Victoria) Papers, NLA MS 4846, Box 11
90 Organising Secretary Lovegrove to Branch Secretaries and Municipal Candidates 1947, ALP (Victoria) Papers, NLA MS 4846, Box 11
'Referendum Pamphlets' and a leaflet attacking Communism, entitled *The Truth at Last*. The majority of Party material was generated in the local branches, where members were committed and self-motivating, and where time and resources were sacrificed freely for the good of the cause. For example, in specific electorates like Coburg, Prahran and Croydon, monthly newspapers were produced and distributed. These reflected the specific cultures of the local memberships, and their particular practical concerns. The Victorian hierarchy of the Party regarded such propaganda as reflecting "great credit on the members and branches responsible for them."1 It was envisaged as a model, and an Executive Editorial Committee was established to promote the establishment of similar papers in other 'approved' Federal electorates. This sort of approach was highly prized, with its blend of local initiative and central 'back-up' supervision, synthesis and support.

Of course, the autonomy and variety of such propagandizing is a long way away from the Leninist model of a class Party. But it is a class Party nonetheless, and one which expressed the political constraints and conditions of mobilisation in an Australian context. The ALP did not so much create working class unity as express its expanded scope. It did not construct radicalism as much as provide an outlet for radical energies. In the most radical electorates, like Eddie Ward's in East Sydney, Labor Party branches were enormously active. In 1930 they started a bakery to provide the local unemployed with cheap bread.2 In other electorates the branch life was moribund between elections, and sometimes even then. Made up of local identities and varieties of political action, the Labor Party encouraged further action, but left its specific dimensions to individual members. This was the range and the limit to working class unity which the Labor Party embodied. It relied upon the 'heart' and the commitment of the activist, it pledged for his or her efforts, and it provided an atmosphere in which the activist could make the appropriate individual contribution which he or she saw fit. The Labor activist or sympathiser worked with rather than for the Party. Freedom, voluntary sacrifice, and broad moral sympathy characterised this contribution. A collectivist and reforming politics was the product of such energy.

Of course, this brand of politics is different from the Leninist ideal type of a revolutionary Party. It is also different from the parties of European Social Democracy. But it is a class Party nonetheless, one which reflects the peculiarities of Australian working class mobilisation. In a country like Sweden, both industrialisation and political democracy arrived late, the Social Democrats organised the trade unions, and wide, industry based unions emerged.3 As we have seen, the situation in Australia was almost diametrically opposite, and it is not surprising that the Australian Labor Party therefore looks and acts differently. The structure of the Party was a product of an attempt to oppose the representative logic of bourgeois parliaments, but it also expressed and respected the individual, institutional unities of craft trade unions, the ideological tenor of specific locales, and the imperatives of federalism.

And this structure of Labor politics was reproduced over time. The very success of political Labor ensured that a sort of informal compact inside Australian parliaments was soon concluded with the liberal, manufacturing sector of the bourgeoisie. This compact is generally labelled 'New Protection', and included Labor support for high tariff walls and 'fair

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1 ALP (Victoria) Central Executive Report 1948-49, Issued by Executive April 1949. *ALP (Victoria) Papers*, NLA MS 4846, Box 11
2 Spratt, E. *Eddie Ward*, 30
manufacturing profits, in exchange for Liberal support for restrictions on immigration, and a system of State-administered compulsory arbitration. The latter was particularly crucial, because it ensured a 'living wage' for all workers, and fostered the growth of trade unionism. By registering as a union with arbitration tribunals, small craft-based, and federally fractured trade unions gained State protection from employer assaults. They flourished rather than perished. Through the political action of Labor, those very institutions which had formed Labor, and structured its internal interactions, were granted organisational security. As a result, the opportunities for fundamentally recasting this structure, and for reorganising the Party remained slim. The institutional matrix remained relatively frozen. Leaders and intellectuals concentrated on finding room for manoeuvre within this structure, rather than smashing it up, and beginning anew.

The space for intellectual manoeuvre

The ALP's very impulse towards mediation gave great scope to intellectuals to influence the direction of Labor's synthesis, and to gain space for intellectual manoeuvre. Certainly, the 'labour theory of democracy' suggested that the Party was to be the political expression of a class, that there would be no room for individual whims and for intellectual manoeuvre. But as How Labour Governs illustrated, the conception and the practice of Labor democracy were to differ sharply. Parliamentary leaders, as might be expected, often refused to obey the dictates of Caucus and Conference when this conflicted with their chances of re-election. In the snug confines of Parliament, personal expediency soon outweighed the desire to carry Labor's ideals into effect. When they managed to gain places on the Central Executives of the Labor Parties, this tendency for leaders to compromise and manipulate policy in their own interests was painfully evident. From the perspectives of many leaders, the mechanisms of the 'labour theory of democracy' were not devices for the transcendence of bourgeois representative parliament. Instead, they were an encumbrance, a tension to be reconciled with the counter-tension of the 'need to rule'. They did not promise the transcendence of bourgeois democracy, but simply made it more difficult for Labor leaders to act successfully inside bourgeois democracy. This perspective is evident in the writings of L.F. Crisp, for example, when he reminds us that a Labor leader needed a "singular adroitness, tact, and a full measure of virtuosity" to reconcile Party and Parliamentary democracy, and to rule successfully. Perhaps more fundamentally, the labour theory of democracy was threatened from other directions. The very process of policy formation inside the Party soon differed from the model of democratic synthesis, and was coloured both by factionalism and by the manipulation of delegates. Factions formed not only around ideological issues, but also around personal and regional divisions. They were often based upon local graft and

97 The argument that the labour movement's fortunes were bound up with the continuance of its early policies is made in Macintyre, S. The Labour Experiment. McPhee Gribble. 1989. 65
98 Childe, V.G. How Labour Governs. 31
99 Lane, E.H. Dawn to Dusk, 221-2
100 Crisp, L.F. Ben Chifley. 337
corruption." Shadowy figures of the illegal gambling and criminal worlds, like John Wren of Victoria, at times seemed to exert a major influence on Labor policy. At other times, it was large, bureaucratic trade unions like the Australian Workers’ Union, which controlled preselection, and therefore wielded massive influence over the voting and actions of aspirants for a political career.

As a result, the sense of the Party expressing the dispositions of a class was compromised by the multiplicity of factions and divisions which cut across its democratic machinery. These divisions were not at all eternal or immutable conflicts between 'idealists' and 'practical men', or between 'politicians' and 'unionists'. These were messy, multiple divisions, constantly being made and remade. As pressures fed through from trade unions, from other political parties, from the international economy, and so on, different alliances within the Labor Party would break down, and scope would exist to reconstitute the bases of Labor unity. The balance existed only to be destroyed again. As a result, the Labor Party was at any time both socialist and reformist, revolutionary and fabian. It is best understood as a 'coalition of interest groups', each painfully constructed by intellectual and political labour, each fragile, evanescent, each coordinated by further labour into wider unities or marginalised by competing, newly configured interest blocs. This is how the 'labour theory of democracy' worked in practice. Such a practice allowed intellectuals the political space within which they could play a role of decisive importance.

It was a small group of Party leaders with access to the State which gained the resources with which to disproportionately influence Labor policy. Their influence was not due to any 'iron laws' or immutable tendencies of organisational logic. It was not primarily due to the technical complexity of issues, or of duties inside the Labor Party. Neither was it due to the large number of members which the Party possessed. Their influence derived from certain positional resources. Firstly, due to their position in the Australian Parliaments, ALP leaders had substantial discretion over which parts of the Labor Party platform would be legislated for and would become law. It is true that there was always the threat of counter action from within the Party’s democratic structure, and that the Pledge was introduced precisely to reduce such discretion. But whatever the efforts of rank and file members and unionists, there remained at least some room for manoeuvre and discretion on the part of Party leaders. This power was particularly strong over what was not brought to Parliament. Given the sheer size of the Party platform, there would always be many things which would not be immediately legislated for. When this discretionary power was used to bring forward

100 Connell, R.W. and Irving, T.H. *Class Structure in Australian History*, 283
101 This is documented in Frank Hardy’s novel of Wren’s life, concerned with a character named 'John West', but substantially a work of labour history and detailed research - Hardy, F.J. *Power Without Glory*. Lloyd O’Neil, 1972
104 Hancock, W.K. *Australia*, makes this point in relation to the Party’s left-right balance.
107 These are nominated as causes of organisational oligarchy by Brym, R. *Intellecutals and Politics*, George Allen and Unwin. 1980. 35
policies to which the Party was opposed, as in the case of military conscription, it proved to be less significant.

The parliamentary position of the ALP's leaders was important and privileging in other ways. Despite the 'labour theory of democracy', Labor Party Ministers related with the bulk of Australian citizens principally as 'representatives', as parliamentary delegates who were active, knowledgeable, and to be distinguished from their constituency. The conception and the practice was that Ministers did things and citizens allowed them to be done. The practices of liberal democracy established a dynamic of representation, of delegation, and removal of responsibility from electors. Although the participative machinery of the Labor Party attempted to counteract this, leaders and State initiates had the structural position from which to emphasise this 'representative' connection, and to influence policy disproportionately as a result. Leaders could emphasise their own active and important role, and use it to win debates within the Labor Party's structure, or to alter that structure. So, for example, a dramatized talk in which two apolitical young people are converted to the Labor Party emphasises the importance and 'representativeness' of leaders:

"If you two were to join up with 50 or a 100 others like yourselves, young people who believed in justice, decency and security, you wouldn't all get to the top of the tree. But you would all be the tree - do you see what I mean? If you weren't out to get to the top, you'd push someone else to the top, someone like yourself. Unity is strength, and when you have unity, the strength rises to the top."

The final resource which Party leaders had access to was the bureaucracy. Labor Party Ministers and parliamentarians had access to bureaucratic knowledge and expertise. This was knowledge which was useful for the winning of debates within the Party, not only because such knowledge conveyed things of importance, but because it contained the veneer of 'objectivity' and distance from the push and shove of political intrigue. Leaders frequently called upon bureaucratic knowledge to silence dissent in the Party and disproportionately influence the process of mediation.

But if it is to be adequately understood, the process of alliance formation and the means by which Party leaders gained room for political manoeuvre needs to be treated in a less abstract manner. It is best demonstrated with a practical example - an analysis of the evolution of the Labor Party's policy on banking over the 1940s. The nationalisation of banking was part of the Labor Party Platform over the whole of the 1940s. Acceptance of the 'labour theory of democracy' would therefore imply that the banks were, indeed, immediately nationalised. But this did not happen. In the first two years of Labor Party rule, no action was taken. As a result, at the 1943 Conference, elements within the Party eager for action on this issue managed to pass a resolution suggesting: "That in order to implement the Party's financial policy, the Commonwealth Government be requested to take appropriate action to

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19 For example, John Dedman commended voters in 1943: "You, the people, have submitted yourselves to all planning and regimentation for total war.... you trusted John Curtin and his Ministers to pull us out of the peril into which we had been placed. Your freedom has been kept for you by a Labour Government." Dedman, J. 3KZ Broadcast, n.d. Sir J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505, Box 24, Series 10, Item 460, 2
20 Brennan, N. 'Dramatized talk for 3KZ Labor Hour 13/11/48', ALP (Victoria) Papers, NLA MS 4846, Box 12, 9
give effect to the principles embodied in Labor's banking policy.\textsuperscript{110} However, when elements at that Conference attempted to put greater pressure upon the Government, and emphasise that financial policy further, the broad alliance of support broke down. An amendment to add that the policy be implemented "with least possible delay" was consequently lost.\textsuperscript{111}

Major banking legislation was consequently not brought forward by the Party until 1945. At this time, Curtin opposed bank nationalisation in Federal Caucus, and Caucus rejected bank nationalisation. A policy of controlling the credit of the banks, rather than nationalising them was preferred, and the Banking Act of 1945 was passed.\textsuperscript{112} However, this legislation was challenged in the High Court, and the then Prime Minister, Ben Chifley, decided to nationalise the banks after all. Aware of opposition from Caucus members who were anxious about a public outcry, Chifley announced publicly in 1947 that the Cabinet had decided to nationalise the banks, and only presented the question to Caucus more than a month later.\textsuperscript{113} Chifley used the Cabinet as a device for policy formulation and propagation, made the policy public, and then dared Caucus to embarrass him as leader by repudiating the policy. He further strengthened his position by declaring that bank nationalisation was part of the Labor Party Platform, and that discussion was therefore unnecessary.

The Federal Executive of the Party eventually supported Chifley's policy. However, in order that the support could be garnered to do so, the ideological significance of such an action was de-emphasised and clouded. A resolution which attacked the Private Trading Banks in sharply ideological terms as hostile to full employment, anti-social, and a threat to democracy was initially presented to the Executive in draft form.\textsuperscript{114} After discussion and synthesis, the need to balance and unify the Party and to husband broad support led to an eventual resolution which was less strident and polarising: "We declare that the complete control by the Australian people through the Commonwealth parliament of banking and the credit of the nation is essential to the continuance of Labor's policy of economic and financial stability and full employment, thus ensuring the happiness and well-being of our people."\textsuperscript{115}

This example is particularly apposite, because it does not concern a collaborationist leader and a radical base, a simple conflict between 'unionists' and 'politicians', or 'practical men' and 'idealists'. It concerns a Party in which alliances are far more complex and conditional, and in which a leader uses his positional resources so as to secure the passage of a radical policy. It also demonstrates the importance of Labor discourse. A moderate and 'technical' resolution by the Federal Executive on the policy of bank nationalisation emerged as a tool by which broad support within the Party was organised, and that policy was implemented. An historian concerned to prove the 'labourist' nature of the Labor Party could easily use such a resolution as proof of Labor's practical, anti-intellectual approach to social reform. He or she could argue that the Labor Party only wanted full employment, and that bank nationalisation was adopted by the Party only with this in mind. Such an historian would fail to understand the internal interactions which had structured the resolution, the enormous political and intellectual labour which went into such a practical and bread-and-butter motion.

\textsuperscript{110}ALP Official Report of Proceedings of the 16th Commonwealth Conference December 1943, ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 118, 32
\textsuperscript{111}Ibid., 32
\textsuperscript{112}Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 92-4 explains the Act.
\textsuperscript{113}Beazley, K. 'Caucus as an Instrument for Determining the Policy and Tactics of the FLP in the Commonwealth Parliament 1901-1960' M.A. Thesis. NLA MS 2426, 429
\textsuperscript{114}Federal Executive Minutes 17/11/47, ALP Papers. NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 1
\textsuperscript{115}Ibid., 7
Such an historian would fail to see the ways in which Labor discourse was manipulated by Party leaders and intellectuals as a tool to build alliances, and to influence the direction of Labor’s synthesis. It is to a detailed examination of this process that we now turn.

**Labor discourse and the space for intellectual manoeuvre**

Any study of Labor Party discourse needs to place language in the context of practical, political interventions. The use of concepts and words, rather than any attempt to affix their abstract meaning, must be the primary focus. With this in mind, the cultural identity of the ALP, as embodied in its official policy pronouncements, has some hope of being understood.

It was the Party Platform which represented the ideology of the Labor Party in its most concrete form. Although many members and affiliates disagreed with parts of the Platform, few were so opposed to it and to the broad idealism which it expressed that they left the Party in despair. If the ideology of the Platform is to be understood, then it must be recognised that the Platform had to be vague and ambiguous in its wording. Anything specific would have alienated members as too radical or too accommodating, and have divided rather than united as a result. The Platform’s political philosophy was broad, inclusive and vague. However, this is not proof of Labor’s anti-intellectualism. On the contrary, it demonstrates well the intellectual labour which went into building up the unity of the labour movement into a Party. It is a record of the cultural struggle to unify a diverse constituency inside a single, democratic institution. Equally, it is a record of the struggles for cultural hegemony inside that institution. The Platform documents the shared intellectual conversation which more radical Laborites and unionists had with their more moderate comrades.

Therefore, although the Platform was structured around the “Objective” of Socialisation of the Means of Production, Distribution and Exchange, it was interpreted in a way which kept both those for and against socialisation within the Party. The famous ‘Blackburn interpretation’ passed at the 1921 Conference insisted that the Party: “does not seek to abolish private ownership even of any of the instruments of production where such instrument is utilised by its owner in a socially useful manner and without exploitation.”

For the socialist, only with the end of a private ownership would exploitation be removed from industry, and therefore the Platform could be interpreted in a way which could be accepted. Equally, for the moderate, because all private ownership was not inherently exploitative, a Platform which was dedicated to the abolition of only ‘exploitative’ ownership was to be welcomed. The argument as to which interpretation of the ‘interpretation’ of the Platform would be accepted was ongoing, and was fought out within the Labor Party’s democratic and unifying structures. The argument was fought out within a Party which both the socialist and the moderate was keen to call home, and was able to identify by reference to the Platform.

The necessarily amorphous and broad nature of Labor’s ideas, which the structure and constituency of the Party demanded, was adopted as a virtue and therefore strengthened by Labor activists and Party associates. Labor Minister John Dedman stated that “An ideal cannot be expected to live if reduced with mathematical precision to a set of rules.” He was

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10Cited in Rawson, D. Labor In Vain?, Longmans, 1966, 68
11Macintyre, S. The Labour Experiment, McPhee Gribble, 1989, 34
12Dedman, J. ‘An Australian Looks at One World’ for BBC Session “Voices from Britain”, n.d., Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 8. 1
typical in his humanism, his commitment to Christian principles, and his presentation of Labor as a spiritual movement. Ben Chifley also emphasised in one of his most famous speeches that the labour movement was not just about sectional greed, about the struggle for another sixpence, but was closer to a "political religion" concerned with the betterment of the masses. It meant more than material gains - it had to, otherwise unity would collapse, and careerism would replace evangelism. Labor intellectuals needed to present broad inclusive ideals if they were to maintain unity against the harshness of capitalism, the variety of Labor opinion, and the individual rewards of Parliamentary politics. Ideals made and represented the family that was the Labor Party. They were constitutive of it: "The Labour Party is a great family spreading its political philosophy over the whole continent and unless problems are looked at in that way, and not in a parish pump way - the Party will not achieve its object."

To an important extent, this championing of Labor's broad, unifying ideas was a championing of the Labor theory of democracy. It was clear that Labor's broad principles were derived from the Party Conference. Indeed, Ben Chifley began one of his speeches to a Federal Conference with the plea: "I want to know the fundamental principles for which Labour stands..." To respect Labor's principles, to see the world from the perspective of spreading Labor's political philosophy, was therefore to accept the decisions of the Party's democratic process. It was to refuse to be shifted to the political ground of political expediency, to refuse to be concerned with individual political fates, but to stick with the movement through all personal travails. It was to affirm the importance of solidarity.

A successful Labor Party needed affiliates and members to accept the overall decisions of Conference, and to support them, even if they did not sympathise with them. The Party needed solidarity, to put it simply: "Solidarity is a very hackneyed word, but a very great word in the cause of which we are fighting." For the Labor Party, solidarity was not based upon action in strikes or political struggles in the streets. It was different from the working class discipline in action which the Communist Party pioneered. Labor Party solidarity was institutional, involved democratic respect and toleration. The Labor Party needed this solidarity to survive. As Chifley recognised:

"Men come from four thousand miles apart who bring to that federal parliamentary Labour Party many diverse views. It is no easy matter to cater for the many parts of Australia in federal policy, and that is done by Federal Conference and translated into action by the Federal Labour Party. It is a great achievement for a Party to create such solidarity as that. There is only one way to achieve such things, whatever personal feelings we have, and that is by solidarity."

119 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 37
120 This is expressed in Chifley's claim, later in that same speech, that "Being in the Labour movement does not mean getting a job in the movement, but trying to inspire others." Ibid.
121 Ibid., 18
122 Ibid., 369
123 Chifley, J.B. Address to Conference, 'ALP Official Report of Proceedings of the 18th Commonwealth Triennial Conference' September 1948, ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 118, 48
124 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 25
This solidarity was a defining feature of Labor Party politics. It was what separated it from the Conservative Parties with their veneer of unity and their multiple voices. If a Party was to unify diverse labour movement views, then it needed to be democratic, and to respect democratic decisions. This is what solidarity meant for the Labor Party. Solidarity was powerful and integral, it formed the core of Labor principle. If the imperatives of solidarity were acknowledged, it meant that Labor could never be extinguished, that, even after defeats and divisions, it could rise again, Phoenix-like from the ashes.

The principle of solidarity was based upon a selflessness, and a respect for the 'movement' of Labor rather than individual destiny or needs. It required that the leader not be a 'great man', but "just one of the people within the movement." The entry of personal interests or aspirations into Labor's synthesis would represent a weak link in the chain. It would introduce inconsistency and ideological flux, threatening the order and ends of the Labor synthesis. Those dedicated to their own interests were possible 'rats'. They shifted ground, moving to the 'right' and 'left' in order to curry favour, and damaging Labor in politics as a result. Those out for themselves were unprepared to obey the main body of trade unionists and Labour men.

The very democracy of the Party and the future prospect of changing policy if support could be mustered was the basis upon which solidarity and acceptance of determinations was justified. Precisely because it was possible to democratically alter policy, that policy ought to be respected by Party members. If it was not, the whole project of cooperative synthesis which the Party represented would be lost. Solidarity was the institutional discipline which ensured that this would not happen. It did not at all imply unanimity. It ensured that democratic opinion be respected, so that difference could continue to exist within the bounds of a single institution.

The dominance of the motif of 'solidarity to the movement' inside the Labor Party had a number of important consequences. Most notably, it led to the conflation of 'Party' and 'movement' inside Labor Party discourse. The idea that the Labor Party, with its affiliated trade unions, was the labour movement, gained wide currency. It was emphasised on occasion by Party leaders Doc Evatt and Ben Chifley. Of course, such a conflation does have a practical basis; the Labor Party's structures did attempt to synthesise and express the broad currents of opinion within the labour movement in a single institution. But this should not blind us to the political uses of such a view. It could be used to curb dissent - to fix Labor policy, by arguing that the policy of the whole movement had been formed at some prior time, and that now it was time for implementation. To brook dissent would be to violate solidarity, and to attack the movement. This is demonstrated in Chifley's claim that: "Members have to stand in line like soldiers and fight for the Labour movement as laid down in the policy of the Party."
But more importantly, the conflation of Party and movement through the bonds of solidarity could be used to marginalise other labour movement institutions. Most obviously, it could be used to attack both the Communist Party of Australia and the organisation known as 'The Movement' that later formed the Democratic Labor Party. These were both legitimate and important labour movement institutions that threatened the hegemony of the ALP in a number of ways. But if the labour movement was 'embodied in the Party', they could be stigmatized as foreign interlopers, unnecessary and culturally alien. Not only this, but the concept of 'solidarity' could itself be turned against these other labour movement institutions. Because such institutions did not interact with trade unions in the same way, or operate on principles of internal democracy and synthesis, they could be conceptualised as a threat to Labor's solidarity. Ironically, in the name of the 'solidarity of Labor' they could be excluded from the Labor Party's democratic synthesis. This was the basis of arguments used to deny the CPA affiliation to the ALP. It was also the sort of argument used by Doc Evatt when he attacked the influence of 'Catholic Action' in the ALP in his famous 1954 speech. The argument is summarised in the sentence: "If members of this group or faction act unitedly within the Labor movement it will be comparatively easy for them in a short time to seize control of the Party machinery." In the name of 'solidarity' and of respect for the 'movement', these currents of opinion and practical action could be attacked and excluded from the Party's democratic synthesis.

The final aspect of Labor's concern with ideals that needs emphasis was its tendency towards what could be called a 'common sense nationalism'. In particular, intellectuals attached to the Labor Party were keen to portray ALP policy as something above politics, something 'non-political', as well as something committed to the duties of citizenship. We will take each of these themes in turn.

To begin with the ALP's 'non-political' stance, it is clear that this, too, would seem to represent fertile ground for those committed to the 'labourist thesis'. After all, it is true that ALP leaders stated frequently that their policies were 'non-political' and non-partisan, dedicated to the interests of all Australians. They were something separate from politics, designed not only to advantage Labor's sectional claims, but to benefit all of our citizenry. The Labor Government's vigorous economic intervention during war-time, intervention into the processes of accumulation, production and distribution, was passed off as non-political. Likewise, when Labor sought wide post-war powers over prices, employment, marketing and social welfare, it argued that these, too, were not political powers. Similarly, the Government's health scheme was not a political matter. The Bretton Woods agreement was justified on non-political grounds.

The apparently non-political nature of Labor policies is, of course, belied by the widespread division and struggle which they engendered. Claiming to be above politics was simply a way of drawing wavering support towards the ALP, and of combating the obfuscation of conservative propagandists. It does not demonstrate that Labor intellectuals were unconcerned with questions of cultural identity or of challenging the power of capital. It

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134 Evatt, H.V. 'Statement 27/10/54' ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 7
135 Labor Leads in War and After. The Australian Clothing Trades Journal, July 1943, 1
137 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 223
138 Ibid., 290
139 Ibid., 146-7
shows just how sensitive Labor was to such questions, and just how anxious it was to package its claims and policies in an appealing, constituency-building manner.

The propensity of the ALP to emphasise the duties of citizenship also needs to be placed in an adequate political context. It is undoubtedly true that the Labor Party leadership often made reference to the duties of citizenship in political interventions. For example, the duties of workers to produce in wartime," as well as in the immediate post-war years were often stressed." Even more than this, the duties of trade unionists to avert strike action in the interests of the nation, and in respect of their duties to fellow citizens, were a regular refrain in the post war years." But this does not mark the Labor Party as forever committed to the politics of nationalism, as an incorporator of a radical trade union base, or as anything else. This sort of claim by Labor leaders does not conceal the 'essence' of Labor policy like a pearl in a shell. It is not smoothness and unity that motivates such interventions, but disunity and competing alliances of support. The claim by Labor leaders to support 'duty to the Nation' should be placed in the context of the Party's need for the affiliation of the trade unions, and the difficulties the Party faced in any attempt to actively intervene in the day-to-day operation of the unions. Put simply, the Labor Party's political leadership possessed very few resources in their attempts to foist their policies upon trade unions - the power and the influence generally worked the other way. When this is understood, then the use of 'nationalism' by Party leaders becomes clear. It did not imply that the Party was uniformly nationalistic. Rather, it must be understood as a mode of intervention by a particular section of the Party to control another section. It was one weapon of battle in the arsenal of Labor leaders, and should not be presented as anything more fundamental.

All of these elements of Labor discourse - the focus on broad ideals, the invocation of the principle of solidarity, the conflation of Party and movement, the politics of the non-political, and the focus on the duties of citizenship, were the products of interactions inside working class institutions. They were not abstract philosophies, or abstruse expressions of esoteric theory. They were the products of political struggle, and were effective to the extent that they assisted such struggle. These ideas were not abstract, but very practical and real.

It is this that separated Labor's organic philosophy from the myths of the ruling class. In working class literature and political theory, it was always the abstract and mystificatory nature of ruling class discourse which was emphasised. The ruling class spoke about the 'free labourer', when the reality was freedom to beg for work or handouts." The ruling class spoke of its charity, when it took back what it gave many times over." It sought to present 'class' as a fiction," and to emphasise the middle class nature of the Australian polity." It spoke of 'objectivity', but used such objectivity to attack Labor policy." It spoke of intrinsic financial

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14 Dedman, J. 'Broadcast' 26/3/42 all Stations 1.10 p.m., Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, 1
14 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 172
11 Chifley made reference to this on a great number of occasions: ibid., 24, 40, 41, 286
12 Lawson, H. 'Stragglers'. reprinted in Prose Works of Henry Lawson, Volume One, Angus and Robertson, 1937, 52
14 This is symbolised in Lawson's story 'Arvie Aspinall's Alarm Clock', in which the charity of a society lady is to give a little boy, Arvie Aspinall, an Alarm Clock, so that he can get up for work at 6 am every morning. The society lady is the daughter of Arvie's boss, the factory owner Mr Grinder. In ibid., 48-50
14 Progress of "Red" Peril", Argus, 17/5/37
14 The commitment of University scholars inside the WEA to 'objectivity' justified their support of Military Conscription in 1917, their attack on "Marxian Sociology" during the Depression, and their attack on planning in
constraints during the Depression, and thus prevented Labor's expansionary policy which would have prevented misery and degradation on such a wide scale.  

The ruling class spoke about politics in the abstract. This was at least partially because the details of policy implementation did not effect their private lives with such force and power. It was also because to be specific would require the ruling class to face the ruin which capitalism had brought. This is symbolised in one of Henry Lawson's short stories, in which a failed businessman, Mr Smellingscheck, is living in a boarding house when the narrator finds him. We are told that he

"talked politics and such things in the abstract, always in the abstract....he defended Capital, but only as if it needed no defence, and as if its opponents were merely thoughtless, ignorant children whom he condescended to set right because of their inexperience and for their own good. He stuck calmly to his own order - the order which had dropped him like a foul thing when the bottom dropped out of his boom, whatever that was. He never talked of his misfortunes."

He closes his eyes to his own life experience, and continues to let abstract arguments sway his mind and bamboozle him as to his own interests.

The ruling class also lied outright. The press systematically distorted Labor's views with Goebbels-like proficiency. Eddie Ward kept a file on the treatment of the bank nationalisation issue in a representative daily newspaper, the Sun. Like almost all newspapers, the Sun was both critical, distortive and relentless in its treatment of the issue. Typical editorials bore titles like "Caesar in Canberra" (22/8/47). Typical 'objective' articles included "Public Aroused to Danger of Monetary Monopoly" (29/8/47). In all, between the 14th of August and the 29th of September, the Sun published no less than 90 complete articles on the subject of bank nationalisation, many very large and with sub-parts and sections. Over this same issue there was widespread paid advertising, pronouncements from conservative political leaders and the Church, and a whole plethora of right-wing organisations which sprang up to defend the banks. The banks themselves were highly active in the campaign, with sophisticated mail-out and personal canvassing techniques used. In these circumstances, a systematic distortion of the truth occurred. Chifley said later: "I do object to the scurrilous lies and the villainous campaign in which they (private banks) engaged in their personal canvassing from door to door."

The distortion was based upon the substitution of abstract and fantastical fears for real life, practical experiences and needs. The media emphasised 'free enterprise', 'individualism' and the like, and created opposition to bank nationalisation by avoiding the practical motivations and repercussions of such a
measure. Witness the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "This is not a question of whether a particular industry or utility should be nationalised. It is a question of whether all business and industry, all financial transactions, all rights of private dealing, shall pass under the control of an oligarchy in Canberra."134

The Labor Party faced consistent opposition from conservative institutions which distorted Labor's message and which denounced its class basis as a fiction. In such circumstances, unsurprisingly and necessarily, the Labor Party claimed to represent the truth. Chifley gave his listeners 'hard facts', not the distortions of the press.135 Where Labor's opponents practised 'misrepresentation', Labor merely brought its own real achievements before the people.136 The equation of Labor with truth was so consistent that a motion (which was lost) was submitted to the Federal Executive to establish a Commonwealth Government-sponsored newspaper to present "completely factual and impartial views...such as are not being made available today"137

More than telling the truth, Labor claimed to look underneath the fancy words or abstract and disabling phrases of the ruling class, to the material interests which underlay them. Labor's truth was deeper than the surface lies of the press and other opponents, not only because it was not abstract and misleading, but because it could explain the real, material reasons for conservative lies. It was because trade unionists understood that Liberal talk of 'free labourers' resulted in nothing but smashed unions that they opposed such high-minded talk with the reality that good unions meant good wages. Likewise, when attempting to combat the lies of the press concerning bank nationalisation, Labor showed the deeper reality of press ownership. In a pamphlet entitled *Money Brothers...*, released in 1947, the interlocking of private bank and newspaper directorships was made clear. The pamphlet closed after the presentation of these links by stating:

"it is farcical to expect that the people of this country will receive anything but a completely biased if not untruthful summing up of the case concerning the nationalisation of banking. *However, these facts must speak clearly to them.*"138

Likewise, Chifley claimed to have found the material basis, the reality which had motivated the lies of the bankers when a new Liberal Government reorganised and rolled back the successful socialism of the Commonwealth bank.139 Underneath the bankers lies about Labor policy and their mythical projections about freedom of choice was the reality of their desire for profits. Underneath the lies of the press was the fact that they were the bankers. In a more general sense, business generally opposed the Labor Government's drive for planning in the post-war era as a threat to freedom and individualism. In opposition to such abstract principles, Chifley claimed that he was concerned with the lives of ordinary people. He regarded such talk of freedom as "sheer utter hypocrisy", and looked instead to the real needs of Australians.140

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134 'The Road to Serfdom', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 19/8/47
135 Chifley, J.B. *The Things Worth Fighting For*, 54
136 Kennelly and Stout to ? 25/11/46, *ALP (Victoria) Papers*, NLA MS 4846, Box 11
137 Federal Executive Minutes 25/11/46, *ALP Papers*, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 9
138 a.a. *Money Brothers...Private Banks and Newspaper Combines*, 9/9/47, *John Dedman Papers*, NLA MS 987, Box 10, Series 10, 4
139 Chifley, J.B. *The Things Worth Fighting For*, 307
140 Chifley, J.B. cited in Crisp, L.F. *Ben Chifley*, 192
So, the ruling class and its intellectuals looked away from the reality of capitalism to abstract formulas and misleading double talk. But even with the best of interests, the ruling class or the intelligentsia could never hope to understand the reality of life as a worker. This is what separated the organic from the traditional intellectual. This is something asserted across different working class movements. Indeed, in Jack London's *The Iron Heel*, the hero, Ernest Everhard, is constituted just like the Australian Labourite. He is self-educated and pitted against the intelligentsia, criticising its metaphysics and fancy words in the name of his own life experience. Everhard, in a dinner table discussion with academics and concerned Church leaders, says:

"you do not know the working class. But you are not to be blamed for this. How can you know anything about the working class? You do not live in the same locality with the working class. You herd with the capitalist class in another locality. And why not? It is the capitalist class that pays you, that feeds you, that puts the very clothes on your backs that you are wearing to-night. And in return you preach to your employers the brands of metaphysics that are especially acceptable to them."  

Likewise, it is this sort of claim which formed the critique of the first wave of working class economists in Britain in the early 19th century. The so-called 'Ricardian socialists' like Hodgskin and Thompson reproached classical political economists for being 'closet theorists', unacquainted with the economic realities and experiences of the labouring classes. Such ignorance of the realities of working class life could not be ascribed to genuine Labor intellectuals. They may have been preachers, but they learnt in the 'world's school', and their knowledge was hard won and drawn from experience. It was by proving their practical and hard-headed nature that Labor intellectuals hoped to prove to their working class constituency that they were cut from the same cloth, that they were something different from the Liberal lawyers who deigned to represent working people, or the Church Ministers who preached to them from comfortable and elevated pulpits. One of the founders of the Australian Workers' Union, W.G. Spence, expresses this well when he gives an account of the Labor Party in its early years:

"One has only to visit one of these conferences to see that the Movement is a live one, and is being pushed on by able, earnest and enthusiastic men and women. The delegates are all practical, and have had all their lives to face difficulties in their struggle for a decent living. They call things by their right names, and are strong and earnest in their denunciation of injustice, because they have felt and still feel it in their lives."  

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[163] For example, this is what identifies the lay preacher and unionist, and ex-alcoholic Peter M'Laughlan, in Lawson's 'Shall We Gather At the River?' and 'His Brother's Keeper' in Prose Works of Henry Lawson, Volume Two. Angus and Robertson. 1937, 245-270
The idea that being 'practical' signifies that the Labor Party is only concerned with small, bread-and-butter reforms, or that the Labor Party scorns all ideas or intellectual effort is not at all present here. Instead, the whole thrust of the passage is that the Labor Party's practical nature is its class nature, its refusal to be satisfied with empty denunciations of injustice, and its commitment to abiding reform. To the extent that the Party is practical it does not practice rhetorical double dealing, or 'representation' of the working class by the middle class in Parliament. To the extent that it is practical, the Party is made up of ordinary people who understand and have lived through injustice, and who are politically organised to ensure that such injustice will end.

Rather than an abstract political philosophy which covered over both the ignorance of intellectuals about working class life, and the real material interests that their claims expressed, Labor intellectuals spoke to and from experience. Their interventions were coloured by common sense and concern for consequences rather than abstract claims about rights and justice. Labor intellectuals argued that the felt reality of capitalism was the basis of Labor unity. Of course, this reality was 'constructed' - it was deliberately interpreted and presented by Labor activists as the "underlying reality", as more powerful than the propaganda of capital and of its agencies. The common danger of reality spoke to workers through Labor intellectuals. If Labor unity was to be achieved, this reality needed to be presented and felt as more powerful, more basic, more real, than the reality which the intelligentsia presented. Hence the assertion by organic intellectuals of their reality as fundamental:

"Organised Labor had its origin in the fact that a danger or an urgent need faced in common is and will continue to be the strongest bond of union between man and man. It is not a case of either this or that "ism"; it is simply one of where and to the extent that man understands the danger or the urgent need with which he is faced, he immediately makes cause in common with his fellow man who likewise is affected."

Labor unity was presented as a common sense impulse and not an 'ism' or a philosophy. This was the source of its apparent anti-intellectualism, as well as much of its strength, appeal, and success in bringing workers together against free market relations. Labor intellectuals consistently referred to the power of 'reality' when trying to construct unity and mobilise both wage-workers and other segments of society. It was argued that Labor unity was not based upon ideas, but often opposed to or contrasted with them as a common sense of solidarity, a basic mateship. The model was Lawson's short story *The Union Buries its Dead*, in which a stranger drowns in a small country town, but where Union Papers are found on him, and a funeral is therefore held. This was not a complex 'ism', but a human reflex toward mutual aid and comradeship. Whereas this common sense could be seen as bringing people together, ideas or "isms" were different in that they often caused unnecessary conflict, wrecking old mateships. They led eventually to inaction with their abstraction and their hypothetical nature. As the Lawson character Mitchell stated: "In the end we'll come to the conclusion that

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165 Cameron, D. 'Labor's "Growing Pains" - "Splits" and Defections', *Industrial Herald*, 28/6/56
166 In Lawson's 'Andy Page's Rival', Andy Page is someone without any "ideers", but opposed to "funny business" such as "tyranny, treachery,...blanky lies", in *Prose Works (Volume I)*, 217
we ain't alive, and never existed, and then we'll leave off bothering, and the world will go on just the same."14 To the extent that socialism and the Labor movement were based upon a common sense solidarity and an expression of the basic, felt interests and needs of working people, they would remain strong and progressive. It was the extent to which the middle class attached itself to the Labor movement, and the intelligentsia attempted to speak in the name of Labor, that the movement became beset by "isms" and by the hypocrisy, division and place-hunting that this brought. In Mitchell's view:

"Socialism, or democracy, was all right in this country till it got fashionable and was made a fad or a problem of. Then it got smothered pretty quick. And a fad or a problem always breeds a host of parasites or hangers-on. Why, as soon as I saw the advanced idealist fools - they're generally the middle-class, shabby-genteel families that catch Spiritualism and Theosophy and those sort of complaints, at the end of the epidemic - that catch on at the tail-end of things and think they've caught something brand, shining new - as soon as I saw them, and the problem spielers and notoriety-hunters of both sexes, beginning to hang round Australian Unionism, I knew it was doomed."15

Those more sanguine about the future of the Australian labour movement nonetheless continued to see it as an expression of 'reality' and 'needs', in opposition to 'abstraction' and 'isms'. The great reformist wave of Labor opinion during the Second World War and immediately afterwards was fed by the experience, the reality of war. Labor intellectuals believed that the realities of war showed that the classic conservative and academic criticism that Labor was utopian, and its policies couldn't be funded was erroneous and misplaced. War showed that enormous funds could be found by Government if it wanted them, and that the economists of the Depression with their talk of abstract financial theories were grossly mistaken. It showed that financial limits were false limits, and that the real limits to development were physical, and not financial.16 It showed that it was not 'finance', a thing of paper and abstraction, but real resources - labour and machinery - which made and unmade society. Money was found to finance the war effort, but it was the strength and purpose of Labor which proved vital to the waging of the war.17 Common sense logic implied that what had been done in war could also be done in peace. No isms were required to see that there was no need for unemployment or shortages in the new order. It was by casting off the 'isms' and superstitions of free market economics, that this could be grasped. As J.F. Chapple, General Secretary of the A.R.U. put it: "The war has taught us the need, let commonsense show us the way."18

In the society of common sense which Labor would build, the tyranny of the market and its false values would be bypassed. With myths about finance destroyed and real resources appropriately directed, all Australians could have their real needs fulfilled. Labor

14 Ibid., 382
15 Ibid., 381-2
16 Chiffey, J.B. Labor's Post-War Plan. Issued by ALP (Vic) 18/6/43, IP & P Co, J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505, Box 24, Series 10. 4
17 Curtin, J. 'Federal Labor Party Official Bulletin' 3 (12) 30/6/40, Edward Ward Papers, NLA MS 2396, Box 50, Series 15, Item 90, 3
18 Chapple, J.F. 'General Secretary's Report' in A.R.U. Biennial Report, April 17, 1944, IP & P Co. Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 1, 38
Premier John Cain promised that: "the war industries can be switched over to production of things we use." He pointed out that "if we have full employment, as we will have under a Labor Government, we can use our wages to buy a sufficiency of the things we want, the things we need." The Labor Party based its policies upon its and Australia's needs. Chifley was often insistent about this fact, emphasising that those who were labour activists and 'pioneers' could continue to "create their own policies, having regard to their own needs and their own necessities." The ideas of maximum use of Australia's "productive resources" for the fulfillment of the "fundamental needs of the whole population" and for high standards of living was emphasised in the ALP's official policy of Post-War Reconstruction. In short, Labor was united by real experiences and addressed real needs.

Such a needs-based policy was derived from the real experiences of the people. It was a policy which threatened the free working of the market mechanism. A free market could not provide for the needs of Australians. Market inequalities meant that production responded to the superior buying power of a few, and that it was skewed towards luxury and inessential goods and services, while the essentials remained unsupplied for a large part of the population. Capitalism's instability, depressions, idle resources and empty bellies violated common sense. Government intervention - both restrictive (taxation, price control, and arbitration) and enabling (indicative and direct planning) was necessary if needs were to be met. Chifley argued this point in his first public expression of Labor's post war aims: "We shall not be able to wait upon the play of supply and demand to do the job. We must as a nation, assess our many urgent demands now and plan on a nation-wide scale how best to use our resources and manpower to meet them."

It would be on the basis of its achievements in addressing the needs of the people that the people would decide to re-elect a Labor Government. Not for Labor the 'abstractions' and empty words about Liberal freedom. Instead, the real world behind words and the better life that citizens could feel. The 'hip-pocket nerve' would sense that life was better and finances more robust. Chifley refused to make 'glittering promises'. He pleaded in 1949 that "you judge us on our record." It was sincerely believed that the honesty and integrity of Labor could be sensed in the policies it promoted and the results that they achieved.

But like the concept of 'solidarity', the concept of Labor policy and unity as being the 'basis of reality' was used not only against the ruling class, but against other labour movement institutions. If the financial theories of the ruling class, or hypocritical talk about 'freedom' could be stigmatised as an 'ism', then so could other competing doctrines. In particular,
Communism was also singled out as an 'ism' - as a Party "ism" from Russia," and a foreign political religion. As an ism from foreign lands, it was presented as a philosophy up in the clouds, unconnected with the realities of the Australian working class. Ben Chifley argued that Australian workers did not need Communism, or some "political philosophy from another country" as they had proved that they could create inside the Labor Party their own policies, having regard to their own needs and their own necessities. It would be wrong to over-emphasise the importance of the Communist Party and other socialist organisations in the formation of the language of 'practical reality' inside the Labor Party. After all, many of the references to practical reality I have cited, such as those by Lawson, London, Spence and so on, were made before the Communist Revolution. But the Labor Party certainly deployed this language with great effect against the CPA over the '40's and '50's, and neither should this be denied.

Conclusion

So, a more historically sensitive account of the Labor Party's internal functioning has yielded both a refutation and an explanation of the concept of labourism. Quite clearly, the Labor Party is not an anti-intellectual, economistic and merely parliamentarist Party, which can be simply sketched and determined for all time. And yet, the source of those superficial accounts of the ALP as 'labourist' can also be clearly seen and understood. Labor intellectuals proved themselves successful intellectuals by speaking of ideals in broad and inclusive terms, and by attacking abstract philosophies in the name of practical realities. This was the means by which they built up the Labor Party from small and diffuse components, opposed the ruling class and its hawkers of ideas, and defended Labor's place as the premier working class institution against later competitors. It was, in short, by acting out the part of anti-intellectualism, that Labor Party intellectuals could best secure their goals.

And this was a performance in many ways. For many Ben Chifley is the archetype of the practical Labor man. After all, he smoked a pipe like the train diver he had been, spoke of his long-term trade union credentials, called trade union leaders by their first names, and constantly denied his own importance. And yet, he was actually a highly educated man and a reasonably wealthy one, who dominated the Labor Party during his term as Prime Minister like none before and few since. In a certain sense, Chifley wore a 'working class mask' which he had constructed carefully and deployed with skill. Indeed, even biographer and admirer L.F. Crisp has noted Chifley's use of "carefully retained working class characteristics" to control the Labor Party quietly and efficiently. After reading Chifley's umpteenth tribute to the rank and file of the movement, and claim that "I want to remain as I am", even the most sincere 'true believer' must begin to suspect the political uses of his 'man of the people' persona. Chifley was an intellectual, and those who insist that he was not are merely taken in by an act that both he and many of his contemporaries saw through with real ease.

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183 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 37
184 Ibid., 52
185 Ibid., 64
186 Thornton, E. CC Plenum, date unknown, Possibly 1946 or 1947, Communist Party Papers, ML MSS 5021 Box 86, 1-2
187 Crisp, L.F. Ben Chifley, 242
188 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, 33
But more generally, this Chapter has aspired to something wider than the delineation, refutation and explanation of the concept of anti-intellectual 'labourism'. It has aimed to provide an alternative tool-kit for use in the historical analysis of labour's advance and retreat in Chapters 4 to 8.

In place of an abstract model of the Party as the repository of immutable organisational and cultural tendencies, it is not enough to substitute the equally abstract model of a bear pit, a maze of cross-cutting tendencies and alliances. It is possible to be more specific than this. We know that the ALP's configuration made certain types of action, and certain sorts of language more persuasive than others. We have a set of parameters within which intellectuals attached to the Labor Party were practically constricted.

This will be useful in later Chapters, because there is obvious potential for tension between actions inside the ALP - aimed at achieving certain goals within that institution, and the impact of such actions upon the 'movement' more generally. The range of institutions and cultural producers which made up 'the family of Labour' could be damaged by a strategic intervention targeted at an objective internal to ALP politics. In particular, there is potential for tension between the Labor Party's institutional conception of 'solidarity', its conflation of the Labor Party and the Labour Movement on the one hand, and the capacity for a smooth and cooperative relationship between itself and institutions like the Communist Party, the Movement, and even trade unions not affiliated to the Labor Party, on the other hand.

Likewise there is a possible tension between the discourse of 'practical realism' and the overall cultural health of the labour movement. Certainly the 'reality-principle' conceded an emphasis on class, and articulated strongly a political and cultural opposition to the reasoning of the ruling class and of the intelligentsia. This has been quite rigorously documented in the main body of this Chapter. But at the same time, the very mistakes and misconceptions of the labourist historians show the possible consequences of such a consistently practical discourse. Talk about your rejection of abstract ideas for long enough, and people will begin to believe you. The sense of a separate cultural identity of the working class may collapse in on itself, or become fractured between those that claim they are 'practical' and those that claim they are 'theoretical'.

These are only some possible tendencies, parameters. There are a whole constellation of immediate political, cultural and economic factors which could possibly influence the form that interventions by Labor intellectuals would take. The purpose of this Chapter has not been to chart the interventions and actions of Labor Party intellectuals over the '40's and '50's, still less to explain them. The purpose here has been more preparatory. It may thought of as a sort of analytical stepping stone. This Chapter has attempted to create an understanding of the sorts of constraints and opportunities that intellectuals working inside the Labor Party were likely to face. Only once the opportunities and restrictions faced by the affiliated intellectual or activist are understood is it then possible to chart and to explain the interactions of such an affiliated intellectual with others inside and outside the Labor Party. This is a far more complex and difficult task, and it will be taken up seriously in Chapters 4 to 8. However, before this it is necessary to attack the practical/intellectual or labourist/socialist distinction from another direction. It is necessary to study the Communist Party of Australia, and the set of constraints and opportunities which it offered to affiliated intellectuals.
3. The Communist Party of Australia

The Communist Party of Australia is typically presented as a strange and dangerous fish - well and truly out of its native European water on our dry southern continent. This was the key theme of those opposed to Communism in the 1940s and 1950s. It was argued relentlessly that the CPA was a conspiracy controlled by Russia,¹ that Moscow chose Party leaders and determined policy,¹ that Communists were a '5th Column' plotting sabotage and social dislocation.¹ According to such a view, Communists were not followers of a particular political philosophy, but followers of the "new ANTI-CHRIST".³ They were not a minority with a following and a right to exist, but closer to a "gang of criminals or an organized racket".⁶ They were disruptors and infiltrators, anxious to foment social disturbance, to create confusion, and to "take self-government from the many" in the consequent disorder.⁴

Part of the demonization of the Communist Party was the assertion that Communists were un-Australian - a strange breed apart from the bulk of honest and worthy workers. They were sutured from the mainstream - one bad, extreme apple in a large and healthy barrel. Such has been the force and the impact of this demonization, that this exclusion has been reproduced in the more recent and less rhetorical work of labour historians. Guided by a rigid distinction between labourism and socialism, such history has insisted that Australian workers and their institutions were nothing but reformist and economistic - aspiring to 'civilize capitalism' rather than push for societal transformation. Communists have been dismissed as ineffectual, forming part of a small socialist subcurrent which has had minimal impact upon the mainstream movement. This sort of analysis has not been limited to those historians opposed to communism. The narrative of a bread and butter movement and a socialist fringe has been both a treasured celebration and a doleful lament.⁸ In the only major and sympathetic history of the CPA, produced by Alistair Davidson in 1969, Communists are treated as bearers of an 'alien tradition,' ill-suited to a continent where "there was no tradition of revolution and only a weak tradition of socialist activity."¹⁰

This sort of approach produces abstract and unconvincing portraits of both the Australian labour movement, and one of its most important institutions. It counterposes the CPA to the mainstream by counterposing Marxism to 'bread and butter'. The pursuit of wages and economic gains within capitalism is presented as necessarily atheoretical and non-socialist. Marxism, the philosophy of the Communist Party, is presented as a set of ideas involving revolution, and counselling nothing but violent and immediate hostility to the social order. To pursue economic gains is to compromise, and therefore to eschew Marxism. The CPA's intellectual life is reduced to a monolithic body of thought with a single strategy, rather than a varied and supple world-view capable of accommodating multiple strategies.

¹ Menzies, R.G. cited in 'Bill is 'Self-Defence' Against 5th Column', Argus, 28/4/50
³ 'Fighting Communism at Home', SMH, 7/6/52
⁴ 'Editorial: the communist plot', Argus, 16/8/46
⁵ 'Sydney University Staff Members and the Bill Against Communism', SMH, 26/5/50
⁷ Nairn, B. *Civilising Capitalism - the labor movement in new south wales, 1870-1900*, Canberra, 1973
⁸ Here the works of the 'New Left' in Australian labour history are most representative - for example, McQueen, H. *A New Britannia*, Penguin, 1971
¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3
This chapter does not at all argue that Marxism was unimportant for Australian Communists, but it seeks to place that Marxism in the context of the Party's political practice. When placed in this context, it can clearly be seen that the CPA's Marxism had little to do with *Das Kapital* or even *The Communist Manifesto*, but much to do with institutional hierarchies and attempts to organise political mobilisation. Briefly, the Chapter argues that:

1. Marxism did not necessarily imply revolution as an immediate political strategy.
2. The CPA pursued unity through discipline in its internal life and used the prestige of Marxism to further these aims.
3. Contestation within the Party was justified via reference to Marxism.
4. The Party attempted to construct unity through discipline within the labour movement as a whole — to make its external interactions ordered like its internal life.
5. The Party failed to do so, and it was in the context of this failure that it produced a specific vision of the working class.

The Chapter aims to shift from a focus on discourse and consciousness to a focus on intellectual production and political struggle. Rather than merely asserting that Marxism was not lodged in the 'consciousness' of Australian workers, and that the CPA was therefore irrelevant, it seeks to analyse the way that Marxism was used by Communist intellectuals, to explore the constraints Party members faced, and to study the sorts of interactions which occurred between the Party and its working class constituency. By adopting this strategy, the distinction between a theoretical fringe and a mainstream movement is attacked, and the basis for a dynamic discussion of the labour movement and its intellectuals in the 1940s and 50s is partially laid.

**What is Marxism?**

Inside the Communist Party of Australia, Marxism was not a set of fixed ideas about revolution, but a "discourse of authenticity" — a language within which members argued out policies and talked about the world. It does not follow that because the CPA was Marxist, it necessarily demanded revolution as an immediate political strategy. Marxism did not demand revolution, but set the terms within which revolution would be assessed as a strategy. It did not control beliefs, but the expression of beliefs. It was largely an internal discourse, used inside the Party rather than in recruitment drives. It was not for 'agitation' among the masses, but for 'propaganda' among the relatively few. It contained immense analytical power. It was used to "teach us what is true or false, what is finite and what is necessary." By understanding Marxism, the limits and the dimensions of the world could be traced. The leadership of the CPA insisted that all new members gain the ability to talk in the language of Marxism, to deploy its concepts and appreciate its knowledge. It was established as "essential for an understanding of any political question."

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11 Esse, 'Features of Agitation and Propaganda'. *Communist Review*, 16 November 1942, 11
12 North Sydney 'Thoughts on Education', *Communist Review*, 27 November 1943, 154
13 Moston, S. 'Party Education - Marx House', *Communist Review*, 22 June 1942, 74
Marxism was an authentic knowledge of the world. Stalin was insistent that the laws of development of society were to be regarded as objective laws. They were not at all conjectures or reasonable, testable hypotheses, but were instead to be equated with the laws of gravity. When the Marxist used class concepts of a scientific nature, he or she was calling upon an objective knowledge which was wedded to the real world. Each word signified something absolute and something real. Marxist knowledge was not at all a 'dialect' or 'language-game' like any other. It was real and true and material. There was no 'construction' of Marxist interpretations, no forcing or making of them. They were real.

The evidence of the absolute truth of Marxism was all around us. Marxism had justified its claims to objectivity in practice. As had been foretold, capitalism was crumbling. The objective truth of "the whole social and economic theory of Marx in general" had therefore been demonstrated. It had been demonstrated in the economic crises, the currency inflation, and the growing impoverishment of the working people which Communists saw. Even more than this, the objectivity of Marxism was shown in the achievements of the Soviet Union. The Party press enthusiastically proclaimed the rapid scientific and industrial advance in the Soviet Union, and used this as evidence of the objectivity of Marxism. In this way, it was argued that: "The story of Soviet electrification is a chapter in the Leninist use of and development of dialectics." Together, the immiseration of capitalism and the progress of socialism were proofs of the objectivity of that brand of Marxism practised by the CPA. They demonstrated that it was only Marxism which had penetrated the veneer to reach the core of historical change, only Marxism which "correctly reflects the needs of development of the material life of society".

Because of this objectivity, this insight into social laws, Marxist knowledge was a knowledge which allowed for the prediction of social change and development. Lenin had been able to foretell the nature of the Second World War in 1914. That ability to predict "the general trend of future development" was equally open to Communists today. And with this ability to predict, came the ability to control. Like the physicist or the biologist, the Marxist was able to modify substances and to create new ones. This happened not only in the laboratory, but on the terrain of production, distribution, and political struggle. The laboratory of the Marxist was the class struggle itself. The Marxist could objectively apprehend social conditions and problems, and was thereby empowered to predict and to control social change. Of course, the Communist did not have absolute 'freedom' to improvise any possible future. But the Communist, by coming to grips with the 'necessary' and 'objective' direction of social change, could push joyfully with history, could make that history real today. In this

14 Stalin, J. 'Dialectical and Historical Materialism', in Sharkey, L.L. and Moston, S. (eds) Dialectical and Historical Materialism, Current Book Distributors, 1945, 14
15 Prichard, K.S. Why I am a Communist, Current Book Distributors, 1956, 11
16 Lenin, V.I. 'The Criterion of Practice' in Sharkey, L.L. and Moston, S. (eds) Dialectical and Historical Materialism, CBD's, 1945, 58
18 "Elder" 'Dialectics and Everyday Life', Communist Review, 15 October 1942, 9
19 Stalin, J. Dialectical and Historical Materialism, 18
30 "Elder" 'Dialectics and Everyday Life', Communist Review, 15 October 1942, 9
31 "Elder" 'Theory, a weapon to be wielded', Communist Review, 13 August 1942, 10
32 Ibid.
33 "Dublin" 'From the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" to the Angle-Soviet Treaty', Communist Review, 12 July 1942
situation, freedom was to be understood as the recognition of necessity. The Communist poet David Martin equated the knowledge, the insight, and the freedom of the Marxist with a game of Chess:

Where spirit reasons and where sense is law,  
Where theory is measured by resource,  
And beauty rises from material force,  
Where each obeys the limit of its kind,  
Where matter moves, but does not rule, the mind;  
Where change is order, order lies in change  
Change only changeless; knowable yet strange,  
And always marching to the final leap,  
The last, decisive, liberating sweep -  
On this small board freedom is shown to be  
The recognition of necessity.  

The Marxist could conceive of the necessity, could foresee social change, and thereby reached freedom. No longer blind, groping about in crisis, the Communist acted constructively, in the light of theory, with disciplined vigour and wisdom. The Communist could control the economic system, could master the machine, be free from the golden chains of capitalism. The key to Marxist thought was its ability to manipulate and control, to consciously grasp and then influence the process of ceaseless development. Nothing was outside the dialectic, nothing could not be predicted, and therefore controlled. For example, it was argued that by applying dialectical thought to plant research in the Soviet Union, Marxists had effectively learnt the 'secret' of heredity. Marxists were able to alter history purposively like Gods: 'Consciously and systematically, by changing the conditions of life of plant and animal organisms, the Michurin school changes their very nature and hence influences heredity as well. It regards heredity as an inherent quality of a living body and denies the existence of any special substance of heredity'.

In being deployed in this way - as an objective knowledge, a predictive device, a controller of social change and a 'discourse of authenticity', Marxism was also a unifying knowledge. Within the CPA, Marxism was used as a force for unity. By sharing in the same language and insights, Party members cohered as a collective. This was heightened because reference to the absolute and objective insights of Marxism was used by Party leaders to justify Party tactics, and to defuse dissent. The theories and insights of Marxism were the Party's ideological cement. This was something that Party leaders were quite self-conscious about. Greater study of 'anointed' Marxist texts was suggested as a practical mechanism for

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25 Martin, D. 'Chess'. The Realist Writer. 3 September 1952. 13
26 Prichard, K.S. 'Communism - a talk given by Katharine Sussannah Prichard over Nation Station 6WF n.d.
making unity and for excluding disruptors." It was also a means of controlling the 'deviations' of sincere but theoretically primitive comrades."

But Marxism was a knowledge and a force for unity in deeper ways. Although treasured for its objectivity and its predictive force, and imbued with a scientific and prophetic air, the Marxism which Party members learnt was not chiefly a Marxism concerned with capitalism, class or crisis. It was a Marxism which actually took unity as its theme. Worldwide, the textbook *The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* was the Communist's bible. In Australia, this was particularly acute - the book was described as taking "first place" in any study of Marxism. It was a "landmark" in the history of the working class movement, recommended as the constant companion of every Party member." This is important for our purposes, because the book is not at all a work about the nature of capitalism, about exploitation, class tyranny or the like. It is a book which details the rise of the Bolsheviks to power. It details the formation of the Social Democratic Party, the Party split, the battle against the Mensheviks and other 'petit-bourgeois' Parties, the battle against Trotsky, Bukharin and other 'petit-bourgeois' individuals, and the living triumph of the Soviet State. This 'essential Marxist text' is concerned overwhelmingly with unity in action, with the ability of the CPSU to construct internal and external unity, and to make revolution as a result. It is a book about unity. In the conclusion of the History it is stated:

"The history of our Party is the history of the struggle against petty-bourgeois parties - the Socialist-Revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, Anarchists and Nationalists - and of the utter defeat of these parties. If these parties had not been vanquished and driven out of the ranks of the working class, the unity of the working class could not have been achieved; and if the working class had not been united, it would have been impossible to achieve the victory of the proletarian revolution.""}

Therefore, it seems true to say that when the Party member learnt about Marxism, he or she primarily learnt about the political construction of unity. However, that unity was distinctive in two ways. Firstly, it was a unity around the institution of the Party. Secondly, it was a unity given the label of 'Marxism', and therefore the status of objective and immutable truth. It followed that Marxism was used to heighten unity within the CPA to a very great extent.

There was a final element of the Marxism imbibed by Party members which further allowed it to act as a unifier. This was its presentation as a 'dialectical knowledge'. Dialectical knowledge was defined by the CPA's theoreticians as a knowledge concerned with "the study of things (be they wars, revolutions, and depressions on the one hand, or atoms, molecules and living bodies on the other) in their relations, and in the process of ceaseless change'.

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25 For example, Howard, J., 'Against Provocation - Against Disruption', *Communist Review*, 17 December 1942.
26 Fajon, E. 'Ideological struggle - the permanent task of the Party', in *Strengthen the Party*, Central Organisation Committee of CPA, August 1948.
28 'Revolutionary Theory and Practice', *Tribune*, 64 1/4/42.
29 'Party Education (No 2)', *Tribune*, 71 20/5/42.
30 'Revolutionary Theory and Practice', *Tribune*, 64 1/4/42.
31 *History of the CPSU (B)*, CBD's, 1942.
development." It was argued that the Party's knowledge was dialectical knowledge in that it reacted to the prevailing political circumstances, and adjusted to them scientifically. Over time, as the conditions of Australian capitalism and working class consciousness changed, the CPA's knowledge also continued to develop, and therefore continued to construct unity with a greater and greater facility. This aspect of the Party's Marxism was important, because it made the correctness of any particular strategy pursued irrefutable. If any set of tactics proved ineffective, and required change, this did not all threaten the perceived sagacity of leaders, or the predictive power of Marxist theory. Rather, because altering the Party's tactics could be interpreted as a 'dialectical' response to capitalist development, it could be seen as a confirmation of the power and of the distinctiveness of Marxism. It did not threaten the absolute status of the Party's version of Marxism, but confirmed it. When one of the Party's founders, Guido Baracchi, was critical of the CPA's changing attitude to World War II, he found it impossible to cope rhetorically with this aspect of the Party's science. As he wrote to R. Dixon: "it has been traditional practice of Party leaders in recent years always to attempt to justify their changes of "line", zig-zags, "turns", somersaults, etc, as being "correct" in the "new conditions". This "dialectic" might be true or false, but it had this advantage: the leadership remained "correct"."

So, contrary to that labour history structured by the labourism/socialism distinction, it is possible to see Marxism as a knowledge which confirmed the CPA's status as an institution of the labour movement, rather than pushed it towards a Russophile and extreme fringe. Marxism, as it was used in the CPA, was not so much the source of specific policies such as revolution, as a language in which to understand and to debate policies. The CPA should not be dismissed as marginal to the labour movement, merely because of its failure to lead revolution, or to rise above a membership of more than 23,000. Nor should it be characterised as 'Marxist' and therefore 'revolutionary'. Rather, it should be characterised as 'Marxist' and therefore concerned with unity, discipline and control. This was the way in which Marxism was used within the Communist Party. This was its institutional reality. Now that the myths around the Party's political philosophy have been repudiated, it will be possible to examine that reality in greater detail. In pursuing such an analysis, it is most convenient to separate the inside of the Party, its internal functioning, from the external interventions of the Party. Of course, such a distinction is abstract and analytical, but it serves as a simplifying device for the subsequent discussion.

Internal structure of the CPA

The organisational principle of the Communist Party of Australia was 'democratic centralism'. Derived from the Party's affiliation to the Comintern, the principle specifically referred to four internal processes:

1. The application of the elective principle to all leading organs of the Party from the highest to the lowest.
2. Periodic accountability of Party organs to their respective Party organisations.

36 'Elder 'Science is Dialectics', Communist Review, 11 June 1942, 5
37 Guido Baracchi to R. Dixon 26/1/40 in Guido Baracchi Papers, NLA MS 5241, Box 2
38 This estimate is made in Davidson, A. The Communist Party of Australia, 82
39 Constitution of the CPA Adopted by the 16th National Congress, August 1951. Communist Party Papers. ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936 Box 1, 6
3. Strict Party discipline and the subordination of the minority to the majority.
4. The absolutely binding character of the decisions of the higher organs upon the lower organs and upon Party members.\(^4\)

By 1935, the CPA was functioning according to these principles.\(^5\) It worked like a military apparatus. The Secretariat lorded it over the Political Committee, the Political Committee over the Central Committee, the Central Committee over both the District Committees and the specific Party Committees concerned with particular policy areas (such as trade unions, education, youth, etc), and the District Committees over the Cells or particular Party Branches. The individual member was at the bottom of this chain of command. The individual was required to follow orders - not to give them and not to behave independently. The Party leaders (and therefore the Party) regarded local autonomy as a harmful and costly tendency.\(^6\) Local autonomy prevented a coordinated, unified and national policy from being followed.\(^7\) A policy of unquestioning obedience to the 'leading committees of the Party' was preferred.\(^8\) The cell pattern of horizontally isolated but vertically tight-controlled small working groups was maintained and even strengthened over the 1940's and '50's. Dissent was not permitted. All opposition was deliberately squashed as a barrier to unity.\(^9\) Any coalescence of individuals with similar perspectives and similar difficulties with Party policy could not occur inside the Party. Horizontal understandings - across structural levels or territorial boundaries, could not form. Organisation against policy coming from the top was made so difficult as to be impossible.\(^10\) As the embittered ex-Communist, Lloyd Ross rightly remarked: "the Communist Party has never tolerated a minority opinion in all its many changes."\(^11\)

Practically, any sort of independent thought was frowned upon.\(^12\) The process of internal debate was regarded as unnecessary and counter-productive. Information and control were huddled at the upper echelons of the Party. Indeed, the process was so deeply entrenched that even Central Committee member Ernie Thornton complained: "I do not feel like a member of the Central Committee, but like a delegate who happens to come along every 3 or 4 months for discussion, because I do not know what the Political Committee is doing."\(^13\) Of course, this tendency was greatly intensified the lower down the Party member was placed. At the branch level, minitiature dictators farcically brandished the small disciplinary powers they possessed, often shutting others out from active participation. The problem was so serious that at the Party's 13th National Congress, it was asserted by leaders that: "direction of the
branches is wrapped around 2 or 3 members. We would like to see more jobs given to new comrades."

The processes of decision-making could have deeply alienating effects on members. For example, faithful cadre Mary Wright, who worked as head of the New Houswives' Association after World War II, was supplanted without any participation, or even notice of the decision in early 1950. Similarly, Party leaders, such as Audrey and Jack Blake, were ordered about the country, often called from Sydney to Melbourne, and forced to leave their child at short notice. The expectations of members were that they would act as the leadership directed - that they would understand the Party line, accept it, carry it into effect, defend it, and fight for it. In this long list of duties, they never were expected to determine it.

This is not to say that the CPA was all centralism and no democracy. The system of electing leaders was always followed. Democratic processes did get an official chance to occur - at Party Congresses and so on. But such processes remained democratic in form rather than content. To oppose the re-election of Party Secretary Sharkey would have constituted 'disruption'. This was not all abstract. If anyone failed to vote for Sharkey they would be disciplined. Central Committee member Jack Hughes confirms that failure to do so at National Committee meetings led to witch-hunts. In a technique generic to democratic centralism, Resolutions for Congresses were drafted by the Central Committee in advance, and submitted for a unified rubber-stamping.

On the other hand, democracy, in the sense of participation, was an absolute requirement. The requirements for Party membership were quite extensive and personally onerous. A Party member was defined as someone who both accepted the Party programme, attended regular meetings of the local Party branch, who paid dues regularly and who engaged in some form of Party activity. Membership was so difficult to gain that many were scared they would be found unworthy. Others faced an 'Exam Commission' and an interrogation, or were simply told to "come back when you know a bit more" about communism. Upon acceptance as members, they were also required to undertake a disciplining course of study in the philosophy of Marxism. The 'opportunists' approach to Marxist-Leninist education - that practical tasks left no time, was heartily rebuked. Individual reading was declared an 'urgency'. In the process of this education, the Party member not only learnt about 'unity' and the Party (as has been emphasised), but also learnt discipline, self-discipline as a personal

50 McDougall, W. 13th National Congress of CPA, March 1943 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936. Box 1.1
51 Johnson, A. Bread and Roses, Left Book Club Co-op, 1990, 133-4
52 Blake, A. A Proletarian Life, Kibble Books. 1984, 51-2
53 Stalin, I. cited in Fajon, E., 'Ideological Struggle - the permanent task of the Party'. 11
54 Davidson, A. The Communist Party of Australia. 181
55 Ibid.
56 Hughes, J.R. cited in Willis, N. Shades of Red, 105
57 Waller, M. 'Democratic-Centralism: the costs of discipline'. in Waller, M. and Fennema, M. Communist Parties in Western Europe: decline or adaptation?, Basil Blackwell. 1988, 14
58 Constitution of CPA. Adopted Congress November 1938, printed Central Committee 12/6/42, Rule 3, Clause B.
59 Ibid.
56 Hughes, J.R. cited in Willis, N. Shades of Red, 105
57 Waller, M. 'Democratic-Centralism: the costs of discipline'. in Waller, M. and Fennema, M. Communist Parties in Western Europe: decline or adaptation?, Basil Blackwell. 1988, 14
58 Constitution of CPA. Adopted Congress November 1938, printed Central Committee 12/6/42, Rule 3, Clause B.
59 Ibid.
56 Hughes, J.R. cited in Willis, N. Shades of Red, 105
57 Waller, M. 'Democratic-Centralism: the costs of discipline'. in Waller, M. and Fennema, M. Communist Parties in Western Europe: decline or adaptation?, Basil Blackwell. 1988, 14
58 Constitution of CPA. Adopted Congress November 1938, printed Central Committee 12/6/42, Rule 3, Clause B.
59 Ibid.
trait. This was tremendously important to Party leaders. Pavlov was enthusiastically quoted in the Communist Review: "Habitate yourself to restraint and patience. Learn to do the 'dirty work' of science. Study, compare, accumulate facts!" By learning discipline, the new recruit was socialized into the culture of the CP. The impulse to violence, to anarchism or adventurism was curbed. The revolutionary cadre of the Communist Party was born.

The final aspect of the structure of the Communist Party which needs to be noted is the organisational practice of 'criticism and self-criticism'. This was presented as the 'weapon of Bolshevism'. It involved the open admittance of all mistakes, an analysis of the reasons for all mistakes, and a thorough discussion of the means of correcting each of these revolutionary errors. Criticism and self-criticism was not so much a means of providing for innovation in policy and free expression of views as of maintaining a revolutionary discipline and awareness. It was conceived as a path to political 'hardness' and a means of avoiding indolence: "A Party perishes if it conceals its mistakes, if it glosses over sore problems, if it covers up its shortcomings by pretending that all is well, if it is intolerant of criticism and self-criticism, if it gives way to self-complacency and vain-glory and if it rests on its laurels." Indeed, criticism and self-criticism was used at times as a technique to 'weed out' the spy or 'provocateur'. It was also used to separate out the good Party member from the bad, the solid from the flimsy - as expressed in the slogan: "Blows smash the glass and temper the steel." The member of the CPA who was equated with steel was the prized comrade.

The member of the CPA

In this context, the personality of the individual Communist was moulded with singular stresses and forces. The CPA's quest for discipline was effectively internalised as a 'second nature'. The Party member governed his or her internal desires with iron. The rules of behaviour were set out in the internal Party document The Fight Against Provocation: "He must always be on his guard, must never talk at random, never be guilty of carelessness; he must know how to govern himself and hold himself in check." Political firmness and seriousness permeated the personality of the revolutionary - firmness understood as a spirit of irreconcilability towards all deviations from Party policy. Any sense of larrikinism or slackness was not tolerated. Any 'bohemian' excesses were frowned upon. Such behaviour was a residue of 'capitalism' still existing inside the personality of the cadre - it was to be fought internally as the entity of the Party fought externally. Dominating, selfish, arrogant,
'backward' behaviour was traced to capitalism, and to defeat the urge to such behaviour was to win a small battle in the ongoing class war. This is shown in the novel *Bobbin Up*, where Nell, a communist worker in a Sydney factory, thinks aloud:

"It was painful to look at yourself without the rose-coloured spectacles, to see all the selfish, arrogant, backward residue of capitalism growing like weeds in the mind you'd been so proud of.....

.....The biggest struggle of all was with yourself. Fighting the boss was a pushover compared to that. No, it wasn't easy to be a communist, it wasn't easy to love a man and marry and bring up your kids in a world that operated on the principle of bugger you Jack, I'm alright."

As the Party disciplined itself to achieve internal unity, so the good cadre's efforts towards self-discipline unified his or her 'multiple selves' into one, integrated personality." Such a CP'er expressed personally the values of order, boundary and discipline. He or she was a model, and the honour and prestige of the Party depended on his or her behaviour. K.S. Prichard believed that "The conduct of our members will be a tremendous factor in stimulating confidence in our Party and in cementing unity among the workers." Such members could discipline the workers because they had disciplined themselves. They constituted a true vanguard. They attempted to approach questions "in an objective way without any personal questions." They scorned the personal for the political, the tactile for the cerebral. They were 'Unbending' - hardened by injustice.

In the fictional imagination of the political hero, Communist novelists consistently portrayed them as extruding their own sensuous selves for the 'good of the cause'. In Prichard's famous Goldfield's trilogy a typical passage runs:

" 'I didn't mean...' Eily tried to explain. 'I've got no right to let you think Tom and I are sweethearts, Mrs Gough - or ever were, as some people imagine. Tom doesn't feel like that about me at all, or care for anybody just for themselves. The working class movement is all he cares about, really. I love him for that as much as anything. So does Nadya."

The good communist personified discipline and unity as political and spiritual principles. Anything less, anything weak or immoral in a personal (which was political) sense would end in disgrace. Rule 9, Clause D of the Party Constitution in 1942 stated:

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74 Hewett, D. *Bobbin Up*, Re-issued by Virago Press, 1985, 139
75 Hardy, F. *The Hard Way*, Fontana, 1976, 41-2
76 Prichard, K.S. 13th National Congress of CPA, March 1943 *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 1
77 Wells, H. 13th National Congress of CPA, March 1943 *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 2
78 Thornton, E. claimed that this was what he was trying to do during the Party's debate on the issue of 'Browderism' - Political Committee Meeting held 14-15th October, 1944 *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 6
79 Waten, J. explores how 'injustice' leads to internal discipline in his novel *The Unbending*, Australian Book Society, 1954. On page 150, an IWW member Killeen observes: "He was painfully moved by the sight of the children huddled round their mother, he grew more dogged and harder inside."
80 Prichard, K.S. *Golden Miles*, Virago, 1984, 174
"Any members found to be strike breakers, degenerates, habitual drunkards, betrayers of Party confidence, provocateurs, voluntary associates of Trotskyists, advocates of terrorism as a method of Party procedure, or members whose actions are detrimental to the Party and the working class, shall be expelled from the Party and, if considered necessary, exposed before the general public.""1

The conditions of membership required the greatest commitment. Many active and 'good' unionists were simply 'not up to' the demands and responsibilities of Party membership. "They morally unfit to lead their fellow workers, those lacking 'prestige' among them, ceased thereby to be communists."2

In these circumstances, the lives of Communists became somewhat cocooned. Their politics dominated their lives. They didn't read the critics of the USSR. "They spent social time together."3 In some working class communities they were like a tiny island of purity in a corrupt and immoral sea - speaking for the working class, but isolated from the working class in terms of mores and behaviour patterns. This was a real practical contradiction of which more will be heard later.

**Unification and Contestation**

However, before delineating the relationship between the Communist Party and its external context, the picture of the CPA as unified and monolithic needs to be qualified. As Michael Waller has argued more generally, the 'democratic centralism' which organised Communist Parties was an essentially contested concept - applied in a variety of practical ways. "Political parties are never static, and the relative power of a Party's leaders as compared to its rank-and-file will fluctuate over time. As such power fluctuates, so too, power to create unity and discipline members will vary - the type and definition of 'democratic centralism' will mutate. Robert Brym has contextualised this insight, by pointing out that the political and democratic attitudes of the leaders of Russia's Marxist Parties fluctuated with the changing size, organisation and political resources of workers."4

Similarly, it is possible to see division and contestation within the Communist Party of Australia. The general organisational practices of the Party were indeed reproduced over time - it remained a Party of unity and discipline. However, there was a political contest over the direction of such unity - over who would be the 'discipliner' and who the 'disciplined', over what kind of unity the Party would immediately pursue. It was in this political contest that Party leaders acted as intellectuals. They used the authenticity and the power of Marxism as a weapon in political battle, and they selectively interpreted that Marxism to justify their own tactical stance. They acted as 'symbol manipulators'. They called upon Marxism to validate rival strategies and to argue out policy positions.

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1 Constitution of CPA. - adopted Congress November 1938, printed CC 12/6/42, Rule 9, Clause D
2 Healy, J. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 93-4
3 Gibson, R. in Communist Leaders Speak: Evidence before the Royal Commission on Communism, 1949 - mis-catalogued under 1948 in CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD ON 1936 Box 49, 11
4 Blake, A. A Proletarian Life, 24
5 Donald, L. Why You Should Join the Communist Party, 1944 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 Box 147, 13
6 Waller, M. Democratic Centralism: an historical commentary, St Martin's Press, 1981, 6
7 Brym, R. Intellectuals and Politics, George Allen and Unwin, 1980, 48
Indeed, with the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, the CPA was no longer bound by the decisions of a 'higher body'. It was free to develop its own approaches.\textsuperscript{48} Certainly, the Party remained pro-Soviet in its orientation, and regarded the generalised advice of the Cominform with an air of reverence. But this advice remained extremely vague, even banal in nature. The famous opening declaration in 1947 did nothing more than postulate the importance of the struggle for peace and national independence, and warn against underestimating the strength of the working class.\textsuperscript{49} Other declarations were of a similar nature - asserting, for example, the need for "a militant offensive of Marxist-Leninist propaganda intimately linked with revolutionary practices."\textsuperscript{50} These statements were not clear and specific directives on policy. As a result, their status was that of a 'Marxist classic', to be equated with that of a statement by Lenin or by Stalin in a given situation. Such statements were a reservoir of authentic truth from which to draw, rather than clear pointers to a specific policy. Witness Central Committee member L.H. Gould - not content to argue that "capitalism is ending", he validates such a statement via reference to the Cominform: "How long capitalism will last can only be a conjecture, but the Cominform statement stressed that the chief danger for the Labor Movement is underestimation of the workers' ability, their fighting capacity to defeat capitalism."\textsuperscript{51} He uses the Cominform statement to justify his own contention, but \textit{strategically}, such a statement can lead in a variety of directions.

This stress upon the relative autonomy of the CPA, and the importance of indigenous application, is confirmed when that institution's relationship with other national Communist Parties is surveyed. During the mid 1940s there were a succession of disputes between Australian Communists and Communists in both the United States and Britain over the correct policies to be pursued. The CPA's Secretariat was keen to emphasise both the division of opinion and the Marxian rightness of the Australian position in both cases.\textsuperscript{52}

It is not at all being argued here that the CPA was a kind of pluralist home of free discussion and debate. The Communist Party was a Party of unity, discipline and control, in which the objective truth of Marxism was a key procurer of such unity. In these conditions, outright questioning of either Marxism or of unity would typically lead nowhere but towards expulsion and denunciation. However, by calling upon and selectively manipulating Marxism, it was possible to open a space in which the Party's "line" could be creatively implemented and partially problematized.

So, for example, to argue for the devolution of authority and a greater democratization of the Party outright would be heresy. However, it was possible for J.C. Henry to argue for just such a policy via reference to Marxism. This occurred at a Central Committee meeting in the early 1950s. Henry initially pointed out, in a spirit of self-criticism, that in the past few months he had been looking towards the Party's Secretariat to solve political problems, instead of fighting for solutions himself. From this point, he argued that: "I feel that we are not sufficiently seized with Lenin's thesis on the Party, the Party as a whole, and I am afraid that we should perhaps study more the whole of Stalin's teachings on the Party, seeking in this way to improve our understanding of the question of responsibility and the whole question of..."\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{48} Kuusinen, O. 'Twenty Years of the Communist International', in Sharkey, L.L. \textit{An Outline History of the Australian Communist Party, 1944 CPA Papers}, ML MSS 5021 ADD ON 1936 Box 49, 83
\textsuperscript{49} Opening Declaration of Communist Information Bureau' Poland, September 1947 in \textit{Study Material, CPA}. Printed by the Peter Lalor Press, 1951, 20-1
\textsuperscript{50} This quote is taken from \textit{Labor News Digest}, 25 October 11, 1950. Held in Australian Archives: M 1509/1 7 Box: ACT 1 3 102 6 - 102 6
\textsuperscript{51} Gould, L.H. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 \textit{CPA Papers}, ML MSS 5021. Box 85. 28
\textsuperscript{52} Both disputes will be alluded to more fully in later chapters.
Here the whole functioning of the Party is being questioned, but it is being done in such a way that the question is harmonised with Marxism, presented as a simple query rather than a fundamental critique. In this way Henry not only proves his commitment to the Party and evades the tag of heretic, he also develops an authentic theoretical rationale for his suggestions.

Creative applications of Marxism more often took more limited and less critical forms. Particularly in the various Communist front organisations, autonomy could be justified and Party leaders could be silenced by a selective interpretation of Marxist authorities. The past-master at all of this was Audrey Blake. Although regarded by many as a Stalinist because of her Central Committee membership, her extended periods in Russia, and her real mastery of Marxist parlance, her political practice as a leader of the Youth movement was actually flexible, free and undogmatic. The explanation for this apparent contradiction lies in her mastery of Marxism itself - it was her ability to argue for the comparative independence of the youth movement which both secured such independence and confirmed her as an ideologue. Blake herself makes this clear:

"...putting 'the line' into action opened up creative paths for all of us, especially in the youth movement where we had scope to use our talents and ingenuity. We made good use of Lenin's stress on the organisational independence of the youth movement - a sine qua non according to him, if the youth were to embrace socialism as an ideal worth the long hard slog."

Similarly, in the world of art and literature, there is a strong consensus that at least over the early and middle '40s there was no one 'Party line' on art. Australian artists like Noel Counihan, Yosl Bergner and Vic O'Connor produced an art of sympathy and compassion, sensitively reflecting the hurt of the working class and of others wronged by Australian capitalism, such as the Australian Aborigines. The theoretical justification for such work was found in the doctrine of 'socialist realism'. The paintings, however, had little to do with a Soviet socialist realism. They were better understood as an Australian social realism. After the middle '40s, there is some dispute over the emergence of a Party line in these matters. For Bernard Smith, the independence dissipated after 1946, when the Party leadership began to insist upon a Zhdanovist art which gloried in the historic purpose of the proletariat and its eventual triumph. Others, like Jack Beasley, insist that because there was no single definition of socialist realism, a relative freedom to pursue individual artistic vision existed within the CP up until the early 1950s. However this specific debate is resolved, it is clear that dissent and discussion were possible within the Party. Control from the centre was episodic, inconsistent and contested. Rather than being continuous and subtle, it was discontinuous and crude. Party leaders could and did move cadres about, do backflips on policy, intervene dramatically in previously stable and relatively autonomous spheres. This is why the Party appears so dictatorial to the outsider and the casual historian, but this is also

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93 Henry. J.C. CC Meeting held approximately 1951 (Dixon refers to 16th Congress as occurring in next 3 months). Proceedings found 177/53 in H.B. Chandler's bedroom. Australian Archives A 6122 XRT 474 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5. n.p.

94 Blake. A. A Proletarian Life, 127


96 Ibid. See also Bernard Smith's contribution to 'The Visual Arts and Politics' at Communist and Labor Movement Conference National Library Oral History Collection TRC 916/6 1/2

how activists (especially those in States distant from the Sydney-based Secretariat) grasped a limited autonomy in the cracks and gaps between blundering interventions."

In all of these interventions, manoeuvres, and debates, it was the language of Marxism which provided both the discursive terrain, and the key weapons of battle. Marxist literature was called upon in a multiplicity of ways to justify a variety of policy positions over time. In a certain sense, all of this argument over specific tactics was also a debate over what was the authentic Marxist response to a given political situation. As a result, continued disputation over policy, continuing about-faces by Party leaders also represented a continued questioning of the validity of certain interpretations of Marxist objective truth. It followed from this that on-going disputation would begin to erode the absolute and unquestioning truth of the CPA’s Marxist philosophy, thereby threatening the Party’s hierarchical structure and institutional unity. It was for this reason that those who used the language of Marxism, but consistently refused to submit to unity around the Communist Party’s leadership were cast out of the Party and stigmatised as unclean. Their presence reduced Marxism to an interpretation of the world, open to challenge and dispute. They threatened unity and were therefore 'filthy', as the analysis of Mary Douglas would suggest: "Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained."

This dirtiness was personified in the figure of the 'Trotskyite'. Trotskyites used the insights of Marxist philosophy to produce a distinct organisation and a separate set of political interventions and policies. The existence of the Trotskyite made Marxist knowledge a knowledge among other knowledges again - an interpretation of the world, no longer a truth-telling, unifying, predictive and controlling secret. Hence the Trotskyites, despite their basic irrelevance to the political situation (in terms of mass political presence), were subject to the sharpest invective. They were literally 'scum'. Adam Ogston said of them: "These (sic) Trotskyite scum are conscious of the role they play, and to play it effectively they indulge in revolutionary phraseology, they play on the discontent of the more backward but militant workers in their efforts to do dirty work."101

The terms of this abuse are particularly important. The Trotskyites were "conscious of the role they play". That is, their use of Marxist knowledge was calculated, was for a specific strategic purpose - that of misleading the workers. They did not truly speak the language of Marxism, they uttered some of its words. They did not speak through Marxism as believers, they merely put on a Marxist mask. This could be shown to be so, because the Trotskyite did nothing more than talk Marxism. He or she failed to do what the CPA member did - live Marxism through the cultivation of personal discipline and the pursuit of political unity. For the Communist Party, the Trotskyite was a provocateur, a liar, possibly a spy.102 He or she was typically middle class - the 'White Collared Trotskyite'.103 A Trotskyite typically lacked order and control, was weak, 'immoral', often personally immoral. Here is a portrait from Tribune: "A certain "Trotskyite" who lives in a mansion over the harbour, is rumoured running with another woman. This is "wife" number five. Number four is writing, it is said, a new play, William, A. 1971. The difficulty of controlling State branches is noted in Taft, B. Crossing the Party Line: Memoirs of Bernie Taft. Scribe Publications, 1994, 50

Douglas, M. Purity and Danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo. RKP, 1966. 40

Trotskyism - the vilest of 5th Columns. Tribune, 110 17/2/43, 2

Ogston, A. 13th National Congress of CPA. March 1943 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 1

Tribune, 77 17/7/42, 4

Tribune, 113 10/3/43, 4
something about harems." Another Trotskyite, Laurie Short, was similarly attacked for immorality and ill-discipline. It was claimed that he was expelled from the CPA's Youth League for "writing lascivious letters to women."

This was more than mere polemics. It was failure to respect the discipline of CPA leaders which made the Trotskyite - not adherence to any particular doctrinal position. This was why Trotskyites were stigmatised as immoral and ill-disciplined in a whole number of ways, and this was why individuals could be characterised as possessing "Trotskyite tendencies" - willfully autonomous natures that asserted themselves intermittently. Many intellectuals who were Party members or sympathisers were typified as possessing "Trotskyite tendencies", despite the fact that they probably had little knowledge of Trotsky's political positions, and little contact with the few small sects dedicated to Trotskyism in Australia.

What they did have was a critical intelligence which sometimes clashed with the insights of the hierarchy. Hence their fluctuating tendencies towards Trotskyism. For example, Bernie Taft's questions in Party education classes led many to suspect him of having been influenced by "Trotskyist elements." In a similar case, Nettie Palmer was accused of possessing Trotskyist tendencies in a letter by Ralph Gibson to Guido Baracchi: "What we (Gibson and Blue Howells) said about the "tendencies" was correct. Probably she (Palmer) was not conscious of the Trotskyist flavor in her views. Certainly she resents herself and Trotskyism being mentioned in the same breath - which is very healthy. Also the tendencies may now be more past than present (we shall inquire more on this point)."

Trotskyism was a conceptual dirt for the CPA, and the attack on the unclean Trotskyite was part of the day-to-day functioning of the Communist Party. In this case it would definitely be correct to say: "If Trotskyites did not exist, it would have been necessary for the CPA leadership to invent them."

**External interventions of the CPA**

The interventions of the CPA into the Australian political context are best understood as an attempt to push outward the order, discipline and unity that had been achieved internally (that is, within the Party and the individual cadre) into the labour movement as a whole. In a very real sense, making the world outside the Communist Party operate like it did inside the Communist Party - making "all politics into internal politics", was the aim of the CPA. This orientation is expressed in the Objective of the CPA - a classless, socialist society. This was presented overwhelmingly as a society in which the "anarchy of production" no longer dominated, but where a "fully-planned economy" brought order to the lives of the people. In such a society: "man, for the first time in history, will control the productive forces instead of being controlled by them."

In such a utopia the order and unity which prevailed inside the Communist Party would exist outside it.

But the only way to such a unified and ordered world tomorrow was the political construction of the unity of the labour movement today. This unity was not at all automatic.
To reach the highest and most developed form of working class unity, "favourable conditions alone" were not enough." Workers faced a labour market in which disunity was created. In the short story by Communist writer John Morrison, *The Compound*, fellow wharfies herd together waiting for a call to work. They jam up against each other in competition, they are disunified and reduced to animals - "You tread on someone’s toes, you get snarled at, and you snarl savagely back. The fierceness of the kill has seized you, seized you so thoroughly that you don’t even know it." This was the 'natural' state of the worker under capitalism - robbed of dignity and pushed up against comrades in battle. To turn that battle into one of worker against capitalism, and to unify the working class, was the aim of the Communist Party. This was the key to the people’s future and the realisation of socialism.¹¹²

The key to unity construction was obviously to begin with the experiences and the demands of workers themselves. Sensitively discovering and then fighting for the demands of the masses was a starting point for the CPA’s quest for unity. Finding unity through "mass work for local demands",¹¹³ and beginning with the "experience" of workers ¹¹⁴ were the most common directions for the "mass work" of cadres. But the demands of the masses were not taken up by the Communist Party in an unmediated way. The Party acted as an active interpreter of the concrete. The people’s demands were translated into the Party’s programme, and the Party then ‘called upon’ the working class to unite around the programme and the concrete demands it embodied.¹¹⁵ It was in a theoretically worked up form that the CPA fought for unity around concrete demands. Wedged in between life experience in working class communities and the programme of the CPA, the Communist Party’s strategic intelligence interposed itself. The CPA constructed unity around certain selective bases, certain ideological interpretations of the concrete world.

It was not Marxism which was interposed between the concrete and the programme. Instead, it was the Party leadership’s strategic conception of the best ‘unifying discourse’ which existed at the time. More specifically, over the 1940’s and 1950’s, the Communist Party interpreted the demands of the concrete through three specific analytical grids - production, wages struggle, and peace. It was believed at the time that the struggle for each of these three aims had the greatest possibility of drawing together a range of different actors and societal interests. As a result, concrete demands were presented as being achievable only through the medium of struggle for each of these goals. All of this will receive a fuller treatment in later chapters, but for the moment, it can be pointed out that over the early 1940s, it was production which dominated as an analytical grid. At this time, the concrete demands of workers were interpreted as being achievable only through increased production. Increased production led to increased trade union strength.¹¹⁴ Socialism was understood as a time when increased productive energy would be unleashed.¹¹¹ It was production which interposed itself

¹¹⁰ Miles, J.B. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 104
¹¹² 'Preamble’ Constitution of the Australian Communist Party, Adopted 14th National Congress, August 1945, 12
¹¹³ Miles, J.B. *Communists in Congress The 14th Congress of the ACP*, Published by the Central Committee, 1945 (October), 16
¹¹⁴ Watt, A. ‘Oral Propaganda - the “miracle” duly happens’, *Tribune*, 27/7/55
¹¹⁵ 'Draft Resolutions for 15th Congress' CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 136
¹¹⁶ Fox, L. *Coal for the Engines of War*, SLP, 1942, 25
¹¹⁷ Purdy, S. "Private Enterprise" and "Incentive", *Communist Review*, 24 August 1943, 107
between working class experience and the programme of the Party. In the mid and late 1940s, it was the wages struggle which took priority. This was the whole basis of the CPA's exchange with the Communist Party of Great Britain in 1947. Raising wages would increase living standards and production, not vice versa, it was now argued. A new analytic grid had interposed itself between the 'demands' of the workers and their mode of pursuit. Finally, in the late 1940s and over the 1950s it was the struggle for peace which began to dominate as an analytic grid. It was deemed the Party's "most pressing task" in 1951. From this point, it was interposed between the concrete demands of Australian workers and their pursuit in the Communist Party platform. So, for example, Ian Turner argued: "The people do not want this arms race; they want the houses and the schools and the better living standards they could have if it was not for the arms race." The aim was always to unify the working class around a specific strategic axis - neither to pursue unity around Marxism, nor to pursue concrete demands in a purely atheoretical manner. Political unity was something which the Communist Party attempted to construct in a philosophically informed and intellectual manner. This is the case not only with unity around the Party programme, but with the operation of the Party's front organisations. Fronts were organisations with partial autonomy which were set up by the Party in order to appeal to the public and to unify the population around specific political questions. The most successful of the CPA's fronts was the Unemployed Workers' Movement of the Depression, but many others operated over the 1940s and '50s. Notable examples include the "New Housewives' Association" - designed to "organise housewives to struggle for improved living standards, in defence of democratic rights and for lasting peace." Others included the Australian Peace Council, the various permutations of the Australia - Soviet Friendship League, the Eureka Youth League, and so on. These front organisations were conceived principally in the quest of building bridges between the Party and the wider community. Those which had the greatest strategic possibilities for unity were the most favoured. They came and went - assumed different forms as different unities seemed more or less possible. So, for example, the 'Federation of Literature and Art' was established to organise and unify dissent by cultural producers against the "inroads of imperialism" in the late 1940's. It was valued for its strategic possibilities - its ability to use cultural and economic nationalism to unify and activise groups under its banner like the Printing Unions, Parents and Citizens' Associations, and even certain well disposed Chambers of Commerce.

Similarly, in its relationship with the Australian Labor Party, it was not a case either of the strictures of Marxism predetermining and fixing the CPA's orientation, nor of the CPA adopting a wholly opportunistic and atheoretical attitude. Once again, the political construction of unity remained the key Party aim. In the pursuit of such unity, the political opportunities for unity around the Communist Party alone, as compared to unity between the Communist Party and the Labor Party, were the key determinants of policy. In this context the Party leaders selectively drew upon Marxism to justify the CPA's changing modes of unity construction.

118 CC Secretariat to J.C. Henry 11/2/47 CPA Papers ML MSS 5021 Box 27, p.2.
119 Program of the Communist Party of Australia - 16th Congress August 1951. CBD's, 1952, 9
120 Turner, I. 'Ban the Atom Bomb'. Peace. 1 (2) June 1950, 20
121 CC Circular to all State and NSW District Committees 22/11/48 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 2
122 Chandler, H.B. CC Plenum 20-22nd February CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 Box 85, 1948, 38
Of course, there were limits to the Party's room for strategic manoeuvre. In a certain sense the Communist Party was always theoretically opposed to the Labor Party - otherwise there would be no rationale for the CP's own institutional existence. The Labor Party was presented as a non-socialist Party. It was not "solid enough" to stand up as an uncompromising class force. It was a cross-class Party, characterised by the presence of weak, undisciplined petit-bourgeois members. The reformist illusions that the Labor Party fostered were, it was argued, the chief instrument of the ruling class.

But all of this was primarily rhetorical. It was not necessarily accepted in private by the Communist Party's theoreticians, and it did not predetermine the Party's practical orientation to Labor, in any case. On the first point, when L.H. Gould came to draft the CPA's official glossary of terms, he found great difficulty in crafting a definition of the ALP which was satisfactory to the Party hierarchy. The Party's leader at the time, J.B. Miles, came to correct Gould, but he did so in a way which demonstrated both his own doubts and the widespread confusion on the issue which must have prevailed. In a comment on the second galley, Miles asks:

"Does the Labor Party not represent the interests of capital? Not just sections of the bourgeoisie. It is true that its link with the organised workers and its liberalism causes monopoly capital to have its own Party. However, you are dealing with the interests represented, and the interests of big capital have been well represented by the ALP. Petty-bourgeoisie and the "small and middle" do exercise a big influence in the ALP organisation, but what do they represent?"

If this was the theoretical clarification of a leader, then for the CPA cadre, an abstract answer to the question 'What is the Labor Party?' must have been extremely provisional and uncertain.

And whatever the Communist Party asserted abstractly about the nature of the Labor Party's 'essence', the relationship between the two institutions went through a whole number of changes over time. As the political constraints and opportunities for independent, competitive Communist Party growth, as compared to Labor Party/Communist Party cooperation tended to fluctuate, so the CPA's orientation to the ALP also went through a series of mutations. This was freely admitted by the CP. As 'McShane' argued:

"The Communists at all times struggle for the united front of the working class, for common action of the revolutionary and reformist minded workers, for objectives desired by all workers.

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123 Sharkey, L.L. *Australia Marches On*, 3rd Impression. February 1943 *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021. Box 147, 28
124 Blake, J.D. 13th National Congress of CPA, March 1943 *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 3
125 *CPA Handbook for Tutors*, 1944 *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 49, 32
126 Henry, J.C. 'The Role of Reformism', in *Study Material*, CPA. Printed Peter Lalor Press. 1951, 16
127 Miles, J.B. 'Notes on First and Second Glossaries 10/6/46' in Folder entitled 'Miscellaneous Notes' *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021 ADD ON 1936 Box 5, n.p.
In the process of the development of the united front, the revolutionary Party, from time to time, changes its tactical attitude towards the reformist leaders.\textsuperscript{123}

As the views expressed by McShane imply, the official term for the relationship between the Communist Party and the Labor Party was the term "the united front". This policy was adopted at the Third Congress of the Comintern.\textsuperscript{124} At the time it referred to a policy of cooperating with the Labor Party through the trade unions as a tactical measure until the next revolutionary upsurge. The tactic was temporarily abandoned during the 1930's, but re-adopted again in 1935.\textsuperscript{125} Once the Soviet Union had been attacked, and the Communists began to support the War effort, the Communist Party renewed its pledge to the united front and maintained that pledge throughout the 1940s and '50s. However, it gave this policy a series of different emphases and twists as conditions changed.

Central to the CPA's policy throughout the period was the emphasis on common action - on the common struggle of the working class across Party divisions. It was typically asserted by Communist leaders that the basis of the united front was the mass activity of workers, not primarily the bureaucratic relations between respective Party hierarchies.\textsuperscript{126} It was through fighting at the local level for things in common that unity at the top would eventually be achieved.\textsuperscript{127} This was a point put most simply by R. Dixon: "The application of the united front differs according to the situation, but in every struggle we must unquestionably develop the united front or in other words, achieve the unity of the workers in struggle, and raise their class understanding."\textsuperscript{128} Practically, this meant that Party divisions were deliberately marginalised in struggle, and that new, unifying institutions were sometimes formed to encourage such a process. The classic example of this is the 'shop committee' - a mechanism through which members of different trade unions and different political parties could cooperate in order to achieve their goals within the confines of a single factory.\textsuperscript{129}

But this unity in action could be used in multiple ways. It could be used to bring together the Labor Party and the Communist Party, but it could also be used to breed a mutual hostility and a sense of competition between the two. To put it differently, practical unity in the struggle of workers could be used as a pathway to the coalescence of the Parties, or as a means of winning the workers from one institution to another. The CPA pursued both strategies over the 1940s and '50s. Indeed, during World War II and in the immediate post-war era, the Communist Party vigorously pursued the strategy of 'coalescence'. It attempted to affiliate to the Australian Labor Party, and the unification of the Communist Party and the State Labor Party was actually achieved in New South Wales.\textsuperscript{130} The Labor Party's plans for post-war reconstruction were supported as a path to increased unity in action.\textsuperscript{131} The strategy of political opposition to the Labor Party was dismissed by reference to an authentic Marxist analysis of the Australian political economy. Leaders used Marxism to argue that the 1940s were not a period of intense economic crisis, and therefore postulated that the Labor Party

\textsuperscript{123} McShane 'The Labor Party in Office', Communist Review, 7 November 1941, 8
\textsuperscript{124} Davidson, A. The Communist Party of Australia, 24-5
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 75
\textsuperscript{126} Dixon, R. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 22
\textsuperscript{127} Johnson, F. CC Plenum 15-17th February, 1945 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 3
\textsuperscript{128} Dixon, R. CC Plenum ACP 14-16th October 1949 CPA Papers, ML MSS ADD ON 1936 Box 4, 15
\textsuperscript{129} Eve, S.T. 'Judge O'Mara's Strange "Concern" for Craft-Unionism', Communist Review, 15 October 1942, 6
\textsuperscript{130} Davidson, A. The Communist Party of Australia, 84
\textsuperscript{131} Blake, J.D. 'Unite for Post-War Progress', Communists in Congress, CC October 1945, 7
could afford to concede a number of important reforms to a mobilised and aggressive working class movement.\textsuperscript{137} The Labor Party was not leading the offensive against the workers,\textsuperscript{138} and a policy of active coalescence was therefore the correct Marxist response to the situation.

By the late 1940's, this position had shifted considerably. It was argued that Communists should "not be afraid" to encourage unionists and Labor Party supporters to break away for the Labor Party.\textsuperscript{139} In this strategy, unity from below was not used to bring the Parties together, but to attack the leadership of the Labor Party - the right-wing who were enemies of the working class and opponents of true working class unity.\textsuperscript{140} The 'united front' was still pursued, that is, unity in action was still the Party's chief aim, but that aim was seen as achievable only with the repudiation of the Labor Party leadership. The idea that the Labor Party was a 'lesser evil' than the Conservative Parties was seen as an illusion which could be ill-afforded. Once again, this was the point at which Marxism came in - as an intellectual support. The Marxist insight of Party leaders told them that "the crisis is developing and the class struggle sharpening"\textsuperscript{141} and this was the scientific rationale for the change in policy.

**Communist Party interventions and the Working Class**

Strangely enough, the CPA's policy of active, strategic construction of the political unity of the working class actually isolated it from the texture of working class life and mores. For the Communist unity-constructor, the working class had become a site of intervention, a tool of political action, rather than an organic community of which the Communist was part. Dorothy Hewett has argued that Communists could no longer 'hear' the idiom of working class speech.\textsuperscript{142} Cocooned in the culture of the Party itself, they lost touch with the class they claimed to represent, and manipulated it like scientific outsiders. It was not at all natural, but reasoned and constructed when the Communist Party spoke the language of the working class. Indeed, such a course was part of the Party's drive to ensure effective propaganda, as embodied in the advice: "Your copy must be written in the language that the people you are out to attract use every day."\textsuperscript{143} The Party spoke down to workers as if speaking a foreign language. It was overwhelmingly manipulative, self-conscious, and distant. This is shown by R. Dixon's directions:

"..you must get closer to the Labor Party workers, you must find out what is really in the minds of these workers, you must speak the language that they understand and find a way to unite with them and find the slogans that will enable you to win them from the Labor Party leadership. That is a problem we must really start to do more about."\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{137} Sharkey, L.L., Political Committee Meeting 14-16th March, 1946 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86. 2
\textsuperscript{138} Miles, J.B. CC Plenum, date unknown (1946 or '47) (? CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 2-3
\textsuperscript{139} Sharkey, L.L. PC Meeting 10-11 January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 Box 86, 1
\textsuperscript{140} Dixon, R. Plenum February 1949 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD ON 1936 Box 5, 13
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} Hewett, D. Bobbin Up, xvi
\textsuperscript{143} White, R. Let's Talk about Publicity, ACP 1944, 6
\textsuperscript{144} Dixon, R. CC Plenum 14-16th October 1949, CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 4. 25
Although very often workers themselves, through their participation in the Communist Party, cadres came to understand the working class as an object remote from their own experience and ripe for scientific understanding and guidance. Nothing could show this more clearly than the discussion of Dorothy Hewett's *Bobbin Up* which occurred inside the San Souci Branch of the CPA. The book attempted to draw a portrait of factory life in Sydney in the 1950s, and to show the interrelationships between the women factory workers, their lives outside the workplace in their homes, and their political consciousness. When the members of the San Souci CPA came to discuss the book, they did not compare it to their own life experiences, criticise it for idealising certain aspects of working class life, commend it for its insight, or the like. Instead, they separated themselves off from the book's protagonists, judged them with an authorial and distant gaze -

"Comrade A: thought the book was "very well written". Also that it was "down to earth", and that it described well the way these people (i.e. the characters) really live. Slight over-emphasis on sex.

Comrade B: Agreed with A. re sex (slightly overdone). The book generally "true to life" in its treatment of the slums.....

Comrade C: "Very, Very good" Sex not overdone. A very true picture of young people; the character of Shirl, epitomises the problem of the young "problem" teenager."^{145}

Communists had highly developed qualities of discipline and unity-creation. However, these very qualities and skills isolated them from those in whose interests they fought. This was a problem so severe that Party leaders periodically drew attention to it. It was emphasised by Lance Sharkey that: "We have to get our branches to know the people, just as well as the A.L.P. so they can say "good-day Harry, good day Mary" just as the A.L.P. people do."^{144} On another occasion, J.C. Henry drew attention to "an actual fear of the masses" which permeated the CPA,"^{147} and Party publications also raised the matter."^{148} But all of this interest and attention could not cure what was a practical disease. The CPA did separate itself off from working class life, and its members could not hope to know the people when the people ceased to be people and became counters in the political construction of unity.

This is another way of saying that the vanguard nature of the CPA was the cause of its isolation from the tenor of working class life. The Party always dedicated itself to the organisation of only the "most advanced and most active section of the working class"."^{149} It continued to assert those classic Leninist formulations about the need for trade unionists to be "raised" by Communists to "the level of a socialist understanding."^{150} Party leaders did not want the working class to reach towards the CPA of their own accord. They quickly cut off moves by trade unionists to push for affiliation to the Party."^{151} They treasured organisational

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144 San Souci Branch of CPA to Dorothy Hewett 30/11/59 Dorothy Hewett Papers. NLA MS 6184 Box 1, n.p.
145 Sharkey, L.L. CC Plenum November 1946 CPA Papers. ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 8
146 Henry, J.C. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 74
147 Fajon, E. 'Ideological Struggle - the permanent task of the Party'. 13
148 Program of the CPA, (16th Congress August 1951) CBD's, 1952, 31
149 Sharkey, L.L. *The Trade Unions*. (Six impressions between 1942 and 1948) CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021. Box 147, 13
150 Miles, J.B. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021. Box 85, 104
detachment - they wanted to influence the working class, to forge its unity from outside, from a separate, autonomous location in political space.

The Party wanted to influence and to construct the unity of workers in their trade unions, but it would not allow trade unionists to influence the Party, and shape its institutional unity. The emphasis was always on the leading role of the Party, the necessity for trade union officials to come to Party headquarters for day to day advice. This was not at all an abstract truism, but a detailed directive from the Communist Party leadership. Its 'leading role' had a rationale - to coordinate trade union activity, to guarantee wages offensives across different unions which were systematic rather than disorganised and self-defeating. And its leading role was confirmed in the enunciations of Communist trade union leaders. It was admitted by Ironworkers' leader Ernie Thornton that all the major questions of policy in his union flowed from the decisions of the Central Committee and the Central Executive of the Communist Party.

The status of the Communist as the wise, disciplined outsider - the hard comrade unswayed by the passions of the mob, is one continually reproduced in the literature of Communist writers. It is always the police and the conservatives who instigate confrontation, always the mob who rise to a frenzy, always the Communist who restrains them, disciplines them, and thereby averts disaster. This is shown most clearly in Eric Lambert's novel about the Second World War, The Twenty Thousand Thieves. Here Australian soldiers are robbed of their Christmas beer ration, and run to confront their officers, living it up with those rations in their own elite tent. The scene is narrated through the eyes of a young, progressive infantryman:

"It was a frightening sight. Men were everywhere, they even straddled the tops of the tents in tightly-packed rows. With a sense of alarm and wonder Dick was looking at the same 700 men who could march and drill as a single massive whole at the words of one man. These were the same men - this seething, leaderless, tumultuous crowd. Its anger was physical and overwhelming; its very mirth was a menace."

In a certain sense, this is nothing more than the famous modernist 'fear of the mob'. But what separates it from a crowd scene penned by T.S. Eliot or E.M. Forster is its vision of the power of discipline to change the mob from a mob to an army, thereby making it responsive to direction, making it, strangely, no longer a mob, but a unit capable of action. This is not a quirk of Lambert, but a conception shared by other CPA novelists of the time. In Prichard's The Roaring Nineties, the goldfields are struck by drought, and water suppliers use this situation to hike up the price of water. Once again, the mob responds by calling a 'roll up', and demanding a change in price. When one owner, McDonald, defies the mob, they attempt to bum down his shack. It is only the intervention of a few 'old hands' and radicals who stop this from happening. Later it is learnt that the shack was filled with ten cases of dynamite and

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1) CC Secretariat to all State and District Committees 17/11/48 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD ON Box 5, 3
2) Donald, L. CC Plenum 14-16 February 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 2
3) Blake, J.D. PC Meeting 10-11 January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 86, 3
4) Thornton. E. 'Trade Union Report' 13th National Congress of CPA March 1943 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1. 2-3
6) Lambert. E. The Twenty Thousand Thieves, Frederick Muller, 1952, 258-9
with 3000 detonators. Eventually, disciplined action manages to force the price of water down. This leads one character to philosophise:

"When the workers stick together and organize, there's nothing they can't do. The chances are we'd all have been blown to blazes if the snake-headed mob runnin' with Billy King had their way and set fire to the store."

The messages are heavy-handed, and important for precisely this reason. There was no subtlety to the Communist world-view on this question - the mob of non-communists could feel their interests in their bones, and they acted in pursuit of those interests. But they had neither the strategic intelligence nor the will to successfully pursue those interests. They needed direction from an outside force, unswayed by passion, hard and possessed of tactical acumen. This was the bill which Communists attempted to fit.

It was this vanguardist conception which coloured the CPA's view of the relationship between theory and practice. For the Communist Party of Australia, theory was something formed away from practice within the sphere of the Party, and then brought to the masses like a product to market. The concept of a genuine interchange between those outside and those inside the Party was rejected. Knowledge was not formed in the context of a relationship with 'the masses', instead - "The thing for us is to master its (knowledge's) content and take it to the masses." Theory was something that was taken to the people like a finely crafted curio to market. "Take theory to the people!" served as a Party slogan. In line with this, skilled propagandists were sometimes presented as an "advertising section of the Labor Movement" - selling policies and theoretical insights to 'the people'. The idea that Marxism was in some sense a philosophy tied to the ongoing experiences and consciousness of working people was flatly rejected in practice. Similarly, the idea that socialism was not an institutional slogan, but a movement which transcended institutions, could not be grasped. Indeed, J.B. Miles saw clearly that many Communists did not see "socialism in all its breadth, not only as a name but as a movement." The reason that Communists did not do so lay in this elitist, institutional, vanguardist mode of action. To see socialism as a movement would be to attack the authority of the Party. To see Marxism as a means to critically theorize the political present would be to erode the internal hierarchies and unities of the CPA. This is a view confirmed by J.B. Miles's solution to the apparent failure of CP members to see 'socialism as a movement' - they would be educated up to the institution-safeguarding Marxist truths of the Party with still more vigour. The hierarchy between Party leader and cadre, between Party and class, would not be relaxed, but emphasised. As he puts it:

"I conclude that there is one great need right within the Party, to raise very much higher consciousness and understanding about the Party, about its role,

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188 Prichard, K.S. The Roaring Nineties: a story of the goldfields of western australia, Jonathan Cape, 1946, 135
189 Ibid., 136
190 "Elder" Theory, a weapon to be wielded', Communist Review, 12 July 1942, 10
191 "Elder" Dialectics and Everyday Life', Communist Review, 15 October 1942, 9
192 White, R. Let's Talk about Publicity, ACP, 1944, 3
193 Miles, J.B. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 100
what it really is, all its various features, and at the same time to carry this understanding amongst those who are very near to us." 

The distance between Party and class was retained, with the class treated as mere consumers of Party theory they needed, but could not help to produce.

But if we provisionally accept the analogy of the Communist Party selling itself to the people, then, in its own terms, the CPA was not always in high demand. Communist leaders may have attempted to push their internal order outward, to discipline the labour movement as a whole, but they were at best only partially successful in this quest. Often the CPA found it difficult to organise workers in the same way as it did its cadres. Sometimes it could get workers on strike, but not keep them there.

Other times, it 'lagged behind' workers, and could not control or direct their action. Overall the Australian labour movement remained committed to the ALP in elections and through trade union affiliation. It is in the context of its "failure to sell" that many of the Communist Party's political articulations make sense. Most specifically, the Communist Party's conception of the 'working class' can only be understood in the context of its failure to control the external world as it controlled its internal functioning.

This is contentious terrain, and so what I am arguing needs clarification. I am not arguing that there is no such thing as a 'real proletarian' - that it makes no sense to speak about wage workers, or that the Communist Party simply imagined an inert mass as 'wage workers' in some titanic act of discursive will. I am not arguing that the intellectuals of the Communist Party created the working class. I am arguing that the CPA's conception of the working class was highly specific, and that this specific conception can only be understood and explained in the context of the Communist Party's relative failure to construct labour movement unity on its own vanguardist terms. Put simply, the Communist Party identified itself with the working class, 'imagined' a working class which was disciplined and ordered and unified as a means of constructing that unity, and coercing those who escaped CPA control. This is seen clearly in this statement by the CC Secretariat: "the leading role of the Party as the vanguard of the working class must be thoroughly understood. Communists in unions often become immersed with problems in their industry or with craft issues. Miners, in particular, have an isolated, miners' outlook. The Communist Party is the Party of the working class as a whole." By being representative of the working class, the CP attained a legitimacy in its quest to be the disciplinarian of the working class.

This was a multi-layered process. On the one hand, the Communist Party argued that the working class was naturally a disciplined body. Because of the organisation of production under capitalism, they had been trained to have "learnt the value of discipline and organisation." The direction of the labour process, the process of control and supervision, the need to interact with regularized machines on a production line - all of this had made the worker a being of discipline. In the words of poet Leonard Mann, a single shift of factory work was a time of:

184 Ibid. . 103
185 Elliot. E.V., CC Meeting held approximately middle 1951. Proceedings found 177/53 Australian Archives A6122 XRI 474 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5; n.p.
186 Dixon. R. CC Plenum 14-16th February 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 3
187 CC Secretariat to all State and District Committees 177/11/48 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 3
188 Metz. K. 'Marx and Socialism', A Fair Hearing for Socialism, ACP CC 1944, Printed Fraser and Morphet, 14
Contact striking between men and metal,  
Flesh being charged with new desire”  

For a worker to repudiate the discipline of the Communist Party would make no sense, for that worker was inevitably disciplined by his or her place in the social structure. For the worker, freedom was an illusion, and discipline a reality. This is something a militant but non-Communist factory worker named Tom Maguire comes to realise in *Bobbin Up*:

“He'd wanted to be free to be himself, not bound by the discipline and the rule book of any Party......  
And it had all been an illusion. He had never been free. He had always been part of that great army of toilers that had helped to put *Sputnik* in the skies...”

In contrast to the natural discipline of the working class, the middle class were naturally ill-disciplined and sloppy. They had not had the same experience of the process of production, and as a result they were likely to "fall into panic" in times of political crisis.\(^{170}\) They had an instability and a tendency to approach political problems from an "emotional point of view".\(^{171}\) It was this weakness and this emotionalism which threatened the CPA's discipline and order. It was not the authentic proletariat, but the petit-bourgeoisie who were, as has been noted, those most liable to "Trotskyist tendencies". It was also the petit-bourgeoisie who were regarded as the primary source of factionalism if they penetrated the Party.\(^{172}\)

If the working class were disciplined by capitalism, it was equally true that they were unified by the dynamics of capitalism. This was in two ways. First of all, this was a process attributable to the organisation of production. The capitalist process of production was unifying those who had been apart, and this was increasingly so over time - "the development of capitalism itself is consistently increasing the experience, and strengthening the bonds of unity and organisation between workers."\(^{173}\) In a certain sense, unity was learnt on the factory floor, in the same way and through the same means that discipline was forged. But unity was also learnt by the working class outside of the work process itself. Unity and solidarity were necessary parts of working class life. Certainly, if workers were ever to achieve their political aims, then their only power was in the force of numbers, and in combination. But more importantly, mutual aid was a requisite of survival for the worker. Workers learnt unity in the very act of living - it was natural to them.\(^{174}\)

This picture of the working class - as intrinsically disciplined and unified, was used by the Communist Party to ground the idea that the CPA's interests were the interests of the working class. This became a Party truism, asserted at Congresses and presented as a matter of fact. The Communist Party had "no interests separate and apart from those of the working

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\(^{170}\) Hewett, D. *Bobbin Up*, 101

\(^{171}\) Vidal, P. 'The War and the Urban Middle Class', *Communist Review*, 5 July 1941, 9

\(^{172}\) Ross, E. CPA 13th National Congress. March 1943 *CPA Papers*, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 1

\(^{173}\) *Handbook for Tutors*, CPA, 1944, 32

\(^{174}\) *The Capitalist System*, International Bookshops, 1942, 15

\(^{175}\) This is shown fictionally in Communist novels Prichard, K.S. *The Roaring Nineties*, 39, and Waten, J. *The Unbending*, 150
Because the working class was naturally like the Party in its orientation toward discipline and unity, its interests were likewise identical. It was this conception that served as a powerful tool in the hands of Communist leaders.

For the Communist Party, the working class was itself writ large - no longer an institution, now a social class. Everything which made the Communist Party the Communist Party (its discipline, unity, its fight for its interests) made the working class the working class. The only difference was that one had 23,000 members at its peak and was dwarfed by the Labor Party, and the other, (while never quantified) was vast in size and dominating in importance. By being able to speak as the true voice of the working class, the Communist Party gained two things. Firstly, it gained the authority to coerce other labour movement institutions - as demonstrated earlier in the Secretariat's critique of 'sectional' mining unions, who had failed to listen to the global, authoritative voice of the CPA. This claim to be the legitimate voice of the Australian working class, and therefore of the mass of Australians, was also used to quell dissent within the Party. Secondly, it could be used as an incitement to Communist Party growth. Especially during war-time and its spectacular expansion, the CPA used its claim to be the true voice of the working class as a means of increasing recruitment to its ranks. The argument was not only that those dedicated to the labour movement should join the Communists rather than any other Party. It was also argued that the working class were the basis of the war effort, and therefore anyone anxious to contribute to the war effort should strengthen the working class, and therefore join the Communist Party.

Once again, it must be emphasised that the thrust of my analysis is not to argue that the Communist Party imagined the working class, and that the working class does not 'really' exist. Instead, it is merely being pointed out that the Communist Party used a particular vision of the working class for its own specific, strategic, institutional ends. There is much truth to the CPA's portrait. It is true that working class communities are based upon mutual aid, that the working class has mobilised collectively, that in this sense, it has a 'unified' political consciousness. It is true that in the rituals of respectability the working class developed means of self-discipline and order - vital if the threats of drink and poverty were to be parried, and if self-respect and political mobilisation were to develop. There is also much truth in the claim of the Communist Party to represent the interests of the working class. It pursued concrete gains for working people which were in no sense illusory. Its quest for working class unity was an important part of the reproduction of labour movement over time. In all of these senses the picture of the working class drawn by the Communist Party must be respected.

But for all that, it remains a distortion. If the working class pursued unity, it was not the institutional unity of the Communist Party, justified and enforced by the absolute truth of its version of Marxism. If the working class needed discipline, and self-discipline was a necessity of working class life, it was not the hierarchical discipline of the Communist Party, undemocratic and coercive in nature. If the interests of the working class were in at least partial harmony with those of the Communist Party, it remains true that the Communist Party did not allow the working class's perception of its own interests to permeate or influence the

177 Dixon, R. CC Plenum 14-16th October 1949, CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 4, 9
178 Howard, J. 'Socialist planning, competition, initiative, emulation', Communist Review, 13 August 1942, 7
179 A point made by MacIntyre, S. Little Moscows: Communism and Working Class Militancy in Inter-War Britain, Croom Helm, 1980, 91, and more broadly and theoretically in Martin, B.A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change, St Martin's Press, 1981
Party. So, the working class itself is not being treated as a purely discursive construction. The claims of reality are not being rejected. On the contrary, the importance of that reality is being emphasised and specified. The nub of the argument is that the Communist Party's vision of the working class diverged from that of the real working class, and that it did so because of the real institutional position of the Communist Party in relation to the structure of working class life.

Conclusion

One of the chief barriers to the study of the interrelationship between the labour movement and intellectuals is the denial of labour’s own intellectual depth. In the Australian context this denial has taken the form of an emphasis on the ‘bread and butter’, atheoretical nature of the movement, and the marginalisation of the role and of the importance of the Communist Party. This chapter has attempted to oppose this marginalisation, and has done so for two primary reasons. Firstly, as a means of establishing a basis for the dynamic, historical and interactive analysis of intellectuals and the movement in later chapters. Secondly, as a task worthy in itself, an important historical service to a group seldom analysed with anything but a glancing, selective, or tendentious gaze.

What the analysis has yielded is an affirmation of the importance of the study of the Communist Party in any study of labour as a social movement. The Communist Party was not merely Russophile, revolutionary and marginal. It was definitely intellectual, but it was nonetheless important as a unifier and a disciplinarian of the working class. Certainly, the Australian labour movement was not a monolithic, revolutionary labour movement, nor a Marxist labour movement. But it may not have survived as a movement at all, without the contribution to discipline, unity and order by Communist intellectuals.

All the same, this does not lay the foundation for a triumphalist history of the CPA in the 1940s and '50s, in which a Communist vanguard expresses the expanding consciousness of the working class, and its steady movement toward socialism. We are not grasping the ‘Making of the Australian Working Class’ here, but attempting to study its un-Making, its decline and demobilisation. For that reason, this Chapter has expended a great deal of energy upon the institutional form and functioning of the Communist Party, and the relationship between the Party and the working class as a whole. The institutional structure of the CPA was 'democratic centralist'. This structure gave enormous scope to leaders in the determination of policy. The interests of leaders in maintaining that structure (and their very real belief in its virtues) came to dominate the Party's use of Marxism, its conception of unity, its impulse to discipline, its relations with other institutions and with working class communities - its very conception of the working class. In this context, there was no genuine interplay between Party and class, no concept of socialism as a movement which transcended the institutional limits of the CPA and the historical particularities of the present. The Communist Party did not attempt to learn from the working class, but brought its theory to the working class like a finished product to market.

As a result, the pursuit of its own institutional unity by the Communist Party may on some occasions have actually led to disunity and division within the labour movement as a whole. The effects of the CPA's interventions were historically variable, and will be analysed in the narrative which begins in Chapter 4. With the analytical gains of the past two chapters, such actions may now be understood in terms of the interactions between institutions, intellectuals and the constituency of wage workers, and not simply attributed to the
'consciousness' of Australian workers. The working class, the political parties of the working class, and the intellectuals affiliated to such parties can now be understood as separate entities, which are nonetheless linked through specific historical mechanisms. Their interactions may therefore be documented in detail. The possibility of a new analytical approach to the advance and retreat of the Australian labour movement in the 1940s and 50s is now before us.
PART II:

UNDERSTANDING LABOUR'S ADVANCE AND RETREAT
4. Political Opportunities and the Disciplined Mobilisation of Labour

This Chapter begins the analysis of the labour movement's growth and decline from the early 1940's through to the later 1950s. It focuses upon wartime Australia, and the process by which Australian workers mobilised, or acquired collective control over the resources they needed to shape society. In analysing this period, there is certainly much to describe and explain. The early 1940's are firmly established in the pantheon of both Australian labour and intellectual history. The period will be thought of as involving four key processes:

1. A Labor Government comes to power and enters into a period of unsurpassed reform.
2. The Communist Party expands its influence to become a major institution.
4. A cultural renaissance bursts into life.

Unfortunately, the existing literature has not come to grips with each of these four processes, nor has it attempted to understand their interrelationships. In a by now familiar pattern, the existing literature has grasped the period through two basic analytic moves. Firstly, it has separated the intellectual from the labour movement, thrusting the cultural renaissance of the period into the realm of 'art', of genius and of mystery. While the 1940's are celebrated as a time of growth in Australian art and literature, there has been no attempt to explain this development in anything but the most general terms, or to tease out its relationship to the political and social context. The political radicalism and commitment of many artists has been consistently elided, and the capacity of identity formation, and therefore of politics, to energise the arts has been overlooked. Overall, the championing of past achievements and the construction of a national canon has preoccupied intellectual historians, and a full study of the relationship between artist, audience and political context in the 1940's waits to be undertaken.

The second analytic move which characterises the literature, and one with which we are also familiar, is its rendering of the Australian labour movement according to the 'labourist thesis'. This has had three consequences. Firstly, the insistence upon a division between the 'mainstream' and the 'fringe' within the movement has marginalised the remarkable growth in the Communist Party which occurred over this period. The growth of the CPA has been reduced to a trend of purely institutional significance, a matter of background detail and limited import. The question of the relationship between the growth of the CPA and the labour movement as a whole has not been posed, and the only attempt to explain such growth has focused exclusively on internal factors, such as a more democratic, open and 'Australian' Communist Party.

\footnote{The closest we get to an explanation is the raising of the War as a possible stimulus for cultural production - see McKernan, S. A Question of Commitment: Australian Literature in the Twenty Years After the War, Allen and Unwin, 1989, 8 and Beasley, J. Red Letter Days, A.B.S., 1979, 173}

\footnote{For example, Richard Haese treats the 'Angry Penguins': painters as lineal successors of liberalism - Haese, R. Rebels and Precursors: The Revolutionary Years of Australian Art, Allen Lane, 1981, 126, and L. Strahan treats Meanjin's politics as nothing more than a vague liberalism - Strahan, L. Just City and the Mirrors: Meanjin Quarterly and the Intellectual Front, 1940-1965, Oxford University Press, 1984, 27, 215}

\footnote{The relationship between identity formation and artistic energy is explored in White, H. Careers and Creativity: social forces in the arts, Westview Press, 1993}

\footnote{Davidson, A. The Communist Party of Australia: a short history, Hoover Institution Press, 1969, 83-4}
The second consequence of the 'labourist thesis' has been that most studies of the period have not attempted to explain the emergence of the policies of the Labor Government. Rather, they have focused their attention upon proving that such policies were economistic, limited, and ultimately pro-capitalist.  

Thirdly, when serious attempts to explain Labor's reforms have been made, their presentation of the mainstream movement as preoccupied with bread-and-butter policies has led them to deny the nuanced contribution of labour intellectuals to the process of post-war reform. Instead, the whole wave of post-war reconstruction has been attributed to the brain work of the bureaucratic intellectuals, and the practical and intellectual interactions which actually characterised the period have therefore been ignored. Such an approach is evident, for example, in the work of scholars Stephen Alomes, Peter Spearitt, and Rob Watts. For Alomes, it is a cluster of middle class reform groups and publicists that generate the ideas for post war reform, that propagandize and agitate for educational and social change from the 1930's onwards, and who promptly enter the bureaucracy and implement it themselves during the '40s. In this strange world, the ideas which circulated within the labour movement are not addressed at all. In a similar vein, Peter Spearitt has argued that it was the middle class and the Churches which generated the ideas behind the massive slum eradication policies of the NSW Labor Government. Perhaps more extremely, Rob Watts argues that the whole edifice of the welfare state was primarily the work of a small group of committed yet non-socialist, liberal reformers. His myopia concerning Labor's ideas is so advanced that he sees the Labor Government's commitment to full employment as a confirmation of the dominance of the bureaucratic intellectuals, and part of the process by which Labor became "the major proponent of Keynesian liberalism."  

In opposition to such views, the argument of the next two chapters will be twofold:

1. The processes of Government reform and Communist Party growth were intertwined, and together they represented the mobilisation of the labour movement.
2. It was the mobilisation of the labour movement in this period which created the context for:
   - the vigorous propagation of ideas for post war reconstruction by the intelligentsia
   - a national cultural renaissance.

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6 Alomes, S. 'The 1930's Background to Post War Reconstruction', Post War Reconstruction Seminar Papers, NLA MS 6799, 3
7 Ibid., 24
8 Spearitt, P. 'Sydney's "Slums": Middle Class Reformers and the Labour Response', Labour History, 26 May 1974, 55
10 Ibid., 117. It is interesting to note that the same explanation of post-war reform, informed by the same 'labourist' frame of reference, can be detected in the literature concerning British politics in the '40s - see Morgan, K.O. Labour in Power 1945-1951, Clarendon Press, 1984, 99, 135, for BLP reform as pragmatic and non-ideological. See Addison, P. The Road to 1945: British Politics and the Second World War, Jonathan Cape, 1975, 143, 171, 182, 277-8, for an account of reform as driven by the intelligentsia.
This Chapter will be concerned with the process of labour movement mobilisation, and it attempts not only to narrate its rise, but to explain it.

Understanding Labour Movement Expansion

Unfortunately, labour history does not possess the necessary tools to grasp the process of labour movement mobilisation. Emerging with and through that mobilisation, labour history rested originally upon grand exhortations to revolt, and upon an expectation that material interests necessarily translated into political mobilisation. As it shrugged itself free from this expectation, through the contributions of Lenin and Gramsci, it began to focus upon 'consciousness' and 'culture' as mediating frames sandwiched between 'interest' and 'mobilisation'. However, the focus has remained fixed upon how class experience has translated into class consciousness and class mobilisation, and upon the strength of the links between these different levels. As a result, much insightful work has been produced around the emergence of specific national 'profiles' of class formation, and upon broad movements in the class structure. Today we know much more about the process of class formation than in the past. But such work is little help in explaining how and why specific mobilisations of the class occurred at different moments - in explaining how and why a 'formed' labour movement within a given context, culture and set of institutions, was galvanised into action, and changed by that action in Australia in the 1940's.

To understand this process, we are driven toward the theorists of 'collective action', and in particular the work of Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow. Working in an American, social science tradition, Tilly deftly sidestepped debates about class consciousness, and instead attempted to understand collective action as a product of interest, organisation, mobilization and opportunity. There was much common ground here, but this approach was distinguished by its attempt to grasp the lineaments of collective action through detailed historical work, and its insistence upon political opportunities as an explanation for differing levels and varieties of collective action. Sidney Tarrow has recently taken up and developed a strand of this work, and has brought it to a study of collective action in the late twentieth century. In so doing, he has systematized the concept of the 'political opportunity structure' (p.o.s.) as a means of explaining the changing levels of collective action. Tarrow defines the p.o.s. for actors as:

"...consistent - but not necessarily formal, permanent or national - dimensions of their political environment which either encourage or discourage people from using collective action. The concept of political opportunity emphasises

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resources external to the group - unlike money or power - that can be taken advantage of even by weak or disorganised challengers."\(^{13}\)

The four most salient changes in the political opportunity structure that Tarrow isolates are the opening up of access to power, shifts in ruling alignments, the availability of influential allies, and cleavages within and among the elite.\(^{14}\) Tarrow uses changes in the p.o.s. to explain how movements for change are formed and diffused. His basic thesis is that altered political opportunities provide the major incentives for transforming mobilisation potentials into action,\(^{15}\) and that the sources of a movement's power, and their limits, are the results of political opportunities.\(^{16}\)

While both Tilly and Tarrow are concerned with non-institutional forms of collective action (such as protest movements), the concept of the political opportunity structure is still tremendously useful for our purposes. Using this concept in tandem with our focus on classes, political parties, and the institutional constraints of affiliated intellectuals, I want to argue six things in this chapter:

1. The war changed the prevailing political opportunities of labour, and brought the ALP to power.
2. The Labor Party became committed to an 'all-in' war effort, intervened in capital accumulation, but also attempted to discipline labour.
3. The CPA took up this disciplining role, and unity between labour movement institutions thereby increased greatly.
4. The combination of unresponsive wartime administration by the ALP and Communist political advocacy of selective claims drew workers both towards membership in the CPA, and dimensions of a social movement.
5. The CPA's Marxism caused it to misinterpret this growth in influence as the product of inevitable, dialectical developments in the history of capitalism. Leaders used their prestige to further reduce internal democracy and increase centralization.
6. The combination of labour movement growth and CPA's propagandistic misinterpretation of this growth struck fear into many intellectuals, and helped fuel suggestions for post war reconstruction as an antidote to revolution.

The Labor Party to Power.

Australia on the eve of the war was hamstrung by a class deadlock. On the one hand, there was a stable, Federalist system of Government, in which Conservatives had ruled nationally almost without interruption since World War I. The United Australia Party was organised with close institutional ties to business, and it watched over an economy dedicated to profit maximisation, still reliant on agricultural exports, but now with an emergent indigenous

\(^{13}\) Tarrow, S. *Power in Movement*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 18
\(^{14}\) *Ibid.*
\(^{15}\) *Ibid.*, 99
\(^{16}\) *Ibid.*, 130
heavy industry. Foreign ownership was extensive, and much property ownership was centralized. Brian Fitzpatrick estimated in a report for the ACTU in 1939 that "between 3/5's and 2/3's of the total capital invested in Australian public companies is invested in 91 companies". On the other hand, union membership was high at 47% of employees in 1938, the Labor Party had recovered from division to be united and strong, and the Communist Party had grown from its founding in 1920 to have the beginnings of a mass base in Australian unions. The conditions of this deadlock gave the labour movement very real defensive and reactive strength, but little initiatory or proactive power.

The conditions of this deadlock were to change with the outbreak of the War. This brought a division between the interests of the State and those of business. For those concerned with warmaking, the problem was always to extract the means of war from a limited territory, population, and set of resources, when the people involved were reluctant to yield such resources. More specifically, this required the subordination of profit maximisation to the task of maximum production for the war effort, as well as the full mobilisation of labour as a resource. The latter remained particularly central, because Australian industry was still comparatively underdeveloped, and new, successful munitions factories would require rapid learning and cooperation from workers.

However, the relationship of the Menzies Government to the business community ill-suited it to either of these tasks. Firstly, its links to business did not dispose it, or empower it to implement the controls on capital required for maximum war production. Secondly, its mutual distrust of labour led it to attempt to coerce rather than collaborate with Australian workers in the quest for a full war effort. Indeed, despite a professed commitment to 'liberalism', Menzies waged war on the home front in an authoritarian and repressive manner. Two aspects of Government war policy concerned the labour movement and prominent civil libertarians. Firstly, a National Register of Labour was developed. Originally conceived as a voluntary aid to the assessment of manpower resources, it was transformed into a compulsory instrument and a prelude to total war by March 1939. More than this, the Government's Register legislation refused to guarantee either the validity of arbitration awards or the right to trade unionism inside proposed Government war factories. The spectre of fascism at home was raised, and some unions promptly boycotted the Act.

Of equal concern was the Government's skewed implementation of wartime censorship and National Security regulations. Political opponents, especially Communists,
were ruthlessly tracked down, shut up, and shut away. By October 1941 there were 6174
detainees under the National Security Act. Censorship seemed to be selective to many,
and was wide-ranging enough to interfere with intellectual freedom and the possibilities of
social and political study. The situation is well evoked by an Editorial in the journal of the
Workers' Educational Association, *Australian Highway*:

"The impression produced on the rank and file of the labour movement by the
widespread raids on private homes, and those on organisations that are purely
cultural (e.g. The New Theatre League) and have not been banned, the seizure
of every kind of book, regardless of its nature or contents, has been one of
amazed indignation that such things could happen in Australia..."

Two consequences flowed from this repressive and partisan war policy. Firstly, concerned
intellectuals cooperated with the labour movement in joint opposition to Government action.
Although it initially opposed a trade union boycott of the National Register, by June 1939
the Australian Council for Civil Liberties had both advised the ACTU on the impact of the
Act, and had publicly declared that it offered no advice to citizens as to whether they should
complete the registration form. By early 1940 the ACCL was defending the rights of
Communists to free speech, and opposing the Government's selective censorship policy.
The voice of the W.E.A. was added to Government opposition in the latter case. Campaigns
for the release of internees Ratliff and Thomas also drew wide support from across the
intelligentsia and the labour movement.

This common battle drew liberal intellectuals and labour movement stalwarts
together. A process of mass union affiliation to the Australian Council for Civil Liberties
began. The affiliation of metropolitan Trades Halls, of the Painters' Union, the Plumber's
Union, the Seamen's Union, and the Boot Trade Union all occurred in rapid
succession. Other unions, like the Builders Labourers' sent delegates to ACCL Conferences, and
greater union affiliation to the Workers' Educational Association was also detectable at

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26 This was argued by the ACCL: 'Censorship Laws', *Argus*, 27/7/40
27 C.L. Movement Notes', *Australian Highway*, 22 (3) June 1940, 61
28 'The Editor's Notebook', *Australian Highway*, 22 (4) August 1940, 65
29 Burton, H. (President of ACCL) 'Letter to the Editor', *Argus*, 15/6/39
30 'Civil Liberties Policy', *Herald*, 24/6/39
31 Mr Thorby at the Domain', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3/1/40
32 'Censorship Laws', *Argus*, 27/4/40
33 Richmond, N.M. 'Adult Education and Civil Liberties', *Australian Highway*, 22 (3) August 1940, 66
34 The ACCL circulated a petition for the release of Ratliff and Thomas to 'Labor Organisations' according to
 release petition for internees', *Argus*, 2/8/41
35 The Hobart Trades Hall, for example, affiliated in 1939 - 'Industrial Unity Urged', *Mercury*, 8/9/39
36 Painters' Union Elects Officers', *Telegraph*, 13/12/39
37 Plumbers' Union insists that Members must take Annual Holidays', *Telegraph*, 16/1/40
38 Seamen's Executive', *Courier-Mail*, 29/2/40
39 *Telegraph*, 13/2/40
40 'Nominations for Builders Labourers' Positions', *Telegraph*, 7/8/40
this time.\textsuperscript{41} The convergence between intellectuals and the labour movement worked from both directions. The Civil Liberties Council itself grew closer to the labour movement in a number of significant ways. More timid members, such as President Herbert Burton, resigned from the Council's Executive over the ACCL's failure to damn the union boycott of the National Register, and consequent endorsement of civil disobedience.\textsuperscript{42} In the wake of this resignation, the Council addressed Trades Hall meetings with greater and greater frequency.\textsuperscript{43} By 1941, ACCL members had signed a manifesto produced by the Australia-Soviet Friendship League,\textsuperscript{44} and the Council had organised a deputation to the Melbourne Town Hall to demand its use for League meetings.\textsuperscript{45} A period of close cooperation between the labour movement and many intellectuals had begun.

The second consequence of the Menzies Government's war policy was a disunified polity and a poor national war effort. The labour movement's defensive strength was great enough to stand aloof from Menzies' policies, and to prevent the outright subordination of workers to the imperatives of the war. And yet the wave of repression had destroyed any trace of labour's good faith in the Federal Government, and mobilising industry for war without the cooperation of labour was a hopeless task. As Secretary of the ACCL and labour historian Brian Fitzpatrick would later say: "You cannot coerce a million unionists in a population of 7 millions."\textsuperscript{46} National unity was elusive and the people seemed disinclined for a genuine war effort.\textsuperscript{47} During Menzies' term an average of 17,430 working days were lost through strike action every week.\textsuperscript{48}

And as the war effort flagged, the need to accommodate the labour movement, and the centrality of labour became increasingly apparent. Labour intellectuals increasingly asserted the vital importance of labour power,\textsuperscript{49} and the sense that Australia's productive strength was the basis of its defence was widely endorsed as a lesson of the war.\textsuperscript{50} For generations, the Australian labour movement had been denouncing the Money Power, and asserting that it was labour rather than finance which was the basis of real production and social development. Now Labor's claims were being supported by economists attempting to organise the war effort,\textsuperscript{51} and Labor leader John Curtin proclaimed authoritatively: "What we can do is limited by our real resources. Financial considerations are secondary."\textsuperscript{52} This proclamation was

\textsuperscript{41} C.L. 'Movement Notes', Australian Highway, 22 (3) June 1940, 60
\textsuperscript{42} Age, 31/5/40
\textsuperscript{43} For example, both the Adelaide and Brisbane Trades Halls were addressed at mass meeting during November and December 1940 - see 'Security Act Attacked', News, 30/11/40; and 'Public Safety Bill Protest Meeting', Telegraph, 14/12/40
\textsuperscript{44} 'Qualified Liberties'. Age, 22/8/41
\textsuperscript{45} Herald, 27/8/41
\textsuperscript{46} Fitzpatrick, B. 'Australian Labor and Australian Liberty', Smith's Weekly, 30/5/43
\textsuperscript{47} 'The Nation is not Mobilised'. Smith's Weekly, 24/1/41
\textsuperscript{48} Hasluck, P. The Government and the People 1942-1945, Australian War Memorial, 1970, 252
\textsuperscript{49} Dedman, J. 'Notes on the Government's Measures for the War Organisation of Industry' 3AW Broadcast 14/12/41 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, 1
\textsuperscript{50} Dedman, J. 'Labour Means Progress and Security' Broadcast n.d. John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987 Series 1, Items 166-336, 1
\textsuperscript{51} Hytten, T. 'Wartime Financial Policy', Australian Quarterly, 12 (1) March 1940, 63
\textsuperscript{52} Curtin, J. 'Labor's Economic Policy - War and Postwar', Rydge's, 1/12/41, 711
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echoed throughout the movement, and expressed the growing practical and cultural confidence of Australian workers.

So, the combined impact of war and of the Menzies government's prosecution of the war changed the political opportunity structure for the labour movement in a number of significant ways. Firstly, a division between intellectuals concerned with civil liberties and the Federal Government opened up over the repressive impact of its policies. Secondly, the changed footing of the economy gave the labour movement added leverage, increased the resources of the trade unions, and was interpreted in a way that increased the confidence of the movement as a whole. Thirdly, there was a growing alliance between intellectuals and the labour movement - expressed both in the defence of civil liberties, and in the endorsement by economists of the need for a rational war effort which recognised the central place of labour as a resource. The cumulative impact of these changing opportunities was that Labor resisted Menzies' entreaties for a National Government on the British model, and that a political crisis caused the defection of independent M.P.'s, and brought the Labor Party into Government by October 1941. Labor's timing was fortuitous. As Labor manoeuvred itself towards Government, two external events had increased the ability of the Government to build broad national unity. Firstly, the German invasion of Russia in June 1941 had changed the nature of the Communist interpretation of the war, and had led it to proclaim the necessity for a united struggle and a 'People's war' against the fascist menace. Secondly, the Japanese threat in the Pacific placed Australia under immediate threat.

The Labor Government and the 'All-In' War Effort

Unlike the conservatives, the Labor Government did mobilise both capital and labour for maximum production and a full war effort. Under the National Economic Plan of February 1942, Labor pledged itself to control all capital movements, prices, profits, interest rates, and labour. The same plan also made industrial absenteeism illegal, gave the Government power to proclaim any area as under military control, and prohibited 'forward dealing' and other speculation in commodities. The Curtin Government ensured that these paper regulations were actively applied. The Department of War Organisation of Industry, under the aggressive leadership of John Dedman, actively fostered the rationalisation of production and the rapid freeing up of resources for the war effort. Its interventions included the prohibition of certain production, the control of new business, disemployment orders, control of building, and the fostering of the concentration of industry. Dedman deliberately targeted the

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53 For example, both of Curtin's successors as ALP leader made similar statements: Chifley, J.B. Labor's Postwar Plan, issued by ALP (Vic) 18/6/43, 4 and Evatt, H.V. Dr Evatt and Social Credit. The Leisure Age Pub, Co, 3/12142. 3
54 Gollan, R. Revolutionaries and Reformists, 99
58 Dedman's Department Shows Good Results', Forward, 21/5/43, 3
production of luxury goods.59 Already in March 1942 orders were being given for the prohibition of 60 non-essential commodities,60 and rationing was eventually introduced.61 The Government's intervention into accumulation was thoroughgoing and largely successful. It is a measure of its scope that, for example, building was restricted to an estimated 15% of its prewar level in 1942/43,62 and that the civilian manufacturing labour force had fallen to only 200,000 employees in 1943.63

The Federal Government became a major force in the economy, and a whole army of federal bureaucrats emerged as aspects of this force. Before even the smallest economic regulation was issued there were a whole series of surveys, consultations, check-ups, and counter-responses that required a multitude of trained personnel to coordinate and implement.64 Likewise, Government regulations themselves needed to be explained and justified to the populace. There was a need for expert propaganda on behalf of measures like the introduction of rationing.65 Consequently, the number of employees employed under the Public Service Act jumped from 47,000 in 1939 to 95,000 in 1946.66 A new elite section of the Treasury was formed with responsibility for general financial and economic policy,67 and it was peopled with university graduates who stood apart from other employees.68 This trend was reflected throughout the Commonwealth bureaucracy, as the civil service became more professionalised, expert and powerful.

Just as significantly, Labor's war-time policies also led to a vast expansion in Government owned industry. It was the Government rather than private enterprise which increasingly took advantage of available resources and which harnessed these resources for war-time production. Employment in Government munitions factories reached a peak of 131,000,69 and public investment in the war was estimated as equivalent to the whole of private investment at the beginning of the war, in all forms of manufacturing carried on in Australia by public companies.70 The Government had emerged as a truly massive employer and as the primary motor for Australian industrialisation. Its munitions factories not only expanded employment, they brought women into manufacturing in far greater numbers, and they helped to shake Australia loose from its pastoral economic reliance.71

59 Dedman, J. 'Notes on the Government's Measures for the War Organisation of Industry' 3AW Broadcast 14/12/41 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, 1
60 Dedman, J., 'Broadcast' 12/3/42 John Dedman Papers. NLA MS 987, Series 1, 2
62 Dedman, J. 'Address to Commonwealth Institute of Accountants' 5/4/43 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, 5
63 Ibid., 2-3
64 Dedman, J. 'Address to Commonwealth Institute of Accountants' 5/4/43, John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, 10
66 Whitwell, G. The Treasury Line. Allen and Unwin, 1986, 10
67 Ibid., 6
68 Ibid., 14
69 Fitzpatrick, B. The Rich Get Richer, Rawson's Book Shop, 1944, 44
70 Ibid., 46
71 In early 1943 it was estimated that women made up 20,000 of employees in the munitions factory then employing 70,000 - 'Figures and Facts of the Australian War Effort', Forward, 15/11/43, 3
Of course, the Labor Government did respect capitalist interests. Labor's policies of nationalisation were not implemented during the course of the war. Although the Labor Party's 1943 Conference included a motion which called upon the Government to nationalise all "essential industries" as a part of the war effort, this appears to have been primarily rhetorical. Curtin's consistent policy as war-time Prime Minister was that "We have not socialized Australia and we don't intend to do it just because we are at war." The wisdom of limiting conflict and soft-pedalling on nationalisation was so widely held that even a motion imploring the implementation of Labor's banking policy "with least possible delay" was lost at the 1943 Conference.

It is also true that the Government's proposal to restrict profits under the cost plus system to 4% was eventually withdrawn after sustained conservative attack. Likewise, there was no Government legislative response to the 1940 Party Conference's demand for an excess war profits tax of 100%. But even the CPA's press admitted that regulating restrictions on profits presented innumerable difficulties in a capitalistic economy. Furthermore, price control was successively tightened and widened to such an extent that it eventually constrained the prices of "practically all goods". Although price control did not seek to abolish profits, it did aim to pare down profit margins to a "reasonable" level. Douglas Copland's policy as Prices Commissioner was that profit margins should be maintained at the same rate as had prevailed in the pre-war era, and this practically ensured that profiteering and excess profits were limited.

As a result, the prosecution of the war effort by the Labor Government changed the structure of the economy in a number of fundamental ways. Before the war, the economy was moderately industrialised, directed towards profit maximisation, and characterised by a comparatively small Federal Government presence. By the end of the war it was heavily industrialised, directed towards maximum production, and characterised by a strong, even dominant Federal Government presence, which both employed a host of bureaucrats and factory workers, and which exerted substantial directive force over economy and society. This was a transformation which, it could be argued, would not have been possible without the Labor Party's commitment to socialism and knowledge of socialist doctrine.

The Labor Government's commitment to an 'all-in' war effort was also to have profound implications for the status and experience of labour in the Australian economy. Just as the Curtin Government subordinated the interests of capital to the war effort, so its firm and restrictive hand also came down upon workers. Firstly, and in opposition to the whole...
tradition of the Australian labour movement, military conscription was introduced. This issue had torn the Labor Party apart during World War I, and opposition to conscription was reaffirmed as a tenet of Party policy, and even suggested as a possible part of the Australian constitution as late as June 1940. However, John Curtin, the figure who had made his name as a leading anti-conscriptionist almost 30 years earlier, convinced his Party to accept military conscription in January 1943. Along with conscription, the war was notable also for the 'militarization' of labour, with the formation of the 'Civil Construction Corps' of 50,000 to rapidly turn Australia into an operational base in the Pacific war. Both of these policy innovations represented what trade unionists had feared most from a Menzies Government. The irony was that what they opposed and unseated Menzies for, they tolerated and even supported from Curtin.

However, there were a number of compensations for workers and for their institutions, and the Curtin Government remained highly sympathetic to the organised labour movement. With the legalisation of the CPA and the comparative avoidance of skewed or 'political censorship', the number of Government detainees was reduced from 6174 when Labor first took office, to 1180 in July 1944. Civil liberties and freedom of discussion within the labour movement were respected, the ACCL fell into a long slumber, and conflict over Government repression was almost non-existent. When the ACCL did agitate about Government surveillance and Security services in March 1944, it was met with receptiveness and concern from officials. By June 1944, the formation of an independent advisory body was announced, with ACCL representation, and power to review National Security Regulations. By September 1944 the Committee had reported, and regulations were reduced.

Likewise, the Labor Government was receptive and consultative in its relationship with the trade union movement as a whole. Certainly, expectations were high. The June 1940 Party Conference had insisted upon adequate trade union representation on any new Boards or Commissions, and Curtin himself had emphasised that gains for workers remained one of the issues of the war. After only a few months in office, a letter from leading radical trade unionists was delivered to Curtin with a list of suggestions including: price control, the legalisation of the CPA, closer relations with the Soviet Union, the controlling of monopolies, and worker control in industry. Curtin's somewhat terse response was less than encouraging: 'I feel this is time for action under leadership by the Government and acquiescence by people...

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81 ALP Official Report of Proceedings at Special Commonwealth Conference 18/19th June 1940, 5
82 ALP Official Report of Proceedings of Special Commonwealth Conferences held at Melbourne on Monday, November 16, 1942 and Monday, January 4, 1943, ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 118, 19
84 Crockett, P. Evatt: A Life, 126
85 'Seamen Gaolcd Without Trial' Labor Call, 24/2/44
86 'Alleged Opening of Private Mail' Telegraph, 11/3/44
87 'Committee to Review Security Regulations', Sun. 10/6/44
88 'Moves to Counter Bureaucracy' Argus, 16/9/44
89 ALP Official Report of Proceedings at Special Commonwealth Conference 18/19th June 1940, 8
90 Curtin, J. Federal Labor Party Official Bulletin, 3 (12) 30/6/40, 4
in decisions reached. However, in less than a year's time nearly all of these requests had been granted, and the left-wing press was lauding the Government for its close relationship with the trade unions.

Indeed, in June 1942 Curtin and 14 of his Ministers met with the ACTU and leading unionists. The Conference signalled a growing willingness of the Government to listen to the unions, and Curtin proposed that a panel of trade union representatives be established "for the purpose of advice and consultation" in the future. The Government was soon showing "greater reliance" on the unions, and Minister of Labour, Eddie Ward's closeness to the trade union movement was being noted and emphasised. It was probably this informal and personal closeness more than formal machinery which was the means towards cooperation between unions and the Government. Nevertheless, such formal machinery was established. Unions were represented on most controlling or advisory bodies, there was liaison between the Department of War Organisation and the ACTU, union appointments on the Prices Commission, and on the Industry Advisory Committees of the Manpower Directorate. Communists received important appointments - Jim Healy was on the Stevedoring Commission, E.V. Elliot on the Maritime Commission, William Orr on the Coal Commission, and Norman Jeffrey was appointed as Organising Secretary of the Industrial Panel in the War Loans Office. At the war's end, Trade union advisory committees existed in industries as diverse as Radio Services, Building, Jewellery, Roof and Tile, Bread, Ice and Toy Production. Furthermore, the joint production committees which facilitated worker control and which had been intensively lobbied for, were soon diffused throughout the economy. They were organised in the Government's massive munitions factories and strengthened by a vigorous network of Communist inspired factory shop committees.

The Government's aim to ensure and improve worker welfare during the war was also achieved. In November 1942 the Government put a ceiling on the number of hours that could be worked each week, and thereby limited the punishing overtime levels to 56 hours maximum. Rates of pay were also increased in the armed forces on a number of occasions. When Labor came to power a soldier with a wife and child was earning 73/6, but this had

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93 "Editorial: A Year of the Curtin Government", Tribune, 92 14/10/42, 2
94 "Editorial: ACTU says "Lift Ban"", Forward, 3/11/42, 2
95 C.C. Secretariat General Circular No 10 to all State Committees and NSW Organisations 3/7/42 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936 Box 5, 2
96 C.C. Secretariat General Circular No 26 12/10/42 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936 Box 5, 2
97 'Smash Tory Plot to Wreck Government', Forward, 8/5/42, 3
98 Ross, L. Trade Unionism in Australia - a contemporary and personal view (n.d. Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 11, 86
99 Ibid.
101 ACTU to Minister for War Organisation of Industry 13/3/45 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 22, n.p.
102 For example 'Editorial: the Miners' Case', Forward, 24/4/42, 2 and 'Editorial: the Government and the Strikes', Forward, 26/3/43, 2
103 Ross, L. 'Trade unionism in Australia - a contemporary and personal view' Lloyd Ross Papers MS 3939 Box 11, 86
104 T.W. 'Hours of Labor and Production', Communist Review, 16 November 1942, 4
been increased to 98/- by 1943. Overall, the effect of Government policies of price control, wage increases and employment expansion led to a leap in the proportion of Gross Domestic Product going to salary and wage earners. In the financial year ending on June 30th 1940, wages and salaries made up 51.75% of production. Two years later it had jumped to 56.90%, and in 1943 it reached a peak of 59.34%. This should not blind us to the austerity, the shortages and the discipline of the period, but it is an indication of the Labor Government’s commitment to its constituency, and its insistence on an ‘all-in’ war effort that would not be a bonanza for capital. Overall the Labor Party intellectuals and policy makers ensured that a mood of equity and labour movement unity was diffused. Its policies of economic intervention and trade union consultation were widely endorsed, and its claim to lead the nation energised the movement and heightened the mobilisation that had propelled it to power.

Indeed, rather than understanding the period as one of incorporation and political quiescence, the war represented mobilisation, leadership and unity for the labour movement. It is true that the Labor Party claimed to speak for the nation. But this was not at all a process of ‘incorporation’ through the ruses of patriotic hegemony. Rather, it was an expression of the class confidence and the mobilisation of the labour movement. Labor leader John Curtin believed that the "...strength and purpose of labour..." was vital for any successful war effort, and it was precisely this confidence in the centrality of labour which led to his claim that "Labor gives a lead to Australians to stand together." It was the forces of labour which were equated with the nation, and the forces of reaction, the “vested interests” which stood apart from the nation. The substance of Labor’s claim to represent the nation meant that Labor Ministers like John Dedman would tread on the corns of the privileged, and would refuse to be intimidated by any person, organisation or newspaper. It meant that Prime Minister Curtin would assert: "Industry, production, distribution and exchange must be organised to the best advantage of society. Where this clashes with the profits of the individual, the individual must give way."

Indeed, in practice the Labor Government’s claim to represent national interests did not inevitably lead to reconciliation with capital, but often to opposition. Monopoly capital was often presented as unpatriotic, as concerned only with profits, and as unwilling to make the requisite sacrifices for victory. The Victorian Labor Party believed that the ‘Haves’ ignored the fact that human life should be placed above all other considerations, and this belief was echoed around the labour movement. The dissident ‘State Labor Party of New South Wales’, which had been expelled by the Federal Executive in August 1940, and the Communist

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105 Fox, L. *Australia’s Guilty Men and their conspiracy against the Labor Government*, State Labor Party, 1943, 23  
106 Acting Commonwealth Statistician S.R. Carver to John Dedman 3/2/54 *John Dedman Papers*, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 1  
109 Dedman, J. Broadcast 3GL 6/2/40 *John Dedman Papers*, NLA MS 987 Series 1, 3  
110 Curtin, J. *Labor’s Economic Policy - War and Postwar*, Rydges, 1/12/41, 744  
111 *12 Months of Labor Rule*, Issued by ALP (Victoria) 2/11/42, 44  
112 The exclusion of the State Executive, and its reconstitution are explored in Crisp, L.F. *Ben Chifley: a biography*, Longmans, 1960, 126-7
Party of Australia both took up the theme of capitalistic betrayal with gusto. It was asserted that monopoly was a traitorous force,\(^{113}\) that it had preferred Nazi victory to a people's war in France,\(^{114}\) and that it had violated national unity by attempting to undermine the Government.\(^{115}\) The theme of 'the guilty men', which was also prevalent in Britain,\(^{116}\) gained wide currency in Australia. But for Australians, the 'Guilty Men' were not merely Chamberlainite appeasers who had refused to oppose themselves to the emergent fascist menace.\(^{117}\) They were also monopolists who conspired against the Labor Government. Rumours that the Chamber of Manufacturers had set aside funds for a political campaign against Labor were rife,\(^{118}\) and employer provocation of strikes to erode confidence in the Government was also widely claimed.\(^{119}\) In sum, Labor's claim to represent the nation represented class mobilisation and advance, and not conservative ensnarement and the taming of the movement's radical energies.

However, if national unity did not inevitably imply class collaboration and labour movement retreat, it did imply discipline and austerity for Australian labour. Much was demanded of the Australian people, and the theme of self-sacrifice and voluntary restraint was given great emphasis by Labor Party intellectuals.\(^{120}\) This period of labour movement expansion was no 'festival' of political mobilisation, no 'moment of madness' in which politics had become an expressive as much as an instrumental activity.\(^{121}\) On the contrary, the mood was dour and grim, and politics - including Government policy and unity construction, was at its most instrumental and calculative. Typical was John Dedman's plea to citizens to reduce consumption by asking "Do I really need this?" - Dedman claimed that those who answered "No" helped Australia to victory.\(^{122}\) This same desperation about Australia's fate and mood of sacrifice and austerity provided the Government's rationale for its policies of control and intervention. Dedman always emphasised that controls and other Government actions were not 'political' actions, but were motivated purely by an interest in a full war effort.\(^{123}\) In an effort to justify their controls, other Labor intellectuals like Fred Riley similarly called upon the extremity of the situation. Anxious to reassure dissenters, Riley stated symptomatically:

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\(^{113}\) Battle turns our Way', *Forward*, 10/4/42, 1

\(^{114}\) Dixon, R. 'Patriotism and Mr Menzies', *Communist Review*, 24 August 1943, 101

\(^{115}\) Unity for Victory in 1943!', *Forward*, 29/1/43, 2

\(^{116}\) A pamphlet attacking Britain's 'Guilty Men' was produced in the wake of the evacuation from Dunkirk - see Addison, P. *The Road to 1945*, Jonathan Cape, 1975, 110

\(^{117}\) The appeasement of Conservative politicians is noted in Andrews, E.M. *Isolationism and Appeasement in Australia: Reactions to the European Crises, 1935-1939*, ANU Press, 1970

\(^{118}\) Fox, L. Australia's Guilty Men and their conspiracy against the Labor Government, State Labor Party, 1943, 4

\(^{119}\) Examples include R.D. 'The Labor Government', *Communist Review*, 10 May 1942 5; Editorial 'Rebuff the Saboteurs', *Tribune*, 28/4/42, 2; and 'Menzies "Determined to Prove a Villain"', *Forward*, 28/8/42, 3

\(^{120}\) Examples include 'John Curtin's Warning', *The Australian Clothing Trades Journal*, July 1943, 11

\(^{121}\) This expressive moment of collective mobilisation is one that Tarrow notes in the Italian protest cycle of the 1960s and 1970s, and which he implies is the phase of 'early risers'; present in all protest cycles - see Tarrow, S., *Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy 1965-1973*, Clarendon Press, 1989, 59-60

\(^{122}\) Dedman, J. 'Broadcast 9/4/42 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, 3

"...the controls) cannot be regarded as being other than special war time measures designed to maintain the maximum war effort and they do not in the long run impair the fundamental liberties of a democratic people."[124]

The mood and the articulations of this period were highly instrumental. Their aim was to justify rapid, necessary, and fundamental changes in Australian economy and society. However, the emphasis on the emergency situation and the transient nature of the controls would later cause troubles for Labor intellectuals. As an amazingly prescient J.V. Barry had foreseen: "...the failure to relate existing controls which impose individual hardship to any other communal ideal than the need to survive has bred an impatience with those controls, and a strong desire to have done with them as soon as possible."[125]

Barry's fears were not widely expressed. The mood of common subjection to the war effort was upheld by the Labor Party with all of its intellectual resources. It was truly the exigencies of the war effort which demanded sacrifice and discipline from the populace, and the need for unity around these ideals was always framed by the reality of the war. But the Labor Party's relationship to the trade union movement, as explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis, ill-suited it to do anything but exhort its union affiliates to greater sacrifice and greater discipline. The networks of communication and power historically had operated in the opposite direction - from union affiliates to the Parliamentary Party, and not vice-versa. If sacrifice, discipline and unity within the union movement was to be maintained, then a different sort of institution was needed - one that was centralized, hierarchical, disciplined, and yet with strong links inside Australian trade unions. This institution was the Communist Party of Australia, and it was its commitment to the war effort that heightened discipline and sacrifice within the polity and laid the basis for a more unified and mobilised labour movement.

Institutional Needs and Movement Unity: the CPA, the National War Effort, and the Unity of Labour

The Labor Party clearly needed the Communist Party in this period. In the months before the Curtin Government and the invasion of Russia, the CPA had won influence by drawing together those suspicious of Chamberlain and "...not prepared to accept sacrifices lest those be diverted against Russia."[126] Although the Russian invasion and the advent of a Labor Government had changed the situation, there were still large numbers of workers fearful of Government coercion and especially hostile to conscription. When Curtin pushed for conscription towards the end of 1942, former Premier Jack Lang opposed him, as did prominent figure Maurice Blackburn, and the delegations to the Special Party Conference from both Victoria and Queensland.[127] The Catholic Worker also campaigned strongly for a referendum on the issue.[128] In this situation, the Communists were valuable allies, and they

[124] Riley, F.J. '2nd Statement Wireless Address 3KZ' n.d. F.J.Riley Papers, NLA MS 759, Box 61, 3
[125] Barry, J.V. to Brian Fitzpatrick 11/11/42 Sir J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505, Box 24, Series 10, 2
[126] Ross, L. 'Trade Unions and the War', Australian Quarterly, 14 (3) September 1942, 57
[127] Gollan, R. Revolutionaries and Reformists, 117-8
[128] 'People must be Consulted', Catholic Worker, February 1943, 3
were accepted as such by Curtin.\textsuperscript{129} It has been estimated that in 1937 the CPA held a thousand lower level trade union positions, and that one in four communists was a trade union official.\textsuperscript{130} By 1942 the Party also had control of the Seamen's Union, the Waterside Workers' Federation, the Ironworkers' Union, and the NSW Clerks' Union, as well as a number of professional unions. Communists also took control of the Queensland Trades and Labour Council and the Newcastle and Illawarra Labour Councils in this period.\textsuperscript{131} Communists used all of their influence to support conscription, and Communist leader J.B. Miles declared that "Anti-conscription has been dead for the last 18 months."\textsuperscript{132}

The pay-off was immediate. Although it is true that the CPA was never "seriously uncommoded" by the Curtin administration,\textsuperscript{133} its legality and property were only formally returned at the same 'Special' Labor Party Conference which ratified conscription.\textsuperscript{134} Once legalised, the Party's trade union links remained invaluable to the Government for dampening down the industrial conflict which threatened war production. In September 1942, Lloyd Ross sensed that industrial unrest could "erupt" unless corrective measures were taken,\textsuperscript{135} and it was the CPA, disciplined, hierarchical, and union-based as it was, that possessed the means to take such corrective measures.

The Communist Party adopted a vigorously pro-war policy. This was a policy suggested by the place of the Soviet Union in the Allied force, but pursued 'independently' in Australia after the Comintern was dissolved in 1943.\textsuperscript{136} The winning of the war was not a dominant aim because of constant CPSU control, and yet it was dominant nonetheless - so much so that even May Day was dedicated to the defeat of fascism,\textsuperscript{137} and planning for the post-war era was regarded as strictly secondary to the struggle for victory.\textsuperscript{138} The CPA's commitment ensured that it subordinated the class struggle to the military struggle. Even the dreaded forces of American and British imperialism were 'let off the hook' for a year or two. \textit{Tribune} confirmed that: "It is true that the class interests of the rulers of Britain and America are not changed, but insofar as they fight for independence they today play a progressive role."\textsuperscript{139} Perhaps even more starkly, the Labor Government was gazed upon with an admiring eye. Praise for Curtin's rule was lavish. It was regarded as "...the best Government for
Australia."\textsuperscript{140} and any criticism of its policies was inevitably qualified by the statement "...the Labor Government is doing a good job."\textsuperscript{141} This support for the war and for the Labor Government was far from rhetorical, however. The CPA became the key force in civil society leading the fight for increased production. The Party's formidable propaganda apparatus chugged into action, constantly hammering home the fact that increased war production was the primary imperative of the moment. For the Party propagandists, this had three practical repercussions. Firstly, it meant that profiteering should be repressed in the name of greater production.\textsuperscript{142} Profit-making was conceived as a barrier to war production, and it was production before profit which was proclaimed as the basic principle.\textsuperscript{143} Secondly, and balancing this hostility to excess profits, was a realisation that it was the fight for production rather than the fight against profit-making which was central. As \textit{Tribune} put it: "...while trying to limit profit making from the war, production must go on. The immediate issue is not to abolish profit making which means to abolish capitalism. The issue today is to defeat Hitler..."\textsuperscript{144} Communists did not aim for socialization, and even regarded war-time agitation for such measures as "disruptive". The transition to socialism was deemed too divisive and complex for wartime, and it was pressure for more production and greater State control, that remained the CPA's key theme.\textsuperscript{145} The third aspect of the CPA's commitment to production was its outright opposition to strike action of any kind. Rather than industrial action being presented as the weapon to safeguard the interests of workers and to build strong trade unions, it was the fight for production which Communists claimed would offer the best means of union-building. As one Central Committee member argued:

"...the strengthening of our unions today lies in the fight for production. The unions with the best organisations in the struggle for production will emerge the strongest unions."\textsuperscript{146} It was in the battle to resolve industrial conflict and to maintain worker discipline that the CPA directed most of its energies. Certainly, the Labor Government was also a major force in reducing industrial conflict, and its pro-worker policies as well as more repressive State capacities could be used to dampen down industrial conflict. Both the National Security (Coal Control) Regulations and the Mobilisation of Services and Property Regulations were passed by Labor in an effort to avoid strikes.\textsuperscript{147} Minister for Labour Eddie Ward threatened to remove from striking workers their exemptions from military call-up on occasions,\textsuperscript{148} and in

\textsuperscript{140} 'Leader: A Year of the Curtin Government', \textit{Tribune}, 14/10/42, 2
\textsuperscript{141} 'Companies and the Wealthy Could Pay More', \textit{Forward}, 26/2/43, 3
\textsuperscript{142} McShane 'The Labor Party in Office', \textit{Communist Review}, 7 November 1941, 9
\textsuperscript{143} Gollan, W.E. 'Economic Planning' \textit{Labor's Plan for Victory}, State Labor Party, 1942 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 57, 7
\textsuperscript{144} 'Produce for Victory', \textit{Tribune}, 47 14/11/42, 4
\textsuperscript{145} Miles, J.B. \textit{United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943} (Resolutions for CPA Congress, March 1943) CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 6-7
\textsuperscript{146} Henderson \textit{United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943}, 1-2
\textsuperscript{147} Hasluck, P. \textit{The Government and the People 1942-1945}, 253
the first 18 months of the Curtin administration only 10,610 working days were lost through strike action every week. However, this great achievement was as much due to the efforts of the CPA as it was to the Government. The Communist Party possessed the means to vigorously carry down to unionists the message that strikes were not to be supported. The Party presented monopolists and managers as the provokers of industrial conflict - as Machiavellian figures attempting to foment disturbance and thereby erode confidence in the Curtin Government. In this context, the striking worker was apparently a dupe for the ruling class. Not to strike was to be a disciplined, class conscious worker. To work was a radical act that expressed working class strength, initiative and leadership. It was a means of fighting in a new way. It demonstrated practically that the working class was dedicated, unified, patriotic, and a leader. Forward printed examples of workers ignoring management provocation and choosing to work:

"Another occasion was the hearing of a report by miners' officials on the agreement with the Curtin Government. Realising this was a defeat, the management determined to have trouble in preference to coal, and blew "No work" twice. "Take no notice" called a lodge secretary. "Let's go to work"."

The Communist Party consistently emphasised the need to 'carry down' its no-strike policy to rank and file unionists, as well as its "responsibility" to ensure that this policy was not undermined. Communist-led unions frequently disciplined their own members who caused strikes or continually absented themselves. It enforced this ban on strikes with all of its power, often with great difficulty, upon unionists in the vital Mining and Waterside industries - unionists who had Communist leaders, but had always associated Communism with industrial militancy. There was much rank and file opposition. It was at this time that the Trotskyist Nick Origlass emerged at Morts dock in Balmain, and created a mass local base by tapping the incipient worker dissent. It was also at this time that troubles erupted in the mines, and a challenge arose to the policy of the Miners' Federation. Even in Sydney factories, the Communists permanently alienated many workers with their opposition to

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149 Hasluck, P. The Government and the People 1942-1945, 252
150 For example, see 'Rebuff the Sabotagers', Tribune, 68 28/4/42, 2 and R.D. 'The Labor Government', Communist Review, 10 May 1942, 5
151 Fox made this point about coal miners who resisted strike action - Fox, L. Coal for the Engines of War, SLP, 1942, 25
152 'A Miner - Wangawilli' "No Work" Whistle Blows but Miners Go to Work', Forward, 18/8/42, 4
153 Henderson United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943, 1
154 Johnston, C. The Communist Party and Labor Unity, 1939-1945', 80
155 The emergent 4th International hopefully noted the mounting opposition to the no-strike, pro-production policy in these industries - 'Manifesto of the Revolutionary Workers' Party (4th International) July 1943 Guido Baracchi Papers, NLA MS 5241, Box 3, 28
156 Freney, D. 'Trotskyism in Australia' - contribution to the 'Communist and Labor Movement Conference', Oral History Collection, National Library TRC 916/9. See also Short, S. Laurie Short: a political life, Allen and Unwin, 1992, Chapters 5-7
industrial disputes.\textsuperscript{158} Certainly, those Communists who were also trade union leaders expressed opposition to the Party's policy. Tom Wright of the Sheet Metal Workers' Union feared that the Party was conveying a "one-sided" impression to workers by its opposition to strikes,\textsuperscript{159} and Ernie Thornton of the Ironworkers' made the point that "Sometimes we have to adjust our stand to keep with the workers."\textsuperscript{160} Those with their fingers on the pulse of unionists knew the unpopularity of the CPA's stance, and some unionists were even driven to ignore Party directives.\textsuperscript{161} Although open rebellion within the Party did not really emerge, and figures like Thornton emphasised that they were Communists first and unionists second, there was clearly exasperation about the constant reining in of trade union militancy. Thornton himself was so consistently attacked for allowing strikes that he declared union officials "...are just not going to take too much more of this sort of thing......we know how to look after ourselves, and give a warning to Party members generally."\textsuperscript{162}

Whatever the difficulties that policy implementation faced, there is not doubt that the Communist Party was a consistent proponent of increased production, and that the Party's centralised, hierarchical and disciplined nature passed this imperative down to trade unionists most effectively. The Party was so consumed with production, and so anxious to soothe worker dissent that it attempted to channel worker radicalism into the production drive, and encouraged the formation of shop committees to suggest improvements in the labour process. \textit{Tribune} frequently sang the praises of shop committees that had sped-up production,\textsuperscript{163} and it was asserted that they should vigorously tackle technical problems, think creatively about the production process, and attempt to find efficient and expert solutions. The shop committee's activism expressed the class leadership of workers,\textsuperscript{164} and this leadership was a leadership for more production. Even the youth wing of the CPA, the Eureka Youth League, contributed to the production drive in this period. Its Shock Brigade helped to bring in the harvest, and worked tirelessly in many factories to eliminate absenteeism and to increase production.\textsuperscript{165}

Production became the grid through which the Party perceived all political questions in this period. The CPA's whole vision of capitalism and socialism was coloured by its immediate absorption in production. For Party propagandists, the key problem with capitalism in this period was that it shackled production,\textsuperscript{166} that the "anarchy of production" it embodied created bottlenecks, waste and delays.\textsuperscript{167} It was asserted that only when private enterprise and profit incentives had been abolished from the economy would it become

\textsuperscript{158} Dorothy Hewett notes that Textile workers in Redfern regarded the CPA as a "dirty word" because the Party had refused to support a war-time strike - see Hewett, D. 'Introduction', \textit{Bobbin Up}, Virago Press, 1985, xi
\textsuperscript{159} Wright, T. 13th National Congress of the CPA March 1943, \textit{CPA Papers}, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 1
\textsuperscript{160} Thornton, E. 13th National Congress of the CPA March 1943, \textit{CPA Papers}, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 4
\textsuperscript{161} Davidson, A. \textit{The Communist Party of Australia}, 91
\textsuperscript{162} Thornton, E. 'Trade Union Report' 13th National Congress of the CPA March 1943, \textit{CPA Papers}, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, 2-3
\textsuperscript{163} 'Production must be Speeded'. \textit{Tribune}, 4/2/42, 3
\textsuperscript{164} 'Struggle for Production', \textit{Tribune}, 26/8/42, 4
\textsuperscript{165} Blake, A. \textit{A Proletarian Life}, Kibble Books, 1984, 81
\textsuperscript{166} 'National Welfare and Taxes', \textit{Tribune}, 109 10/2/43, 4
\textsuperscript{167} 'Unity for Victory in 1943 !'. \textit{Forward}, 29/1/43, 2
possible for Australia to reach its full productive potential. Socialism, conversely, was identified via reference to its capacity for greater production. The Soviet Union had achieved staggering production levels, principally through massive technological improvement, it was argued. Technology under socialism was not used as a weapon against workers, and its swift implementation could be vastly expanded. Influenced by their war-time absorption in production, Communists argued for socialism as a sort of Stakhanovite utopia—a society identified primarily by its productivity. Here there were no market forces to impede production, and no 'Money Power' to focus on finances rather than resources. As one pamphlet claimed of the Soviet Union:

"The importance attached to money by many people in Australia would amaze the Russians, who concentrate their attention on production problems rather than money problems." But the 'grid' of production also dominated other Party visions. The CPA's propaganda for improved wages and working conditions was also linked to production in this period. Improved working conditions were presented as "one of the principal means of improving production totals" and it was asserted that factories policed by the Board of Health's Industrial Department would yield greater output levels. Production was the only justification for any action, it seemed. Even labour movement unity, that great shibboleth of the Communist Party, was justified in this way. Working class unity and discipline were to be treasured, Forward argued, because they would "...maintain and further expand production, the foremost issue in industry to-day."

It was through its drive for production that the CPA claimed to build unity with the Labor Party, and such unity was zealously pursued. Communists never admitted that the Labor Party was a socialist Party in this period. They were apparently still 'reformists', still 'splitters' from whom Communists needed to be independent. They were concerned only with the development of "democratic capitalism", and they had no interest in socialism. For the Communists in this period, unity was not motivated by the socialism of the ALP, but in spite of its anti-socialism. The CPA never reviewed its basic conception of 'reformism', and continued to trumpet about its limitations, and its pernicious influence upon the working class. What the Party did do was fend off its conception of 'reformism', and focus strategically upon the war effort. It was both the necessity and the opportunity for labour movement unity around the war effort, and not abstract propositions about 'reformism' which were deemed primary. As the Central Committee Secretariat argued:

168 Purdy, S. "Private Enterprise" and "Incentive", Communist Review, 24 August 1943, 107
169 '1,000 Per Centers in Industry: Soviet Lessons for Aussie', Forward, 31/7/42, 4
170 Fox, L. Coal for the Engines of War, SLP, 1942, 27
171 'Soviet Finance, Authorised by the Australia-Soviet Friendship League, n.d., 2
172 Lindsay, J. The Battle for Production, Labor Council of NSW, 1943, 8
173 '1,000 Per Centers in Industry: Soviet Lessons for Aussie', Forward, 31/7/42, 4
174 'Editorial: Absentee Issue', Forward, 15/1/43, 2
175 Miles, J.B. United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943, March 1943, 8, 11
176 'A Great Victory for Democracy', Forward, 1/1/43, 1—
"Our attitude to the Curtin leadership is determined by its present role in the struggle for victory. Those who fail to see this and base themselves on the past (sic) this or that Labor Party leader, or on our views about the historic role of reformism, who are all along motivated by suspicions instead of by the present class alignment and present role of a Labor Government, weaken the forces of progress and fail to take advantage of the opportunities to strengthen the fighting unity of the working class and our own organisation."  

The justice of the war against fascism provided the starting-point for "fruitful cooperation" between all sections of the labour movement. Communists pursued such cooperation through the mechanism of the united front, and they conceptualised the united front as a weapon in the struggle to defeat fascism. CPA leader J.B. Miles suggested that the united front in this period involve Communist and Labor Party cooperation in the factories, unions and localities for the attainment of three primary ends - a greater war effort, support for the Curtin Government, and the maintenance of "security and freedom" in the post war world. The accent was very much on the first two of these ends, and it was unity for the war and for production which was given greater stress at this time. Communists believed that unity for the war could be transmitted out from the CPA itself, that its organisations could work for a "real mass movement", that the "foundations" of unity could be established in the trade unions, and that this unity would eventually "compel" broad Party unity. This was precisely how the Communist Party worked for unity.  

The Party constantly drew upon attacks on the Curtin Government (both real and fantastic) as the pretext for greater labour movement unity. It constantly asserted the CPA's loyalty to the war effort as well as its 'hardness' and its unifying abilities for a Government which desperately needed both. When the Government was attacked from the Right, this meant that 'the Left' were needed in Government. When a Tory conspiracy was feared, this dictated the need for a more cohesive united front within the labour movement, and when the anti-conscription movement and the "anti-Dedmanist" attacks on regulation gained momentum, this too suggested that the issue of working class unity be given greater emphasis.  

So, the labour movement unity which was attained in this period was not some spontaneous eruption from the people, and nor was it a direct, unthinking and 'national' response to the strains of the war. Rather, it was the activity of labour movement institutions which was the key procurer of unity over the early 1940's. It was the Labor Party's need for the institutional resources of the Communist Party which opened it up to the CPA, and it was

177 CC Secretariat General Circular No 26, 12/10/42 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 3  
178 'McShane' The Labor Party in Office', Communist Review, 7 November 1941, 7  
179 Dixon, R. United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943, 6  
180 Miles, J.B. 'Need for Unity is "Most Pressing"', Forward, 12/3/43, 3  
181 Blake, J.D. United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943, 5  
182 Sharkey, L. The Trade Unions. (Six impressions between 1942 and 1948) CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 147, 42  
183 'Editorial: Bring Lefts into Government !', Forward, 8/5/40, 2  
184 'Menzies "Determined to Prove a Villain"', Forward, 28/8/42, 3  
185 'Editorial: Dedman, Santa and the War Disruptors', Forward, 18/12/42, 2
the CPA which used this openness to construct movement unity with its typically efficient and centralized zeal. Unity was rooted in the difficulties of the period. It was prompted by the pursuit of the war, and it was clothed in justifications and articulations specific to the war situation. And yet this specific and evanescent unity was to have repercussions for labour movement politics reaching all the way over the next two decades.

The Communist Party's Expansion and Labour as a Social Movement

It was in the process of campaigning for national defence, for a disciplined war effort, and for labour movement unity, that the CPA underwent a tremendous expansion in both size and influence. Between June 1942 and February 1943 there were 526 new Party branches established, and Party membership similarly billowed. In May 1942, the Communist Party had 7,200 members, in September 1942, 11,000. By October 1942 there were 15,000 Australian Communists, in September 1943, 20,000. Membership went on expanding until late 1944, when a peak of 23,000 members was reached. This enormous expansion of membership was notable particularly for the great increase in what could be thought of as 'atypical' Communists. Firstly, there was a great expansion in women members, with 1,900 women joining up over the six months from June 1942 alone. Secondly, there was a great expansion in the number of middle class Party members. For what had been a primarily industrial Party, as well as a Party sustained by its belief in the working class, the expansion of middle class members is striking. Alistair Davidson has estimated that after the Party's legalisation around half of the Party's new members were 'middle class', whereas the Party's make-up had been at least 70% factory worker before this time.

Alongside this expansion in Party membership, and partly covering over its 'atypical' nature, was a further expansion in trade union leadership by Communists. By March 1943, at the Party's National Congress, it was claimed that the Communists held executive positions in 51 trade unions, 4 Provincial Trades Hall Councils, and many other Central Trade Union bodies. And the Party press expanded alongside membership and union representation. In 1940 the circulation of *Tribune* was 20,000. In December 1942 it was over 50,000. The circulation of the Victorian *Guardian* in 1944 was 15,000. In 1944 a Communist candidate was elected to State parliament in Queensland, and in New South Wales four Communist candidates received an average of 27% of the Labor vote. In short, the CPA had greater membership, influence, practical leadership and broad cultural and intellectual influence than

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186 'National Hook-up for Congress Opening', *Forward*, 12/2/43, 1
187 Davidson, A. *The Communist Party of Australia*, 82-3
188 'Communist Party to Hold National Congress', *Forward*, 29/1/43, 1
189 Davidson, A. *The Communist Party of Australia*, 83
190 Samson, W. *United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943*, 1
191 "Don" Communist Party Growth Strengthens Labor and National Unity', *Communist Review*, 17 December 1942, 6
192 Gibson, R. *Communist Plan for Victory and Peace*, ACP Publication, 1944, 34
193 Johnston, C. 'The Communist Party and Labor Unity, 1939-1945', 90
ever before. However, the nature, direction, and even the reasons for such influence were very much at issue as the war rumbled towards its conclusion.

The most frequent explanation for the Party's growth advanced at the time was the Soviet Union's war effort in the Allied cause. Not only did the courage and success of the Soviet's draw admiration, it also cancelled the previous identification of Communists as un-Australian. For the first time, the main efforts of the Party were directed towards what the majority of Australians perceived as their national interest. The Party's disciplined activity harmonised with the discipline of war society, and the Party enacted a policy "in tune with popular national sentiment." Australian could join the Communist Party without stigma, and they did so in unprecedented numbers.

However, it is my belief that this expansion in Communist influence was not merely an example of institutional affiliation, but was an expression of the political opportunity structure of war time Australia. In this context, it is possible to see the combination of wartime administration and Labor Party rule as generating three primary changes in the means of rule, and as thereby changing the strategic utility of competing modes of contention. Firstly, the wartime emergency gave the Federal Government increased power under the Australian Constitution, and empowered it to make regulations with jurisdiction over the whole of the Nation. Secondly, the fact of a Labor Government in power, as was argued in Chapter 2, signified that the Parliament no longer functioned as a bourgeois, or 'representative' Parliament. The Labor Party was organised with ties of communication running from trade unions and branches into the Parliamentary leadership, and with mechanisms of discipline and control to ensure that members obeyed Party commands. The dual impact of these two aspects of wartime administration was to marginalise the importance of Parliament to the process of governance. New bodies like the 'Production Executive' made important decisions about production and the war effort without reference to parliament. Concerned intellectuals remarked fearfully that the Labor Party had made "...compromise, an essential of democracy, impossible except to some extent in a time of crisis...", and there was a related fear of "..."class" legislation which often is forced through the House without giving the opposition full opportunity for debate." Combined with these changes in the means of rule, the Labor Government's commitment to National Unity, and its support by the Communist Party, also meant that open petitioning of Parliament and open strike action both lacked institutional support and faced sustained Government repression.

In this context, being a part of the labour movement, and asserting claims through its organised, democratic structures offered the best tool for securing interests. Of course, this was partially translated into increased support for the Labor Party - open, democratic, and in

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194 Bean, C.E.W. War Aims of a Plain Australian. Angus and Robertson, 1943. 44
197 This is admitted in Dedman, J. The Labor Government in the Second World War: A Memoir', Labour History. 21 November 1971, 64-6
198 Janes, C.V. 'Ministers and How to Handle Them - By One Who Doesn't', Public Administration.
199 Ibid., 170
Government. However, surprisingly enough, it was to have more profound repercussions for membership in the CPA. This was for two reasons. Firstly, the concern of the Labor Party leaders with the war effort and with the problems of wartime administration left them ill-disposed to take up the demands of the people in an organised and reflective way. Secondly, the Labor Party's firm, historical and established basis in male-dominated trade unions, and its comparative lack of a vigorous Party life made the CPA a more receptive institution for women factory workers and for the middle class in particular.

Women possessed enhanced power and status with the war years. Economically, they had entered the workforce in unprecedented numbers, contributed to the war effort in a vital manner, and enjoyed admiration and independence long denied them. Sexually, many pursued relationships with available American servicemen, and amid the moral panic that this caused, a woman's interest in, and right to sexual pleasure was becoming established. It was this new power which sustained the emergent self-conscious political activity of women.

The CPA demonstrated a comparative openness to the involvement of women within both the confines of the Party structure, and the political, economic and cultural life of the nation as a whole. Other political forums had traditionally been insensitive and sometimes hostile to the concerns of working class women, and this situation was little changed over the early war years. The ALP's male trade union base had historically closed it off from the concerns of women, and the Party did not even form a 'Labor Women's Interstate Executive' until its December 1943 Federal Conference. The many deputations of women anxious to press their claims at this time were rejected by a Labor Government which wrongly saw them as conservative and troublesome. Prime Minister Curtin pledged that no man would be replaced by a women in post war employment. The Conservative's championing of the traditional family, as well as its class basis also alienated it from many working class women in this period, while the Catholic Worker professed outright hostility towards female paid employment.

Certainly, the Communist Party cannot claim to be a feminist utopia. Women comrades were forced to juggle both their household and political work, and men were invariably favoured for important Party posts. Nevertheless, it was comparatively receptive to women in a way that has not been fully recognised. The CPA's new women members were granted real responsibilities. Five hundred women were promoted to the status of cadres, and Central Committee member Phyllis Johnson spoke proudly of "...their acceptance of greater..."
responsibility than ever before."208 Communist author and founding member Katherine Sussanah Prichard spoke widely for the Party in this period, and Audrey Blake was both a CC member and head of the Party's youth wing. Others like Frieda Lewis and Moira Clive had important roles in addressing factory meetings,209 and Leah Healy was the State Secretary of the Party in Western Australia.210 Of course, the receptivity of the Party to women's input and concerns should not be overestimated. There were no women at the very crest of the Party's hierarchy - on the Central Committee's Secretariat. But these small concessions to the capacities and interests of women were nonetheless a great incentive for female participation, and it climbed accordingly.

The Party recruited further women members with its support for the rights of women to stay employed post war,211 as it did with its championing of equal pay for women. In the field of equal pay, the Labor Government's Women's Employment Board was created to lift women's wages from the old level of 52% of the male basic wage, and had been granted the power to fix that wage at any point between 60% and 100% of the male level.212 However, many employers flouted the Board's decisions, and it was the militancy of women, combined with the vigorous action of Communist trade union leaders that enforced Government Arbitration supervision and led employers to modify their policies.213 The whole process was followed and encouraged by the Left wing press, and involved close cooperation between women shop delegates and Communist union hierarchies.214 Such close cooperation, struggle and support must have persuaded many to join the Party. Certainly, Party leaders were anxious to promote new women members, and the "fundamental change" which socialism brought to the status of women was often asserted.215

The Communist Party's own intellectuals also acted to heighten the appeal of the CPA to the middle class in a number of ways. Firstly, the ideal of 'Communism' was presented in such a way that its intellectual and cultural aspects were emphasised. It was argued that the theory of Communism was based on the rational direction of social forces in a time of crisis, and the avoidance of blind, unwise action.216 The idea that the Communist Party was 'modern', and that it applied science to politics was also frequently stressed.217 Socialism was described as leading to a revolution in science,218 and the idea of a 'Planning Commission' staffed by "...engineers, economists, and others..." was a part of the Party's socialist vision.219

208 Johnson, P. United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943, 1
209 Stevens, J. Taking the Revolution Home, '94
210 Reekie, G. 'Industrial Action by Women Workers in Western Australia During World War II', Labour History, 49 November 1985, 76
211 Wright, T. 'Women's Employment Board', Communist Review, 20 April 1943, 36
212 'Louise' 'Government Steps Towards Equal Pay', Forward, 3/7/42, 4
213 Wright, T. 'Employers Flout Women's Employment Board', Forward, 12/3/43, 4
214 For example, Forward notes that 50 Women shop delegates met with the Sydney branch of the Ironworkers in 'Women Unionists Meet', 11/9/42, 3
215 Platform of Capable Women Leaders', Forward, 9/10/42, 3
216 Prichard, K.S. 'Communism - a talk given over Nation Station 6WF, n.d. Katherine Susannah Prichard Papers NLA MS 6201, Series 9, Box 14, Folder 3, 3
218 "'Elder' History Makes the Man', Communist Review, 18, February 1943, 8
219 Gibson, R. 'What Socialism Would Mean to Australia', in A Fair Hearing for Socialism CC, 1944, 20
The cultural as well as the scientific benefits of Socialism were also noted. The capacity of the USSR to provide an audience and regular employment for writers and artists was highlighted by intellectuals like Bernard Smith,220 and others like J.V. Duhig.221

More than redefining Communism to highlight its cultural and intellectual potential, the CPA also acted in a way that was calculated to recruit and retain its intellectual members. The Party's educational and propaganda apparatus was beyond compare, and it proved appealing to intellectuals like Brian Fitzpatrick.222 The Communist Party was also the only Party with a special committee dedicated to the Arts and Sciences.223 The CPA supported cultural development and the construction of a National Theatre and an Opera House as a part of post war reconstruction.224 It also acted to encourage art, and its sponsoring of suburban art shows even drew praise from the Daily Telegraph.225 In this way, the Communist Party aimed to fulfill the interests of Australian intellectuals, and to thereby encourage and retain their allegiance.

More broadly, membership in the Communist Party for all members implied local, practical activity in support of the war and in opposition to the private interests of profit-makers. Membership in the CPA, or cooperation with the CPA in the campaign for a united front was a peaceful means of reminding the Labor Government of its responsibilities to its constituency, and of its need to prosecute the war effort equitably and with advantage to labour. It expressed a faith in the battle of the Red Army against Hitler, as it did in hopes for a better post war world. Given the paucity of other viable modes of contention, it was a tool both available and conducive to the interests of Australians during these middle war years.

And the campaign for labour movement unity, for a united front, did attain the genuine dimensions of a sustained campaign, or a social movement, over these middle war years. Lectures and discussions involving both Communists and Labor Party figures were widely reported,226 and the excluded 'State Labor Party of NSW' acted as a sort of 'middle bridge' between its old Party on the right, and the Communists on its Left.227 Support for the Government's War Loans brought both trade unionists, Communists, 'State Labor Party', and Labor Party officials together on the same panel, and expressed a growing unity for victory.228 It was a practical unity which took different forms in different localities, but was existent in a great number of areas. At its most extreme, unity was so highly developed that the Labor Party and the Communist Party were separate in name only, and collaboration was total. For example, in Rockhampton in Queensland the Communist Party supported ALP candidates in the 1943 elections by writing ALP radio speeches, organising advertising,

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221 Duhig. J.V. Cultural Activity in the USSR, H.M. Hutton Printer. n.d., 4
224 Moston, S. 'A Worker Listens to Beethoven'. Culture. Democracy and Australia, Marx House Publication n.d., 16
225 'Example Set by Art Show', Daily Telegraph. 7/7/45
226 Good Work, Garden Island Shop Committee !'. Forward, 17/7/42, 3
227 Chandler, H.B. (visitor from the SLP) United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943, 1
228 Miles, J.B. 'Congress Signpost Reads Unity', Forward, 12/3/43, 1
raising funds, distributing propaganda, and even staffing electoral booths. This was also detectable in Minister John Dedman's seat of Corio, where a 'Dedman Committee' was organised with the help of ACCL Secretary and labour historian Brian Fitzpatrick, and included both Labor Party and "Non-Labor Party" (i.e. Communist) supporters. In the NSW electorate of Hume, some Communists were so enthusiastic about the united front that they counselled a vote for the ALP in preference to the CPA in the 1943 Federal elections.

In States like Victoria the combination of Communist domination of major trade unions and small local ALP memberships meant that Communists "provided much of the organised working class support for Federal Labor policies." A sort of 'Left Community' emerged at this time with broad dimensions wider than petty institutional boundaries. May Day parades in Sydney attracted 30,000 to the Domain in both 1942 and 1943, and the latter included real gallows for the hanging of Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo that seemed "gloriously real". A Town Hall rally in this period also presented leading Communist and ALP figures in cooperation, welcoming the Curtin Government and celebrating the opening of a Parliament with a Labor majority. In Melbourne the Left Community was found in the camaraderie of pub life, and the famous meetings of the late '30's and '40's at 'The Swanston Family' Hotel. It was here that artists like Vassilieff and Counihan, writers like Judah Waten, and Bill Dolphin the violin maker mixed with a shifting calcavade of political activists, journalists, and associated hangers-on. Many who came regularly were Communist Party members or 'fellow-travellers', but the Swanston Family was not a Party front, and it provided a loose, communal forum for political discussion and education. Indeed, it functioned as a sort of 'people's university' for many at this time. It was within such forums that the unity between Communists and Labor Party supporters was championed and cemented.

In 1943 cooperation and unity between the excluded 'State Labor Party of NSW' and the CPA was well established enough that they concluded a united front agreement, and the SLP later merged into the Communist Party. There is no doubt that this was somewhat 'staged', as the Party had been excluded by the ALP's Federal Executive precisely because of its Communist penetration. But the public and rhetorical effect was important nonetheless. It heightened the perception that unity was developing inside the labour movement, and gave

229 Commonwealth Investigation Service copy 11/10/43 of CPA Document: 'Rockhampton District Report Socialist Emulation' Australian Archives A 6122/40 447, Box ACT 1 52 2576 4 - 2576 4
230 Brian Fitzpatrick to G.T. Chippendale (Director-General of the Department of War Organisation of Industry) 25/11/43, Brian Fitzpatrick Papers, NLA MS 54965, Series 6, Part 2
231 Johnston, C. The Communist Party and Labor Unity, 1939-1945', 87
232 Smith, B. Noel Counihan: artist and revolutionary, Oxford University Press, 1993, 106
233 'Agreement for United Action between the ALP, State of NSW, and the Communist Party 23/4/43' CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 4

234 'Inspiring May Day Celebrations', Forward, 8/5/42, 1, and 'Glorious May Day Celebration', Forward, 7/5/42, 3
235 Ibid
236 'Town Hall Rally Makes History', Forward, 11/9/42, 1
237 N. Wills remembers 'The Swanston Family' in Wills, N. Shades of Red, Communist Arts Group, 1980, 73-5
238 Ibid., 105
239 N. Wills remembers 'The Swanston Family' in Wills, N. Shades of Red, Communist Arts Group, 1980, 73-5
the CPA's united front with the ALP a greater edge and momentum. In June 1943 the
Australian Council of Trade Unions passed a motion supporting a united front by 130 votes to
120,240 and it seemed as if the strategy of the Communist Party was being vindicated. 'United
fronters' within the Labor Party agitated strongly, and in Victoria they almost gained control
of the Party.241

The battle between the two camps was hard fought, but those opposed to a united
front managed to maintain Party policy by the barest of margins. Despite internal Party
opposition, the Victorian Labor Party banned membership in the Australia-Soviet Friendship
League,242 and a motion to lift the ban was defeated at a Federal Executive meeting in
January 1943.243 At the Party's December 1943 Conference a motion for the establishment of
a 'Special Committee' to prepare a united front was lost,244 and in the 1943 elections the ALP
did not exchange preferences with Communists.246 But the battle over a united front was by
no means definitively won or lost, and the situation remained fluid. When the CPA officially
petitioned the Federal Executive for affiliation in the first months of 1944, the division inside
the Labor Party was readily apparent. The numbers required for an outright refusal of
affiliation simply did not exist, and a motion rejecting affiliation could not be passed. A
Motion rejecting affiliation was amended by 6 votes to 5 to one which claimed that the
Federal Executive was not empowered to accept or reject the petition. The motion read:
"...That the Communist Party be advised that under the rules of the ALP, no authority is vested
in the Federal Executive to give consideration to the question of affiliation or amalgamation
with any other political organisation."248 That such a motion could be passed demonstrates
both the strength of the campaign or movement for labour unity and mobilisation, as well as
the political indeterminacy of this particular historical moment.

The centrality of Marxism, and the interpretation of Communist
Party Growth

However, as argued in Chapter 3 of this thesis, the Communist Party remained locked in a
dogmatic orientation to a narrow and specific brand of Marxism. Marxism acted as a
'discourse of authenticity' for Party members, and the Party's very success, as well as the
implications of that success were interpreted in the 1940's through the 'frame' of this
particular and limiting world-view. Rather than admitting that the Communist Party's growth,
and the progress of the united front was the product of a particular and limited constellation
of opportunities, needs and articulations, the CPA interpreted its own rise as the glorious and
inevitable unfolding of history's dialectic.

240 'Bitter Debate by Unions', SMH, 24/6/43
241 McManus, F. National Library Oral History Collection TRC 121/72, 19-21
242 'ALP Ban on Soviet League', Argus, 16/8/41. For opposition, see letters in the possession of J.V. Barry
dated August and September 1941, in Sir J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505, Box 24, Series 10
Conference December 1943, 21
244 'Minutes', in Ibid., 33
246 'Item 7' Federal Executive Minutes 13/3/44 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 2, 2 and 7
The period of the Communist Party's growth and the mobilisation of labour as a social movement had harmonised with the rapid industrialisation of the Australian economy, as well as a sharp drift to the cities, and a quickened process of 'proletarianisation'. Factory employment as a whole increased from 565,000 in 1938-9 to a peak of 766,000 in 1943-4. At the same time, the proportion of metal workers employed in establishments with 100 hands or less on the payroll fell from 42% in 1935-6 to 24% in 1942-3. Hypnotised by its own propositions about the necessary development of the working class, the CPA explained its own growth as the direct product of such changes in economy and society. As Lance Sharkey argued:

"The working class feels the new conditions and its own increasing strength more every day. It is in this setting that Communism reaches mass dimensions and will continue to grow organisationally and politically, and the Labor Party will continue to lose its old influence over the proletariat..."

In this scenario, two interlocking propositions were at stake. Firstly, it was argued that the development of capitalism and the rise of mass production fostered greater discipline and organisation amongst the working class. Along with this, the sheer size and unity of workers would develop. Secondly, it was also believed that workers became Communists to the extent that they became political adults, that they increased their "political maturity". The combined weight of these two propositions suggested that over time there would be a bigger working class which was more Communist - a thesis which seemed borne out by the early '40's. It suggested that history was on the side of the Party guided by Marxism-Leninism, that a sort of "logic of history" was sweeping the CPA to dominance. In its most elaborate versions, such a schema understood the ALP as playing a developmentalist role for the Australian nation and working class, but as being superseded by the Communist Party. The working class needed socialism, and it therefore needed a more committed Socialist Party. That Party was the Communist Party, and its birth had been "...the most significant event in the history of the Australian labor movement..." All in all, the history of the labour movement could be conceived as a history of expanding unity and

248 Ibid., 146
249 Sharkey, L. Australia Marches On, 3rd Impression, 1943 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 147, 41
250 Metz, K. 'Marx and Socialism', in A Fair Hearing for Socialism, ACP, 1944 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 44, 14
251 The Capitalist System, International Bookshop, 1942. CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 57, 15
252 Hundreds Join Communist Party', Tribune, 63 25/3/42, 1
254 Henry, J.C. '25 Years of the Communist Party' "No 5" in Communists in Congress, August 1945, 5-6
255 See 'Leader: A Year of the Curtin Government', Tribune, 23/9/42, 2 or 'Leader: Fadden's Fantasies', Tribune, 27/11/43, 2
256 Campbell, E.W. History of the Australian Labour Movement: a Marxist Interpretation, Current Book Distributors, 1945, 160
257 Ibid., 5
growth, and with the growth of the CPA and the momentum of its united front campaign, that unity was on the eve of being crowned.258 The working class needed the Party to fulfill its historic mission,259 and for Communists that mission and that leading role for the CPA seemed to be confirmed by the Party's rapid growth and expanding influence.

Despite the fact that the Communist Party had expanded to a very great extent by recruiting middle class cadres, the Party's leading intellectuals identified the Party with the working class more strongly than ever. The CPA was consistently described as a working class rather than as a socialist party over 1942260 and into 1943.261 More than this, the CPA persuaded itself that increasing membership and trade union positions for the Party could be equated with the acceptance of Marxism by the Australian working class. Rather than thinking through the nature of Communist support, its conditions and implications, the Party's leaders proclaimed that Communists were the "...main factor in influencing the working class."262 Other CPA propagandists insisted that Marxism had become "...the basis of the struggle waged by the working class."263 At this time, and a greatly self-important and mistaken air characterised the hierarchy.

It was a legacy of this misinterpretation of the Party's expanding prospects that the Party remained rigid, hierarchical and 'Stalinist' in its operation throughout the early 1940s. Contrary to Alistair Davidson's thesis, the CPA did not become more democratic, and open over this period, and by no means can it be admitted that "rigid democratic centralism collapsed" in the middle war years.264 On the contrary, the increasing confidence of the Party leadership in the power of their Marxist propositions led them to affirm the sagacity of their centralized, hierarchical leadership, and its centrality to the Party's brighter fortunes.265 Both after and before legalisation, the Party became more centralised as it became larger and more important. In March 1942, at what appears to have been a Political Committee meeting, Lance Sharkey submitted a motion for reorganisation of the Party which was agreed to in principle. The NSW State Committee was abolished, and State cadres would now take their orders directly from the Central Committee. In addition, it was affirmed that Interstate members report regularly on policy, and that education be made uniform within the CPA as a whole. Trade union, youth, women's and agrarian committees were also made uniform at this time. Sharkey summed up his reforms by stating:

258 Campbell, E.W. United Working Class and a National Front for Victory in 1943,1
259 Handbook for Tutors, CPA, 1944 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 49, 4
260 For example, see the Party's Preamble to its Constitution Constitution of the Communist Party of Australia, Printed 12/6/42 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1, n.p. and 'Adam Ogston on the Air', Forward, 3/7/42, 3
261 'Leader: Toward the United Front of Labor', Tribune, 14/4/43, 2
262 Howard, J. 'Socialist Planning, Competition, Initiative, Emulation', Communist Review, 13 August 1942, 7
263 Furnberg, F. 'Engels the Thinker', Communist Review, 14 September 1942, 6
264 Davidson's book is motivated by the need to argue the Eurocommunist case within the Party in the late 1960s. As a result, it is, as he notes, an "institutional history", a "short history", as well as a somewhat tendentious one. Because he does not try to grasp the links between the Party and the movement as a whole, he has no other explanation for CPA expansion than the one he wants: the CPA grew because it was more democratic in the early '40s, but contracted as it became less so from 1943 onwards. See Davidson, A. The Communist Party of Australia, 83-4
265 'Hundreds Join Communist Party', Tribune, 63 25/3/42, 1
"With one or more of the leading Central Committee members directing the work of the different Committees, with closer cooperation with the Central Committee members in other States, we will at once have the leadership of the Party; that is the political, executive, administrative, practical, in the hands of the Central Committee, of the most experienced comrades, thereby benefitting greatly the work of the Party..." 266

At the branch level, further reforms were made to ensure that the influx of new, often intellectual members did not disrupt previous patterns of decision-making and action. A system of Group organisers was established in May 1943, whereby a "capable" Party member was empowered to educate and activise new recruits, and ensure their smooth introduction into Party life.267 They made assessments and recommendations about new recruits to their Branch Executives, and they familiarized such recruits with the responsibilities and duties of the Communist.268 This organisational reform, like its more far-reaching predecessor, ensured that democratic centralism was maintained amidst the fanfare and the instability of expanding membership.

Contrary evidence to Davidson's thesis about the 'democratisation' of the Party over the early '40s is also found by an analysis of the CPA's educational apparatus. If the Communist Party was to maintain its democratic centralist organisation into this new era, then it needed to ensure that new Party members were socialized into that brand of Marxism practiced by the Party. This is exactly what happened. There was a clamour to improve and reform the CPA's educative apparatus from mid 1942 onwards. The urgency of individual reading was emphasised,269 and the primacy of the History of the CPSU received special attention.270 But this book-learning was always linked up with current Party policy,271 and its use as a corrective to 'disruption' was continually affrmed.272 In short, Party education worked as a tool of control, a corollary of democratic centralism, and a stabilising force as the Party expanded. Its expansion is a further indication of the way in which the Party's growth was used to strengthen rather than weaken its basic 'Stalinist' organisational traits.

The final pointer to this tightening up of the CPA's centralist tendencies was the Trotskyist scare that galvanised the Party over the early months of 1943. As argued in Chapter 3, the focus on the Trotskyist inside the Party was always associated with internal purges, and with cutting off alternative interpretations of Marxism, and alternative strategies for the Party. In the run-up to the Communist Party Congress in March 1943, there was an explosion of sound and fury over the issue of Trotskyism. It is especially notable that attacks on Trotskyite arguments at this time were expressed in terms of the 'petty-bourgeois' position

266 Sharkey, L. Political Committee (?) Meeting, March 1942 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 2
267 'Resolution' Political Committee Meeting 29/10/43 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 1
268 'How? Issued by the City District Committee (NSW) of the CPA, n.d. CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 43, n.p.
269 'Party Education (No 1)', Tribune, 70, 13/5/42, 4
270 'Party Education (No 2)', Tribune, 71 20/5/42, 4
271 'Party Education (No 4)', Tribune, 73 3/6/42, 4
272 'Against Provocation - Against Disruption', Communist Review, 17 December 1942, 9
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from which they spoke.²⁷³ It is at this time, too, that the villain known as the 'White-Collared Trotskyite' makes his entry.²⁷⁴ Clearly, the new middle class members of the Party were targeted in this conception of the Trotskyite. All of this sound and fury around Trotskyism did signify something. What it signified was that the CPA would not be 'democratising', and that its acceptance of capitalism, cooperation with the Labor Party and greater membership in no way signified its straying from the organisational path of Leninism.

Fear of Working Class Mobilisation and the Birth of Post-War Reconstruction

However, if the CPA's own wishful thinking about its growth was incorrect, there is no doubt that it was tremendously significant for the evolution of wartime politics. Of course, it was important for the evolution of the Party's own view of its prospects, and therefore its political strategy in relation to other institutions. But less obviously, the CPA's interpretation of its own advance and of imminent revolution shaped the culture of ideas which existed in the 1940's. More specifically, it was the real, practical mobilisation of labour as a social movement, magnified by the discourse of the CPA, that struck fear into the hearts of the Australian intelligentsia, and created the momentum for post war reconstruction.

Indeed, the sense that a crisis was emerging was ubiquitous among the intelligentsia, and there is no doubt that this sense of crisis was linked to the growth in the labour movement. It was believed that industrial society would be rocked by revolution if it was not fundamentally reformed. Brian Penton declared that without a sense of fulfillment, 'man' would "smash up" society,²⁷⁶ and this same fear was also the declared rationale for slum clearance and housing expansion among intellectuals.²⁷⁶ One proponent of social reform was driven to state:

"The danger of civil commotion in Australia after this war as a result of the housing situation is a very real danger....When, therefore, we think of the effect of poverty and bad housing on the physical health of the people, let us not forget the effect of poverty and (for many) no housing on the health of the body politic. In present circumstances we are inviting disaster."²⁷⁷

Likewise, the adequate rehabilitation of soldiers was counseled to avoid these "skilled and ruthless killers" being converted to the forces of revolution,²⁷⁸ and education was similarly

²⁷³ Miles emphasised that reformists were identified by their 'petty-bourgeois position', and were therefore likely to use Trotskyite arguments - Miles, J.B. '13th National Congress of the CPA' March 1943 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 1. 7-8
²⁷⁴ The "White-Collared" Trotskyite', Tribune, 113 10/3/43, 4
²⁷⁵ Penton, B. 'The Problem of Spectatorship - Talk No 3 in Series "After the War Then What About Leisure"', 6/12/43 E.M. Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/2, 68
²⁷⁶ For example, see F. Oswald Barnett and W.O. Burt Housing the Australian Nation, Research Group of the Left Book Club, 1942, 82
²⁷⁷ Burt, W.O. Poverty, Housing and Health, Australasian Medical Publishing Co, 1945, 18
²⁷⁸ Hughes, G.F. 'What Does Rehabilitation Mean ?', Australian Quarterly, 27 (1) March 1945, 29
suggested as a safeguard against revolution. Many intellectuals were terrified of the capacity of the working class to destroy the social system, and their suggestions for reform emerged out of this fear. Even an intellectual with close ties to the labour movement, like Lloyd Ross, suggested a variety of reforms to prevent Communists from gaining further strength. His plea in mid 1942, when Communist expansion was at its most rapid, is highly evocative of the 'intellectual state of mind':

"If a constructive policy - based on Australian needs - not on Russian inspiration is not developed quickly, then the present industrial and political calm will be followed by storm in which the labor movement may be weakened and discredited, and in which the Australian people may be torn by conflicts with different forms of authoritarianism." ²⁸⁰

Conclusion

This chapter has offered a new interpretation of the politics of the early 1940's. In opposition to claims about the 'bread-and-butter' concerns of labour intellectuals, I have argued that labour intellectuals were intelligent and forceful constructors of unity. In opposition to claims about the 'integration' of official institutions, and their failure to act as effective claim makers, I have emphasised the need to focus upon the historical specificities of wartime Australia, and how the specific configuration of political opportunities made membership in the CPA and participation in united front campaigns an effective means of claim-making in difficult circumstances. In opposition to the traditional sundering of a Communist 'fringe' from a mainstream 'movement', I have focused upon the common campaign for wartime unity, and have argued that this campaign expressed the vitality of labour as a social movement. In opposition to the separation of 'the intellectual' from the 'labour movement', I have focused upon the way in which Communist visions of their Party's growth struck fear into the intelligentsia, and generated the momentum for post-war reform. What emerges is a complex picture of interactions and institutional needs. A chain of successions leading from the war to the emergence of a Labor Government, to labour movement cooperation, to CPA growth, to CPA propaganda, to the terror of the intelligentsia, led eventually to the environment in which post war reforms to capitalism seemed possible. This involved a subtle interplay between broad shift in economy and society, changing institutional strategies, and fluctuating outlets for popular demands. The period cannot be understood by analysing the 'consciousness' of Australian workers, or by writing a simple working class biography. It is better understood in terms of political resources, strategies, and manoeuvres. In the next chapter we widen our understanding of these manoeuvres, by focusing upon the political mobilisation of the intelligentsia, which occurred concurrently with that of labour.

²⁷⁹ Greenwood, G. 'Has Higher Education Failed ?', Australian Quarterly, 14 (4) December 1942, 32
²⁸⁰ Ross, L. 'Trade Unions and the War', Australian Quarterly, 14 (2) June 1942, 63
5. Bold Ideas and Base Realities

Amidst the fanfare from the battlefront and the glory days of the labour movement's own mobilisation, Australian society was also marked by a period of unmatched intellectual ferment. The early and middle 1940s were characterised by both a deluge of ideas concerning the dimensions of post-war Australia, and an eruption of cultural and artistic activity with a breadth and a depth not seen before. In describing and explaining such intellectual ferment, this chapter seeks to widen our analysis, and to focus not only upon relationships within the labour movement, but upon the conditions of intellectual production, and the emergence of an Australian intelligentsia. The trajectory of both post-war reform and of labour movement success cannot be understood without this analysis.

In adopting such an approach, this Chapter sets itself against the pre-existing literature which examines Australian intellectuals. This literature generally attempts to absolve Australian artists and writers of any political motivations. It thrusts 'intellect' into a non-political and non-material world, and denies rather than problematizes the relationship between intellectuals and the labour movement. Australian artists and writers were up to their eyeballs in the gooey mess of war-time politics. Many were Communists, a great many more were 'fellow-travellers', and all were vexed by questions of political and personal identity. However very few writers and artists maintained their political commitments, and the hagiographic history written by later generations has allowed a false, apolitical continuity to settle over their careers. The political radicalism of much of the art of the period has been denied. Richard Haese wrongly treats the Angry Penguins painters as an extension or a rediscovery of liberal values,1 and Strahan's study of the journal Meanjin presents the editor's politics as unsystematic, liberal and vague.2 These are two glaring examples of a common trend. When historians have conceded the importance of politics, this has been only to the extent that politics impacts upon the consciousness of the artist and is thereby channelled into the art work. For example, a critic like Charles Merewether admits that the Depression and the rise of Fascism had the dual impact of fragmenting the unity of experience for Australian artists, and of thereby provoking protest, despair and resistance.3 The focus has remained on the lone intellectual, and the possibility that art production may have been an expression of intellectual group identity and mobilisation remains unrecognised. The consciousness of the individual artist rather than the conditions of intellectual production have remained the primary focus.

In opposition to such an approach, this Chapter attempts to understand the political and material motivations behind the art and ideas which emerged during the early and middle 1940s. It seeks to find the 'base' realities behind the 'bold ideas' of post-war reconstruction, and to treat both the cultural renaissance and the suggestions for post-war reform as marking the mobilisation of the intelligentsia.

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1 Haese, R. Rebels and Precursors: The Revolutionary Years of Australian Art. Allen Lane, 1981, 126
Explaining the Collective Action of Intellectuals

Does the idea of the 'collective action of intellectuals' make any sense?

The definition of the intellectual advanced in the first chapter of this thesis was that the intellectual was a 'truth-producer'. If we accept this definition, then the idea of 'collective intellectual claim-making' initially appears as rather odd. In one sense, intellectual contention is almost a tautology. Of course intellectuals make claims. This is precisely what they do, all the time and everywhere. But in another sense, the idea of intellectual contention also appears as an impossibility. Truth-producers are located in various parts of the social formation, affiliated to different institutions, advancing different identities. For example, the past three chapters have focused particularly on intellectuals within the labour movement, and their articulations and attempts to organise their constituency. These labour movement intellectuals were tied to certain distinctive organisational and cultural practices. What can they have to do with other truth-producers, in other places - in the bureaucracy, the universities, in bohemia? How could collective action between such actors possibly work? What forms could it take? What would it look like?

I want to argue that it is possible for intellectuals to form a group, and I will call that group the intelligentsia. The constituency of the intelligentsia is made up of all truth-producers, but like any active group, the intelligentsia rarely mobilises the whole of its constituency. It is also true that the group action of intellectuals is often evanescent, and therefore that the history of the intelligentsia is discontinuous and complex. But this does not mark the intelligentsia apart - in the same way the labour movement does not mobilise all wage-workers, is often quiescent, inactive and pronounced dead. And yet it has a real existence nonetheless. Of course, not all truth-producers act collectively as part of an intelligentsia. Many remain attached to their sites of production, such as churches or specific political parties. But a collective of intellectuals, or an intelligentsia, is both theoretically plausible and historically existent. Desley Deacon has sketched the rise of such a collectivity, which she calls the 'new middle class', in the Australia of the late 19th century. It is also possible to identify an Australian intelligentsia in the 1940s. Furthermore, we can explain the emergence of its collective action with broadly similar analytical tools to those which were used in the last Chapter.

This Chapter will proceed with a study of the intelligentsia, and will treat it as a collective of truth-producers with a certain set of common interests, level of organisation, opportunity, and mobilisation. If we accept this course of action, then it is possible to sketch the economic and social context from the strategic perspective of intellectuals, and to explore how that context was altered by the early war years. What we find is a world provincial, small, and insular.

Indeed, the number with the technical training or the institutional opportunity for intellectual work was sharply limited. In the 1930s there were still few Australian historians, almost no political scientists or sociologists, and an 'abyssal' standard of newspaper commentary. As Australia was a colonial milieu without a large, indigenous educated class, the universities were by far the most important basis for the formation of the intelligentsia,

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1 Deacon, D. Managing Gender: The State, the New Middle Class, and Women Workers 1830-1930. Oxford University Press, 1989
and the universities, as well as their adult education programs, provided one of the few means of gainful employment. Intellectuals were clustered in a small and very private conversation. Stephen Alomes has estimated that at this time no more than 80 or 100 people were involved in debate and research on Australian society, economics, and foreign policy. They formed the most active part of the intelligentsia, communicating through the journal *Australian Quarterly*, and gathering yearly for the 'Australian Institute of Political Science' Summer Schools in Canberra every January. Certainly, the scope of intellectual debate was wider than educators, and published debate in the field of economics was marked by "significant contributions" from public servants and the world of business. But the practical and cultural isolation of this group remains undeniable.

The world of the arts was perhaps even smaller and more provincial. Between the wars, most painters made their living as commercial artists, and modern art was deployed principally in the service of advertising and home fashion. So tightly was contemporary art integrated into commerce that "women's art, commercial art and modern art became identified as virtually one thing." This began to broaden as the war approached. The Communist Party played an important role with the formation of the 'Workers' Art Club' in the early '30s, the broadening of its cultural work in the middle thirties, and the eventual formation of a discrete 'Artist's Branch' within the Party in late 1938. The art world was further enlivened around this time with the formation of the Australian Academy of Art in June 1937, and the subsequent establishment of the Contemporary Art Society (C.A.S.) in 1938. The new presence of immigrant artists Vassilieff and Bergner also had an energising effect. Perhaps most importantly, a wealthy couple named John and Sunday Reed became interested in supporting contemporary art, and in 1939 the National Gallery of Victoria hosted the 'Herald Exhibition of Contemporary English and French Painting'. As a result, the Australian art world was both small and nascent, and the C.A.S. quickly developed to bring together "painter, writer and patron under the banner of a fighting organisation for new values in Australian culture."

The war was to disrupt and to alter the environment and the opportunities for Australian intellectuals in a number of ways. Firstly, the period was marked by the mobilisation of the labour movement, as was explored in the last Chapter. Secondly, there was a heightened demand for intellectuals. As already noted, the Government intervened widely in the economy, and opted for economic controls rather than the market mechanism to organise the war effort efficiently. It followed from this preference for economic controls that the Government needed a whole plethora of controllers and experts with the requisite skills. More than this, Government regulations themselves needed to be explained and justified to...

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1 Alomes, S. *The 1930's Background to Post War Reconstruction*, *Post War Reconstruction Seminar Papers*, NLA MS 6799, 11
2 Ibid., 10
5 This is explored in Merewether, C. 'Introduction', 11-4
6 Smith, B. *Noel Counihan: artist and revolutionary*, Oxford University Press, 1993, 135
7 Haese, R. *Rebels and Precursors*, 43
8 Smith, B. *Noel Counihan*, 137
9 Merewether, C. 'Introduction', 16
10 Eagle, M. *Australian Modern Painting Between the Wars*, 174
11 Ibid.
12 Haese, R. *Rebels and Precursors*, 39
the populace. There was a need for expert propaganda and education both at home and in the Army itself. And if these expert skills were required, it was also clear that the Labor Party did not possess them. Although there were many very good speakers, writers and union organisers inside the Party, its long periods in the political wilderness had prevented the emergence of its own organic, expert intellectuals. As leader John Curtin was to lament:

"We haven't the men. We have to develop them. The British Labor Party has developed that type of worker. We have to win over competent and trained advisors who have been advisors to other Governments."

The Labor Government was forced to rely on experts from academia and business, and to recruit them into the Federal bureaucracy. In many cases these were the same figures who had foisted a regressive 'recovery plan' on the Scullin Labor Government during the Depression, and there was a discernible unease within Labor's ranks. But whatever unease may have prevailed, a new race of technocratic planners were soon thronging the bureaucracy. The size of the Federal Bureaucracy virtually doubled over the war years, and some bureaucrats were so important that they overshadowed minor members of the Cabinet. Both the power and the scope of the State's intellectuals had leapt forward. Thirdly, the war brought with it a greater closeness between intellectuals and the labour movement. The Australian Council for Civil Liberties and the labour movement had fought the Menzies Government shoulder-to-shoulder, and the CPA owed at least half of its growth to the recruitment of middle class cadres. There was a real, working alliance between the labour movement and the intelligentsia.

These three changes which war-time had brought were to have a significant impact upon the political opportunities of the Australian intelligentsia. With the emergence of a Labor Government there had been a 'shift in the ruling alignments', and the stability of the status quo had been severely shaken. With the need for intellectual expertise as an aspect of the war effort, there was an enhanced 'access to power' among Australian intellectuals. With the growing closeness between intellectuals and the labour movement, the Australian intelligentsia had important and 'influential allies' available. All in all, intellectuals seemed to represent a new and growing occupational stratum whose importance had not fully been recognised, and they seemed to have the strategic openings to demand such recognition. Collective action by intellectuals seemed even more likely because the situation represented both opportunity and threat. The mobilisation of the labour movement and the concomitant growth of the Communist Party frightened many, and as Charles Tilly has noted, it is threat even more than opportunity which is likely to stimulate collective action.

And collective action on behalf of Australian intellectuals did emerge over the middle and late 1940s. However, this action did not take the form of strikes, of marches in the streets,

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1 Curtin, J. 'Federal Executive Meeting' 24/1/44 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 2, 6
2 Ross, L. 'Australian Labour Today', University of Toronto Quarterly, 17 (1) October 1947, 76
5 Shifts in the ruling alignments, increased access to power and the availability of influential allies are all listed as salient changes in the p.o.s. in Tarrow, S. Power in Movement, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 18
6 This scenario is described as one of expanding political opportunities in Tarrow, S. Democracy and Disorder: Protest and Politics in Italy 1965-75. Clarendon Press, 1989, 49
or of violent and threatening outbursts. Intellectuals were prisoners of their own history of collective action, and their repertoire of action remained mostly limited to the production of truth and the manipulation of symbols. More specifically, the collective action of Australian intellectuals took the form of propagating ideas for post war reconstruction, and of the production of an art with unrivalled force and vigour. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify this production as a collective production for four reasons:

1. There was a heightened consciousness of the separate identity of intellectuals, and their opposition to 'the people'.

2. There was a firm expression of the power and centrality of intellectuals to society.

3. There was an open assertion of the need for intellectuals to rule.

4. Articulations were accompanied by political unification.

The Assertion of Intellectual Identity

There is no doubt that intellectuals argued openly during the 1940s that they constituted a distinct and united section of the population. Intellectual class-consciousness was very much on the rise. Those classic, Mannheim-inspired accounts about the 'free-floating' nature of the intelligentsia were dusted off once again, and intellectuals identified themselves as possessing a particularly privileged place in the class structure - a "declassed" political position which promoted a "rationalistic and individualist outlook"." Australian intellectuals at this time both reprinted and endorsed Arthur Koestler's definition of intellectuals as the "self-interpreting, introspective organs of the social body"." It was this ability to be introspective and rigorous - to think critically, and to be above political expediency or dogma which separated intellectuals from the common run of politicians. This is the basis upon which T.H. Kewley identified the 'social planner'." It is also the basis upon which Albert Tucker divided intellectuals off from the world of the Communist, and those who subscribed to particular political doctrines." Australian intellectuals of the '40s formed a small, self-enclosed world, and they defended this world as one that should not be shaped to fit in with the demands of society as a whole. Rather than serving society, they declared their allegiance to the virtues of 'critical thinking', and their need to stand opposed to society." This sense of apartness which signalled the mobilisation of Australian intellectuals was marked not only by ideas and images concerning intellectuals. At the same time as 'visions of the intellectual' were being produced, intellectuals were also producing visions of non-intellectuals. Non-intellectuals were sometimes called 'the people', sometimes 'the masses', and sometimes 'workers'. The labels were variable, but the terms in which non-

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"Ritchie, A.M. 'Phantasy and Social Reality', Australasian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy, 29 (2) September 1941, 135
"Koestler, A. 'The Intelligentsia', Meanjin, 4 (2) Winter 1945, 42
"Kewley, T.H. 'Social Service Planning', Public Administration, 4 (3) September 1942, 117
"Tucker, A. 'Introduction - Sociological Section', Angry Penguins, 8 1945, 142
intellectuals were described during the 1940s have a number of common and quite striking characteristics.31

Firstly, 'the people' were characterised as unconcerned with liberty or freedom. In sharp contrast to the liberty-loving intellectual, the people were not interested in such values or issues. Firstly, they did not care about the liberty of others.32 But more than this, it was also argued that the people did not care for their own liberty and freedom. There were fears that the people were so smitten with material imperatives, so selfish and short-sighted, that they would sell their liberty for the sake of security and regimentation. This was the fear enunciated by the Governor of N.S.W. in March 1943.33 It was a fear most stridently and elaborately expressed in John Anderson's famous article The Servile State. Anderson argued that the workers' movement had once possessed a dynamism and a purpose, but that this had rested upon the propertyless condition of workers, their absence of security, and the drive towards "expropriation".34 He believed that this dynamism was a thing of the past, because workers had effectively sold their independence and their rights for the sake of economic security and cash benefits. Liberty had been forfeited by those who were too brutish to understand its significance. This conception of non-intellectuals was shared by many who claimed sympathy with the labour movement, and who reached out for practical alliances. Even Clem Christesen, the cultural nationalist and 'progressive' felt that he needed to remind workers about the need to pursue 'worker control in industry', as their materialistic zeal to solve the problem of ownership and distribution could cause them to lose sight of the problem of control.35 For other progressive intellectuals, the logical future for the people of Australia was sketched in the Brian Vrepon poem The Pleasant Future of Jones. Vrepon painted a nightmarish vision of the future in which a 'Captain of Politico-Industry' had orchestrated the transmogrification of workers into robots without feeling or freedom.36 This was regarded as very real possibility for a people without the taste for freedom or the instinct for liberty.

Just as the people were presented as without an appetite for liberty, so they were presented as without an appetite for art or beauty. By pursuing economic security, common Australians were pursuing a "low aim" which eroded the level of pluralism and of culture within the polity.37 Just as the worker had exchanged economic gains for freedom, so art and beauty had also been traded away. Typically, H. Baker argued at this time that 'man': "is selling his birthright to an individual emotional life fully experienced and appreciated and expressed in art."38 And others made similarly frantic claims. The people were envisioned as without cultural abilities or tastes. They inhabited a mechanised world without aesthetic

31 These terms also bare stark similarity to the terms used by the great intellectuals of literary modernism to describe ordinary people early in the century in Britain - see Carey, J. The Intellectuals and the Masses. Faber and Faber, 1992
32 Intellectual and campaigner for civil liberties, Brian Fitzpatrick believed: "the great majority of electors" did not care "tuppence about freedom of speech or association" when their own actions were not directly effected, and when the "persecution of minorities" occurred - Fitzpatrick, B. to "Mr Burns" 9/7/43 Brian Fitzpatrick Papers, NLA MS 4965, Series 8, n.p.
33 Lord Wakehurst Towards Social Security. An Address by Lord Wakehurst, Governor of NSW March 1943
35 'Trailer', Meanjin, 5 (4) 1946, 336
36 Vrepton, B. The Pleasant Future of Jones'. Meanjin, 5 1941, 13
37 Anderson, J. 'Review', 125
38 Baker, H. 'The Emotional Life', Angry Penguins, 8 1945, 141
merit. According to Brian Penton, they could only sit and stare, hypnotised by mass culture." They had no concern with art, which was limited to the intelligent few." Of course, this sort of vision of the people has a long and infamous history, and it may be thought of as one of the defining elements of modernism. But whatever its ubiquity, it was very much alive in Australia during the 1940’s, and it formed the second defining characteristic of ‘the people’, and the second means by which they were juxtaposed with intellectuals at this time.

The third characteristic which intellectuals identified in the Australian people was their absence of thought. They were described as "economic illiterates", as a "herd of dumb, driven cattle", and in numerous other wonderful ways. Their capacity to see below the surface of problems was questioned, and they functioned without the intellectual’s ability to think ‘critically’. Once again, it was the materialism of workers which robbed them of such intellectual gifts. Firstly, ‘materialist’ philosophies which postulated economic determinism caused their proponents to lose the ability to investigate, to relate and to coordinate ideas. Such philosophies were a barrier to intellectual accomplishment. But more broadly than this, it was the greediness and the base, materialistic nature of workers which kept them from the sacrifices necessary to develop intellectual skills. J.D.B. Miller was shocked and revolted when he visited Broken Hill - a mining town with strong unions and rising incomes:

"to anyone who sees life as something more than the pursuit of money, leisure as something too precious to be wasted on drinking and gambling alone, and political activity as needing a less materialist goal than more money, Broken Hill is an enigma. Its challenge to adult education lies in the possibility that the Broken Hill attitude towards non-material ends might repeat itself wherever prosperity and full employment become realities."

The image of Broken Hill was a close-up image of the worker. That worker was ignorant, materialistic and anti-intellectual.

The final characteristic which intellectuals identified in the Australian people was their apathy and their lack of agency. It is a startling fact that just as the labour movement was mobilising and the Communist Party was expanding enormously, intellectuals argued that the working class movement was exhausted and moribund. In part this was purely a misrecognition. W.G.K. Duncan noted the passivity of the populace at this time, and he obviously failed to see the consequences of a disciplined, worker-led ‘all-in war effort’. But other writers were more calculated. W.H.C. Eddy attempted to draw a distinction between the ‘proletarian movement’, which he equated with Marxism; and the working class, which could not be identified with any movement. The implications of this deft manoeuvre were clear -

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1 Penton, B. 'The Problem of Spectatorship - Talk No 3 in Series "After the War then What About Leisure"' 6/12/43 E.M. Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/2, 63
2 Gardner, A. 'What, Then, is Art?', Australian Quarterly, 12 (1) March 1940, 105
3 President Cooperative League of Victoria (J.V. Barry) to H.V. Evatt 19/6/41 J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505, Series 11, Item 60, 2
4 Rochester, A. 'Finding Time for Reading', Australian Highway, 24 (5) October 1942, 79
5 N.R.W. 'Powers for Whom and for What', Australian Highway, 26 (3) June 1944, 34
6 McPhee, J.T. 'On Being a Person - The Individual and the Organisation', Australian Highway, 26 (4) August 1944, 62
7 Miller, J.D.B. 'Union Town', Australian Highway, 28 (6) December 1946, 89
8 Duncan, W.G.K. 'E.H. Carr has Written a Book', Australian Highway, 25 (2) April 1943, 19
the power of non-intellectuals could be denied, and the mobilisation then in progress could be pushed to the margins. Likewise, P.H. Partridge was keen to deny the strength of the working class at this time. The weakness of the working class, and its incapacity to rule was the basis upon which he rejected Marxism. He was later on, in June 1943, to describe the working class movement as at a "dead-end". The analysis of the last chapter proved that such claims were incorrect. However, what is at issue is not so much the truth of such claims as the consequences of such claims. They expressed the mobilisation of intellectuals as a group, and they are important because they were part of the process by which intellectuals attempted to forge an image and an identity for non-intellectuals.

So, the idea of a collective intellectual identity gathered much support during the 1940s. Writing and speaking in a narrow world, a group of truth-producers increasingly asserted that they were different from those outside the magic circle. As would be expected, the identity of intellectuals was forged as much through the demonization of the 'non-intellectual' as through direct articulations. Nevertheless there is no doubt that such an identity was in the making, and that it signalled the mobilisation of the Australian intelligentsia.

Asserting Intellectual Power

Intellectuals were not merely conscious of their separate identity at this time. They were also conscious of their own power and importance within society. It was a primary strand of the mobilisation of the intelligentsia that they began to assert their own centrality with a remarkable insistence. This took three primary forms. Firstly, there were quite direct and open declarations of the importance and strength of intellectuals. Norman Bartlett was convinced that the form that social planning and social development would take was dependent upon "...you and me and the influence of an independent intelligentsia." Others were confident about the power of educated opinion and expertise to shape Government policy, and E.P. Dark went so far as to declare that a united, progressive medical profession "...would become the real leaders of the nation into a new promised land." These were by no means isolated declarations. Educators and researchers responded to their expanded political opportunities with a common cry expressing their own power and energy. Institutions like the Workers' Educational Association favourably assessed their collective resources for future battles, and were swelled enough by the growth in the intelligentsia to proclaim their existence as a "...vitally important core of opinion."

Secondly, and more generally, there were also frequent claims about the importance of intellectual life, the power of theoretical as compared to practical knowledge, and even the

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4 Partridge, P.H. 'Discussion Course No B 40: Political Theories and Movements Today' 1942 E.M. Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/16, Item 15, 39
5 Partridge, P.H. 'Workers' Education', Australian Highway, 25 (3) June 1943, 39
6 Bartlett, N. 'Anatomy of Disillusion', Meanjin, 5 (1) 1946, 58
7 Kewley believed that the growing numbers who understood the need for social planning and research would change Government policy - Kewley, T.H. 'Social Service Planning', 125
8 Dark, E.P. Medicine and the Social Order, F.H. Booth and Son, 1942, 15
9 In a battle with Communists which will be discussed in the next Chapter, the WEA became increasingly aware of its own resources for propaganda - not only its 'intellectual power', but its own newspaper in a time of mass paper shortages - see Davern, A.I. 'I'll Huff and I'll Puff...', Australian Highway, 29 (6) December 1942, 86
10 'The Editor's Notebook', Australian Highway, 22 (1) February 1940, 32
11 Duhig, J.V. 'Culture and the Crisis', Meanjin, 8 March 1942, 16
power of thought to precipitate social change. For example, it was argued by J.B. McKinney that it was intellectual activity, and more particularly, the systematic analysis of the "common consciousness" which had become dominant, and had thereby destroyed the "unity of experience" of the population. In the place of such unity, there was now a "discontinuity of experience", and the possibility of "cataclysmic" change. This was a social problem with an intellectual cause. But McKinney also proffered an intellectual solution. The solution proffered by McKinney was that the sense of individual hopelessness and evolutionary transition that individuals were passing through would become a common consciousness of growth and change, and thereby become the basis for a new self-discipline and understanding. What thought had produced, thought would resolve, and the intellect would, in his conception, therefore continue to drive social development.

In a related sense, the period of the mid 1940s was also filled with announcements about the centrality of education to the process of social change and development. One spectacular example is the educator G.V. Portus, who claimed that the battle between totalitarianism and democracy would ultimately be decided by the kind of education that a society adopted. What this grab-bag of ideas jointly expressed was the common sense of power and centrality of intellectuals. To argue that the mind and the intellect moves the world is also to argue that it is the intelligentsia that directs progress. The apparently abstract, disinterested, and critical ruminations of Australian intellectuals about the capacity of thought to effect change are best understood and explained as a means of social action and mobilisation by a common group with expanding opportunities. This is their meaning and their significance.

As the assertions of intellectuals concerning the power of 'thought' actually concerned the power of intellectuals, so assertions about the centrality of 'art' fulfilled a similar role. Throughout the 1940's, there were a range of claims made about the importance of art, and its independence from society. At their most moderate, such claims merely insisted upon the autonomy of art from narrowly conceived political and instrumental ends, as when Adrian Lawlor claimed that "art does not serve society, and cannot serve it." However, these more typically became grander assertions about the power of art and of artistic vision. The claims made were often confused, even ridiculous. H.M. Swan, in a burst of sententious pomposity argued that:

"Life follows no pattern. And life is created by emotion not by thought, except in so far as thought is a rare emotion. And emotion is always the creation of the whole self. Poetry and imagination have an equal value, indeed imagination is of greater worth than reality because it has no limits set to it.""
Confused as such a claim was, it expressed the confidence of artists in the power of their art over reality. It was mirrored in the assertions of countless others. For J.P. McKinney, the poet pointed the way forward, because "...the gift of the poet is to feel the truth that cannot yet be thought." As a result, the creations of the poet offered the way out of society's impasse and discontinuity. These poetic and artistic creations were deliberately juxtaposed with the world of politics and economics. Poets insisted that their creations lorded it above politics. Max Harris was convinced that "Each poem has absolute reality higher than political reality." Likewise Albert Tucker rejected Marxism on the grounds that it did not sufficiently appreciate the role of non-economic factors such as religion, myth, art and psychology." Tucker's alternative conception was that conceptual or experimental art produced ideal mental projections of the world, and thereby both achieved autonomy from society and made further social progress possible." Through their courage and isolation, artists could produce creative visions which society could not absorb, thereby acting as an "advance guard" for social development, and providing the prerequisites for the emergence of a "qualitatively distinct and higher form of society.""

Of course, there was nothing new about such ideas. As Bernard Smith recognised in 1945, Tucker's assertions were no different than those of artists and critics of the nineteenth century, who had insisted that they were the prophets and hidden legislators of society." Nevertheless, our concern here is not to judge such ideas, nor even to test them, but to explain their emergence and to weigh their significance. Tucker's ideas were significant because they provided the theoretical rationale for the majority of the innovative art produced at this time. Tucker's own 'Images of Modern Evil' series clearly represented a mythical rendering of Australian society from a sharply moral and condemnatory standpoint. More broadly, Bernard Smith agrees that Tucker's theories also provided the base for Sidney Nolan's Eureka, Kelly, Burke and Wills and Mrs Fraser paintings, as well as Arthur Boyd's cycle of paintings concerned with biblical history and myth." Such ideas were therefore enormously significant. The idea of the painter as 'myth-maker' expressed the confidence of intellectuals in their own importance and power, and the paintings informed by this conception were likewise embodiments of this important, powerful identity. Together the insistence on the power of art, of thought and education were all part of the assertion of the power of the intellectual, and thereby formed a primary strand of the mobilisation of the intelligentsia.

The Need for Intellectual Rule

However the mobilisation of intellectuals did not only consist in abstract postulations of what the intellectual was, and the power of such an actor. The process by which intellectuals began to make claims about their collective interests also involved the assertion that intellectuals needed to rule society. This was the third part of the mobilisation of the intelligentsia, and was widespread during the early and middle forties. Intellectuals argued

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Harris, M. 'And the Sexton Talled the Bell', Angry Penguins, 7 December 1944, 55
Tucker, A. 'Art, Myth and Society', Angry Penguins, 4 1943, 52
Ibid., 49
Ibid., 50
Smith, B. Place, Taste and Tradition: a study of Australian Art since 1788, Oxford University Press, 1979
First published by Sydney Ure Smith Pty Ltd, 1945) 227
that they needed to rule not for their own sake, but for society's. There was much discussion
at this time about the sense of responsibility which artists should feel for society as a whole."
When intellectuals argued that they should rule, this was presented as a responsibility, an
urgent necessity for the sake of others. K. Baier is symptomatic:

"If intellectuals continue to keep aloof from the job of governing; if they prefer
to follow 'pure' pursuits instead of accepting responsibility...then other men
with other values will shape the future state. Those men will not believe that
action should be informed by thought. They will not value science, art,
literature, personality, individual exertion, kindness and reason. They will be
men who are tough, efficient, brutal."

The mixture of self-interestedness, fear and moralism is typical. When J.V. Duhig argued that
intellectuals should grasp hold of corporate life," or when P.H. Partridge argued that
philosophy needed to play a greater role in social and cultural life," the same articulations
came into play. The point being made was that intellectuals needed to rule society precisely
because they were "declassed" and without specific political interests. Without appropriate
education, citizens apparently made political decisions based upon narrow or sectional
interests, non-logical reasoning, ignorance or emotion." In contrast, intellectuals were lifted
above such concerns through their shared commitment to 'critical thinking'. As a result, they
functioned as guardians of truth and justice. Intellectuals waged a war on the intellectual
front, a war against "...injustices and plausible untruths..." They had a sort of special access to
the primary and essential values of society, and it was therefore argued at this time that the
specific task of the writer was "...to cast light on the eternal values which are involved in
present political and social issues." " Not only could intellectuals 'cast light' and provide
illumination to the populace, their wise rule could lift the people towards eternal values. Poet
Ian Mudie argued in 'Onward, My People' that an intellectual's tasks were:

But to make men flesh-blood-bone again:
Ours to shake the golden calf
From the statisticians' seats
And prove man does not walk
With belly higher than his head."

Intellectuals argued that it was in the name of essential and eternal values, on the basis of
critical, detached thinking, and in the interests of society as a whole, that they mobilised in
the 1940s.

"Editorial', Angry Penguins, 8 1945, 2
Duhig, J.V. 'Culture and the Crisis', Meanjin, 8 March 1942, 16
(1) June 1940, 16-7
Elkin, A.P. 'Our "New Order" and Liberty', Public Administration, 4 (6) June 1943, 274
"Editorial Note 'War as the Intellectual Front'. Meanjin, 8 March 1942, 3
Editorial', Meanjin, 4 (3) Spring 1945, 150
Mudie, I. 'Onward, My People', Meanjin, 3 (3) Summer 1944, 176
The Organisation and the Unification of the Intelligentsia

However, these ideas about the intellectual's power and responsibility were not mere words. In the world of truth-producers, truth-production is a process with practical repercussions. The production of this set of ideas practically involved the construction of greater bonds of unity between intellectuals. This was the more mundane side of their 'enlightened' and critical mobilisation in 'society's interests'. Intellectuals integrated as a class, or became more unified as a group in four primary ways.

Firstly, there was greater unity within the cultural realm. Of course, the emergence of the Contemporary Art Society in 1938 had already provided artists with a means of greater collective action and cooperation. However such cooperation extended out of the plastic and into the literary arts. The journal Angry Penguins had been established around the University of Adelaide, and it provided a vehicle for modernist experimentation and contemporary writing. In the journal's second issue in 1941, the editor Max Harris was already declaring that: "ANGRY PENGUINS stands in line with every progressive endeavour throughout the Commonwealth and believes that The Contemporary Art Society is in the forefront of this battle."" The ideological compatibility of the C.A.S and Angry Penguins was matched by the generational experiences of its key players (who were chiefly in their early '20s), and by their shared status as rebels and visionaries. In the journal's third issue, there were contributions from C.A.S. members and art criticism, and Harris now spoke of "...a greater degree of intellectual integration within our class."" By the journal's fourth issue in 1943, it was becoming "...a literary and art journal proper."" and there were major contributions from the Reeds, Sidney Nolan, and Albert Tucker. The same issue announced the establishment of the 'Reed and Harris Publishing Company', which would produce the journal as well as issuing books of quality and innovation. The journal's fifth issue later in 1943 came out under the joint editorship of Max Harris and John Reed, and the ties between writers, painters and critics were now greatly thickened.

At the same time, there was also a sense of shared purpose between Australian writers with different approaches to the Angry Penguins group. The early '40s also saw the growth of the CPA-linked Australian New Writing, and the cultural nationalism of the journal Meanjin. Other journals with less lasting significance or with differing concerns included the academic Southerly, the Aboriginal-inspired myth-making of the Jindyworobak journal, as well as such forums as Hudson's Poetry and Comment. Despite the difference between these schools, there was a genuine degree of cross-fertilisation between Australian writers. Rather than a sense of competition between journals, there was a sense of camaraderie, and of a common intellectual front which needed both its avant-gardist wings and its stuffier central trunk. Max Harris was the most sensitive to these issues, and he declared that up until at least 1944, there was a "...complex of an advancing national culture...", made up of each journal searching for its own particular path, producing a cumulative "...surge of literary vigour and cultural ferment.""46

1The Contemporary Art Society', Angry Penguins, 2 1941, 70
2Angry Penguins, 3 1942, 3
3Angry Penguins, 4 1943, 1
4For example. Max Harris had been published in all the other Australian journals but one by December 1944 - Harris, M. 'The Current Literary Scene No 2', Angry Penguins, 7 December 1944, 101
5Ibid.
The greater unity which emerged within the cultural realm was matched by greater unity within the educational and academic world. There were plans for greater cooperation within the social sciences at this time, and P.H. Partridge advanced a future in which all branches could cooperate in a study which took "...the culture-continuum..." as its object. There were also suggestions made about cooperation between the humanities and the 'scientific movement', and a push to strengthen intellectual relationships within the Academy. Of course, there is no evidence that such grand plans came to anything substantial, and this signals that such suggestions were as motivated by politics as they were by scholarship. Plans for greater intellectual cooperation expressed the drive for intellectual unity in the Australia of the 1940s - their role was 'ideological unification' and there are no intellectual traces, no substantial works, which bare the mark of a disinterested quest for greater knowledge.

Alongside the drive for a common object of study, intellectuals were building unity in more practical ways. The common interests of educators in an expanded educational system led them to put aside old divisions and debates. When the WEA held a Conference on Adult Education in early 1944 it drew 78 organisations, 280 delegates and 1000 in total attendance. There was collective discussion, debate, and a set of Conference Resolutions which made common demands for expanded education in the post war world. This attempt to find a common voice as educators and intellectuals is reflected in the evolution of the journal of the WEA, the Australian Highway. In December 1944, and in the wake of the Conference, it was decided that the journal would upgrade, and attempt to become a "...high quality journal." No longer would it print items of purely "domestic interest" and "indifferent quality". The journal's editors were fashioning it into a more assertive and cohesive unit - a mouthpiece for Australian educators, and both a signpost and a contributing force to the heightened unity which emerged at this time within the intelligentsia.

Not only was there unity within the discrete 'cultural' and 'educational' realms, there was also unity between these two sorts of truth-producers. Particularly the 'educational' and 'critical' intellectuals reached out for an alliance with artistic or cultural intellectuals, and insisted upon their similarities and common make-up. This took both purely cerebral and more practical forms. In the world of the intellect, there were attempts to assert the similarity of critical and the creative. H. Hudson argued that metaphysical philosophy was actually a form of art. Like art, it had an "...important meaning which falls outside the scope of scientific treatment." Like art, it stemmed from the working out of emotions." Like art, it could be understood as the linguistic expression of our personality." Philosophy and art were identical, and by implication, so were their practitioners. Likewise, critics like Leslie Rees argued at...
this time that they needed "imaginative enthusiasm" to fulfill their functions, and thereby shared ".the first attribute of the originating artist himself."  

More practically, educators moved to affirm that they would assist Australian artists to grow and flourish. Academics like J.I.M. Stewart of Adelaide University declared their willingness to help create an audience for Australian poets," and there were noises within the WEA around this time over the need for a greater focus on painting." More broadly, it is true that the emergence of Chairs in Australian literature would be a prerequisite of cultural growth. Even outside the Academy, the high school market was lucrative for Australian historians, and it was generally affirmed that expanded education meant expanded cultural opportunities. It was this realisation that led Lloyd Ross to demand that ".educational and cultural policy should form a unity..", and to lobby the Government around this point." In short, unity between 'cultural' and 'critical' intellectuals was also detectable over the early and into the mid 1940s.

Finally, there were also signs of unity between 'technical' intellectuals and both 'cultural' and 'critical' intellectuals. Experts in science and in economics were not excluded from the intelligentsia, but integrated into its class unity. As early as November 1942, Reverend E.H. Burgmann was declaring that art, religion and science were compatible," and that they needed to "love one another", and "work together in mutual concord"."  

Around this time the poet Harry Hooton declared that modern poetry was addressed ".to a small minority, mainly made up of technicians in industry.."," and there were numerous attempts to integrate the interests of the planners and the poets. Propagandists like Lloyd Ross worked to tie the cultural renaissance of the early 1940s to the greater role of planning in Australian life, and to the future role of such planning. In his conception, they were all tied up together:

"Truly if we think that an Australia without slums and suffering can arise like a mirage over the desert, our hopes will disappear and leave us stranded, thirsty and lost. We will be inspired by our poets, but we must build not to music but by planned effort, national effort. Blueprints as well as poets, music and engineering; architects and artists - maybe architects who are artists; anyway, "Waltzing Matilda" and "Plans for Post War Reconstruction"." 

And once again, these articulations had a more practical embodiment. The role of the CPA in the intellectual life of the 1940s meant that its 'cultural' or 'educational' middle class members were also trained in the technical language of Marxism. As we have seen, outside the CPA many painters and poets aspired also to be sociologists and political activists. Likewise, educators were forced to think about the technologies of radio and of film in making plans for the future of mass learning." More than this, the education of the planners and their class

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"Rees, L. 'Is the Critic Creative?'. Meanjin, 5 (1) 1946, 43
Stewart, J.I.M. 'Australian Poetry'. Australian Quarterly, 14 (3) September 1942, 98
"n.a., 'Art in the WEA'. Australian Highway, 26 (5) October 1944, 76
Burgmann, E.H. The Regeneration of Civilization - being the Moorhouse Lectures delivered in Melbourne at St Paul's Cathedral, November 1942 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 20, 35-6
"ibid.. 52
Hooton, H. 'Poetry and the New Proletariat', Australian Quarterly, 18 (2) June 1946, 96
"Ross, L. 'How Shall We Develop Australia's National Spirit?', in Searchlights on Life and on Australia. ABC, November 1944, 51
Boyer, R.J.F. 'Radio in Education Conference', Australian Quarterly, 18 (1) March 1946, 97
trajectory gave them the means and the desire to function as an audience for the cultural renaissance. The ties which bound intellectuals together were greatly strengthened over the 1940s, as cultural, educational and technical truth-producers all thought (and therefore acted as intellectuals) as well as organised themselves with greater vigour and purpose.

This process of integration within the intelligentsia was also a process of separating intellectuals off from non-intellectuals within Australian society, and from the labour movement in particular. Significantly, it was at this time that Donald Horne warned artists to be concerned primarily with themselves, and with what pleased them. Likewise it was also over this period that Albert Tucker insisted that only the artist and the intellectual could define their collective roles in society, and that this was not at all the concern of politicians. Intellectuals may have existed alongside non-intellectuals, but their action was distinctive and separate. W.H.C. Eddy codified this aspect of intellectual mobilisation with his concept of the independence of political theorizing. Eddy contended that political theorizing was not at all tied to other movements and interests, but was an independent action with its own distinctive force. An actor who produced ideas about the nature of politics was not helping the working class, the capitalist class, or the like. On the contrary, if such ideas were 'critical' and scientific, then they contributed to the health of the scientific movement and of political theory:

"I would take political theorizing then as itself a political activity, independent, and with policies of its own, and the various moralities which support science as making contributions to political theory in the course of their political struggles."

The political theorist—motivated by science was contrasted with the 'politician', who was servile to political masters, and whose thought was motivated by the ends he or she assumed, and the "...movements of which he (or she) is an instrument, and which support and are supported by those ends." The politician was part of the grubby world, and particularly a creature of the labour movement, while the political theorist was above the world, above politics and above interests.

This attempt to separate intellectuals off from the labour movement took two primary forms. Firstly, it involved assertions that intellectuals were a different species from the labour movement figures who were in power federally, and with whom intellectuals were in close collaboration. In his memoirs, H.C. Coombs still thought of himself and other progressive bureaucrats as separate from the Labor Government. When describing the prospects for post war planning, he uses a 'we' to identify the interests of the planners, and places both the Prime Minister and "the community" outside that 'we'. This is not at all a quirk of Coombs's historical imagination. Intellectuals of the time contrasted the "patient zeal of the research workers" with base "political interests lying behind the great organised parties of Australia."

Others were so convinced of the separation between intellectuals and the labour movement that they focused their attention on encouraging intellectuals to develop greater administrative

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23 Horne, D. 'Some Cultural Elites in Australia', Angry Penguins, 8 1945, 133
24 Introduction - Sociological Section'. Angry Penguins, 8 1945, 142
26 Ibid., 87
28 Black, H.D. 'A Realistic Approach to Administration', Public Administration, 3 (3) September 1941, 120
expertise. This was encouraged because the expert administrator would attain the ability to bring Ministers "...on most questions of policy, to his (or her) own way of thinking." This separation was not at all limited to the technocratic intellectual. Cultural intellectuals were convinced they lived in a world separate from the Labor Government. Even when pleading for cultural funding, artists were keen to emphasise that politicians should not have direct control over cultural matters, and that a "new conception of the State" was necessary, in which Ministers would delegate authority in fields outside their own expertise.

Secondly, intellectuals were anxious to affirm that they were separate from the labour movement institutions and from workers themselves who often provided an audience for intellectuals. In the field of non-University education, there was a discernible move away from the 'worker-centered' model towards the more generic 'adult education'. The Workers' Educational Association had a rift with the labour movement in N.S.W., and its workshop classes and trade union enrollments fell at the same time as its overall enrollments increased. With the growth of Army Education and agitation around education for the post-war period, many within the WEA argued for a shift in the narrow, worker-based nature of the organisation. W.G.K. Duncan argued at the 1944 WEA Conference that the old vision of the union of "labour and learning" was redundant, and asked:

"Doesn't labour, in this context, mean "practical experience", and "workers' education" include all education with a social purpose?"

Despite the mobilisation of the labour movement, intellectuals argued that their quest for public funds and expanded opportunities would be strengthened by focusing on adult education, and by adopting a less 'sectarian' type of education. This sort of argument gained greater weight with the conflict between the WEA and the NSW labour movement, and many looked towards alternative models which could develop "a kind of united front in adult education" without the "heresy hunting" which had marred their own circumstances.

As educators attempted to shape their audience, and to make it increasingly non-working class, so cultural producers acted in a like manner. The journal which was most self-conscious about the creation of an audience for Australian literature was Meanjin, and it was in no way convinced of the merits of a mass audience. On the contrary, the editor Clem Christesen characterised the period as one of "mass aesthetic ignorance", and mourned that Australians ranked the publican higher than the poet. Christesen's aim was for the poet to develop the audience he or she already had, and to expand that audience through sustained and accomplished work. The success of Meanjin was itself raised as proof of the virtues of such a strategy. Art remained the concern of the elite few, and not the ignorant many. Certainly, artists resented any incursions onto their turf from the world of the labour

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23 Janes, C.V. 'Ministers and How to Handle Them - By one who doesn't', Public Administration, 3 (4) December 1941, 177
24 'Editorial', Meanjin, 4 (1) Autumn 1945, 3
25 The details of this rift will be explored in Chapter 6.
26 Stewart, D. 'The Trade Union Movement and the WEA', Australian Highway, 25 (4) August 1943, 58
27 Duncan, W.G.K. 'WEA Conference on Adult Education', Australian Highway, 26 (2) April 1944, 18
28 'The "Highway-man" These Present Discontents', Australian Highway, 23 (3) June 1941, 47
29 Editor's Notebook', Australian Highway, 26 (1) February 1944, 2
30 'Editorial 'The point of View'. Meanjin, 5 1941, 2
31 'Editorial Notes - Poet and Audience'. Meanjin, 9 June 1942, 3
32 Ibid.
movement. In opposition to the role of the Communist Party and Communist artists, John Reed went so far as to submit a motion to the Contemporary Art Society that all members involved in outside activities relating to art must have the approval of the CAS. Although this motion was withdrawn after protest, it expresses strongly the sense of the apartness and organisation of intellectuals which marked their mobilisation over the early and mid 1940s.

Even when intellectuals and the labour movement had clearly drawn together in action, many intellectuals attempted to insist upon the apartness of intellectuals, and their distinctive identities. As already noted, many intellectuals joined the Communist Party over this period. However, those concerned with the mobilisation of the intelligentsia aimed to interpret this process in such a way that the implications for the collective action of the labour movement were muted. Max Harris insisted that intellectuals joined the CPA for non-material (and by implication, non-class) reasons. Harris argued that intellectuals were distinctive beings, in that they were heterogeneous, drawn from different classes, concerned with love, existence, ethics, and the difficulties of social communication. For Harris the intellectual was a utopian, because he or she needed a panacea for the restlessness of existence. This innate utopian urge was what drew the intellectual towards Communism—not because Communism was a fantasy, but because "in this case fantasy-projections are not far removed from potential social realities."

But although Harris was superficially sympathetic to Communism, he conceptualised Communist-involvement as stemming from utopian, idealistic, and non-material motives. Likewise, Harris also paid lip-service to the idea of 'the Left', and even pledged his commitment to it. However, the implications of this commitment were, for Harris, that an intellectual could place his or her resources either "in the ranks of the working class struggle", or in integrating the intellectual class. One needs little imagination to guess where Harris put his energies, and to see that the consequences of this were merely to push intellectual mobilisation under the banner of 'the Left', and to violate the previous identity between the labour movement, class and 'the Left' of politics. By eroding this previous identity, and by insisting upon the common (yet unique) motivations of intellectual CPA'ers, Harris acted to assert the apartness of intellectuals, and their distance from the labour movement with which they were involved.

So, there is ample evidence to suggest that the early 1940s were marked by the emergence of an Australian intelligentsia. Drawing from an expanding constituency of truth-producers and educators, intellectuals began to form a collective and to make claims upon society. They became more conscious of their separate identity. They asserted their power and importance within society. They advanced the idea that it was their 'responsibility' to rule society. They organised as a collective separate from the labour movement, and they tightened the thickness of their internal ties of communication and interaction. In all of these ways Australian intellectuals formed an intelligentsia. And it was an intelligentsia, a collective, that Australian intellectuals made a series of demands about the future shape of post war society. These demands were not the only demands made. The labour movement had its own visions about the future for Australia, and it was ideas from both sources which formed a part of the drive for 'post war reconstruction'.

Haese. R. Rebels and Precursors, 135
Harris. M. 'Art and Social Integration', Australian Quarterly. 15 (1) March 1943, 30-1
Harris. M. letter to Bernard Smith, cited in Haese. R. Rebels and Precursors, 136
Post-War Reconstruction and Intellectual Interests

The bold visions which were advanced as part of the drive for post-war reconstruction were not the product of idealists and of disinterested speculation. They were a product of specific claims made in the name of concrete collective interests. This section of the Chapter aims to amplify the version of post-war reconstruction advanced by the Australian intelligentsia, and to explain how it was marked by the shape, the opportunities, and the 'cultural frames' used by this collective.

The proposals of the intelligentsia for post-war reform were tied up with their visions of 'the people' and of 'the intellectual'. According to intellectuals at this time, the common people of Australia were materialistic, dumb, inert, and without the desire for liberty or for art. As a result of this vision, intellectuals felt that only certain sets of interactions with the Australian people were possible. Interactions were limited by two principles. Firstly, it was believed that the desires and the expressed needs of non-intellectuals could not be trusted. Non-intellectuals were quite literally treated as children. John Metcalfe, the Principal Librarian at the Public Library of NSW, stated openly that:

"Children are an example of people not knowing what their needs are in the way of education and culture, and also of not having the means to meet them if they did. Most adults are in the same position as children in both respects. They don't know what they need and couldn't afford it individually if they did.""111.

The metaphor of the child was widely deployed by intellectuals,122 as was that of the patient and the surgeon.123 Both metaphors evocatively expressed the sorts of interactions which intellectuals were willing to countenance. What Australians claimed that they wanted was dismissed. Intellectuals believed that they needed to meet the latent or "submerged" needs of the community,124 and that this was the best means of fulfilling their interests. Intellectuals were to do the acting, and were not to be acted upon.

The second principle of interactions was that the intellect and the critical abilities of non-intellectuals could not be directly appealed to. As Brian Fitzpatrick lamented, non-intellectuals were incapable of independent thought. In a letter to H.V. Evatt he argued that:

"People won't participate - give their votes in a referendum, for example - just because they ought to, ought to see that the future of the ordinary family is contingent on the result."125

Brian Fitzpatrick's solution was the construction of a propaganda apparatus,126 but intellectuals generally preferred the term 'education' to 'propaganda'. Nevertheless, because

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111 Metcalfe, J. 'Cultural Institutions and the Australian Community', *Australian Quarterly*, 17 (1) March 1945.
122 For example, it was used in Horn, R.V. 'About Country People', *Australian Quarterly*, 14 (1) March 1942.99
123 The commonality of these medical metaphors in slum eradication literature is noted in Spearitt, P. 'Sydney's "Slums": Middle Class Reformers and the Labour Response', *Labour History*, 26 May 1974, 78
124 Wessells, H.E. 'Give the People Books', *Australian Quarterly*, 17 (4) December 1945, 74
126 Ibid.
non-intellectuals were deemed incapable of independent thought, the implications of 'education' were practically indistinguishable from propaganda. Education meant that the people were persuaded as to the policies and opinions advanced by intellectuals. It meant that even if the people were not wise enough to rule, there was still cause for optimism, because they could be shown "...what is a proper course to pursue." More specifically, people needed to be educated as to what was possible and what was impossible in the post-war era. Their mass of "inarticulate opinion" needed to be tutored to support a 'constructive economic policy'. The form of education suggested by the intelligentsia during the early 1940s did not allow for the process of mutual learning and interaction. The intellectual was the surgeon, the people were the patients; the intellectual was the parent, the people were the children. In its most extreme formulations, such as those advanced by Clem Christesen, the concept was sinister, and smacked of social engineering. Christesen argued that the poet could participate in the process of social planning through the 'management' of the national consciousness. He was convinced that: "...an intelligently managed national consciousness would act as a check against foreign exploitation, and would constitute a valuable unifying force."

Proposals for post-war reform were marked by an adherence to these two principles. It is possible to describe the proposals of the intelligentsia as being concerned with three basic objects:

1. Educational and cultural expansion.
2. The expansion of social research and the social sciences.
3. The retention of economic controls.

Educational and Cultural Expansion

Australian intellectuals were vocal about the need for post-war policies to be structured around education. Rather than the material questions that concerned the labour movement, intellectuals argued that it was education which was of greater importance, and which needed to receive priority. Support for education was quite weak for most Australian citizens, and was only strong among 'informed' member of the community. For intellectuals, economic security was not enough; education was the means to the new order. It was hence the self-appointed task of intellectuals to ensure that "...education becomes the first necessity demanded from our Governments." The key political and cultural journals of the intelligentsia were filled with demands for expanded education - demands which were made in opposition to the 'base' and 'material', and which were made upon the Government. Herman Black was a most persuasive and influential advocate:

"...the long term problem is that of changing the quality (and quantity) of the Australian population. Education is the means whereby qualitative changes..."
can be made; and these will support improved efficiency, higher living standards, greater equality of opportunity, less inequality of income."

As we would expect, such pleas were shaped by the conception of 'the people' held by intellectuals. The aim was to remake the people - to make them less materialistic, less ignorant, less aesthetically desensitized. The nature of the people made them vulnerable to the wiles of demagogues, charlatans and of totalitarianism. They therefore needed education as a safeguard against the demagogue. Education's aim was to teach the people to disdain false propaganda. It developed the "enlightened" citizenry which was a prerequisite of democracy. The understanding and the knowledge provided by education could reduce the level of industrial disputation. Likewise, education was needed for the soldier whom intellectuals did not expect to think, but who therefore presented a social problem in the post war world. Education was presented as the means by which the thoughtless people would learn to have something to say. It lifted the people to a higher level, and thereby made a better, more democratic society possible. It was, indeed, the only means by which the dream of a democratic world could become a reality.

The key mechanisms of expanded education were established during the war itself. The Army Education Service employed 540 full time personnel, and it stretched out its educative influence to unprecedented numbers. In 1942, audiences for the Service's lectures were estimated at 84,379. By 1944 numbers had expanded further, and during that year there were over 2.5 million attendances at 46,500 talks and lectures; half a million attendances at 9225 music recitals; 1.5 million attendances at 8,500 film shows. There were also 1.62 million copies of discussion courses and pamphlets issued, and by September 1945 field libraries had a cumulative size of over 600,000 volumes. The journal Salt was sent to all troops fortnightly, and Current Affairs Bulletin was also sent to officers every two weeks. This was the cause of much excitement and much hope for Australian intellectuals. The Adult Education Movement aimed to ensure that the resources and the momentum of the A.E.S. were maintained and converted over into a peacetime Australia. The WEA's Conference on Adult Education made a resolution to this effect, and pressure was maintained as the war ground to a close.
There were concrete signs that the demands of intellectuals were being fulfilled. The Labor Government's Department of Post War Reconstruction organised Discussion Groups as part of its activity, and these introduced many to the "basic techniques" of adult education. Under the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme a quarter of a million Australians attained (mostly vocational) training after their time in the services. The Australian National University was established in Canberra in 1946, and the Labor Government's scholarships scheme opened up the universities to greater numbers from wider areas. By the financial year 1948-49, the Commonwealth Government was spending 28 times as much on education as it had been in 1939-40. Clearly, the push by the intelligentsia for increased education was able to achieve forceful and far-reaching results.

However, the key means by which intellectuals aimed to expand education in the post war era was not through the University system or through vocational training. The key means through which the people were to be remade was the growing movement for 'Community Centres'. Community Centres were conceptualised as the focal point for a local neighbourhood and for the mental and physical life of its people. The Centre aimed to provide facilities for preschool children, for adolescents and for adults - everything from baby health centres, to creches, to gymnasiums, to libraries, to educational facilities would form a part of it. The Centre was regarded very much as an educational institution. T.H. Coates declared it "an educational enterprise in the broadest sense...", and it was also labelled "a new phase in the long history of the development of adult education..." It was the adult education movement which provided the impetus for the development of community centres. Proposals for Community Centres first emerged around the adult education movement. The Secretary of the WEA in New South Wales, Dave Stewart, suggested that his organisation link up with the interest in community centres, act to organise them in local areas, and thereby mark out a path of future progress. The proceedings of WEA meetings also bare witness to vigorous lobbying for the Centres. When W.G.K. Duncan submitted his report into Adult education in 1944, he suggested that: "a "home" for adult education could best be provided by community centres; and that provision should be made for such community centres in all new housing estates."

The Community Centres were educational institutions in a number of ways. Firstly, they provided classes facilitated by the WEA and by like organisations, and therefore directly embodied greater education. But more broadly than this, the Centres were educative to the extent that they inculcated new values into the Australian people. It was hoped that the

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33 Stewart, D. 'The WEA and the Future of Adult Education in Australia', Australian Highway, 26 (5) October 1944, 65
34 Dedman, J. 'Foreword', in 'Return Journey' 30/9/49 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 9, Series 7, 4
35 Sanders, C. 'Higher Education - State or Commonwealth?', Australian Quarterly, 22 (4) December 1950, 43
36 Ministry of Post War Reconstruction Bulletin No 3, E.M. Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/17, 63
37 Untitled document issued by the Ministry of Post War Reconstruction 16/4/45 E.M. Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/17, 5
38 Coates, T.H. 'Community', Australian Highway, 29 (1) February 1942, 3
40 Stewart, D. 'The WEA and the Future of Adult Education in Australia', Australian Highway, 26 (5) October 1944, 67
41 For example, the NSW Annual Conference of the WEA resolved that the NSW Government be encouraged to support the Community Centre movement strongly, as they would "provide adult education with an appropriate background" - NSW Annual Conference Australian Highway, 28 (3) June 1946, ii
process of coming together in the Community Centre would allow people to develop common interests, and to share as a group. Rather than discord and division, a common sense of belonging would emerge. The very struggle to establish the Centre would develop a sense of teamwork, interest in civic affairs, and enthusiasm for physical and cultural development. It would effectively teach the people to become genuine citizens. The people would be assisted to climb above their debased and anti-intellectual state.

However, if it was hoped that the people could be educated through participation, this in no sense implied that the rationality and agency of non-intellectuals was accepted. On the contrary, the whole struggle for the Community Centre was to be waged with intellectual leadership and guidance - with the intellectuals as the adults, and the people as their children. Those who planned the Centres asserted that:

"a spontaneous local enthusiasm and good will are not in themselves sufficient guarantee of the success of a movement, and in fact may do harm unless directed by a trained leader."

The Department of Post War Reconstruction believed that without trained personnel, the Community Centre movement was bound to fail or to fall into disrepute. It offered technical guidance to communities seeking to establish centres, and it advised that such guidance be taken up. There was no danger that Australian intellectuals would endorse spontaneous or independent action on behalf of the Australian people.

However, it was hoped that this expansion in Australia's educational resources would feed into an expansion in Australia's cultural resources. As the people were ushered into the world of ideas and education, as they were led towards community development, so (it was hoped) they would begin to form the building-blocks of an audience for Australian artists. It was regarded as an "obvious necessity" that art centres become a part of community centres at this time. Although it was clearly more a potential than a reality, intellectuals like Lloyd Ross were convinced of the cultural potential of the Community Centre Movement. He argued in 1945 that:

"We have no truly national journal today, but our young writers and artists, our painters and preachers, our poets and players may find awaiting for them new and growing audiences in libraries, community centres, mobile film units, rural concert halls, area schools, discussion groups and residential adult colleges. We can have a national revival, though we have no one national medium of experience."

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18 Windeyer, R. 'Community Centres', Australian Quarterly, 17 (1) March 1945, 68-9
19 McCallum, J.A. 'Review', Australian Quarterly, 17 (2) June 1945, 123
20 Ross, L. 'Community Building in Australia', Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 11A, 4
21 Draft for Cabinet - Community Centres, Immediate Needs and Future Developments' n.d. Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 49, 2
22 Untitled Document issued by the Ministry of Post War Reconstruction 16/4/45 E.M Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/17, 11
25 Ross, L. 'Building Community and Nation', Meanjin, 4 (1) Autumn 1945, 5
Educational and cultural expansion would thereby feed off each other, 'the people' would be lifted from their materialistic misery, and the intellectuals would gain both greater unity and a greater audience.

**The Expansion of Social Research and the Social Sciences**

The second primary aspect of the intelligentsia's vision for post war reconstruction was the expansion of social research and the social sciences. It was argued that the social sciences were needed for four primary reasons. Firstly, the social sciences provided the basis for the techniques of economic and social planning. Before plans were constructed, the planner needed the knowledge and the assistance of the economist, the geographer, the sociologist, and a host of other specially trained people. There was a vital need for statistics if objectives like full employment were to be attained. Social planning also needed detailed social research. Even physical and town planning needed a comprehensive "physio and demographic survey" before they could be undertaken. There was consequently a very deep need for social research - a need which could be equated with the national need for a war effort. Expanding the level of social research was therefore one of the primary aims of Australian intellectuals.

The second reason for expanding the social sciences was that they contributed to greater levels of production and reduced industrial conflict. A 'comprehensive research programme' was the basis upon which production per head could be lifted. The use of social science experts was vital if the problems of factory fatigue and inefficiency could be diagnosed and treated effectively. The existence of trained industrial welfare officers was a means of soothing unrest and of lifting output. However, it was the nascent social science of industrial relations which promised to do most to guarantee peaceable labour relations and high production. The "detailed examination" of industrial relations was necessary if the wartime improvements in Australian productive performance were to be carried over into the post war era. More than this, A.E.C. Hare believed that it was the very task of industrial relations to educate workers and employers so that they could forfeit past "prejudices" and come to a peaceful understanding. This educative role was particularly addressed to workers, and to demonstrating that a boss would always be necessary, that worker control was impossible, and that the appeal of State Socialism was an illusion. This was the proclaimed contribution of industrial relations, and like other social sciences, it was treasured by intellectuals as a means of lifting production and lowering strikes.

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144 Elkin, A.P. 'Our "New Order" and Liberty', *Public Administration*, 4 (6) June 1943, 274
145 Oswald Burt, W. Poverty, Housing and Health, Australasian Medical Publishing Co, 1945, 14
147 Kewley, T.H. 'Social Service Planning', *Public Administration*, 4 (3) September 1942, 117
148 Fuchs, E. 'Towards Physical Planning', *Australian Quarterly*, 16 (1) March 1944, 89
149 Black, H.D. 'A Realistic Approach to Administration', *Public Administration*, 3 (3) September 1941, 116
150 Shipway, C.H. 'The Relationship of Research to Australia's Economy', *Australian Highway*, 23 (1) February 1946, 11
151 Ross, L. 'Hours and Health', *Australian Highway*, 24 (5) October 1942, 74
152 Crisp, H. 'Women in Munitions'. *Australian Quarterly*, 13 (3) September 1941, 76
153 Ross, L. 'Wartime Industrial Impressions'. *Australian Quarterly*, 26 (2) June 1944, 56
The third contribution which the social sciences were needed to make was that of organising the Government's social services program. In 1939, F.A. Bland had already claimed that social scientists were necessary for an adequate welfare system, stating with unaccustomed hyperbole that "...the future of our social services depends upon our ability to recruit and train a capable personnel." A few years later, the opinions of leading intellectuals seemed unchanged. By 1941, social work was established at the universities of Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney." In 1943, E. Govan advised those interested in the social services to use and to stimulate further detailed social research." In the same year the Australian National Research Council established a Committee for Research in the Social Sciences." The usefulness of the social sciences to the organisation of the Government's social services program was the third contribution that they could make, and the third reason advanced for their post-war expansion.

The final use for the social sciences was their ability to gain insight into, and to allow for the manipulation of non-intellectuals. They provided for this in a number of ways. Firstly, the techniques of 'mass observation', or of detailed political polling provided the means to understand the views of the people about discrete issues of concern. The techniques of mass observation were celebrated by intellectuals,” and they proved to be useful for the prosecution of the war effort and the maintenance of morale.” But more generally, 'the people' who were so distant from intellectuals could be apprehended and understood through polling and through social investigation, and the voice of "...the ordinary man, little John Citizen..." could finally be heard.” This knowledge was valuable for two reasons. Firstly, it allowed for prediction about the future of Australian society. Faith in science was such that John Metcalfe declared that "...within certain limits of inquiry, a poll, or even observation, may establish that the society as a whole, by a resolution of predictable forces within it, will move in a certain direction, act in a certain way..." But social scientists were probably more interested in the potential for manipulation of the people which the knowledge of mass observation delivered. Brian Fitzpatrick was anxious for the Labor Government to establish a propaganda apparatus - or a 'Public Relations Directorate', as he called it. The data delivered by mass observation techniques was an important prerequisite to the effective functioning of this directorate, as Fitzpatrick made clear:

"We cannot hope to induce sections of the community to adopt appropriate attitudes towards a planned post war economy, unless we have informed ourselves of their present attitudes, derived from their experience under wartime planning."
Used in this way, the social sciences allowed for interaction between intellectuals and non-intellectuals. As Tom Harrison put it, the social sciences "...contributed much towards bridging the gulf between leaders (few in number) and the vastly increased number of followers, ordinary, often rather "dumb" and apathetic citizens." They allowed for those dangerous, greedy, materialistic children, 'the people', to be led towards wisdom and adulthood. This was one of the primary uses of psychology. The psychologist could teach people the art of living. Citizens could learn about mental health like they learnt about first aid, and neuroses could thereby be avoided. Perhaps more importantly, psychologically trained parents would ensure the growth of happy, well-equipped children, and an even better social order could therefore be attained.

In all of these ways, the social sciences promised to provide for a better Australia. They allowed planning to function effectively, they assisted increased production and reduced strikes, they helped to establish effective social services, and they allowed for insight into and manipulation of the mass of non-intellectual Australians. It was for these reasons that Australian intellectuals lobbied for their expansion into the post-war era.

The Retention of Economic Controls

The accepted historical wisdom is that Australian intellectuals converted to Keynesianism before and during World War II, that this was a systematic, intellectual conversion, and that it signaled the acceptance of capitalism, and a quest to maintain and to modernise it. This is the argument that informs Greg Whitwell's *The Treasury Line.* It is also an argument which H.C. Coombs privileges in his memoirs, where he speaks of his first contact with 'The General Theory' like a defining moment, in which "...I had become convinced that in the Keynesian analysis lay the key to comprehension of the economic system."

However, Australian intellectuals were neither so committed to Keynesian nor to capitalism. As Paul Smyth has recently argued, although it is true that Australian intellectuals moved away from the orthodox, neo-classical model of the economy, they did not convert to Keynesianism pure and simple. Intellectuals were more likely to accept the views of Marx when thinking about the social framework of the economy, and about the sets of social demands that an economic and political system should fulfill. Consequently, the economic philosophy of Australia's leading technocrats was less Keynesian than a sort of eclectic part Keynesian, part socialist mix. Australian intellectuals fought hard for the maintenance of economic controls into the post-war era, and this was the third primary strand of their claim-making for post-war reconstruction.

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"Harrison, T. 'Socio-Starvation: Australia', *Angry Penguins*, 7 1944, 47
"Clunies Ross, J. 'O. Brave New Social Order!', *Australian Quarterly*, 14 (4) December 1942, 84
"Clunies Ross, J. 'Civilian War Neuroses', *Australian Quarterly*, 18 (2) June 1941, 78
"Clunies Ross, J. 'O. Brave New Social Order!', *Australian Quarterly*, 14 (4) December 1942, 85
"Ibid., 56
"Ibid., 90-1
Practically, the history of discussion over planning in the 1930s,"' and the experience of war time administration both persuaded Australian intellectuals that there was a need for more thoroughgoing intervention into the workings of the economy. As H.C. Coombs argued in 1944:

"We have built over the years of the war a technique for handling our economic affairs which we need not throw aside."'°

Even the most conservative and cautious believed that Government controls and regulation were needed to coordinate the post war changeover from a 'war economy' to peacetime production."' But more importantly, it was believed by leading economists like Coombs and Copland that both price control and planning were needed as part of a full employment economy. Despite his commitment to Keynesianism, in 1944 Coombs believed that:

"There will have to be a control of prices to prevent the relative shortage of materials leading to competition and rising prices. The existence of some machinery to ensure that first things come first seems, therefore, to be a necessary consequence of the full employment economy.""'

The journals of the Australian intelligentsia were filled with demands for the maintenance of price control into the post-war years."' Likewise, the economic and social aims which intellectuals held encouraged them to lobby for the retention of detailed planning and intervention into the economy. A full employment economy with high production of socially useless goods and services was not something economists like Copland were willing to accept."' As a result, the setting of production goals,"' the extension of greater public ownership of utilities,"' and the continuing intervention of the State into economic life were all advocated. Economists like J.S.G. Wilson argued that State enterprises should be pushed to such a level of dominance that "...it becomes possible to bring fluctuations in private sectors of the economy under reasonably effective control by other means.""' The disenchantment with the simple Keynesianism of aggregate demand is shown by the detailed planning of Government expenditure that went on. Rather than merely paying people to 'dig holes' in...
times of recession, the Government kept a highly detailed 'National Works Programme' in Reserve. Its purpose was twofold. Firstly, it was used to facilitate priority-setting, so that those projects with the greatest social merits could be undertaken when demand lagged. Secondly, it was expected to be so well planned and prepared that "..it should always be possible to prepare the current year's programme at a rate to absorb available man-power and materials." It was precisely this approach that led prominent economists of the time to argue that expenditure by the Government was "the backbone of the Australian plan for full employment."

Although there proved to be Constitutional barriers to many of these suggestions, they did represent the claims of the Australian intelligentsia for post war reconstruction, and they were argued for with passion and commitment. The question of the maintenance of capitalism was not the primary question. Intellectuals believed that a certain sort of society was necessary, and they would use the economic techniques available to attain such a society. Rather than fervent warriors for capitalism, in the early and middle forties they were convinced that laissez faire was passing away, that private enterprise was on trial, and that its fate would be determined in the next few years.

Conclusion

Together the maintenance of economic controls, the expansion of education and cultural development, and the growth of the social sciences formed the demands of the Australian intelligentsia for post-war reform. As we have seen, these reforms were advocated through the insights of critical and disinterested thinking, in the name of society's interests and for the ultimate good of the people. As we have also seen, these claims were made by a collective with expanding political opportunities, growing self-awareness, and developing ties of internal communication and organisation. The claims made by the intelligentsia were claims for the extension and adaptation of the State's wartime policies into the post war world - policies which had benefited intellectuals enormously. They provided the means for the Australian intelligentsia to expand in both size and influence. Certainly, they may have been defended in idealistic terms and juxtaposed with the supposedly base, materialistic claims of labour. However, the interests of educators in expanded education and of artists in expanded art were no more idealistic than the interests of the worker in full employment and rising wages.

This is not a cause with which to reproach Australian intellectuals - on the contrary, all politics are concerned with material questions to an important extent, and there is nothing base about this. Nevertheless, these insights into the articulations of the Australian intelligentsia are important, because it is through them (and to an important extent, despite them) that they cooperated with the mobilised Australian labour movement. In the next


Wilson, R.C. (Commonwealth Statistician) to C.A. Hay (Coordinator General of Works) 8/12/47 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987 Box 7, Series 7, 8

Merry, D.H. and Burns, G.R. 'Full Employment: the British, Canadian and Australian White Papers', Economic Record, 21 (41) December 1945, 227

Butler, I.A. 'Agriculture and War', Australian Quarterly, 12 (3) September 1940, 91

Wilson, J. 'Post-War Employment Policy', Australian Quarterly, 16 (3) September 1944, 40

Copland, D.B. 'The Change-over to Peace', 167
Chapter we turn more squarely towards this process, and explore how the mobilised intelligentsia and the mobilised labour movement attempted to form an alliance around concrete suggestions for post war reconstruction. Both the successes and the failures of this attempt will be documented in detail.
6. Unity and Division Around Post-War Reconstruction

This Chapter seeks to explore how the mobilised labour movement and the mobilised intelligentsia sought alliances around concrete proposals for post-war reconstruction. It studies the compromises which characterised this alliance, its partial success, and its partial failure. Briefly, three things will be argued:

1. The labour movement did not passively accept the visions of the intelligentsia for post-war reform, but both:

   (a) reached out for an alliance

   (b) postulated more transformative economic policies which were not emphasised as a means of alliance formation.

2. Together parts of the intelligentsia and the labour movement developed a common campaign or social movement for post-war reconstruction.

3. The period was also marked by emergent conflicts both within the labour movement and between the labour movement and the intelligentsia which threatened the prospects of reform.

This Chapter then complements its predecessors by studying the interactions which shaped both social reform and the career of class over the middle and later 1940s.

The Australian Labor Party and the Building of the New Order

The Labor Party had its own visions and concrete policies for the post-war order. These visions grew out of the unity which had been attained around the war effort, and they bore its distinctive stamp and character. The cusp of Labor’s argument was based upon common sense and practical experience. It was an appeal to the ‘reality’ of the war experience. Labor intellectuals argued simply that the war had shown that the system of private enterprise was anachronistic. Workers knew from the Depression that capitalism was characterised by instability, by excessive profits, limitations upon economic development and an aggressive, bullying role for monopolies and financiers. Labor believed that the war had been waged and won with the rudiments of an alternative system, and they argued for the full construction of that system in the post-war years. It was public enterprise which had won the war.1 The aim of the war time economy had not been profits, but community needs,2 and the possibility of obtaining finance for social progress was now clearly demonstrated.3 The Government’s control of resources could be extended into the peace time so as to ensure “the greatest measure of economic security for the people.”4 As the common refrain went, "What we do in

1 Script for broadcast by John Cain 3KX Labor Hour 8/8/43 Brian Fitzpatrick Papers, NLA MS 4965, Series 8, n.p.
war we can do in peace". The same aims of self-preservation and common purpose existed. If the unity of the people could be maintained, then a post-war plan could be just as effective. This commonsensical argument was applied in two broad directions.

Firstly, there was widespread belief in the possibility of using the Government’s wartime factories for State owned, peace time production. Labor Premier John Cain promised that: "the war industries can be switched over to production of things we use." The ACTU was also excited about post war opportunities in this field, and intellectuals like Brian Fitzpatrick and Lloyd Ross argued strongly for their retention and conversion. In The Rich Get Richer, Fitzpatrick argued for an economy in which the State's factories competed with domestic and foreign-owned monopolies as the only means of breaking "the stranglehold" of the rich, and as a significant step towards use production. Similar arguments were made by Ross, and they tapped both the growing movement for socialism and the history of Labor experiments with State enterprises. The justification remained insistently practical and realistic. The aim was to sidestep the question of 'Capitalism or Socialism?', and to adopt a concrete measure which would benefit workers. As Ross argued:

"The key to our judgement on the present situation is not whether we believe in private or public enterprise, but whether we want to use the existing factories to increase goods for consumption, or whether we desire to destroy them."

The argument about practical experience and the lessons of the war were also used to justify a range of claims which impacted more directly upon the living standards of workers. The Labor Party’s ‘Post War Committee’ made demands for full employment, expanded living standards, minimum standards of health, housing and education, equality of opportunity, and a progressive reduction of inequality of income, leisure and of working conditions. There has been a good deal of ink spilt in the quest to prove that these Labor Government policies were merely labourist, drawn from the collective brain of the bureaucratic intellectuals, and betraying the influence of Keynesianism. The accent is generally placed on the full employment policy, and this is presented as derivative of the Keynesianism of H.C. Coombs and others, as liberal, and as providing only illusory or limited gains. In a complementary sense, others have argued that Labor never had any intentions of imposing controls on

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4 ALP Official Report of Proceedings of Special Commonwealth Conferences held at Melbourne on Monday, November 16, 1942 and Monday, January 4, 1943’ ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 118, 23
6 Dedman, J. ‘The Need for Constitutional Reform’, John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, Item 102, n.d., 28
8 Script for Broadcast by John Cain’, n.p.
9 'Script for broadcast authorised by A.E. Monk’, n.p.
10 Fitzpatrick, B. The Rich Get Richer, Rawson’s Bookshop. 1944, 47
11 Ross, L. You and Your Job, Deaton and Spencer. 1944, 73
and that it was "the ideal vehicle" by which "a New Order of Capital" could be instituted post-war. However, when placed in the context of labour movement and intellectual mobilisation, it is possible to argue two things. Firstly, the full employment policy was a wide policy that represented an important step towards an economy based upon working class rights and power. Secondly, the full employment policy was used as creative means of alliance formation with groups outside the labour movement, and especially with the intelligentsia. Viewed in this way, full employment becomes an important and innovative means of advancing the claims of labour towards a better society, and not a coopted, static plea for more bread and butter from an anti-intellectual mob.

The Wide Conception of Full Employment

The claim for full employment was recognised at the time as a vital development in the process of establishing social objectives for economic policy. It represented a deep ethical claim upon an economic system which had never been able to provide it. Indeed, Labor intellectuals were convinced that full employment under capitalism would not be capitalism at all, but would represent a new order which promised a different life. This was not a small reform, but a means of fundamentally changing the standards and power of labour. As John Curtin argued:

"Capitalism depends for its management of the workers on the fact of a high or low degree of unemployment and on the certainty of the existence of some group of persons who are waiting to be hired. It goes hand in hand to impose restraint upon the development of working class policy and conditions."

Full employment could not be maintained in a totally free enterprise economy. For moderates, a mixed economy and a strong counter-cyclical budgetary policy could guarantee jobs for all. However, for many others, more significant changes in the economic order were necessary. As we have seen, there was a strong, well-argued case made for the retention of war time factories as a step along the path to use production. In addition to this, many Labor activists believed that the control of monopolies, and especially of banking were necessary if full employment and rising incomes were to be attained.

Monopoly was not regarded as a real expression of private enterprise. It robbed the people of their right to direct production, and it increased prices, thereby hurting the people as consumers. But it also robbed the people of a "full range of economic opportunity", and it therefore hurt them as producers. Hence, many believed that the Government needed to

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4. Curtin, J. 'Address to Federal Executive' 24/1/44 *ALP Papers*, NLA MS 4985, Box 2, 6
protect the individual citizen from the lawlessness and the hurt of the monopolies. They also needed to prevent those monopolistic restrictions upon output which may have been imposed for private or sectional advantage. There was in short, the firm possibility that a Government dedicated to a policy of full employment and rising living standards would have to battle with, and ultimately conquer the monopolies. This was something which leading Labor intellectuals admitted, and a prospect from which they would not shrink in the years after World War II.

However, it was the financial monopolies in particular which were regarded with the greatest fear and distrust within Labor’s ranks. The Speakers’ Notes provided by the Party for the 1946 elections declared that “Finance is the root cause of most of our economic ills”. Perhaps even more dramatically, Prime Minister Ben Chifley stated openly that before the rise of the ALP Australia had been a dictatorship, and that “the dictators were the private banking institutions.” For nearly all Labor members and activists, the control of banking was therefore necessary if full employment and good economic health were to be maintained, and the Government’s banking legislation was identified with its full employment policy. For those on the Left of the Party, the Government control of banking also opened up the space for the creative use of credit. Eddie Ward believed that no rate of interest should be charged for public works. Others like H.P. Lazzarini believed that Credit could be advanced to increase production within the economy. A motion was put at the ALP Federal Executive that credit be arranged at “cost of issuance” for the financing of home building. For socialists like Senator Don Cameron, the control of banking and the issuance of credit would ensure that public enterprise would expand as private enterprise failed, and that the promised land would therefore arrive.

So the policy of full employment did not inevitably signal the acceptance of capitalism’s limits and the triumph of liberalism. It signified that ethical and political rights would be placed before profits, that working class power would rise, and that intervention in the economy would be necessary. For the most left-wing labour intellectuals, a commitment to full employment implied that the control of monopolies, the direction of banking, and the issuance of ‘cheap money’ credit policy would all be necessary. This was the continuation of an assault upon capitalism, not the tame attempt to modernise it and thereby safeguard it.

Labor’s policy of full employment also implied a commitment to a generous welfare policies for those temporarily without work. Social security was “set in a framework” of policies aiming at full employment. They were each indispensable to the other. Full employment was the ultimate means towards good incomes for Australian workers, and it provided the wide tax base for a genuine welfare state. At the same time, social security payments acted as an automatic stabiliser in the economy, and they therefore helped to

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1 Dedman, J. ‘The Need For Constitutional Reform’, 24. See also Barry, J.V. Wider Powers for Greater Freedom, Rawson’s Bookshop, 1944, 28
2 Chifley, J.B. ‘Aiming at Full Employment’, The Age, 1/12/43
3 Labor Speakers’ Notes Federal Referendum and Election 1946, Sir J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505, Box 35, Series 10, 103
4 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, Melbourne University Press, 1952, 101
5 Burton, H. ‘The Transition to a Peace Economy’, Economic Record, 21 (41) December 1945, 161
6 Ward, E. Shall the People or the Banks Rule, Printed by The Land Newspaper, 1945, 46
8 Federal Executive Minutes’ 12/2/51 (sic - mislabelled - reference to future meeting on 15/2/45 (p.12.)), 13
9 Cameron, D. ‘Ignorance of Bankers’, Labor Call, 8/2/45
10 Chifley, J.B. Social Security and Reconstruction, Department of Post War Reconstruction, 1943, 3
maintain full employment. Full employment and social security therefore went hand in hand."

Between 1942 and 1945, the Curtin and Chifley Governments introduced Widows' pensions, maternity allowances, funeral benefits for deceased invalid and old-age pensioners, allowances for the wives and children of invalid pensioners, unemployment, sickness and pharmaceutical benefits, and hospital and tuberculosis benefits. Not only did these benefits guarantee income for many, they also ensured that a practical redistribution of wealth occurred. Labor attempted not merely to prevent starvation, but to help spread the country's flow of goods and services more evenly among all classes. This was why Labor rejected systems of 'national insurance', in which the cost of welfare was ultimately borne by the 'citizen-consumer'. It preferred to finance its benefits through general revenue, and to ensure that those most able to pay contributed more. In 1945-46, those earning 150 pounds paid 9 pounds to the Federal Government in income tax. Those earning 1500 pounds paid 547 pounds. This was a more sharply progressive income tax system than either Great Britain or New Zealand, and it ensured that the welfare system acted not only to maintain full employment and minimum standards, but to redistribute income towards Labor's constituency.

Full Employment and the Construction of Alliances

So, the assertion of full employment as a primary tenet of Labor's post-war policy was neither evidence of conservatism nor of Labor's supplication before the bureaucratic intellectuals. It represented a very wide policy which increased working class rights and power, which was based upon common sense, and which bound together both moderate and radical Laborites. However, if it is true that the quest for full employment was not derived exclusively from the intelligentsia and from Keynesianism, it is also true that Labor's intellectuals used the quest for full employment as a means of alliance-formation with other groups, and particularly with reformist intellectuals. This is evidence of the subtlety and political skills of Labor intellectuals, and their ability to compromise and manoeuvre in the pursuit of their ends. As was so often the case, it was Lloyd Ross who was most open to the possibilities of an alliance around full employment. In 1944 he argued that:

"The test of full employment, while limited as I shall discuss later, does offer a possibility of continuous cooperation between many different groups and ideas. If people are sincere in following through this test then it is possible to move together, without agreement on final aims in such a way that disagreement on final aims will not imperil the success of reaching full employment. It is not often that a technical procedure of this kind is possible or that agreement can be reached on such a vital matter as having full employment."

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1 Chifley, J.B. 'Plan for Social Security', The Age, 3/12/43
3 Chifley, J.B. Social Security and Reconstruction, 4
4 Chifley, J.B. 'Plan for Social Security'
5 Administration of Finances', The Age, 27/7/46
The Labor Government's White Paper on Full Employment was written with an eye to alliance formation. It emerged from within the Department of Post War Reconstruction to be redrafted countless times, argued out by the Labor Cabinet, within Departments, and then between Departments of the bureaucracy. It was deliberately framed as a document of consensus, and avoided those issues likely to cause controversy. It argued that full employment offered advantages to every section of the community - to the workers who found a job, to the agricultural producer and to business who found a stable and expanding market. It did not express Labor's final vision of the good society, but a practical attempt to form an alliance towards a better society.

This attempt to form alliances was especially directed towards the intelligentsia. Labor intellectuals responded to the intellectual critique of the base, materialistic worker by attempting to invest the aim of full employment with cultural and educational varnish. Chifley insisted that full employment should be defined as:

"placing permanently within the reach of everyone of us freedom from basic economic worries, the realisation of some of our ambitions for personal development, and the opportunity of bringing up happy, healthy, well-educated families."  

This definition was reconfirmed in different forums. It expressed the sort of society within which intellectuals would continue to benefit, and it therefore acted to attract the intelligentsia. This was a task perhaps more self-consciously and aggressively pursued by Lloyd Ross in his capacity of 'Director of Public Relations' in the Department of Post War Reconstruction. In a wide range of publications, Ross attempted to present full employment as something conducive to the concerns and interests of intellectuals. In his hands, it became primarily a matter of culture and of education. As he argued directly: "The search for full employment is part of the struggle to eliminate ignorance and to save culture that we may save society." It was not at all a threat to intellectuals - a rising up of the ignorant masses out of greediness and self-interest. It offered the opportunity for intellectuals to avoid an uprising, and to attain a wider audience for education and culture. As he put it: "If the Government can remove insecurity, fear of depressions, it really sets us free for cultural development and community development."

More broadly, there was an attempt within the Party at this time to expand its theoretical base, and to appeal to intellectuals and to the community with greater and more effective propagandising. In the realm of propaganda, an ALP Office Organisation report recommended that the General Secretary of the Party be made responsible for the preparation of statements for the media, and that to this end, he or she should "utilise the services of

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"Coombs, H.C. Trial Balance, 52
"Full Employment in Australia, Presented by Command 30/5/45, L.F. Johnston Commonwealth Government Printer, 3
"Chifley, J.B. 'Aiming at Full Employment'
"For example - Chifley, J.B. Social Security and Reconstruction, 4
"Ross, L. 'Cultural Potential - an Unofficial Manifesto' 11/4/45 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 11A. 3
"Ross, L. 'Government and Responsibility', in Recreation and Leadership Movement - Report of the Summer School February 1944, in Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939 Box 10, 10
members of the Party who have specialised knowledge of the various techniques of propaganda."

"Around the same time, the Federal Government was urged to appoint 'publicity officers' by the Federal Executive," and the Prime Minister began regular radio broadcasts after the suggestion of Labor intellectual J.V. Barry. "Intellectuals seemed to have both greater functions and a greater persuasiveness within the Labor Party's structure.

Perhaps more idealistically, the Labor Party also attempted to upgrade its intellectual and educational resources, and thereby to heighten its appeal to the intelligentsia. This took three primary forms. Firstly, there was an attempt to inaugurate a greater campaign around the ideal of 'socialism'. The Party's Conference in December 1943 asserted that "a nation wide campaign for socialism be started immediately, and the implementation of such campaign be left in the hands of the Federal Executive." There was an attempt to produce a treatise on Socialism around this time, and to have it ratified at a Special Federal Conference." This treatise-production was ultimately rejected as "impracticable", but there is no doubt that the impetus behind the campaign expressed a greater theoretical rigour, and an attempt to demonstrate to the intelligentsia that Labor's plans were far more than base or materialistic manoeuvres for more wages. And this attempt found more successful avenues. The Henry Lawson Labor College was established, and was soon producing the journal Labor Digest as a forum of educated Labor opinion. Old autodidacts like the General Secretary of the ARU, J.F. Chapple, commended it as a "valuable medium for the promotion of working class education." and Labor leaders were frequent contributors. Finally, intellectuals within the Party also became interested in forming a Fabian society during this period. The idea of a Fabian society was appealing to intellectuals because it widened the Party's political vision and distance from the trade unions. It also offered those intellectuals who found the ordinary routine of branch life unattractive a more exciting and separate Party existence. It was for these reasons that J.V. Barry contacted the British Fabian society in 1946," and this was a contact which bore fruit. By 1947 an Australian Fabian society was in existence, producing influential pamphlets on a range of theoretical and policy issues.

So, there is genuine cause to reject the vision of post-war reconstruction as purely the product of the bureaucratic intellectuals. Certainly, the ideas of the intelligentsia, and its mobilisation as an active group partially set the context in which post-war reconstruction emerged. However, the Labor Party had its own separate and independent vision of a possible new order. Not only that, but Labor intellectuals were mindful of the need for alliances across the community, and of the possibility of forming an intermediate, compromising policy of full

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"ALP Office Organisation Report of Committee - Draft to E.W. Peters 6/3/46 Sir J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 25, Series 10, Item 1112, 7


"Barry's suggestion is made in a letter to the head of the A.B.C. - Barry, J.V. to W.C. Taylor 1/8/45 Sir J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505 Box 24, Series 10

"ALP Official Report of Proceedings of the 16th Commonwealth Conference December 1943. ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 118, 44

"Federal Executive Minutes' 12/2/51 ((sic) - p.12. refers to future meeting on 15/2/45) ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 7

"Federal Executive Minutes' 25/11/46 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 3

"Chapple, J.F. ARU General Secretary's Biennial Report 23/10/46, Wighton and Simpson Printers, 10

"Barry, J.V. to Secretary British Fabian Society 8/5/46 Sir J.V. Barry Papers, NLA MS 2505, Box 25, Series 10, Item 1127, 2-3
employment. This policy bypassed the question of 'capitalism or socialism?', and was framed and expressed in such a way that it would appeal to the interests and concerns of the Australian intelligentsia. Rather than the intelligentsia 'incorporating' a labour movement without ideas into the modernisation and maintenance of capitalism, the full employment policy expressed the ALP's attempt to draw the intelligentsia towards a new society with greater rights and power for workers. It was the work of sophisticated and subtle cultural manipulators.

The Communist Party and the United Front

Just as the ALP was highly important to the process of post-war reconstruction, so the Communist Party of Australia played an important and seldom noted role. It was argued in the Chapter four that the CPA grew in the early and middle war years through its disciplined support of the war effort, its drive to increase production, and its unification of emergent factory workers and intellectuals into an organisation which could pressure the Labor Government to adopt more sympathetic policies. Communist leaders were delighted with their rise in influence and power, and their policies for the post-war world reflected an attempt to maintain this influence under new and changing conditions. Firstly, there was an attempt to strengthen the Party's closeness with the Labor Party into the post-war era, and an attempt to organise a united front around shared policies of post-war reconstruction. Secondly, there was an attempt to discipline and organise the Party's new middle class and intellectual members into committed working class socialists. Both of these policies had important repercussions for the strength of the labour movement over the middle and later 1940s, and they will each be explained in turn.

There is no doubt that the Communist intellectuals of the CPA had many reservations about the Labor Government's economic policies for the post-war years. There was consternation that Prime Minister Curtin's vision of 'mass prosperity' seemed limited to full employment. More than this, the White Paper on Full Employment was itself questioned as a document. Communists remained adamant both that production could not be planned continuously under capitalism, and that the Labor Party would be ultimately unable to avoid economic crises. In this sense, the hard Marxist analyses of the CPA made it quibble with the very basis of Labor's post-war policy.

Nevertheless, the CPA also realised that socialism was still not an immediate issue in the post war world. The issue was less 'capitalism or socialism?' and more "Government control and national planning, or monopoly control and a return to the pre-war anarchy of production." This led to an acceptance of the aim of full employment, and an admission that the Party "did not quibble very much" with the way in which it had been formulated as an aim by Labor's leaders. More than this, the aim of full employment was valued by Communist intellectuals as a means of developing greater closeness within the working class movement. It was preferable to the policy of the Conservative Parties, because it did not allow large

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"Miles, J.B. CC Plenum 15-17th February 1945 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 9
"Blake, J.D. 'Unite for Post-War Progress', in Communists in Congress, CC, 1945, 8
"Dixon, R We Must Go Forward. 1945 in CPA Papers. ML MSS 5021. ADD-ON 1936-49. n.p.
"Dixon, R. CC Plenum 15-17th February 1945 CPA Papers. ML MSS 5021. Box 86, 5
sectional profits to capital, and thereby enforce a similarly sectional policy upon the CPA. Rather, it allowed for unity in struggle, and for the "widest and closest unity in action ever known in the history of our labour movement." For these reasons, the Communist Party endorsed the aim of full employment, and made it the primary focus of its activities in the immediate post-war years.

Although a labour shortage and a highly unionized workforce were both present in the immediate post-war years, the CPA set itself against the prospect of a wages offensive. This was a controversial and difficult position, and there was much criticism from Trotskyist groups that the Communist Party had adopted a policy of "collaboration and strike-breaking". The policy was so unpopular that J.D. Blake led a movement to overturn it in the latter part of 1945 and early 1946. He insisted at this time that the Labor Government would never adopt an anti-capitalist policy, and that the CPA needed to follow a 'united front from below' - or an aggressively anti-social democratic stance. However, any policy of 'Left deviationism' was eschewed over the early post-war years, and the CPA's policy remained one of strike avoidance. It was believed that the removal of Government wage pegging regulations would feed the sectional demands of craft trade unions, would reduce economic stability, and would ultimately hurt the working class. A policy of support for increased production was continued, even when this involved greater profits for the bourgeoisie. This policy stance did not imply that the CPA ignored the material interests and demands of workers, but that it tried to integrate them into the drive for full employment. The Party's 14th Congress in August 1945 demanded that the Labor Government legislate for the introduction of the 40 hour week and take action to increase the basic wage. However, such demands were not juxtaposed with full employment and increased production, but regarded as key contributors to such a policy. As J.B. Miles argued:

"our aim is maximum production. This means to take a leading part in safeguarding the workers' conditions, in obtaining redress of grievances, in combating employer provocation and disruptive influences on the workers' ranks...it means action by the unions and the whole labor movement to overcome Government weakness.""
into 1946, and the ability of wage rises to combat overproduction and gluts was often cited. This was the basis upon which Rupert Lockwood justified a 1 pound increase in the basic wage. 2 It was a practical means through which the Party could both fulfill its desire to be "with the workers", and combat its fear that "pseudo-militants" would grab the lead of the workers' movement. 3 At the same time, it ensured that the Party criticised the detail and the concrete implications rather than the fundamental nature of the Labor Government's policies. 4 In short, it allowed for both unity with the Labor Party, and differentiation from it. The strategic appeal of such a policy was well understood, and it was therefore followed from the end of the war into 1945 and 1946.

Precisely because there was a commonality between the Parties on the "basic questions of post war reconstruction", 5 the CPA pushed all the more strongly for affiliation to the ALP. It was believed that affiliation would produce a "bolder and more progressive Labor Party policy." 6 Indeed, it could pave the way to the formation of a single, socialist working class Party in Australia. 7 Lobbying for affiliation and for the united front remained the CP's consistent policy, even as worker dissent and strikes advanced into 1946. As late as August 1946, J.B. Miles was writing to the General Secretary of the ALP that the Communist Party stood "resolutely opposed to indiscriminate stoppages of industry." 8 He further suggested that the need for working class unity remained paramount, and that a range of policies involving wage increases, the 40 hour week and tax relief could both cement that class unity and soothe worker dissent. 9 The Party's overriding aim remained unity with Labor.

The CPA pursued such unity with Labor not only through the direct campaign for affiliation. More practically, the Communist Party attempted to build unity with the Labor Party and within the working class through activity at the local level, and through disciplined local campaigning for post-war reconstruction. In the same way that the CPA had been valuable to the ALP in leading the struggle for a disciplined war effort, the CPA attempted to play a similar role in the battle to construct the post-war order. The combination of the Labor Party's commitment to counter-cyclical policies, the intellectual championing of the Community Centre Movement, and the shortage of local amenities after the strains of wartime, led to expanded opportunities for local development and reconstruction. The CPA attempted to take advantage of these opportunities, and to lead local campaigns for planning and development. 10 In areas like Newcastle, Communist control of local councils allowed for creative plans to improve living conditions and amenities. 11 Communists controlled the local...
council in the Shire of Kearsley from 1944 until 1947. The election of around 30 Communists to municipal and shire councils, 16 working in the open, encouraged the Party to pursue such policies elsewhere. In mining communities of N.S.W., Communists planned for improved local amenities, and waged a campaign for them which included industrial action. The Party's Congress in 1945 asserted the best means of gaining the leadership of the people was through:

"campaigning around the urgent needs of the people, working out Branch, District and Regional programs which express the requirements of the people in each locality, workplace, district and region, and by developing the broadest campaign for the achievement of these programs. Attention must be given to regional planning and the standard of locality programs must be raised in order to fit into regional development."

The importance of this type of campaign was asserted into 1946. It was a campaign that replicated the disciplining, creative role of the Communist Party in the 'all-in war effort', and that was envisaged as a means of developing working class unity. It was the "real basis to develop unity with the Labor Party workers", and expressed the constructive and important role of the CPA in Australian life during the middle 1940s.

Making Intellectuals Working Class

At the same time as the CPA pursued a moderate and compromising policy of post-war reconstruction, it also acted to recruit and to integrate its new intellectual members into the Party structure. As explored in previous chapters, the Party had attracted many intellectual members over the early 1940s, and it aimed to continue that recruitment over the post-war years. It drew intellectual members not only through its prestige, its 'scientific' philosophy, and its support for the Community Centres, but through explicit support for such cultural development programs as the construction of a National Theatre and an Opera House.

But although the CPA appealed to the interests of intellectuals, it did not accept the concept of an intelligentsia. The idea that intellectuals constituted a distinct class was rejected, and the CPA practically worked to ensure that intellectuals were integrated into the unity of the working class. This meant that the agency of intellectuals was denied, and that

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*Chandler. H.B. CC Plenum 15-17th February 1945 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 5
*Resolutions of the 14th Congress of the Australian Communist Party*, in *Communists in Congress*, CC, 1945, 2
*Slater. J. PC Meeting 14-16th March 1946 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 5
*Johnson. F. CC Plenum 15-17th February 1945 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 3
*Marton. S. 'A Worker Listens to Beethoven', *Culture, Democracy and Australia*, Marx House Publication No 1, n.d., 16
they were rigorously subordinated to Party discipline. They were treated as Party members first and foremost, intellectuals second. The Artists' Branch was disbanded in the early 1940s, and requests for its resuscitation were denied. The Party refused to recognise a distinction between workers and intellectuals, and asserted that "By joining the Party, everyone becomes a proletarian." The anti-intellectual atmosphere, and the 'reverse snobbery' in operation is remembered by past Central Committee members like Audrey Blake.

Intellectuals were converted into disciplined proletarians. Trade unionism was encouraged as a means of political education, and the Australian Association of Scientific Workers grew and developed with Communist leadership to represent at least a third of the total scientific population. Unionism expressed the proletarian identity of intellectual members of the CPA. This identity is also detectable in the Party's insistence that the primary means of developing Australian culture was the lifting of the economic standards of both artists and scientists, and of the workers who constituted a potential audience. By insisting upon the material foundations of culture, and the material interests of intellectuals as workers, the identity of worker was emphasised over and above the identity of intellectual. In this way, the intellectual was cast in a proletarian identity, and integrated into the discipline of the CPA.

Perhaps more fundamentally, the Party also directed the intellectual and artistic activities of its members to an important extent. Although it is true that central control was relatively weak up until at least 1946, it remains true that the CPA hierarchy did discipline the activity of the Party's artists in a number of subtle ways. The 'challenge' to express political themes, the criticism of non-Party artists who failed to show the energies of the working class, and the virtues of a focus on the hopes of the people, were all notable in this 'weak' period of Party control. Although it has been claimed that these were personal rather than Party opinions on art, there was still a substantial climate of opinion which shaped the context in which Party artists worked. It may not have controlled the activity of Party artists outright, but it did ensure that the agency of intellectuals was restricted, and their identity as Party members and proletarians remained primary.

So, the CPA acted as a counterweight to the emergence of the intelligentsia. It recruited many intellectuals through a savvy appeal to their interests, but it refused to accept that intellectuals could or should act as a united group. The practical functioning of the Communist Party ensured that intellectual members were remade into socialist proletarians.

"Gould, L.H. 'Arts, Science and Communism', in Communists in Congress, CC, 1945, 15
"Gould, L.H. Art, Science and Communism, 26
"Ibid., 28
"Blake, A. A Proletarian Life, Kibble Books. 1984, 123
"B.B.B. The Scientist and the Party', Communist Review, August 1945 in Australian Archives A 6122 XR 1 569 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5
"Gould, L.H. 'Arts, Science and Communism', 8
"Editorial' (Australia's) Progress, February 1946 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 57, 5
"Smith, B. Noel Counihan: artist and revolutionary, Oxford University Press, 1993, 210
"Gould, L.H. 'Arts, Science and Communism', 10-11
"Brown, M. 'Some Views on the Contemporary Art Show', Communist Review, 26 October 1943, 141
"Smith, B. 'The Studio of Realist Art' (1945). Reprinted in Smith, B. The Critic as Advocate, 43
"Beasley, J. Red Letter Days, Australian Book Society, 1979, 178
This was to have important repercussions for the possibilities of cooperation between intellectuals and the labour movement over the middle and later 1940s.

The Campaign for Post-War Reconstruction

In the previous two Chapters, we saw how the early war years led to the expansion of the CPA, the growth of a campaign for the united front, the development of labour as a social movement, and the rise of the intelligentsia. This Chapter has taken up the implications of these developments for the process of post-war reconstruction, and for the political unities and alliances of the middle 1940s. It has documented how the intellectuals attached to the CPA attempted to form an alliance with the intelligentsia around policies of full employment. It has also focused upon how the CPA endorsed full employment as an aim, and sought unity with Labor around it, but how Communists simultaneously disciplined intellectual-members, and did not accept the idea of an 'intelligentsia'. This section of the paper explores the partial success of the alliance-formation process.

There is no doubt that there were real successes. It is a testament to the sensitivity of labor intellectuals that we can detect signs of a common campaign or social movement for post-war reconstruction. Although it never attained the heights of war time unity and momentum, there was a genuine popular movement in action. In the campaign for changes in the Australian constitution which would ensure continued Federal Government powers, the CPA, the ALP and parts of the intelligentsia cooperated intensively. It was the educative and propaganda apparatus of the Communist Party which dominated the Australian labour movement, and which therefore bore the primary brunt in the quest for Constitutional change. The Labor Party itself, with its federal structure and organisational preoccupation with elections, was ill-suited to wage a powerful campaign. But there was also much support from the intelligentsia for Labor's proposals. Intellectuals like Brian Fitzpatrick suggested the construction of a "Government or Party" propaganda apparatus, and did not conceive of any division of interests. There was a massive level of educated public debate around the issue, liberal newspapers like The Age declared support, and an enthusiasm for State action emerged among many intellectuals. The unity that had been attained for an all-in war effort was swept up and into the movement for Constitutional change, and there was widespread activity.

Despite the defeat of referenda in August 1944, and again in 1946, there was continued practical cooperation in localities and communities. The Department of Post War Reconstruction's Discussion Groups attracted mass support. Within a month there were a thousand requests for material on post-war reconstruction, and within two months it was estimated that at least 5,000 groups were studying material on post-war reconstruction.

11 Griffen-Foley, B. "Four More Points Than Moses: Dr. H.V. Evatt, the Press and the 1944 Referendum", Labour History, 68 May 1995, 67
13 The detailed discussion of proposals in multiple forums is noted in Crockett, P. Evatt - A Life, Oxford University Press, 1993, 147
14 Post War Purposes and Risks, The Age, 11/8/44
15 Watson, D. Brian Fitzpatrick: a radical life, Hale and Iremonger, 1979, 147
16 Ross, L. 'Community Building in Australia', n.d. Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 11A, 6
Unions like the Amalgamated Engineering Union in Melbourne printed and distributed copies of the Department's documents into its workshops, and by 1944, the Department was printing 30,000 copies of each of its Discussion Courses. This was a genuine mass movement, and it extended out of discussion into action within local communities.

The Community Centre Movement gained support, and almost overnight there were "some hundreds" of community groups in action. As already noted, the Community Centre Movement was supported by both the intelligentsia (and particularly the Adult Education Movement), and by the Communist Party. The Community Centre Movement provided the forum within which the desires of Australians from differing political and class positions were channelled into a common campaign. In some localities like Whyalla, the 'community' behind the Community Centre was the working class. Here the centre was originally planned as a Trades Hall, expanded into a Community Centre, and constructed through activities like the production of 200,000 cement bricks. In other areas like Waverly, the Community Centre was a 'Christian Community Centre', it was financed through contributions from the local Rotary and Chamber of Commerce, and it expressed the drive for reconstruction on behalf of the middle classes. As Brian Fitzpatrick noted, this was not a movement which belonged to any one class. The growing community spirit was based around the activities of people of "goodwill" from a variety of class locations. The subject matter around which people came together was not particular, but common or 'Australian'. The Community Centre Movement was supported by both parts of the intelligentsia, and by the labour movement. It thereby signified that post-war reconstruction was not the possession of any one group, but the joint product of articulation and activity from both the intelligentsia and the labour movement. In that sense, the process of alliance formation - a process which ensured full employment, a welfare state, and community centre development, could be regarded as at least a partial success in the early post-war years.

Emergent Conflicts

However, the process of alliance formation was far from perfect. Disunities and open conflicts emerged during the same period - both within the labour movement, and between the labour movement and the intelligentsia. This section of the Chapter explores the dimensions and the threats that these conflicts represented. It begins by analysing the primary conflict within the labour movement, which pitted the Church (and particularly the Catholic Church) against the influence of Communists in the labour movement.

The growth of Communism, its expanding influence upon a radicalised labour movement, and its seemingly limitless rise internationally, all provoked fear and reaction from the Australian Churches. The response was one of aggression. From the early 1940s, the Churches began to assert themselves with far greater force upon the Australian political landscape. In June 1940, a Manifesto was issued by the Inter-Church Council of the

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109 Ross, L. to H.C. Coombs 28/9/44 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 49, n.p.
110 Ministry of Post War Reconstruction Public Relations Division Bulletin No 10' E.M. Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/17, 107
112 'A Night at Waverly Christian Community Centre' 'Community Activities Bulletin' Series 3, No 20 E.M. Higgins Papers, ML MSS 740/17, 243
113 Fitzpatrick, B. 'Evidence of Growing Community Spirit', Smith's Weekly, 5/5/45
Movement towards a Christian Social Order, and a journal entitled *The Middle Way* was produced by the 'Christian Cooperative Movement of Australia'. At the same time, the newspaper the *Catholic Worker* reached an average circulation of 55,000 per month, and the Catholic Church inaugurated an annual 'Social Justice Sunday' every third Sunday after Easter. Each year the Bishops made a statement delineating "some fundamental principles of Social Justice and Charity, which are of great importance to our country in its present critical period." The Sundays apparently offered an opportunity for Catholic workers to "demonstrate their loyalty to the Faith." The Statements issued were sold in pamphlet form, and their circulation reached around 100,000. Clearly, massive institutional resources were being mobilised.

What this mobilisation represented was the assertion that the Church and Christian spirituality should remain the basis of social life. As the 'Red Bishop' of Goulburn, E.H. Burgmann put it, the Christian spirit had to become "the inspiration of political and economic and social organisation." Only Christianity recognised that 'Man' possessed an intrinsic value. Only the Church and faith could orient community life. It followed from this that the Church should remain the primary institution for Christians, and that political and economic programmes should be judged on the basis of Christian beliefs and morals. But more than this, it implied that the Church should be more aggressive in making the world, and not confined to the purely spiritual realm. This is precisely what happened over the early 1940s and into the 1950s. A Christian revival sprung into life, and at its crest was an activist Church - "pushing out special workers and movements into every sphere where political and other social issues are being worked out in theory and practice."

Of course, it must be emphasised that this offensive by the Church did not necessarily transmit the values of all Christians. There were frequent complaints by the Catholic hierarchy about indifference and lack of support from the laity, and in 1950 only 23% of all citizens went to Church every week. A clear distinction between the Church as an institution and Christianity was made by most Australians, and many Christians did not accept the

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114 The 'Manifesto' was released as a part of the Journal's first issue - see *The Middle Way*, 1 June 1940 Sir J.V. Barry Papers, MS 2505, Series 11, 5-8
118 Hogan, M. *Justice Now!*, 4
119 Burgmann, E.H. *The Regeneration of Civilization* - being the Moorhouse Lectures delivered in Melbourne at St Paul's Cathedral, November 1942 *Lloyd Ross Papers*, NLA MS 3939, Box 20, 117
120 Moyes, J.S. (Bishop of Melbourne) 'Freedom and Moral Discipline', in *Recreation and Leadership Movement*, Report of the Summer School February 1944 *Lloyd Ross Papers*, NLA MS 3939, Box 10, 7 See also Jennie, A.P.B. 'For What Do We Struggle?', *Meanjin*, 8 March 1942, 21
121 Coughlan, W.G. 'The Churches', in *Recreation and Leadership Movement*, 13
122 Sir Henry Slesser on Church and State', *Catholic Worker*, February 1943, 4
123 Ryan, P.J. *Said Comrade Sharkey*. Published in 'Catholic Weekly', and reprinted by Finn Bros Ltd, 1944, 5
124 Oswald Barnett, F. 'Will there be a Revolution?', *The New Day*, 5 (6) January 1948, 18
126 This is noted in Morris, T. 'Into the Valley of Megiddon - Apocalypticism and Australian Catholicism 1945-1955', B.A. Honours Thesis, Department of History, School of General Studies, ANU 1973, NLA MS 3927, 3
political positions of their Churches. Even within the more disciplined and hierarchical Catholic faith, there was notable division within the Church on basic questions like Labor’s proposed nationalisation of the banks. While Sydney’s Catholic Weekly condemned the Government’s plans, Melbourne’s Advocate accepted that such an action was legitimate, and more progressive Catholic functionaries even pledged support.

Nevertheless, it is possible to sketch the broad lineaments of the Christian vision of the good society in this period. It was a vision which extruded both the present system and political socialism. It postulated a ‘third way’ between laissez faire and total Government control. The ‘third way’ rejected capitalist ownership, as it did Government owned monopolies. It postulated that Christian worker ownership - that is, the widely diffused ownership of small parcels of property, was the way forward. A sort of return to medieval life was envisioned, in which subsistence farming offered independence from the capitalist market and the opportunity for genuine freedom. As one Social Justice Statement put it: “The fight for freedom is a fight for the small unit against the large.”

Where industrial production existed, the same principles were applied. The emphasis was on small units with individual ownership. Where this was not possible, share ownership and worker control in a cooperative workers’ enterprise was advocated. In the few cases where neither of these techniques were practical, ‘Industrial Councils’, with joint representation from employers, employees and the State were suggested. These councils allowed for worker control, for cooperation rather than conflict, and for planning in the interests of the ‘common good’. They provided a primary plank of the Catholic vision for reconstruction over the early and middle 1940s. And although it was the Catholic church which was the most active proponent of such schemes, they were also endorsed by the other churches. In a rare example of inter-church cooperation, a Joint Committee made up of Anglican, Catholic and other Christian churches endorsed a common twenty-point program in 1943 which included the whole panoply of such reform measures. The Catholic Church may have been the most militant wing, but all Australian churches mobilised out of unease and fear over the middle 1940s.

In many respects, the ideas produced inside these institutions were exciting, innovative and bold. However, they were produced out of a fear of Communism, as a counter-movement to Communism, and in order to defeat Communism. Catholic enmity to Communism was based both on philosophical objections to its atheism and materialism, and practical experience that Communists attacked the Church as a pillar of the establishment. As a result, the progressive and reformist ideas of Catholic intellectuals were accompanied by

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13 "Catholic Banking Edict Not Expected’, Argus, 15/9/47
15 Editorial ‘The Middle Way’, 1 (2), July 1940, 2
16 ‘The Future of Social Control in Australia’, Catholic Worker, June 1943, 2
17 Ryan, P.J. ‘Said Comrade Sharkey’, 19
18 ‘Neither Capitalism nor Communism will restore prosperity to workers’, Catholic Worker, June 1943, 3
19 ‘Farmers Face Ruin’, Catholic Worker, 6/4/40, 2
21 For example, see ‘Forward to Industrial Democracy’, Catholic Worker, 2/3/40, 1
22 The Councils are described more fully in the 1942 and 1943 Social Justice Statements in Hogan, M. (ed) Justice Now!
24 Ormonde, P. The Movement, Thomas Nelson Ltd, 1972, 1
an equally substantial barrage of anti-Communist propaganda. The totalitarianism and the subjection of Christians in the USSR was emphasised.\(^1\) The idea that Communist leaders deliberately attacked the Church was diffused.\(^2\) The fear that Communists would lead workers to slavery was a common theme.\(^3\) As early as 1948, Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne was arguing that Communists should be treated as traitors.\(^4\) As a result, cooperation in an enlarged 'united front' to implement such policies was never contemplated. Whatever the commonality of the Catholic and the Socialist visions, they were projected as alternatives rather than as complements.

Indeed, the Catholic vision of the good society was not worked for through an alliance with the labour movement in the quest for post-war reconstruction. On the contrary, it was used as a "boogy" against the rise of the State's directive power,\(^5\) and tended to erode rather than strengthen support for Labor's reform program. The Catholic Worker feared the increased powers which the Labor Government sought for post-war reconstruction,\(^6\) railed against the greater powers which the Federal Bureaucracy had attained,\(^7\) and even compared some planners to the Gestapo.\(^8\) Leading Catholic intellectuals like Paul McGuire opposed the extension of State pensions as a step toward totalitarianism,\(^9\) and there is no doubt that the Church increasingly moderated its critique of capitalism to concentrate on the Communist problem. Perhaps more sinisterly, it was believed by many that the whole Catholic vision of the good society was nothing more than a deliberate diversion from the Labor Government's realistic and tenable quest for reform. This was Brian Fitzpatrick's view of Catholic propagandists like Denys Jackson:

"Jackson states his general support of a "new order" in which the workingman will get a fair go, he states his realisation of the necessity for constitutional amendment to provide the conditions in which this could be accomplished - but he conveys that your (Evatt's) proposals will lead to the establishment of an irresponsible centralised bureaucracy, and he suggests, in the alternative, a plan that means precisely nothing at all, since we know, and he knows, that employers are not going to co-operate voluntarily in "vocational groups" or industrial councils, and since he insists that the Government mustn't use any compulsion!"\(^10\)

While Fitzpatrick's views may not apply equally to all adherents of the 'Industrial Council', it remains true that little was heard of Industrial Councils after the defeat of the Labor

\(^1\) Ryan, P.J. Said Comrade Sharkey, 7
\(^2\) "Russia Invades Australia", Catholic Worker, 6/4/40, 2
\(^3\) "The Greatest Show on Earth", Catholic Worker, November 1942, 3
\(^4\) "Communists as "Traitors"", Age, 5/4/48
\(^5\) Smith, B. Place, Taste and Tradition, Oxford University Press, 1979, 231-2 notes how the commitment of the 'Apocalyptic Movement' (represented in Australia by the Angry Penguins) to similar schemes of 'cooperative ownership' was also used in this negative, anti-reformist way
\(^6\) "Changes in Constitution are Necessary But Evatt's Proposals are Dangerous", Catholic Worker, November 1942, 1
\(^7\) "Menace of State Control", Catholic Worker, February 1943, 2
\(^8\) "Our Own Gestapo in Action", Catholic Worker, June 1943, 2
\(^9\) McGuire, P. 'The Larger Problem', Argus, 2/12/47
Government's proposals for constitutional change. It also remains true that the primary thrust of the Catholic Church's energies went into the battle against Communism. In early 1940, leading Catholic intellectual B.A. Santamaria met with Deputy Leader of the Victorian ALP, Bert Cremean, and the Archbishop of Melbourne, Daniel Mannix. It was decided that the rise of Communist influence, particularly inside the trade unions, was serious enough to provoke organised resistance from Catholic trade unionists. In 1942, a core of 20 trade unionists from 12 suburbs met in Melbourne, and the organisation that was to become known as 'the Movement' was born. While it was shrouded in secrecy and Catholics were never officially told of its existence, the Movement rose to become a common conspiracy of about 5000 formal members, and embodying extraordinary influence. The basis of the Movement's power was the parish 'cell', which met under conditions of tight secrecy. It was the 'cell' which commonly prepared a census of trade unionists in the parish, and then attempted to rouse these trade unionists to attend trade union meetings, and to wrest control of the unions away from Communists. It mimicked the organisational practices of Communism, but attempted to turn them against the gains made by Communists.

It is true that 'the Movement' was not officially an arm of 'Catholic action', and that it was neither an 'official' Church body nor a body directed by the Bishops. However, it was supported strongly by the Bishops - both morally and financially, and in order to garner support from loyal parishioners it "was widely whispered and rarely, if ever denied within the Church, that it was Catholic Action." The battle of 'the Movement' against Communist unionists increasingly swallowed up the energies of Catholic reformists. It was a battle that threatened the ongoing possibility of progressive unity around post-war reconstruction. It was also a battle that was to gain greater centrality over the later 1940s and 1950s, and a dynamic which structured the labour movement in quite fundamental ways.

However, there was also a fundamental conflict between the intelligentsia and the Communist Party of Australia. As noted earlier in this chapter, the CPA both attempted to organise and discipline its intellectuals into working class socialists, and to differentiate itself from the ALP through its hardness, discipline, and its lack of pandering to labour's enemies. At the same time, it has also been noted that the intelligentsia as a formed group was opposed to the intrusion of materialism, of the base, and of politics into its pristine and exalted world. As a result, the intelligentsia and the CPA were set upon an inevitable collision course. This collision was evident during the early and middle 1940s in three primary forums.

Firstly, there was a conflict between Communist artists and the Angry Penguins. As we have seen, throughout the 1940s the Angry Penguins group attempted to affirm the 'independence' of art, the need for autonomy from political institutions, the need for intellectuals to integrate as a class, and the myth-making power of individual visionaries. Alongside these views, Communist intellectuals just as polemically asserted contrary propositions. The idea of the genius was refuted as fascistic, the failure of the Angry

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154 Hogan, M. 'Australian Catholic Corporatism: Proposals for Industrial Councils in the 1940s'. Labour History, 62 May 1992, 102
156 Ormone, P. The Movement, 16
157 Santamaria, B.A. 'The Movement', 71
158 Ormone, P. The Movement, 122
159 Smith, B. 'Art and Mr Lawlor', Australian Quarterly, 15 (1) March 1943, 81
Penguins group to find an answer to turmoil was noted," and their "narrow class arrogance and intellectual narcissism" was emphasised." To begin with, this was more a 'heated conversation' than an argument - a conversation carried out across the pages of journals like *Angry Penguins* and institutions like the Contemporary Art Society. However, with the fear of Japanese invasion evaporating, the conflict escalated after 1944. Increasingly, they inhabited separate and hostile worlds. Communists were never welcome in the world of wealthy patrons John and Sunday Reed, but by the mid 1940s they were inhabiting entirely different institutions. Communist artists in Sydney left the CAS in 1945 to set up the alternative Studio of Realist Art, and in 1946 the three leading Communist artists in Melbourne - Counihan, Bergner and O'Connor, also left the Contemporary Art Society. This was a mutual hostility. Richard Haese has commented that after 1943, the "chief dangers to the Angry Penguin's values and beliefs were seen to come from the left." The second forum for CPA-intelligentsia conflict was the adult education movement, and the rupture between the Workers' Educational Association in NSW and the Communist dominated labour movement. This was a conflict brought on by a course taught by P.H. Partridge in September 1942 entitled 'Discussion Course No. B40: Political Theories and Movements Today'. This was an 'objective' appraisal of Fascism, Communism and Liberal Democracy. The course was not only critical of the Soviet Union, it argued that Communism was a tool of the Russian State, and that social planning was bound to lead to a "violent repression of many social interests". Partridge foretold that the key threat to democracy was not fascism, but a politically inert polity, dominated by labour institutions, sharing the control of monopolistic powers and benefiting economically from its results.

Communists, acting through the State Labor Party of NSW, demanded that this course be withdrawn. The WEA refused, and a period of conflict and division between the workers and their educational association flared into existence. CPA General Secretary Lance Sharkey consistently attacked both Partridge and his mentor, John Anderson, as well as the avowed objectivity and independence of the WEA. WEA affiliations fell by 12 in 1943, including the Labour Council. Those loyal to the organisation hit back, with allegations of 'dirtiness' on the part of Communist intellectuals, and assertions about the inherently anti-intellectual and manipulative atmosphere of the Communist movement. This rupture helped to strengthen the movement away from "sectional" workers' education towards the more generic

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"O'Connor, V.G. 'Arthur Boyd: Progression', *Angry Penguins*, 3 1942, 32
"Ibid., 373
"Smith, B. *Noel Counihan: Artist and Revolutionary*, Oxford University Press, 1993, 201
"Ibid., 207
"Discussion Course No B40: Political Theories and Movements Today' *E.M. Higgins Papers*, ML MSS 14016, Item 15, 97
"Ibid., 71
"Ibid., 131
"See, for example Sharkey, L. 'Professor Anderson - A Counter-Revolutionary Humbug', *Communist Review*, 21 May 1943, 55, and Sharkey, L. 'The WEA Exposed in CPA Papers', ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936 Box 49
"Sharkey, L. The WEA and "the inherent lie", *Communist Review*, 22 June 1942, 70
"Higgins, E.M. *David Stewart and the WEA*, WEA of NSW, 1957, 82
"See, for example, Davern, A.I. "I'll Huff and I'll Puff...", *Australian Highway*, 23 (6) December 1942; and Davern, A.I. 'Dear Bill - An Open Letter', *Australian Highway*, 25 (3), June 1943
adult education. It heightened the sense of separation dominant within the intelligentsia, and it formed the second primary conflict between the intelligentsia and the CPA.

The third conflict was around the Communist Party itself. It was noted earlier in the Chapter that the Communist Party not only attempted to recruit intellectuals, but that it insisted upon their subordination to Party discipline. The Party's leaders also emphasised the material basis of culture, and cultivated an atmosphere of 'reverse snobbery' in which 'petit-bourgeois' was to become the ultimate epithet. It was this insistence upon proletarian discipline which revolted many recruits, and which contributed to the mass exodus from the Party in the early post-war years. From its zenith of 23,000 members in 1944, the Party's membership fell to 16,280 members in 1945, and was to fall further in subsequent years. Detailed breakdowns show that the Party continued to recruit new members during this period, but that more were leaving than were joining. In 1946, the Party gained another 2030 members, but lost 4,400 members. In 1947 it gained 1,855, but lost 3,650. A close reading of upper-level Party discussions on the issue also show us that the poor, exclusionary nature of branch leadership and the 'fear of the masses' inside the Party were frequently cited as explanations for this exodus. At the same time, the CPA retained much of its strength in the trade unions during this period, and there were even realistic hopes that Communists could gain a majority influence in a majority of the Labour Councils. The implications are clear - the very discipline which had marked the Party as useful and significant during the war years was now driving away many of those who had found it so attractive. A vast number of those attracted had been middle class and intellectuals. They seemed to make up an even greater proportion of those now repelled. It therefore makes sense to think of the retreat of intellectuals from the Party as the third expression of CPA-intelligentsia conflicts, and to regard this conflict as emergent in the early '40s and expanding as the decade continued.

However, these two conflicts - between the Communist Party and the Churches, between the Communist Party and the intelligentsia, were neither discretely sutured and compartmentalised from each other nor from other institutions and actors. There was obvious potential for these conflicts to nourish each other, and to draw in a progressively greater number of actors and sites. The conflict between Catholics and Communists was overlaid within the ALP by the battle between those opposed to a united front, and those Communists and Labor radicals in favour of a united front. There was therefore the potential for Labor moderates to draw upon Catholics in their opposition to a united front, and for Catholics to use the Labor Party to adopt more vigorously anti-Communist policies. The Catholic-Communist conflict could thereby become a battle fought out over the terrain of the ALP, and concerning the nature of the ALP itself. Likewise, those Catholics opposed to Communism were opposed to 'class' as a frame of reference, to practical proposals for post-war reconstruction, and to industrial conflict of any kind. There was therefore capacity for committed Catholics to link up both intellectually and practically with those parts of the intelligentsia contemptuous of the 'materialism' of the people, and anxious for a spiritual and intellectual reformation of Australian workers. Intra and Inter-movement struggles could thereby become linked, and both the unity and the mobilisation of the early post-war years could dissolve.

"McDonald, L. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 25

"For example, this view was expressed by both McDonald, L., Henry, J.C., and Dixon, R. at the CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85

"Wright, T., PC Meeting, 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 Box 86, 2
Conclusion

So, the interaction of the mobilised labour movement and the mobilised intelligentsia was to have complex and contradictory consequences over the early post-war years. The period was marked by the cultivation of an alliance around full employment, by successful reform, and by genuine unity in action. These did not drop from the sky, but were painstakingly constructed by the Labor Government, and supported by the Communist Party. Neither of these Parties aimed to incorporate the working class or to cut off socialism. They aimed to build and maintain a measured, reformist path towards a more socialist society which would have genuine cross-class appeal. It was undeniably a moment of both political negotiation and careful, determined advance.

It was also a moment of political contest. The movement for post-war reconstruction was marked by serious, although not yet debilitating conflicts, both within the labour movement, and between the labour movement and the intelligentsia. These were a series of conflicts fortified by antagonistic institutions, multiple and emergent. They undeniably had the capacity to expand as opposing stances hardened, and as the opportunities for cooperation and further reform receded into the distance. In the next Chapter, we explore how changes in the economic and social context shifted the interests and resources of some of our key actors, and thereby eroded the unities and fed the embryonic conflicts of the middle 1940s. This is a story of strikes, conspiracies and divisions.
7. Strikes, Conspiracies and Divisions

This Chapter attempts to explain the trajectory of the labour movement over the second half of the 1940s, and focuses upon the strikes, imagined conspiracies, and divisions which characterised the period. The period saw the collapse of unity around full employment, a strike wave, the total repudiation of a Labor-Communist united front, and the eventual election of a Conservative Prime Minister. The explanation of just how this transpired will be in three stages:

1. The impact of changes in the social and economic context on the political opportunities of labour and of the intelligentsia over the later 1940s will be chronicled.

2. The means by which these changes were explained and adjusted to by affiliated intellectuals, and the implications of such adjustments for the relationship between institutions will be analysed.

3. The process by which these adjustments and deteriorating relationships both eroded the bases of previous alliances, and fed the embryonic conflicts of the early 1940s will be studied.

Just as mobilisation involved the interaction of context and institutional politics to open the space for a certain sort of collective claim-making, so the process of demobilisation is shot through with similar interactions. It was a process by which these interactions disrupted the possibility of wide collective action, and made a more sectional, back-biting and sectarian mode of collective action dominant. To explain how and why this was so is the purpose of this Chapter.

The Changing World

There were four primary changes in the economic and social context for our Australian actors. These changes were: the emergence of a massive strike wave, the changing nature of the market for intellectual production, the heightened fear of world economic stability, and the rise of international Cold War tensions. We shall deal with each of these in turn.

The Strike Wave

In the post-war years right up until 1949, the employer-employee relationship in Australia was marked by an unprecedented level of organised industrial conflict. This conflict emerged almost as soon as the war ended. The number of working days lost annually per employee in industrial disputes rose from only 0.20 in 1942 to a peak of 1.11 in 1945, and remained above 0.5 until the end of the decade. This was a strike wave of historic proportions. Although this wave has traditionally been understood via the 'Communist plot thesis', Tom Sheridan has

Sheridan, T. *Division of Labour: industrial relations in the Chifley Years, 1945-49*, Oxford University Press, 1989, 116
recently and persuasively argued that more economic matters were on the minds of more independent Australian workers.\(^3\) The early post-war years were characterised by both a labour shortage,\(^4\) by a newly expanded union membership ratio of 54%,\(^5\) and by a listless workforce held in check during the war years and anxious for justice. However, the Labor Government adopted a stalling strategy in relation to wage claims, and there is evidence to suggest that it deliberately manipulated the prices index through selective subsidies on 'tested goods' in order to keep indexed wages down. As Sheridan has stated: "workers saw from 1943 an increased share of wages go in taxes to pay subsidies to keep wages steady."

Certainly, there is ample evidence to suggest that the push for improved working conditions and wages was organically produced. The ALP Conference of 1945 included a motion which demanded an increase in the basic wage through two 'loadings' of 6/- each per week.\(^6\) Debate was marked by great militancy, the Arbitration Court was rejected because it enforced a time lag in the adjudication of wage claims, and the Court's whole operation was even attacked as a "glorified confidence trick".\(^7\) The Conference's adopted resolution included a plea for a review of the principles upon which the basic wage was calculated, combined with the formation of a Commission to investigate the quality and the representativeness of the present prices index.\(^8\) When a Federal Executive Sub-Committee reported on unsettled industrial conditions in 1946, it affirmed that the primary causes were wage pegging, high taxation, the continuance of the 44 hour week, and the "inability to secure a higher standard of living by means of an increased basic wage."\(^9\) As late as 1948, the Party's Federal Conference was reiterating the need for a Commission to study the prices component of the basic wage, and reaffirming that it should be established "at the earliest possible moment."\(^10\) More broadly, contemporary intellectuals like Brian Fitzpatrick and Lloyd Ross agreed that the strike wave was caused primarily by war weariness and inadequate pay,\(^11\) and unionists like J.F. Chapple spoke about the difficulty of restraining workers.\(^12\)

The large number of 'anti-victimisation' strikes also gives us cause to reject the 'Red plot' thesis. In Sydney alone, over 30 of the strikes which occurred between the end of the war and mid-1946 were prompted by the victimisation of shop stewards and other active unionists.\(^13\) Throughout NSW and Queensland it seemed to many unionists that a premeditated employer offensive was being launched. There were two major disputes up until

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\(^1\) Sheridan, T. *Division of Labour: industrial relations in the Chifley Years, 1945-49*, Oxford University Press, 1989

\(^2\) *Ibid.*, 75

\(^3\) *Ibid.*, 53

\(^4\) *Ibid.*, 38

\(^5\) "Minutes' in ALP Official Report of Proceedings of the 17th Commonwealth Triennial Conference November 1945 in *ALP Papers*, NL A MS 4985, Box 118, 28

\(^6\) *Ibid.*, 35-6

\(^7\) "Resolutions' in *Ibid.*, 20-1

\(^8\) Report of Sub-Committee on General Unsettled Industrial Conditions 'Federal Executive Minutes' *ALP Papers*, NL A MS 4985, Box 122, 1-2

\(^9\) "Minutes' ALP Official Report of Proceedings of the 18th Commonwealth Triennial Conference September 1948 in *ALP Papers*, NL A MS 4985, Box 118, 32


\(^11\) Chapple, J.F. *ARU General Secretary's Biennial Report 23/10/46*, Wighton and Simpson Printers, 2

\(^12\) Rowe, T. and Wright, T. *United Action Wins Better Conditions, 40 hour Week, Increased Wages*, Current Book Distributors, 1947, 3
mid-1946 - one involving BHP, the nation's largest firm; the other involving three foreign-owned companies in the meat export sector. In both cases victimisation was the trigger for strike action. Even the ALP admitted that employers were attempting to provoke industrial disputation in the lead-up to the 1946 election.

It therefore seems fair to reject the idea that the Communist Party of Australia was the arch-manipulator behind the burst of post-war strike action. The strike wave emerged organically from a labour force which chafed against the institutional stances of both the ALP and the CPA. It should be conceptualised as a matter of 'context' for the institutions of the labour movement and the intelligentsia. It did not stem from them directly, so much as emerge out of a situation marked and shaped (although not determined) by their actions and interactions. As we shall see, the importance of the strike wave was very great in disrupting the world of each of our primary actors, and in opening up the space for different institutional strategies.

The Changing Nature of the Market for Intellectuals

The bold hopes sustained by Australian intellectuals were either not fulfilled, or fulfilled in a manner which had unexpected and unpleasant repercussions. In the world of education, although it is true that the universities expanded in this period, there were complaints about both overwork and underpay for recipients of degrees. More than this, the very expansion in student numbers which educators faced caused many to fear for the status of the University as a place of higher or critical learning, and to lament its degeneration into a "training ground for the professions." For adult educators it was a similarly bleak period. The servicemen who had lapped up the offerings of the Army Education Service did not materialise into an expanded post-war market. Of the 540 full time A.E.S. staff, "painfully few" found places in the WEA or with other adult educators, and almost none of the thousand or so part-time unit education officers found employment in these forums. For those adult educators who retained their jobs, the movement away from the 'worker centred' to the more generic model proved less satisfying than had been anticipated. There were soon complaints that the desire for Government funding had contributed to a reduced focus on 'objectivity', a misplaced concern with the political impact of education, and a dilution of the principles of the adult education movement. Others like Lloyd Ross spoke of the tragic short-sightedness of adult educationalists who had accepted State grants to teach classes in any subject, and had thereby marginalised the vitality of trade union linkages and of socio-political classes.

The situation for cultural intellectuals was also appraised with a pessimistic eye. The early post-war years witnessed the collapse of the market for domestic and innovative Australian

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2 Sheridan, T. Division of Labour, 89
3 "Executive Report of Sub-Committee on General Unsettled Industrial Conditions", 2
4 Fitzpatrick, B. "The Trade in Literature", n.d. (1948?) Brian Fitzpatrick Papers, NLA MS 4965, Series 13 M-
5 N, Box 53, 30-1
6 Carroll, N.C. "The Changed Australian Outlook", Australian Quarterly, 18 (4) December 1946, 103
7 Stout, A.K. "The Functions of a University", Australian Quarterly, 18 (2) June 1946, 6
8 Duncan, W G.K. "The Legacy of Army Education", Australian Highway, 29 (1) February 1947, 8
9 Lyle, G. "The Legacy is Limited!", Australian Highway, 29 (2) April 1947, 25
11 Ross, L. "An Experiment in Working Class Education", Australian Highway, 31 (5) October 1949, 65
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7 Lyle, G. 'The Legacy is Limited', Australian Highway, 29 (2) April 1947, 25
8 Eddy, W.H.C. 'The Political Boss', Australian Highway, 30 (6) December 1948, 82
9 Ross, L. 'An Experiment in Working Class Education', Australian Highway, 31 (5) October 1949, 65
literature. With the relative decline of adult education, literary demand had also fallen, and this was magnified by the poor progress of the local library movement in most States, the removal of import restrictions on comics from the United States, and the United Kingdom's embargo on imports of literature from Australia. At the same time, there were shortages in the post-war publishing industry, delays in publication, and increases in publishing costs. The Commonwealth Literary Fund seemed pusillanimous in not using its stipend budget to full capacity, and there were renewed pleas for assistance to the writer. The Australian publishing industry went into a downturn, and it was estimated that 1947 production figures were about 25% less (in dollar terms) than their 1946 counterparts, and that the average print run had dropped from the level of 5,000 copies during wartime to only 3,000 or so in 1947. The second largest Australian publishing house took the step of writing to the Prime Minister, and complaining that it had made a total loss of 3,453 pounds on its publishing activity over the period from January 1946 to March 1948. Even leading writers like Frank Dalby Davison could not support themselves from their work, and took frustrating and stultifying jobs in the expanded bureaucracy.

And this decline also characterised the production of the literary journals. Both *Australian New Writing, Angry Penguins*, and a numbers of others folded in this period, and survivors only remained in operation through a combination of stringency, sacrifice and luck. Clem Christesen, the editor of *Meanjin*, estimated that he took a personal loss of 464 pounds in the year 1948-49, and a loss of around 500 pounds in the succeeding year. Likewise, the generation of Australian painters which had emerged during World War II were scattered and cast adrift, and both the Melbourne Branch of the Contemporary Art Society, and the cultural ferment which it had expressed, were spent by 1947. The hopes held for a post-war world with a greater place for the visual arts were partially realised at best, and the world seemed a less hopeful place. This disillusion was strengthened by a series of powerful attempts by conservatives to discredit avant-garde art - attempts which included the 'Em Malley' hoax, the

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10 Fitzpatrick, B. 'The Trade in Literature', 48
11 The importance of these import restrictions for the indigenous comic industry is explored in Ryan, J. *Panel by Panel: a history of Australian Comics*, Cassell Australia, 1979, 154. Given the (obviously imperfect) substitutability of other literature for comics, it seems fair to hypothesise that the removal of restrictions had implications for the demand for Australian writers.
12 This was a response to the British Government's 'dollar crisis' - see Fitzpatrick, B. 'The Trade in Literature', 43
13 The problems in the mechanics of book production were the product of post-war shortages - see 'Melbourne University Press to Brian Fitzpatrick 1/6/47' *Brian Fitzpatrick Papers*, NLA MS 4965, Series 13, D-E-F, Box 47, n.p.
14 Fitzpatrick, B. 'The Trade in Literature', 43
15 The Fund had never expended more than 2,000 of its 6,000 pounds available allocation up until at least 1948 - Dobbie, J.M. 'Australia's State Aid to Authors', *Australian Quarterly*, 20 (2) June 1948, 43
16 Ross, L. 'Literature and Society'. *Meanjin*, 6 (4) Summer 1947, 227
17 Fitzpatrick, B. 'The Trade in Literature', 55
18 Cited in *Ibid.*, 60
19 *Ibid.*, 15
challenging of William Dobell's Archibald-winning portrait in 1943, and the prosecution of writers like Robert Close for indecency."

Even those social scientists who had hoped to remake Australian society were hurt and disappointed by the later 1940s. For bureaucrats, the failure of referenda in 1944, 1946 and 1948 robbed them of the opportunity for permanent powers and the permanent means to reorder the Australian continent. Although the Federal Government continued to play an expanded role in economic and social life, it was a more limited, routinized and mundane prospect than had been envisioned. There were also complaints in this period concerning both the need for greater economic relief and recognition for the middle classes, and the marginalisation of the humanities by 'harder' and more technical forms of knowledge." Even when the Federal Government pursued large-scale development projects, like the Snowy River scheme, social scientists needed constantly to assert the importance of general policies, and to complain that problems of policy were often concealed as problems of design or technique." For those social scientists employed in the private sector the bold new world also seemed a little baser than the grand vision had suggested. For example, it is true that many personnel officers entered into employment, and that 47% of manufacturers with more than 50 employees had, in 1949, either a personnel department or a personnel officer. However, it is also true that these officers were unable to remake the employment relationship through 'scientific' programs in human relations and psychological testing. Indeed, in 1949 90% of the surveyed staff concentrated on working conditions, amenities, safety and health in the course of their work."

So, the market which intellectuals faced was greatly altered by the later 1940s. The war had seen an expanded demand for both technical and cultural intellectuals, a cultural ferment, and a range of ideas which expressed hopes for a world in which intellectuals would maintain and further expand their positions. However, a combination of international forces, lost political battles and economic imperatives caused many hopes to be dashed. Even when hopes were partially fulfilled, this often had repercussion which were unforeseen and unfortunate. This changing market for intellectual production was to have profound repercussions for the shape of politics in the late 1940s and into the 1950s.

**Heightened Fear of World Economic Instability**

Australia's place in the world economy remained one of dependence and vulnerability in this period. Although the War had witnessed the growth of indigenous manufacturing on a large scale, exports were still limited to the primary and mining industries, and the health of the British and US economies remained paramount to Australian economic health. The Australian Government's response to this was to become one of the primary proponents of...
international economic and social planning." At post war trade conferences, Australia sought a Charter to control both the USA and the United Kingdom, and it was claimed that "(it is) primarily with an eye to these countries that we have advocated the embodiment in the Charter of an undertaking to maintain high levels of employment and effective demand." It was an Australian amendment which ensured that the promotion of full employment became a part of the UN Charter.

Nevertheless, Australians had no illusions about the strength of these guarantees, and even as the treaties were being ratified, the world economy seemed in a dangerous state. It was fearfully noted that price control in the United States had been removed, and prices had thereby risen steeply. An American recession was sincerely feared. At the same time, Australia's overall balance of payments surplus was matched by a balance of payments deficit within the dollar area, and it was therefore implicated in the post war 'Dollar Crisis'. The Australian Government had cooperated with Britain in pooling dollars within a common Sterling area, and it could therefore obtain dollars only through earning them or buying them through the British Treasury. When the British Government was thrown into a dollar crisis, Australia was therefore similarly stricken. The overall economic mood was one of restriction and stringency, and optimism about a 'Golden Age' plummeted with these overseas trends. Although the Labor Government could adjust to these trends, there is no doubt they shaped the context in which our pertinent actors interrelated over the later 1940s and 1950s.

The Rise of the Cold War

The Cold War was the final contextual factor which proved important over this period. Australia's place as a minor force in world geo-politics meant that it was little more than a helpless bystander as the United States and the USSR squared off against each other. Certainly, there is strong evidence to suggest that Australia's own foreign policy was peaceful, activist and independent. No foreign policy motions reached the Labor Party's Federal Conference between 1945 and 1953," and it was H.V. Evatt who almost single-handedly negotiated Australia's international stances. In areas of defence and trade, there was little evidence of Cold War thinking, and trade with Russia actually expanded from 0.03% of total exports in 1944-45, to 2.26% in 1948-49. In the United Nations, Australia took an independent and militant line in favour of the 'Middle Powers' and insistent upon the juridical purity of the UN procedures." While this implied anger at the Soviet Union's continuing use
of its veto powers upon the Security Council." It also implied that relations improved after 1946, when the veto power faded as an issue from the UN agenda. Indeed, Soviet diplomatic status in Australia was actually upgraded to embassy level in May 1948. Meredith Burgmann has made the bold claim that "Australia alone among the Western nations refused to accept as gospel the American interpretation of the post war world." While this may seem hyperbolic, it is true that the United States imposed an embargo on the transmission of classified and foreign policy information during 1947, and that it refused to lift this embargo during 1948. Political immaturity, a "leftish Government greatly influenced by Communist infiltrated Labor organisations", and poor security procedures were all cited as justifications for this embargo. It therefore seems fair to see Australia as victim rather than a proponent of the Cold War. Nevertheless, the Cold War atmosphere did have tremendously important implications for Australian politics, and it forms the fourth important contextual factor in understanding the evolution of the labour movement over this period.

The Changing Context and Labor Party Policy

It was the Labor Party which had most intensively attempted to craft unity around policies of full employment, and which was most strongly effected by these changes in the economic, social and political context. The Government's program was assailed from two primary directions. Firstly, the dollar crisis and the fear of world economic instability provoked the need for more interventionist Government policies. Labor had always argued that it would attain full employment by whatever means necessary, and had thereby both sidestepped the debate over 'Capitalism or Socialism?', and drawn a broad base of support towards wide State action within economy and society. Central to this commitment was the belief that a Depression could be avoided by the use of idle resources in new production; and that the manipulation of the credit system and an expanding public sector could combine to maintain economic activity. However, just as the international economy seemed more unstable, and Australia was hit by the dollar crisis, the Government's 1945 banking control legislation was threatened with Constitutional challenge. The need for Government intervention seemed greater and the ability seemed more questionable than ever.

Labor's response was swift. Prime Minister Chifley moved to nationalise the banks, stating that:

"With economic difficulties increasing overseas the Government must be in a position to act with certainty and effectiveness to ensure fulfillment of its policy of full employment and the maintenance of economic and financial stability."
Given the imperative to unify Australians around a policy of full employment, Labor intellectuals tended to emphasise the 'practical' and realistic aspects of this policy, rather than its implications for socialism. Lloyd Ross argued that nationalisation was adopted as a practical measure. At the 1949 elections, Minister John Dedman claimed that: 'nationalisation or socialisation or whatever other term may be applied to our policies, are but means to an end, that end being your welfare. If such methods do not promote the welfare of the people, they most certainly will not be employed.' In this conception, the powers of privately owned finance were overwhelmingly negative and threatening. They could make Labor's plans go astray. The banks pursued profits, and thereby contradicted community interests. They had traditionally lent when times were good, and contracted their lending when times were bad. They had also charged the maximum possible rates of interest. As a result, the nationalisation of the banks was justified via the consensus around the pursuit of full employment. Nationalisation was presented as "essential to the continuance of Labor's policy of economic and financial stability and full employment." So, the nationalisation of the banks was a policy that emerged as a response to economic questions outside of Labor's control. It was unthinkable outside of the context of world economic instability. At the same time, it was also a policy which was necessary if Labor was to honour its declared commitments. It was a policy that embodied an extension of Labor's approach to social reform, and a policy justified by the 'realistic', 'practical' rewards it could bring. Indeed, Labor consistently deployed these practical claims about the link between nationalisation and full employment against conservative sloganeering about liberty and freedom. It therefore represented an expected Labor Party response to the changing economic context - but a response that was to have important repercussions for the ability of 'full employment' to maintain unity between groups.

Labor's policies were simultaneously assailed from other directions. The Labor vision of vision of full employment and rising living standards was a world in which all Australians would have employment, basic needs, and expanding desires fulfilled. In the immediate post-war years, this implied that the Australian economy needed to maintain and even expand its very high production levels - so as to supply citizens with what they had been promised. The economy's national needs had risen enormously over the war years. In the field of Steel production, the cumulative production levels of Pig iron from 1936-39 averaged out at 1,018,653 tons per annum. Despite industrial disputation, it was estimated that in 1947, 1,100,000 tons would be produced. However, the estimated requirements of the national economy were now 1.5 million tons, and a production crisis was the result. This situation...

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38 Ross, L. 'Political Prospects of Australian Labor', The Canadian Forum, 28 (332) September 1948, 127
39 Dedman, J. '1949 Election Campaign Speech' n.d. John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1, Folder containing Items 166-336, 1-2
40 Clarey, P.J. in 'Should Banking be Nationalised?', ABC Forum of the Air, 10/9/47 3 (23), 4
41 Ward, E. 'Speech on Banking Bill House of Representatives 23/10/47', in E.J. Ward Papers, NLA MS 2386, Box 16, Series 7, 2
42 Chifley, J.B. The Things Worth Fighting For, Melbourne University Press, 1952, 105
43 'Federal Executive Minutes' 17/11/47 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 7
44 Ross, L. 'Views on Banking Nationalisation', SMH, 26/8/47
45 Breen, H.P. (Director of the Secondary Industries Division of DPWR) to Dedman, J. 20/10/47 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 6, Series 7, n.p.
prevailed in all forms of steel production, as it did in the coal industry." It was a problem magnified by the dollar crisis, and the need to combat Australia's trading deficit with both greater self-sufficiency and improved export performance.

However, if production retained primacy for the Government in the post-war years, it was threatened by the wave of industrial conflict which swept across Australian industry. Strike action was particularly damaging at this time, because flow production had created a situation in which the strikes of one trade union affected production everywhere, and therefore produced widespread paralysis and pessimism.16 This worker action therefore threatened full employment, as it did the hopes of those who had envisaged full employment as a stepping-stone to socialism.17 Strike action threatened the smooth-running of the economy, made aggregate supply and demand unstable, and therefore posed a real threat to employment levels. It also posed a problem for the transition to socialism because chronically low production led to shortages, and therefore necessitated the retention of irksome Government regulations. It thereby heightened public irritation, further reduced the morale of trade unionists, and bolstered conservative attacks on 'Red-Tape' and the regulationist tendencies of socialists.

The strike wave therefore threatened the viability of Labor's reforming path. This was most serious, because the ALP possessed few institutional resources to foist the drive for production upon the trade union movement. As explored in Chapter two, the ties of communication and control had traditionally operated in the opposite direction - from trade union affiliates up towards the Parliamentary leaders. Certainly, the Government had the State's coercive resources at its disposal. But such resources had proved ineffectual when used by a Conservative Government during World War II, and violated the very tenets of the ALP's existence.

Consequently, the Party's intellectuals turned to persuasion and propaganda. There were conferences with unionists and employers, and appeals from Chifley about the need for discipline and subservience to the 'Common Good'.18 There were even pleas that unionists in the coal mines prove themselves more 'moral' than their capitalist counterparts.2 Lloyd Ross and his Public Relations Directorate inside the Department of Post War Reconstruction swung into action. Ross tried to emphasise worker consultation and industrial democracy as paths to increased production.20 There were also attempts to prove that increased production did not go to luxuries, but to essentials.21 In an article entitled The Objectives of Labor and the Need for Increased Production, Ross attempted to show that the welfare and progressive income tax levied by the Government ensured that the fruits of increased production were

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16 Chifley. J.B. 'Report to the Nation' 23, 13/2/49 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1. Folder containing Items 337-501. 1
17 Dedman, J. The Problem of Bottlenecks' n.d. John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Series 1. Folder Containing Items 166-336, 2
18 Ross. L. 'Labour and Production', Twentieth Century, 4 (1) September 1949, 66-7
19 Ibid. 62
20 Chifley's speech to one Conference in August 1947 is collected in The Things Worth Fighting For, 1952, 277-8.
21 Ibid. 285
22 This suggestion is made in a letter by Ross to A.S. Brown 6/10/48 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 49, 1.
23 That this technique be used was suggested in a letter from Meyer (Public Relations Officer) to Lloyd Ross 30/10/48 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 49.
being distributed fairly within the community." But more than this, he also appealed to socialists, by arguing that greater production proved the 'social responsibility' of Labor supporters, and therefore quickened the transition to socialism." In Ross's supple hands, production and socialism were identified once more. It was through the initiative of intellectuals like Ross that the Labor Party's Federal Conference in 1948 passed a motion declaring:

"our view that a Labor Government, which is increasing the standards of the people, and which has achieved full employment, and has a policy by which full employment will be maintained, is entitled to call upon the working class for assistance in the battle for economic progress, just as the workers assisted so patriotically and enthusiastically the battle for victory in war.""

However, arm twisting and oratory are rarely enough. During World War II, the Labor Party's commitment to maximum production was shared by the Communist Party. The CPA played a vital disciplining role in preventing disputation and in infusing the production drive with a radical, hegemonizing purpose. As we saw in the last chapter, the Communist Party retained its commitment to production and full employment up until at least 1946. However, by this time the changing context caused the Party to review its policy, as we will explore in the following section of the Chapter.

The Communist Party and the Hour of Revolution

The Communist Party's institutional strategies were altered for three primary reasons. Firstly, the scope and the nature of the strike wave had an obvious influence. Many of the strikes were provoked by employers, and to counsel restraint in this context would be to counsel an obsequious and a 'lily-livered' stance on behalf of the working class. This need to defend the working class was combined with the mammoth proportions of industrial disputation, and the Labor Government's increasingly futile attempts to halt it. In an obvious sense, the Union/Labor Party division around the strikes expressed a disenchantment with the Government, and an opportunity for the CPA to gain prestige and to win support. As the opportunities for affiliation to the ALP around common policies seemed to contract, so differentiation and outright competition with the Labor Party seemed to offer greater hopes of advancement. By 1947 these hopes were too great to ignore.

At the same time, world economic instability also influenced the Party's leaders. Given their inflexible and apocalyptic Marxist beliefs, the CPA hierarchy saw contemporary economic trends as the first signal that capitalism was crumbling. Throughout the 1940s, there were frequent predictions about the developing economic crisis, and the imminent dissolution of capitalism." Some predictions, like those of Jack Hughes, were buttressed by 'scientific' analyses of the stock exchange," or other strange and fearful portents. In 1947, the

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1 Ross, L. 'The Objectives of Labor and the Need for Increased Production', contained in letter to John Dedman 27/9/48 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 6, Series 7, 4
2 Ibid., 7
4 Dixon, R. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85. 2
5 Hughes, J. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85. 72
Central Committee made a statement that an economic crisis, linked to overproduction, was threatening Australia." Around the same time, it was prophesised that a "revolutionary situation" was possible in the next few years, linked to a "general crisis of Capitalism." This wildly optimistic assessment was made under the influence of a religious attachment to a simplistic Marxism. It defined a sort of fantastic aura that characterised the Party right up until 1949, and only evaporated with the entrance of the Menzies Government, and the resultant cold war repression.

This confidence in the imminence of economic collapse counselled that political power was not many years ahead for Australian Communists. It implied that with the coming ferocity of a 'developed' class struggle, the Party's declining membership would soon be reversed. Perhaps more fundamentally, these projections of future revolution tended to colour assessments of the political present. Fantastical imaginings about immanent Communist centrality spilled over into delusions about the CPA's current significance. The strike wave was not characterised as a simple attempt to extract more wages while the opportunities of workers were momentarily greater. Nor was it characterised as an autonomous drive by workers against the policies of reconstruction then advanced by both the Labor and the Communist Parties. Instead, Communist intellectuals interpreted the strike wave as part of a 'left swing' sweeping over the continent.

The Party believed that it gave a lead to the wages struggle, and that its changing direction was a "tribute to the Communist Party's influence." As a result, the Party leaders did not conceptualise the later 1940s as a time of disenchantment with the Party, declining membership and increasing opposition from both moderate and Catholic enemies. Instead, the delusions held about the CPA's centrality caused them to assert that they possessed very great influence "among the masses" and "in struggle", but to lament that this had not translated into the Party's "organisational aspects". In short, the Party's interpretation of the economic context was shaped by its form of Marxism. This had caused it to misapprehend its own strategic surrounds, and to therefore foresee greater merits in a policy of opposition to the ALP and support for the wages push.

The third force contributing to this change in Communist policy was the Cold War. The dynamics of the Cold War led the CPSU to form the Cominform in 1947, and to reinstitute formal contact with Communist Parties in other countries. Although the CPA was not a member of the Cominform, and therefore not directly controlled by it, it was greatly influenced by the statements of the Cominform and the views of the Soviet Government. The famous opening declaration of the Cominform postulated the overriding importance of the struggle for peace and national independence, as well as warning against underestimating the

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43 Statement by CC Plenum 12-14th September 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 1
41 Hughes, J. CC Plenum, date unknown (1946-7) CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 3
42 Henry, J.C. CC Plenum February 1949 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 5 made similarly confident claims about encroaching economic crisis.
41 Henry, J.C. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 82
42 Gollan, W. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 66
41 Hughes, J.R. CC Plenum, date unknown (1946-7) CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 1
41 Wright, T. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 90
41 Thornton, E. CC Plenum 14-16th February 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 1
41 Miles, J.B. CC Plenum 14-16th February 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 5
strength of the working class." The Communist Party in Australia took up both of these views, and ensured that they guided the Party's action.

The assertion of the strength of the working class strengthened the mood of apocalyptic crisis, and the sense that a militant, uncompromising policy should be adopted. It was frequently linked to the proposition that these were the last years of capitalism." At the same time, it also implied that there was a need for a sharper attitude to the "socialist right-wing." It thereby stimulated the idea of inter-Party competition rather than cooperation, and suggested that support for the wages push was advisable. The Cominform's insistence on the centrality of the struggle for peace was also accepted. Even before its 15th Congress in 1948, the Party had distributed four pamphlets on America's war policies, with a total circulation of 45,000." At this same Congress, the Party Constitution's Preamble was altered, and it gave a new emphasis to the war policy of US capital, and the CPA's desire to unite the people for national independence and for world peace."

Of course, we should not be so myopic as to see the CPA's new policies as purely the result of Moscow control. The strike wave, international economic instability, and the influence of the Party's brand of Marxism were all of vital importance. Nevertheless, it remains true that the CPA's policy did change in this period, and that the Cold War and the emergence of the Cominform were vital contributory factors.

The Communist Party's New Policies

The Communist Party's confidence in the inevitability of economic crisis led it to eschew the aim of increased production. There were assertions that production had almost reached saturation point," and that the Labor Party was not doing enough to combat underconsumption." In this situation, increased production would only make matters worse. It would lead to increased profits, overproduction and declining employment." High production and full employment were not identical, as Labor argued, but antithetical.

The Communist Party's policy was to fight for the raising of real wages and the shortening of the working week." If pursued before the onset of the crisis, an increased standard of living ensured that workers could combat the crisis from a strong strategic position." If pursued in the very teeth of the crisis, it promised to reduce the extent of the crisis." Somewhat paradoxically, it was also argued within the CPA at this time that to fight for concessions was to fight for socialism. Concrete gains were presented as anti-capitalistic,

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" Opening Declaration of Communist Information Bureau, Poland, September 1947 in Study Material, CPA, Printed by the Peter Lalor Press, 1951, 20-1
" Gould, L.H. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 28
" Henry, J.C. PC Meeting 7/10/47 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 1
" Preliminary Draft Report for the 15th Congress on the Work of the Central Committee Between the 14th and 15th Congresses' CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 140
" Constitution of the Australian Communist Party, Adopted by the 15th National Congress, May 1948, 10-11
" Miles, J.B. CC Plenum 14-16th February 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 7
" Statement by the CC Plenum September 12-14th 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 2
" Dixon, R. CC Plenum February 1949 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 1
" Statement by the CC Plenum 12-14th September 1947, 2
" Miles, J.B. CC Plenum 14-16th February 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 5
" Rowe, T. and Wright, T. United Action Wins Better Conditions, 40 Hour Week, Increased Wages, Current Book Distributors, 1947, 15-16
because they made capitalism more fragile, less able to weather each succeeding wave of economic crisis. Wages and profit were enemies, and increased wages attacked the profits of the monopolies. This was the official 'Marxist veneer' which justified the CPA's strategy of supporting the wages offensive. However, it was in no sense the only authentic 'Marxist' policy, nor the only policy pursued by Communist Parties in the industrialised, democratic countries. Over 1947 and 1948 there was a heated exchange between the British and Australian Communist Parties - with the British retaining an allegiance to 'reconstructionist' and production-based policies. The exchange is notable if only because it forces us to reject seductive theses about Moscow dictation in a homogenous movement, and to glimpse the reasoning of Australian Communists. The Australian Secretariat berated their British counterparts for not grasping their strategic opportunities:

"The wave of discontent in Britain, the outbreak of "unofficial strikes" should indicate the need for an active policy that decisively distinguishes them from the Labor Party, especially on questions of production and strikes. It appears to us that the whole line of the British Party in relation to the Labor Party and the struggles of the working class should be reviewed."

However, there was more to Communist Party policy than a championing of the economic demands of workers. The struggle for peace and the pursuit of nationalisation were also primary planks of the Party's policy at this time. Communist intellectuals attempted to fuse the wages struggle with these policies. As the economic crisis apparently loomed, so the Party aimed to provide an integrated and coherent set of policy responses. Lance Sharkey believed that the struggle for peace was not a purely humanitarian aim, but one which needed to be fused with the other major aims of the Party, and which represented a deadly blow at a capitalist system in decay. This integration was achieved through the Communist analysis of the causes of the Cold War. Communists at this time asserted that it was the encroaching economic crisis which had led American imperialists to plan for a war. War allowed the crisis to be attenuated through the production of increased profits, and the suppression of the working class movement. It was accompanied by a drive by monopolists to disarm the working class and to weaken the trade unions. As a result, the struggle for peace and the struggle against the economic crisis were presented as complementary. This was so in the negative sense that the warmongers, the anti-democrats and those who attacked the living standards of Australian workers were all the same people. They were all monopolists. But this also implied that the fight against imperialism was also the fight against the economic crisis and against depressed living standards. It was hence possible to see the socialist and the peaceful potential in the struggle for increased wages. As one Communist publication put it:

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13 Sharkey, L. CC Plenum November 1946 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 13
14 Gibson, R. A Straight Talk on Wages and Prices, International Bookshops, 1949, 5-7
15 CC Secretariat to J.C. Henry 11/2/47 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 27, 2
16 Sharkey, L. CC Plenum February 1949 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 1
17 Dixon, R. Report to CC Meeting 20/2/48 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 3; and Dixon, R. CC Plenum February 1949 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 4
18 Blake, J.D. War, What For?, International Bookshop, 1949, 3
19 Hughes, J.R. Keep the Unions Free, Current Book Distributors, 1949, 3
20 Statement by CC Plenum 12-14th September 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 4
21 Henry, J.C. CC Plenum February 1949 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 2
"The important task of the Australian people today is to struggle against the developing economic crisis and for national independence against the domination of Yankee imperialism. This can be done by fighting unitedly for better social services, for reduced prices of essential living commodities, for increased wages for the working masses. These achievements would assist in improving living standards and would lay the basis for united mass action against capitalist exploitation and for a planned economy in which the social well-being of the toiling people is placed before the profits of a few."116

At the same time, the perceived economic crisis, combined with the increasing militancy of CPA policy opened a greater space for an emphasis upon policies of nationalisation. Whereas the early and mid 1940s had witnessed the Communist championing of limited measures of intervention and alliances to extend State control, now the idea of outright nationalisation of the economy was stressed. The Party wanted more than the nationalisation of the banks.117 They believed that this could not avert the economic crisis, and that it was necessary to nationalise both the key basic industries and the big monopolies to break the cycle of boom and bust.118 There were attempts to bring forward the CPA's policy to a greater extent,119 and to mobilise the trade unions around policies of nationalisation 120. Jack Hughes best exemplifies the intentions of leaders:

"Our programme for the nationalisation of industries has to live and when the industries are nationalised, it will be the result of development of a tremendous power of the people from the mass movements that have and will take place."121

Obviously, the changed emphasis of the Communist Party's policies also implied a changed set of relationships with the trade unions and with the Labor Party. Certainly, support for a united front lingered on into 1947, and in South Australia resolutions supporting labour movement unity were still being passed in a number of trade unions in the June of that year.122 There was also some initial confidence that the nationalism of the Australian Labor Party, and its battle for national independence during World War II could lead it to oppose the domination of American imperialism and its web of war-making.123 However, as the Labor Government attempted to push for increased production, and the Communist Party pushed for increased wages, there was a clear deterioration in mutual relations. As early as March 1946, Central Committee member L.H. Gould was already noting this trend.124 By the CPA's 1948 Conference, this was being formalised in Party statements, and blamed on the Labor Party's

116 Social Services and the Struggle Against the Economic Crisis, 2nd Edition, Current Book Distributors, 1948, 31
117 Dixon, R. CC Plenum 12-14th September 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 13
118 'Draft Resolution for 15th Congress' CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 122
119 Dixon, R. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 12
120 Henry, J.C. CC Plenum 12-14th September 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 5
121 Hughes, J. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 70-1
122 'Support Grows for Labor Unity', Tribune (South Australia) 13/6/47
123 Henry, J.C. CC Plenum 16-19th May 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 16
124 Gould, L.H. PC Meeting 14-16th March 1946 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 5
refusal to align itself with the "principles of the working class movement". As a result, the chances of affiliation seemed more distant than ever. The mass activity of workers became the Communist Party's central aim, and unity agreements were now desired only to the extent that they developed such mass activity. Unity was not at all something official or institutional, but almost exclusively unofficial and local.

With this mutation in the Communist Party's aims, the critique of the Labor Party was both 'sharpened' and made more basic. Communist intellectuals focused increasingly upon the need to expose the "right-wing splitters and Redbaiters" within the labour movement. They conceptualised the Labor Party's nationalisation policy as an attempt to insulate capitalism from working class struggle, and denied it any radical intent or significance. The aim of criticism seemed increasingly to "detach workers" from social democracy, and to bring to workers the truth of Communist advice, tactics and policy. To be sure, this had always been a strand of the CPA's interventions. But whereas once criticism and action aimed to draw workers together into a common united front of socialist Laborites and Communists, now it aimed to lead workers away from Labor and towards the CPA. Leaders like Dixon commented on the need to bring disillusioned workers from the Labor Party into the ranks of the Communist Party. Around the same time, Lance Sharkey argued that unions should be encouraged to disaffiliate from the Labor Party, and from its "right-wing agents in the Unions or the Labor Party.

And as relations further deteriorated, so the demonisation of the Labor Party also proceeded. In 1949, Prime Minister Chifley was declared to be leading the attack of the bosses upon the working class. The idea that the Labor Government was a "lesser evil" as compared to a conservative Government was repudiated as both incorrect and as a constrictive force on the development of the working class movement. Communist intellectuals enunciated their Party's aim as to "liquidate reformism" as the decisive policy within the working class movement.

However, if unity with the Labor Party seemed less likely, this did not at all imply that the Communist Party forfeited unity as one of its primary aims. On the contrary, the Party...
sought unity all the more vigorously through the mechanism of the peoples' front or the peoples' movement. This was an approach dominant in Eastern Europe, where, it was argued, alliances between the peasantry and the working class had been formed, and where the movement towards socialism had thereby been secured. Drawing upon this experience in an artificial way, Australian Communists of the later 1940s took up these conceptions, and attempted to adjust them to an Australian context. The CPA's traditional use of front organisations was expanded around this time, and it was regarded as essential that all struggles involving Communists include the formation of broad committees with non-Party people. These provided the means to defeat the class enemy and to build conditions for a new form of State power. The most important examples of this tactic were pursued in the peace movement (through the Australian Peace Council), and in the Youth Movement (through the Eureka Youth League). But there were a plethora of such organisations. The 'New Housewives' Association' attempted to organise housewives "to struggle for improved living standards, in defence of democratic rights, and for lasting peace." Similarly, the Federation of Literature and Art was established to organise and unify dissent by cultural producers against the "inroads of imperialism" in the later 1940's. It was valued for its strategic possibilities - its ability to use cultural and economic nationalism to unify and activise groups under its banner like the Printing Unions, Parents and Citizens' Associations, and even certain well disposed Chambers of Commerce.

The autonomy of these fronts was somewhat elastic, but was always questionable. Jack Hughes believed that although there was need to use wide committees, there was an equal need to ensure that this policy was carried out in the name of the Communist Party, so that "there is no doubt as to where the leadership is coming from." When the progress of fronts seemed retarded, new organisations, new leaderships and new struggles were quickly organised by the Communist Party hierarchy. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Peoples' fronts were an extremely important part of the mass work of the later 1940s, and their ability to form unities around concrete questions was to exert a profound impact upon the politics of the 1950s.

Just as relations with the Labor Party changed in this period, so the Communist Party's strategy also dictated a new orientation to the trade unions. Communists attached themselves to the already existent wages offensive, and attempted to canalize it towards more overtly political, revolutionary and Communist-directed ends. As a result, Communist interventions within the trade unions took on a renewed force. There were attacks on the ill-discipline of miners, on the means by which their disputation antagonized others, and on their need to recognise that the CPA represented the working class a whole.

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24 Campbell, E.W. 'Postwar History of the CPA' admits the importance of the Eastern European Peoples' Democracies in these policies - CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, n.p.
25 Sharkey, L.L. PC Meeting 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 10
26 Hughes, J.R. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 70
27 CC Circular to all State and NSW District Committees 22/11/48 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 2
28 Chandler, H.B. CC Plenum 20-22nd February 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85, 38
29 Hughes, J.R. PC Meeting 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 2
30 This was the experience of Mary Wright as head of the NHA in 1950 - see Johnson, A. Bread and Roses, Left Book Club Co-op, 1990, 133-4
31 Dixon, R. PC Meeting 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 7
32 CC Secretariat to all State and District Committees 17/11/48 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 3
were berated about their failure to "act in a proper Communist fashion"," and their narrow focus upon the problems of the individual union was also frowned upon."

Communists aimed to secure control of the trade unions for two primary reasons. Firstly, they aimed to coordinate the wages offensive, so as to make it more systematic and unified." With the CPA's tactical acumen as a directive force, general strikes would not be called around insignificant issues, but around issues which benefitted the working class as a whole." As a result, the significance and success of the stoppages would be all the greater. But more generally, the CPA aimed to infuse the wave of industrial disputation with a greater political content. There was a drive to build factory branches around this time." While it was true that unions now neglected "vital questions" for a narrow economic focus," this could be reversed. In the most hopeful scenarios drawn by Party intellectuals, the influence of Communists in the unions would politicise their action, and cause them to turn their industrial agitation into a more focused and political campaign. In this vein, Jack Blake speculated that:

"...the great trade union movement, and in particular the trade unions directly influenced by our Party, constitute the lever, the mass force from which we can proceed to develop unity in the ranks of the workers, to develop the People's Front of the kind we need."

So, Communists no longer supported the quest of the Australian Labor Party to integrate the working class into a drive for maximum production. As the 1940s progressed, the CPA was influenced enough by changes in the economic and international context to alter its direction, and to eschew increased production for increased living standards, the pursuit of peace and the primacy of full nationalisation. This strategy was not the result of a Moscow plot, so much as a sensitive, opportunistic and perfectly understandable response to the changing environment. This strategy contributed to changed relations with both the ALP and the trade union movement. The Communist Party no longer sought affiliation with the Labor Party. Although it still aimed at working class unity, this unity was perceived more directly as an attack on the institution of the Labor Party, and on the stances of its conservative masters. With the trade unions, there was both a greater identification, and a greater attempt to control and direct their activity. The ultimate aim of Party leaders at this time seemed to be a broad people's front, built around the trade unions and working towards peace, wages and socialism.

The Intelligentsia and those Materialistic Masses

However, at the same time as the Communist Party was influenced by both the context and by the compensatory actions of the Labor Government, the intelligentsia was also influenced by this matrix of forces. The intelligentsia was parched at this time by the deteriorating demand

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"Rowe, E.J. PC Meeting 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 4
Sharkey, L.L. CC Plenum n.d. (1946-7) CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 9
Blake, J.D. PC Meeting 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 3
CC Secretariat to all State and District Committees 17/11/48 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 5, 3
By February 1947, 20% of the Party's NSW membership was organised into Factory branches - Donald, L. CC Plenum 14-16th February 1947 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 1
Blake, J.D. PC Meeting 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 5
Blake, J.D. PC Meeting 10-11th January 1948 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 86, 2"
for intellectual production. The bureaucracy lacked the power to plan society in its own image. The educational sector and the cultural sphere were starved of finances and almost moribund. At the same time, the failure to maintain high production and the deteriorating relations between the CPA and the ALP meant that the community centre movement was robbed of both resources and key organisational support. Furthermore, although many intellectuals supported full employment as a primary aim, the nationalisation of the banks by the Labor Government in 1947 was a far more radical and transformative measure than many had anticipated. The context had closed off many of the intelligentsia's most treasured hopes. More than that, the response of the Labor Party to the context seemed to confirm to many Australian intellectuals their worst fears about the materialism and the lack of liberty of the masses. Even more, the wages offensive, now tied to a militant, deluded and uncompromising CPA, all heightened the fear and the disgust with Australian workers which we noted amongst the intelligentsia in previous chapters.

In this section of the Chapter we explore how the Australian intelligentsia interpreted its impoverished prospects. We shall argue that this interpretation drew upon the previous distinction between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, and that it further separated the intelligentsia from the labour movement. As a result, it made the Labor Party's policy of full employment and cultural development less able to unify a common constituency.

The fear of Communism became increasingly hysterical among the Australian intelligentsia. Feeding upon the reduced opportunities of Australian intellectuals, the Cold War, and the altered stance of the CPA, the intelligentsia-CPA conflict which had been evident in the early '40s took on a far greater scope and urgency. Communists were presented as enemies of democracy, as totalitarians with an evangelical zeal. It was argued that their place in the trade union movement had been the primary cause of the strike wave, and therefore of the nation's economic woes. Communist endorsement of direct action had caused production to fall and the rewards of victory to be lost. Although Communists called strikes ostensibly for better conditions, their real motivation was to reduce the country to chaos. Communist trade union leaders apparently created a situation favourable to 'Asiatic invaders'. Conservative newspapers like the Sydney Morning Herald believed that in the shadow of World War III, the Communist Party should be banned. Even the most liberal newspapers, like Melbourne's The Age, commended those who attempted to oust Communists from union leaderships. And this expanded fear of the Communist threat was integrated with the intelligentsia's prevailing assessment of the people of Australia.

Intellectuals in the early 1940s had argued that Australian workers were apathetic and materialistic, and the rise of Communism was explained in these terms. It was rank and file apathy which was the source of Communist power within the trade unions. The idea that apathy and lassitude were linked to Communist success was part of former Victorian Premier, E.J. Hogan's assessment of Australia's problems. He believed that Australians suffered from a peculiar anaemia:

10 Howard, S. 'The State of Democracy', Australian Quarterly, 18 (2) June 1946, 16
11 'Wreckers Who Threaten Our Industries', Melbourne Herald, 2/5/47
13 This was the view of former Communist T.C. McGillick, cited in 'Communism as Aid to Invasion', SMH, 1/7/48
14 'We Must Ban Communists', SMH, 12/3/48
15 'Communist Challenge Accepted', The Age, 29/3/48
16 'Keon's Retort to AEU', Argus, 24/9/48
"The anaemia is pernicious and it is caused by evil intentioned men whose aim is to destroy our economic and industrial life and so weaken us as a nation that we will be easy prey for international Communism. It is a dangerous sickness and more widespread than any epidemic ever experienced. It has within it the seeds of self-destruction which precede national suicide."\[15\]

It was the apathy of Australians which opened the way for sinister Communists to pull strings with an evil intent. Australian workers were not Communists - they were simply 'anaemic' fools "duped" by Communist union bosses.\[16\] But this Communist manipulation had important repercussions for the conception of 'the people' held by Australian intellectuals.

Not only was the rise of Communism explained through the apathy of the masses, the apathy and materialism of the masses was also explained via reference to Communism. Prominent Liberal parliamentarian, Wilfrid Kent Hughes, stated that Communism "in its essence, is gross materialism."\[17\] From this point, it was possible to argue that Communism had increased the materialism of Australians. For example, it was argued by A.J.G. Simpson at this time that "this evil insidious thing called Communism" had weakened the moral fibre of the Australian people. Its ill-effects apparently included: "a lowering of the standards of behaviour, a widespread increase in selfishness, a lack of self discipline and a curious belief that individual efficiency, interest in one's work and service to one's fellowmen are somehow belittling and derogatory to the individual."\[18\] So, the rise of Communism and the debased state of the people were linked in the minds of many Australian intellectuals.

This is important, because the fear of Communism spilled over into a greater fear of the masses, and an even more distorted vision of the Australian people. Certainly, as we may have expected, the terms in which non-intellectuals were apprehended were unchanged in many ways. During this period, 'the people' were still treated as a materialistic herd.\[19\] There were still complaints about their drinking and betting,\[20\] and about the corruption of the public's aesthetic appetites.\[21\] The majority were still acquiescent and apathetic,\[22\] and the 'thinking few' were still presented as in isolation from the thoughtless political mass.\[23\]

Nicholas Brown, in his study of Australian social analysis in the 1950s, found ample evidence that intellectuals were unsure about the moral character of the people,\[24\] prone to a kind of social pathology,\[25\] and anxious about the growth of 'mass society'.\[26\]

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\[16\] Tipping, E.W. 'Widespread Unrest Due to Reds', Melbourne Herald, 3/5/47
\[17\] Hughes, W.K. cited in Brown, N. Governing Prosperity: Social Change and Social Analysis in Australia in the 1950s, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 16
\[18\] Simpson, A.J.G. 'Whither Australia?', Australian Quarterly, 21 (2) June 1949, 77
\[19\] Thomas, G. 'Australian Theatre', Meanjin, 8 (1) Autumn 1949, 13-4
\[20\] Guthrie, T. 'Report on Australian Theatre', Australian Quarterly, 21 (2) June 1949, 78
\[22\] Tapp, E.J. 'Responsibility in an Expanding Society', Australian Quarterly, 21 (2) June 1949, 42
\[23\] Carroll, N.C. 'The Changed Australian Outlook', Australian Quarterly, 18 (4) December 1946, 101
\[24\] Brown, N. Governing Prosperity: Social Change and Social Analysis in Australia in the 1950s, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 4
\[25\] Ibid., 124
\[26\] Ibid., 185
However, if the picture remained constant in many ways, it was also at least partially altered. No longer were the Australian people conceptualised as 'children' who needed guidance from those intellectuals who knew their own best interests. The fear of Communism and the changed context caused Australian intellectuals to express a far greater fear and alienation from 'the people'. Because the context had reduced the opportunities of Australian intellectuals, they now expressed far less confidence in their ability to make the world and to lead society. At the same time, because their explanation for the changed context was linked to a fear of the ill-effects of Communism, 'the people' were increasingly conceptualised as a frightening and all-powerful mass.

Indeed, there were frequent expressions of fear in this period that the 'unthinking' were outbreeding the 'thinking', and thereby threatening social progress. This was the fear of N.C. Carroll - a fear which made the achievements of any form of social planning largely irrelevant. J. Gentilli believed that the proportion of "persons of higher culture" within the polity was tremendously important in gauging the resistance to regimentation and to irrationality. He lamented that the current context was resulting in "smaller families for many intellectuals and for many well-to-do people, and in larger families for many labourers." There was no subtlety in this fear - a fear that the sensitive few would literally be swamped by the greedy masses. But the fear did find other less alarmist means of expression. The key problem with democracy was now presented as the possibility that the thoughtless majority would provide the 50.1% of voter support required for an evil or tyrannous Government. The key threat to democracy did not now come from the mighty and the powerful, but from "the moral and mental "littleness" of the little man." Even intellectuals sympathetic to the labour movement seemed influenced by this mood. Dave Stewart, the Secretary of the WEA in New South Wales, argued that the workers had changed over the history of his organisation. They had once possessed no power, and had sought education as a means of attaining rule and of using that rule wisely. Stewart argued that the situation in 1950 was greatly different: "Today, they have in a large measure attained that power, and too many of the activists of today fail to realise that power is not synonymous with wisdom or real strength." Workers had lost their incentive to gain education, and had turned away in selfishness and shortsightedness. Clearly, the people were thought of less as ignorant, boisterous children, and more as threatening, brutish fools.

This shift is detectable within Australian economic thought. It was the perceived materialism of workers which was used to explain the failures of the Australian economy in the late 40s and early 50s. This was the belief behind Douglas Copland's famous description of Australia as a "milk-bar economy". Copland's description referred to the imbalance in the economy - to the inadequate production levels in basic industries like foodstuffs, power and exports, while production remained high in "non-basic industries". He argued that this imbalance occurred because the high demand for labour meant that the basic industries, which often represented poor working conditions, had become unattractive. In this

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17 Carroll, N.C. 'The Changed Australian Outlook'. 103
18 Gentilli, J. 'Demography and Democracy'. Australian Quarterly, 20 (1) March 1948, 104
19 Ibid., 103
20 Henderson, K. 'The Immaturity of Party Politics'. Australian Quarterly, 21 (4) December 1949, 44
22 Copland, D.B. 'Balance of Production in the Australian Post-War Economy'. Economic Record, 25 (49) December 1949, 2
23 Ibid. 5
conception, it was the materialism of workers, and their quest for more money and easier work which had undermined the Australian economy. This was a conception held by other economists of the period. F.E. Mauldron argued that the imbalance of the economy occurred because Government planners had failed to foresee the "sectional self-interest" of "consumers organised in their occupational or industrial groupings". It was this self-interest which had fed inflation, and which was expressed in the readiness or many to "ease off a little in their exertions in their regular jobs."¹⁷⁷ Later in the 1950s, workers were still being blamed for inadequate production levels. In an overview of the Australian economy, R.I. Downing stated that: "Perhaps if we considered ourselves poor we would have a spur to produce more. But our present troubles stem from the fact that we think and behave as if we were richer than we are."¹⁷⁸

Later economists have criticised the views of Copland, Mauldron and their cohorts. A. Waterman has argued that production in this period was retarded by other causes, such as the difficulty in obtaining imported capital goods from Britain and Europe."¹⁷⁹ Others, like B. Haig have also pointed to the slowness of business in making replacement investment, and have argued that poor "entrepreneurial activity" is the main reason for Australia's slow rate of increase in real product.¹⁸⁰ However, these reasons were not advanced by economists of the late 1940s and 50s. Trapped in a demonisation of the people, they blamed them for the failure of reform. They saw ordinary Australians as the reason for their disappointed hopes, and they feared for the stability of their world.

Through this conception of 'the people', the fear which the intelligentsia felt for the Communist Party became a fear of all Australian workers. This extension of fear was assisted by the strength of the wages offensive, the Labor Party's nationalisation policies, and the skills of conservative propagandists. The interlocking of banking and media directorships in Australia was extremely close. The Director of the Herald Press, H.P. Giddy, was also the Director of the National Bank of Australasia. Two of the Directors of 'Associated Press' were also Directors of the Bank of NSW, another was the Director of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney.¹⁸¹ As a result, there was a flood of anti-nationalisation propaganda.¹⁸² Typical editorials were like the Sydney Morning Herald's assessment of the issue:

"Once in control of all except State banking facilities, the Government will have nearly absolute power over the lives and fortunes of individuals and groups...Its powers of large-scale regimentation, like its opportunities for petty tyranny, will be virtually unlimited. This is the prospect opened up by the Chifley plan. This is the road to the economic enslavement of the Australian people."¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Mauldron, F.E. 'The Consumer in a Planned Economy'. Economic Record, 25 (48) June 1949, 14
¹⁷⁸ Downing, R.I. 'The Australian Economy, March 1956', Economic Record, 32, March 1956, 17
¹⁷⁹ Waterman, A.M.C. Economic Fluctuations in Australia, 1948 to 1964, Australian National University Press, 1972, 66-7
¹⁸¹ Money Brothers. Private Banks and Newspaper Combines, 9/9/47 John Dedman Papers. NLA MS 987, Box 10, Series 10, 2
¹⁸² This is explored in May, A.L. The Battle for the Banks, Sydney University Press, 1968
¹⁸³ 'The Road to Serfdom', SMH, 19/8/47
Propaganda around this issue was combined with the more general promulgation of views about the relationship between socialism and communism. Conservative leader Robert Menzies argued that socialism was the ultimate aim of communism. More than that, he argued that socialism represented a sort of "marvellous mental preparation for communism", because the people became accustomed to being pushed around. This sort of view was echoed by R.G. Casey, who argued hysterically:

"Labour has openly declared its intention of the complete socialisation of our country. Although Labour is 'officially' opposed to Communism, there is little doubt that the eventual aims of the Australian Labour Party and of the Australian Communist Party are indistinguishable."

As a result of such interventions, the middle class lost the ability to distinguish between Labor and Communist theory and practice. As Lloyd Ross lamented, the general public remained prone to think of socialism in terms of controls. The Labor Party's own internal reports suggested that swinging voters were influenced by Liberal propaganda about 'freedom'. There is no doubt, then, that the intelligentsia largely interpreted the changing context in terms which made an alliance with Labor less possible. Not only did it take fright at the links between Communism and the wages push, but it also conceptualised the people as a powerful, greedy mob, and linked the Labor Party's economic regulations to this vision.

As a result, the reforms which the intelligentsia had foreseen as part of post war reconstruction were all now rejected. Journals like Australian Quarterly, which had been brimming with suggestions for planning, for widened education and expanded social sciences now seemed either silent or sceptical on these issues. Indeed, planners were increasingly stigmatised as overly technical, as lacking in a holistic vision, and as unable to claim the title of 'thinkers'. Intellectuals retreated from invocations to social reform. Even in the field of educational reform, the intelligentsia became "demoralized and immobile." Manning Clark later recalled that he regarded the defeat of Labor with "indifference", and that: "It seemed a time in which not to expect too much from the fruits of political action." Talk about a new social order declined, and advocacy of the status quo and 'the Australian way of life' grew up in its place. To the extent that reform was advocated at all, the focus moved sharply away from the remaking of society towards the remaking of the moral and mental status of the people. Intellectuals became consumed with moral and religious questions.

The intelligentsia had explained their disappointed hopes largely through the influence of Communism and of the materialistic, threatening people. It was the moral deficiencies of Australians which had caused the failure of the intelligentsia's bold visions. The absence of...

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10Menzies, R. cited in 'Socialism "Way to Communism", Says Mr Menzies', SMH, 20/7/49
12Ross, L. 'Socialism and Distributivism', n.d. Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 10, 24
15Carroll, N.C. 'The Changed Australian Outlook', Australian Quarterly, 18 (4) December 1946, 103
16This is noted of intellectuals such as Hancock and Copland in Brown, N. Governing Prosperity, 241
17Spaul, L. Australian Education in the Second World War, University of Queensland Press, 1982, 211
religion had precipitated the expanded scope of class conflict. It was the lack of Christian fellowship which caused industrial and international conflict. The moral “binding element” had gone out of life, and division and segmentation was the result. Christianity and conflict were treated as antinomies. At the same time, the materialism of the people was also juxtaposed with Christianity and spirituality. N.C. Carroll believed that the material gains of the people had been won by ignoring the spiritual. Others argued that materialism and spiritual disintegration were linked. W. Stanner argued that it was the decline of "religious conformity" which had allowed "secularism, materialism and hedonism" to rise to dominance. In the wake of religious decline there had emerged "a general cynicism and unrest destructive of all prospects of social stability." And it was a religious and moral antidote for the corrupted and Red-influenced sensibilities of Australian workers that the intelligentsia increasingly sought over the later 1940s.

Indeed, the confidence in the centrality and power of the intellect which had characterised the early '40s was now transplanted by an equal focus on the importance of morality. It was morality which determined the physical health of the individual. It was religion which was the answer to the dissolution and marginalisation of the family in social life. Religious education appeared as the intelligentsia's new panacea for Australian social problems. Australians needed to be cleansed of their mania for money. It was a religious education which could meet this need. It was believed that religious education should be used in the service of ideals, and not of personal comfort and security. It could wean Australians from their materialism and reorient community life. With civilization's doom apparently impending, Australians only had two means of salvation - religion and education.

Obviously, this set of formulations suggested a greater closeness with the Churches. A sort of religious boom was evident in the 1950s. There was a massive increase in the number of Churches built, an ecclesiastical expansionism, a rising religious interest in the general community, the largest religious gatherings in the history of Australia, and an increase in financial contributions. The developing Marian cult within the Catholic Church encouraged the apostolic spirit among the laity, and gave strength to anti-communist action.

However, Australian intellectuals did not see the Church alone as playing a moralizing and educative role. They believed that their own interventions would also be of vital importance. There was a need for both Christian and secular ideals of justice to participate in the moral and imaginative enlargement of the people. This was expressed most dramatically in the 'Call to the People of Australia', issued on Remembrance Day, 11 November 1951. The

McKinney, J.B. The Individual's Problem in an Age of Change', Australian Quarterly, 19 (2) June 1947, 80
Carroll, N.C. 'The Decline of the Individual', Australian Quarterly, 21 (1) March 1949, 96
Triebel, L.A. 'The Religious Basis of World Peace', 76
Greenland, P.C. 'New Horizons in Health and Life', Australian Quarterly, 20 (2) June 1948, 81
Collocott, E.V. 'Ancient Festival and Modern Usage', Australian Quarterly, 20 (4) December 1948, 107
Henderson, K. 'A Religious Philosophy of Education', Australian Quarterly, 20 (3) September 1948, 89
Lewis, W.S. 'The Layman and the Libraries', Australian Quarterly, 19 (2) June 1947, 18
Hilliard, D. 'God in the suburbs: the religious culture of Australian cities in the 1950s', Australian Historical Studies, 24 (97) October 1991, 414-8
Massam, K. 'The Blue Army and the Cold War: Anti-Communist Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Australia', Australian Historical Studies, 24 (97) October 1991, 420-1
Call exhorted all Australians to place themselves in the service of both moral enlargement and national unity. It was issued in the context of the Korean war, and was signed by five Australian chief justices and six religious leaders. It was accompanied not only by editorials and sermons, but by thousands of posters, film strips and copies of the document distributed to schools. This was clearly a grand intervention, financed by both Sydney and Adelaide businessmen, and the US Information Service. However, its moralizing force and educative focus was mirrored in a number of smaller interventions by intellectuals.

Indeed, men like Kenneth Henderson declared their commitment to the idea that: "The Christian ideal of "agape" - goodwill, caring, love - and the secular ideal of justice must work as two ends of the one process." In the context it was believed that history teaching in particular had a role to play. Through history it was possible to seek those values "that will have some prospect of permanence and of general acceptance." It could thereby assess the most successful ethical positions, with the highest possibilities of winning the people away from materialism. Some intellectuals were even ambitious enough to suggest that history writing mutate to become closer to an "artistic expression". They foresaw history as playing the primary role in moral education, and believed that it could "take the place of the Bible and the Classics as the basis of liberal education." These intellectual currents are evident, of course, in Manning Clark's famous essay of 1954, Rewriting Australian History. Clark argued here that the radical tradition of Australian historiography should be repudiated, and offered in its place a history based upon 'the great themes' such as, for example, that "the era of bourgeois liberalism, of democracy and belief in material progress is over, and that those who defend such a creed are the reactionaries of today." This harmonised well with the prevailing retreat from radical politics, and embrace of moral, spiritual and religious notions. It offered an historical gloss to the moral preoccupations of intellectuals in the middle 1950s.

All of these examples demonstrate clearly that it was less out of conversion or belief and more out of desperation at the supposed materialism of Australian workers that the intelligentsia turned to spiritual and religious education. Australian intellectuals were not blinded by Christian light - like Paul on the road to Damascus. They believed that they were in darkness, assailed by a frightening mass of foes - and they sought religion as a weapon to beat back the hordes and to keep themselves safe.

The ALP's Counter-Response to the Changing Context

So, the possibility of an alliance around full employment was lost by the later 1940s. Certainly, the Labor Government retained its commitment to this aim. However, its pursuit required new policies in a changing context - it required the nationalisation of the banks and opposition to industrial disputes. The CPA was attracted by the size of the strike wave, influenced by the militancy of the Cominform, and hypnotized by its own 'Marxist' propositions concerning the inevitable nature of social development. As a result it supported

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18 Interventions around 'the Call' are explored in Alomes, S: A Nation At Last? The Changing Character of Australian Nationalism 1880-1988, Angus and Robertson, 1988, 144-5
20 Tapp, E.J. 'History in Education', Australian Quarterly, 19 (1) March 1947, 35
21 Pyke, N. 'History as Literature', Australian Quarterly, 19 (3) September 1947, 95
22 Clark, M. 'Rewriting Australian History', in Occasional Speeches and Writings, Fontana Books, 1980, 19
the wages offensive, attempted to turn it to more 'political' ends, and effectively substituted unity in struggle and competition for institutional accommodation with the ALP.

At the same time, the intelligentsia took fright at the wages offensive and its aggressive championing by the CPA. Although the market for intellectual production had contracted for a whole variety of reasons, intellectuals blamed the Communist-driven materialism of the people for their disappointed hopes. These moral explanations suggested that the intelligentsia reject its declared aims for post-war reconstruction. The middle classes swung away from the Labor Party's nationalisation policies, and towards the Church and spiritual answers to perceived social problems. In this sense, unity around full employment seemed elusive, and the chances of sustaining full employment and moving towards socialism more remote than ever before.

What was the response of Labor intellectuals to the changed institutional perspectives of the CPA and the intelligentsia? Although we need to be wary of ascribing an overly unitary response to the ALP, the Labor Government's policies did shift in a number of important ways in this period. The Labor Government's continuing belief in the importance of full employment led it to set itself against the Communists who subordinated production to the wages struggle. With the fracturing of the 'full employment coalition', the Labor Government went the way of the Church and the intelligentsia, and left Communists isolated. This was not a policy supported by all Party members, but the CPA's more militant line against the ALP had weakened the hand of the 'united fronters' and the Left within the Labor Party, and helped provide the numbers for an increasingly anti-Communist policy. Blaming Communism allowed Labor Party leaders to glide over the real dissatisfaction of many workers anxious for wage rises. In the descending atmosphere of Cold War, with educated opinion firmly against the Communists and battles within the unions between rival groups, it also offered the most seductive electoral strategy.

The Labor Party's policy became increasingly anti-Communistic in four senses. Firstly, it attempted to separate itself off from contact with the Communist Party, and to push Communists out of the accepted labour movement. By 1947, those Communist-led unions not affiliated with the ALP were banned from direct access to Labor Party M.P.'s. At the same time, the ban on Communists was more rigidly enforced within the ALP, and Communists and their 'fronts' were even banned from participation in Sydney May Day parades during 1949. This was nothing less than a sundering of one part of the labour movement from the other. Whenever the CPA attempted to reconstitute unity through a front organisation, the Labor Party's functionaries immediately moved to forbid contact and to isolate it from the mainstream. Although the New Housewives' Association merely agitated for reduced prices, ALP members in Victoria were already warned not to join in 1948, and informed officially that it was a CPA subsidiary in 1949. This sort of stance hardened as the CPA became more militant, and formed part of a spiral of mutual recriminations and increasing hostility.

The second aspect of the Labor Party's new policy was its acceptance that the CPA was both controlled from Moscow and the deliberate architect of industrial conflict. Although, as we have seen, the Labor Party accepted the economic determinants of industrial

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211 This was in Victoria - 'New Ban by ALP', The Age, 15/3/47
212 'Labour Plans to Oust Communists', Argus, 16/12/47
213 'Reds Banned on May Day', Sydney Morning Herald, 28/4/49
214 'Keener ALP Fight with Communists', The Age, 14/8/48
215 Kennelly (General Secretary of Victorian ALP) to Affiliated Unions 26/1/49 ALP (Vic) Papers, NLA MS 4846, Box 11, n.p.
conflict in the early post-war years, by 1948 there had been a turn-around. Catholics like F.P. McManus had been asserting that the Communist Party was a tool of Russian foreign policy for years. However, the CPA's identification with the wave of strikes and its opposition to the Labor Government caused many others to accept this seductive 'conspiracy thesis'. The Labor Party's Conference in 1948 declared that the CPA received "both its inspiration and its major directives from the Russian Communist Party." It went on to argue that there was evidence that the Party had adopted a plan "for the obstruction of economic recovery and the promotion of social disorder." The great coal strike of 1949 acted to spread these views. A rash of anti-Communist party pamphlets appeared, and Prime Minister Ben Chifley enunciated the Communist plot thesis publicly. In taking up this position, the Labor Government aligned itself with the intelligentsia, the Churches and the Conservative press.

The third strand of the ALP's anti-Communist policies was its use of State power to suppress the Communist movement. Although the Labor Government did not ban the Communist Party, its last two years of rule were marked by an increasingly authoritarian attitude to the CPA. In 1947, the Government passed the Defence Projects Act, and put a new piece of repressive legislation on the Statute Books. The legislation was a response to Communist attempts to place a black-ban upon the construction of the Woomera rocket range in South Australia. It defined such action as seditious, and thereby created a powerful tool for repression - a tool that Brian Fitzpatrick, Secretary of the ACCL, had severe reservations about. The Federal Executive was unanimously supportive of the Labor Government's action on this issue. But the scope of Government repression was wider than this. Communist printeries, as well as offices and educative institutions were raided in the wake of the coal strike. A number of Communists, including Lance Sharkey, were prosecuted successfully for sedition, others were arrested for trumped-up offences like addressing a public meeting without police permission, or contempt of the Arbitration Court. Under the National Emergency (Coal Strike) Bill, five Miners' Federation and two Waterside Workers' Federation officials were sentenced to 12 months gaol. The Labor Government proved increasingly willing to use the State's coercive power against the CPA during the late

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214 McManus, F. 'Are the Communists 'Stalin's Stooges'?', in F.P. McManus Papers, NLA MS 4816, Box 1, Folder entitled 'Communism and Trade Unions', 3
215 Report of the 1948 Conference Decisions, IP & P Co. 1
216 Examples in NSW include 'Tearing Aside the Iron Curtin' (Authorised by the NSW Trades and Labor Council); 'Proof! The Conspiracy Against the Miners' (NSW ALP Branch) Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 22
217 Chifley, J.B. 'Report to the Nation No 43' 3/7/49 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 6, Series 7, 2
220 Fitzpatrick, B. 'Be Vigilant of Your Freedoms'. Smith's Weekly, 5/7/47
221 Federal Executive Minutes 12/5/47 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 9
222 'More Documents Security Raid'. Argus, 13/7/49
223 'Security Men Raid Communist H.Q.'. The Age, 9/7/49
224 Sharkey was imprisoned for three years under the Crimes Act - see Rich, H. 'The Story of the Sharkey Trial' 1949 CPA Papers. ML MSS 5021 ADD-ON 1936, Box 49. Others imprisoned for like offences included Gilbert Burns from Queensland in 1948 - see Burgmann, M. 'Dress Rehearsal for the Cold War', 71
225 'More Documents Security Raid'. Argus, 14/4/49
226 McPhillips "Thinking Over" Apology', Argus, 14/4/49
227 Buckley, K. (et al) Doc Evatt, 346
1940s. It thereby attempted to align itself with Catholics and concerned intellectuals, but it also set precedents for Conservative Governments in the 1950s.

The fourth of the ALP's new policies was its foundation of the ALP Industrial Groups within the trade union movement. These were in effect Labor Party cells within the trade unions, designed to win away control from Communist leaderships. They emerged in Sydney in 1945, and in Victoria in the succeeding year, and their Constitutions suggested a focus on education, and on the greater participation of ALP members in union life. The object of the Groups was defined as the furtherance of the aims of the ALP, the "propagation of the ALP viewpoint" through the distribution of Labor newspapers and periodicals, and the active participation of members in industrial activities like Shop Committees and in Union leadership positions. Although all envisaged the Groups as a weapon against Communism, for many they were an educative weapon which would inform trade unionists about the Labor Party's brand of socialism, thereby making Communism anachronistic.

However, the already existent 'Movement' of Catholics threw its full weight behind the Industrial Groups, and they quickly became concerned less with the possibilities of socialism, and more with the exigencies of the battle against the Communists. The Movement acted as a service organisation for the Industrial Groups, providing candidates for office, catholic votes, cars to meetings, financing printing costs, legal advice, literature distributions and advocating support for the Groups inside the ALP. Certainly, many Groupers were more concerned with keeping their jobs than with the religious fight for a world unsullied by materialism, and the alliances between trade union officials and the Movement were often conditional and provisional. It is also true that support for the work of the Groups was anything but uniform. Even when the 'Communist Conspiracy' thesis was at its most persuasive, the Party still did not give the Groups a federal organisation, but left them fractured at a State level. Even a motion congratulating the Groups, and urging "continued active support" was passed by the Federal Executive by only 7 votes to 4 in 1949. Nevertheless, the Industrial Groups did form, persist and grow during the later 1940s.

The Groups were tremendously significant for two reasons. Firstly, they offered Catholics a mechanism through which to combat the Communists and identify themselves with the Labor Party. As a result, they ensured that the Catholic-Communist dynamic, and their ongoing battles within the trade unions, also became an ongoing concern to the Parliamentary Labor Party. The battle between Catholics and Communists was now fought out over the terrain of the ALP itself. Secondly, the Groups were important because they reversed the historic flow of power and communication from affiliated trade unionists up towards the Parliament. The Labor Government's need for increased production and its acceptance of Communist conspiracy caused it to intervene directly within the unions, and to shape them to its own needs and desires. Communications and power now worked the other

21 n.a. 'ALP Industrial Groups', The Australian Observer, 26/7/47; n.p.
22 Santamaria, B.A. "The Movement": 1941-60 - an Outline', 74
23 Murray, R. The Split, 52
25 A motion to constitute the Groups on a Federal basis was lost at the Federal Executive Meeting 9/5/49 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985. Box 122, 6
26 Ibid.
way, and were strengthened by powerful institutional supports. This was a step of decisive significance in the history of the Australian labour movement.  

Institutional Division and Collective Action

The possibilities of unity both within the labour movement and between the labour movement and the intelligentsia had been greatly eroded by 1950. During the early and middle 1940s the Labor Party and the Communist Party had been linked by the pursuit of similar policies, bound together by a common culture and set of trade union linkages, and drawn ever-closer by the mass support for a united front. Now they pursued opposing policies, battled each other within the trade unions, and conceptualised each other as enemies of the working class. In the early and mid-1940s, the intelligentsia had emerged as a major actor, and had produced a set of aims for post-war reconstruction. Parts of the intelligentsia were drawn into Labor's reform program, and acted to support it. The links between the intellectual and labour visions for the post-war world were strengthened through fights in localities for community centres and public facilities. However, by the later 1940s, the intelligentsia had seen its own visions disappear, and it held the CPA, and by-extension, the whole of the labour movement responsible. Most intellectuals no longer hoped to uplift the people. They hoped to find some way of controlling them, of stemming their perceived materialism with religious and moral education.

As a result of these divisions, there was now little hope of wide-ranging and successful campaigns linking together the working class and the intelligentsia. The radical ferment of the early '40's had become the merest ebb. In that sense, the mobilisation of the labour movement in a campaign for societal change was entering a long period of hibernation. But at the same time, this should not blind us to the ongoing forms of collective action that included workers and intellectuals. The strike action which had marked Australian society in the post-war years was an expression of collective action by workers for material ends. As we have seen, it exerted a profound impact upon the politics of the 1940s, and it would continue to do so into the 1950s. Likewise, the battle between the Industrial Groups and the Communists within the trade unions expressed a highly important conflict, conducted by highly mobilised citizens. The same point could be made about the intelligentsia's moralistic and educative interventions, or the Communist Party's peoples' front campaigns. These were all examples of collective action - action for perceived group interests which would become increasingly vital during the 1950s.

Nevertheless, our consistent analytical focus has remained upon the breadth of collective action, its ability to sweep up large numbers of people, and to successfully reshape society. That was what marked the collective action of the early and middle 1940s, that it was makes periods of collective action significant for participants and descendants, and that is what dissipated over the later 1940s. Because of the disposition of institutions, collective action worked against the prospects of social change rather than for them. In that sense, the analysis now leaves the glory days and the golden age, and enters a time of darkness and disillusion.

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This step was at least partially foreshadowed by the operation of the 'Lang machine' in New South Wales during the inter-war period - a subject too long ignored and a fruitful topic for future research.
Conclusion

However, before we begin that analysis, it will be useful to review the significance of our narrative for more theoretical debates about society and culture. The analysis of the past three chapters can contribute to debates within both labour history and sociology. Within labour history, that old distinction between labourism and socialism has proven to be an impediment to our analysis. This distinction informs most Australian and British labour history, as it does any European history which draws a sharp line between ‘social democracy' and ‘socialism'. The analysis gives us cause to reject this distinction for three reasons. Firstly, the analysis has shown that although there were very great differences between the organisational practices of the ALP and the CPA, there were also very great similarities. Neither Party pursued a coup d'etat - if that is what is meant by revolution. However, both Parties attempted to institute quite fundamental social change, and to guarantee that change by responding sensitively to strategic opportunities. This was true in the early and middle 1940s, but also in the later period. The Labor Party and the Communist Party did not battle each other because one was inherently 'reformist' and the other 'revolutionary'. This was an estrangement based upon opportunity and strategy. It may have been covered over by articulations about 'class betrayal', revolution and reformism, but the motivating forces were far more provisional and practical.

The idea that the Labor Party was anti-intellectual, and merely pursued bread-and-butter gains has also been proven false. Labor's policies opened the way to further societal change, and were not limited to the quest for a few dollars more. Labor intellectuals were extremely sensitive about the needs of unity construction, and extremely successful political operators. Not only that, but they transcended a material focus, and attempted to appeal to the intelligentsia during the '40s through emphasising the cultural and educative aspects of their full employment policy. Therefore, Labor intellectuals were anything but the hungry mouths and empty heads they are often portrayed as.

Finally, the distinction between a labourist mainstream and a socialist fringe has also been repudiated. It was a mark of the politics of the early and middle 1940s that the Communist Party was at the very heart of political life. The united front campaign achieved notable successes at a local level, and nearly managed to secure the affiliation of the CPA to the Labor Party. Even later in the decade, Communists retained substantial trade union strength, and the articulations produced by Communists and about Communists in no sense lost centrality. It is certainly true that the CPA was isolated as a Party over the later 1940s and into the ‘50s, but this was in no sense an expression of the labour movement's inherent tendencies. It was a product of a whole series of interactions and forces which we have charted in detail.

The narrative of the past three chapters has also contributed to the debate about the role of classes in political and social change. Against the weight of traditional labour history, the possibility of intellectuals acting as a class has been noted, and the possibility of non-working class actors asserting claims through both the CPA and the ALP has been explored. However, the analysis offered here represents a greater challenge to those who deny the possibility of class action. The importance of classes to our period is threefold. Firstly, the centrality of changing balances in class power has been noted - as in our analysis of the Labor Party's path to rule, where the way in which the Second World War heightened the centrality of labour as a resource, and created a division between capital and the State was noted. Such
changes in class power are important parts of the political context, and important determinants of political opportunities.

The possibility that institutions may express class interests has also been clearly documented. The policies of the Labor Government during the war acted to ensure that capital did not profit overly from the hostilities, they increased the voice of workers in Government policy, and they secured material advantages for ordinary Australians. In the post-war era, further gains were made for workers. There is nothing illusory or 'constructed' about full employment, increased wages and a welfare state. Of course, it remains true that the Labor Party and the Communist Party did not perfectly express the material interests of the working class. The ALP acted to ensure wages did not rise in the post-war years, the CPA placed its own institutional possibilities ahead of the pursuit of ongoing labour movement unity. However, this is an issue of the translation of class interests into action. It in no way compromises the basic (though increasingly neglected) insight that class interests are vital to political struggle and change.

More than this, the institutions of the ALP and the CPA reflected certain class identities and privileged certain class actors. It has continually been asserted that they are labour movement institutions tied to working class communities. This has been supported by our analysis. The Labor Party was organisationally tied to the trade unions, secured in working class communities and reflective of working class views. Certainly, Labor intellectuals pursued alliances with other groups, but it remains true that the Party privileged the working class. Likewise, even though the Communist Party recruited a great number of intellectuals during the war, its class basis never changed. The Party continued to privilege the working class as the key social actor, and to force intellectuals to obey Party discipline and to accept the material basis of intellectual production. In that sense, both the ALP and the CPA were institutions tied to workers and hostile to capital. Once again, there is nothing constructed about this. These were real institutional practices whose uneven consequences have been documented historically.

The narrative of the past three chapters also sheds some light on the debate about the importance of discourse in social and political life. The position staked out theoretically in our first chapter was that language should not be separated from its material context - that every language is a form of life, to vulgarise Wittgenstein. The past four chapters have attempted to implement this approach by placing the articulations of intellectuals in the context of their affiliation to institutions and their implication in institutional politics. This was the 'form of life' from which labour discourse could not be separated.

This approach has ceded ground to both post-modernists and philosophical realists. On the one hand, it has accepted the realist claim that the context is tremendously important to the shape of the articulations produced by intellectuals. Many Labor Party intellectuals were socialists, but their need to weld together a post-war alliance led them to focus upon full employment and to downplay their socialism. Even measures like the nationalisation of the banks were justified via reference to full employment and 'practical rewards'. In an analogous sense, the Communist Party moulded its vision of socialism to fit its own strategic needs. While the CPA remained committed to the 'all-in' war effort, socialism and increased production were identified. However, when the Party switched to a support of the wages offensive, this was no longer heard, and the socialist potential of concrete gains was emphasised. Likewise, when the intelligentsia sought to weld itself into a collective and to have pro-intellectual reforms made, then it used a discourse concerned with 'the people' and
their debased state. These were all important discursive acts, and they were all marked by the positions and constraints of affiliated intellectuals speaking through certain platforms and towards certain constituencies. In that sense, the 'material' context has been shown to be tremendously important in the shaping of discourse. It clearly is not some omnipotent and unmarked force.

But at the same time, the approach adopted here has also shown that the discourses deployed by intellectuals are tremendously important in shaping the trajectory of collective action. While the urge to respect common-sense and to be practical was dominant within the Labor Party, there was no adequate socialist justification for the Government's measures developed. As a result, conservative scaremongering campaigns around obviously transformative measures like bank nationalisation had a greater opportunity of success. In the same way, while the discourse of Marxism operated in a highly authoritarian way within the CPA, affiliated intellectuals would come to understand minor economic instabilities as proof of the imminent collapse of capitalism. This understanding would then effect the Party's strategies, and the scope of future collective action. This also applies to the intelligentsia. Its restrictive and self-serving view of non-intellectuals led it to explain the disappointment of its post war hopes in a certain way. It thereby shaped the direction of its interactions with the labour movement, and the future of Australian politics. These are all important examples of discursive frames becoming practically established in certain 'forms of life', and of shaping social development.

Most vitally of all, the narrative of the past three chapters has attempted to explain the rise and decline of the labour movement. The approach adopted here has regarded the shape of labour's mobilisation as the product of three sets of interactions. Firstly, the social and economic context opens and closes the level of political opportunities for actors. It was the impact of the Second World War, and the changed footing of a war economy, that gave labour renewed strength, and destabilised the political alliances of the inter-war years. Later on, in the middle 1940s, it was the fear of world economic instability, and the rise of the international Cold War that set the framework of political opportunities within which labour movement and intellectual actors pursued their aims.

Secondly, institutions manoeuvre in relation to these changed opportunities, interpret them through 'ruling discourses', and form fluctuating levels of accommodation and competition. Thirdly, the prevailing state of institutional relations opens and closes the space available for groups to assert claims concerning their collective interests. Claims may be asserted within institutions, against them, or in some combination of the two. However, it is vital that we cannot understand this group collective action without first locating the activities, stances and articulations of institutions. It was the ALP's institutional need for and toleration of the CPA in war-time that fed the disciplined mobilisation of labour and the growth of the Communist Party. This was an example of collective action being expressed through institutions. In a mirror image of this process, we cannot understand the post-war strike wave, an enormous and powerful manifestation of collective action, outside of the support of both the ALP and the CPA for maximum production, and the paucity of political, institutional support for wage rises.

This three-step approach to the explanation of collective action moves between the levels of economic structures, political opportunities, and institutional stances and articulations, in an effort to understand collective action. While it accepts that collective action often occurs outside of established institutions, it asserts that collective action may also
occur within large, accepted institutions, and it does not treat collective action as a strictly anti-institutional phenomena.

This approach further focuses its attention on the type of collective action, and its implications for prospective social change. The period that we described as 'the glory days' of the labour movement actually involved greater integration within legal and accepted institutions, and reduced overt social conflict. However, it was argued that it also expressed the vitality of labour as a social movement and a quite fundamental drive to reshape society. Likewise, the period sketched during this Chapter was marked by massive fear of social disruption, wide strike activity and organised conflict between labour movement institutions. However, it was argued that the conflict eroded the ability of labour to remake the world, and that collective action was increasingly skewed towards sectional, institutional and counter-productive ends. For this reason it was a time of disillusion for those sympathetic to the labour movement.

The next Chapter will aim to extend this approach to an analysis of the 1950s. The aim will not be merely to explain the given level of mobilisation, but to explain why this type of mobilisation occurred, advancing these interests and shaped by these discursive frames. In doing so, the analysis will directly take on those who claim that the 'affluence' of the 1950s directly translated into the marginalisation of the labour movement, and its supersession for more 'modern' and relevant modes of action.
8. Who Killed Class and How?

If the early 1940s were a time of labour movement advance, and the later '40s one of division, then the 1950s look and smell suspiciously like a death scene. Over almost all of the liberal democracies conservative politicians rose to dominance, the labour movement was both marginalised and further divided, consistent economic growth occurred and full employment was attained. The labour movement was in decline and a whole gaggle of intellectuals jostled each other inelegantly for the right to give the funeral oration. Class was dead, buried and even mourned within a few short years.

This Chapter seeks to analyse both the alleged death and the multiplicity of eulogies. It attempts to do three things:

1. Present the major arguments of those who believe that the working class died in the 1950s.

2. Refute these arguments through an analysis of prevailing social and economic conditions.

3. Explain the trajectory of labour movement politics over the 1950s through a more nuanced analysis of political conflicts and opportunities.

Pronouncements of Death

The idea that the working class died during the 1950s may be separated into three discrete streams. Firstly, it has been argued that a new affluence made the class system anachronistic, class differences insignificant, and class radicalism unnecessary. This was a view trumpeted from the rooftops by conservative politicians during the 1950s, and even shared by 'modernising' social democrats and certain academics.

In research beginning in Britain in 1962, Goldthorpe and his coworkers tested and decisively refuted this thesis, but it has apparently attained the immortality and the portability of a cliche. It is sprinkled over schematic accounts of the 1950s published in both the United States and Australia. The second variety of the 'class is dead' argument is the related view that the development of consumer culture eroded the vitality of working class culture, disrupted working class community, and made radical advance impossible. This was a view associated with the grand, elitist and 'radical' pessimism of the Frankfurt School. Subsequent arguments in this tradition have not only focused upon the role of the media in modifying the folk cultural practices of the working class. They have also emphasised the centrality of leisure,


4 Martin, B. A Sociology of Contemporary Cultural Change. St Martin's Press. 1981. 77

as well as the development of a new, hedonistic and consumption-based "language of dissent". Such arguments insist that the consciousness of the working class has been altered in the post-war world, and that this is the explanation for the labour movement's steady decline from the 1950s onwards.

The third stream which argues that class is dead is concerned more with changes in the productive process. It is certainly true that if the working class is associated with the factory worker, then the working class shrunk over the 1950s. In Australia the relative numbers of 'white collar' workers grew from about 30% of the workforce in the decades before the Second World War to about 40% in the decades after. In this narrow sense, it could be argued that class was declining. Alain Touraine has expanded this view and given it a cultural twist in his book *The Workers' Movement*. Touraine argues that working class consciousness was forged in the Taylorist organisation of the factory. This brought together two components of the workers' movement - the 'positive' solidarity and consciousness of skill associated with the skilled worker, and the 'negative' economism and consciousness of exploitation associated with the manual labourer. With the fusion of these two elements, the workers' movement was born.

But Touraine further argues that subsequent changes in the productive process have ensured that working class consciousness no longer exists. Not only is the workforce increasingly white collar, factory work has witnessed the gradual dissolution of the autonomy of the skilled worker. The 'positive' and 'negative' aspects of worker consciousness have thereby become disconnected, and the workplace no longer rates as the site of the decisive social movement. The new social movements which are emerging are concerned with different issues and located away from the workplace, in the "broad cultural domain." These are three quite distinct arguments about the decline of the workers' movement. To the extent that they share common traits, they each posit that it is a change in the social and economic context that leads to a change in the consciousness of workers and thereby to the decline of the workers' movement. Each of these arguments is therefore open to two obvious forms of criticism. On the one hand, it can be argued historically that these changes in context and consciousness did not occur. On the other hand, it can be argued analytically that the health of the workers' movement and the scope of its collective action does not rest primarily on the 'consciousness' of workers. We will have recourse to both sorts of argument in the following sections of the Chapter.

How Fundamental Were these Changes in Australian Economy and Society?

It is certainly true that the Australian economy was in good health over the 1950s and into the '60s. The average increase in GDP between 1951 and 1972 was 4.7% p.a in real terms,
this brought with it full employment and living standards far greater than their Depression era equivalents.12 This was a prosperity mirrored over the Western World, fed by the massive military expenditures of the United States Government and its permissive lending policies for sympathetic Governments with similar designs.13 In August 1950, newly elected conservative Prime Minister Robert Menzies returned from Washington with a loan of 100 million pounds from the World Bank, and the Australian economy was placed on a preparatory war footing.14 In 1950/51, Defence expenditure accounted for a massive 36% of public current expenditure.15 This was the source of the economy's great growth, combined with the effect of the Korean War on the demand for its primary exports. By November of 1953, the prices of Australia's major exports had risen by 390% over their pre-war base, and this wealth also spread over much of the economy.16 For many, the Cold War was good business.

However, this prosperity was transitory, unstable, and marked by its own limitations. The affluence of the 1950s was little more than skin deep. The increase in profits fed domestic inflation, and the automatic quarterly indexation of the 'basic wage' ensured that wages and prices continued to spiral upwards. In the first four years of Conservative Government, inflation ensured that the basic wage increased by 5 pounds and 11 shillings,17 and workers eventually bore the brunt of attempts to halt its perpetual advance. Company profits continued to increase into the middle 1950's,18 rising from 792 million pounds in 1952-3 to 1070 million in 1955-6.19 However, automatic quarterly adjustments in the basic wage were abolished in September 1953. In February 1954, Arbitration Commissioner Galvin went further by also freezing metal trades margins. Workers increasingly worked more overtime as they attempted to find a way of keeping pace.20 In a poll within the Ford company, held in 1953, it was found that car workers averaged 8 and a quarter hours per week in overtime.21 The standard of living of Australian workers did not even keep up with productivity improvements,22 and both income and consumption growth was "relatively sluggish" as compared with later decades.23

12 Macintyre, S. Winners and Losers: the pursuit of social justice in Australian history. Allen and Unwin, 1985, 88
15 Waterman, A.M.C. Economic Fluctuations in Australia, 1948 to 1964, Australian National University Press, 1972, 81
16 Kingman Eberhart, E. 'Crisis in Australian Labor Relations', Australian Quarterly, 26 (4) December 1954, 18
17 'ALP Speakers' Notes for House of Representatives Election May 29, 1954' in John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 14
18 Over the financial year 1954-55, 180 public companies which issued their balance sheets showed increases in profits of 23% and dividends of 35% - The Australian Financial Review, 3/9/55, cited in 'Points from Policy Speech by Leader of the Opposition'. Edward Ward Papers, NLA MS 2396, Box 52, Series 15, Item 1029, 1-2
19 Lees, S. and Senyard, J. The 1950s...how Australia became a modern society and everyone got a house and car, Hyland House, 1987, 32
20 This was noted by a number of labour movement intellectuals. For example, see Cameron, D., to Fitzpatrick, B. 1/2/57 Brian Fitzpatrick Papers: NLA MS 4965, Series 13, Box 52, n.p. and Brown, J. ARU Biennial Report 2/1/52, Walter Brown Printer, 3
21 Lees, S. and Senyard, J. The 1950s...how Australia became a modern society, and everyone got a house and car, Hyland House, 1987, 45
23 Whitwell, G. Making the Market. 25
This was hardly a period of new, post-class affluence. Indeed, the first comprehensive sociological analysis of Australia, completed in 1954, stated unambiguously that:

"Tension is overwhelmingly derived from economic conditions - the answers of dissatisfaction in political and family regions are about issues concerned with production and the control of economic factors."  

While it is true that many workers may have had it better than in the past, inequality actually may have increased in the post-war decades. At the very least, wealth was still distributed in a highly uneven way, and as The Henderson Commission would find, more than 1/6th of Australians remained at least "rather poor". The post-war society of full employment did not reduce the inequalities of class so much as their transparency.

Pensioners even more than wage-workers faced economic tension. Between the last Budget of the Chifley Government and August 1953, age and invalid pensions fell from 39% of the basic wage to only 28%. Australia was one of only two OECD countries in which public income maintenance expenditure as a proportion of GDP actually declined during the 1950's. In addition, the limited welfare measures which were made by the Menzies Government, such as child endowment and dependent spouse tax deductions, actually favoured the middle class rather than the working class. This was also true of policy initiatives in health, housing, and aged care launched during the Menzies regime. This policy stance opened the way for the 'rediscovery' of poverty during the 1970s, and represents anything but a new world of affluence and evaporating class distinctions.

Neither did the world of consumer privilege and consumer culture devolve with the speed that many imply. Television did not come to Australia until 1956. Car ownership had risen to only 253 per 1000 by 1959. In 1956 only 50% of homes had a washing machine. By 1964 only 55% of homes had a full hot water service.


24 Hammond, S.B. 'Social Institutions and the City', in Oeser, O.A. and Hammond, S.B. Social Structure and Personality in a City, RKP, 1954, 27
27 Reference to 'Henderson Commission into Poverty 1975' in Mendelsohn, R. The Condition of the People, George Allen and Unwin, 1979, 109
28 This is argued in relation to Britain in Westergaard, J.H. 'Sociology: The Myth of Classlessness', in Blackburn, R. (ed) Ideology in Social Science, 126
29 'Federal Executive Minutes' 13/7/53 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 9
30 Castles, F.G. Australian Public Policy and Economic Vulnerability, 16
31 Murphy, J. 'Shaping the Cold War Family: Politics, Domesticity and Policy Interventions in the 1950s', Australian Historical Studies, 26 (105) October 1995, 567
34 'Electrical Appliances in Australia' in Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 29, n.p.
35 Ibid.
expanded enormously, 40.1% of all new houses completed in 1953 were owner-built, and many were in new suburbs poorly serviced with public goods. This was not a world of consumer privilege and post industrial excess. It was not a new era where leisure and mass culture had made class difference and class consciousness anachronistic.

Likewise, the changes in the productive process were not great enough to make class passe. Charles Tilly has made the point that proletarianisation in Europe was associated with the concentration of capital rather than with industrialization as such. There is no intrinsic reason why factory production alone may nurture the working class. This is a point supported by even a cursory knowledge of Australian labour history - the classic age of working class formation occurred among rural labourers and urban craftspeople in the 1890s, while white collar workers actually began to organise in the 1960s as they became part of mass occupations with routinised work schedules. Touraine's thesis about the link between the vitality of the workers' movement and the introduction of Taylorism is not supported in the Australian case. This seems also to be true elsewhere. Kitschelt's study of the electoral performance of socialist parties found no link between either the magnitude of the (blue collar) working class across countries or changes in the working class within countries over time, on the one hand, and the respective electoral performance of socialist parties, on the other.

So, each of the arguments which insist upon the death of class is based upon questionable historical data. Although it is true that full employment made things better for workers, there is little evidence that economic affluence made class distinctions anachronistic. There is little evidence that consumer capitalism swamped class life and culture. There is little evidence that the factory system alone nurtures the labour movement. If class died in the 1950s, then it was not killed as the most outspoken proponents of such a view have suggested.

Indeed, perhaps the reasoning which links together context, working class consciousness and the collective action of workers in a causal chain should be rejected. Our own study of the 1940s rested instead on an investigation of political opportunities, institutional manoeuvres, and intellectual affiliations. Rather than using 'consciousness' as an intellectual explanation, it found that intellectuals continually imagined and projected 'consciousness' into the heads of workers. Intellectuals referred to the 'consciousness of workers' less in a quest for enlightenment and more as a means of attaining their own political ends.

The approach of the previous chapters involved a shift away from the search for the 'meaning' supposedly rattling around in workers' heads towards an analysis of the interactions between intellectuals, institutions and workers. It was an analysis concerned with strategy, opportunity and the uses of language-games. The following section of the Chapter returns to this form of analysis. It aims to explain why intellectuals of the 1950s proclaimed that 'class is

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37 National Advertising Services Pty Ltd Central Bureau, 5/6/62. Ref No 76 Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 29, n.p.
dead' by focusing upon the conditions within the 'intellectual field' and the efforts of intellectuals to secure their own specific interests in a shifting political environment.

Explaining the Decline of the Labour Movement

If class was not killed simply and directly by affluence, consumerism or productive changes, then there remains much to explain. It is true that the 1950s represented the political decline of the labour movement in a number of important senses. Successful examples of collective action by workers were greatly diminished, the health of Australian working class institutions was severely threatened, and large groups of intellectuals began to emphasise the transcendence of class for the first time. This section of the Chapter attempts to explain how and why this occurred. Its arguments are presented in four connected stages.

Stage One: State Repression and the Retreat of the Working Class

The first stage of labour movement decline involved adjustment to a sustained campaign of State repression. Put simply, this section of the paper argues that:

State Repression -->
(a) retreat of working class institutions
(b) increasing working class political division
(c) increasingly moderate policies that attempted to reconstruct unity by both de-emphasising class and reformulating socialism.

With the election of the Menzies Government in 1949, State power was now in the hands of a Prime Minister with a wartime record of repression and a strong belief in the dangers of Communism. Almost immediately, Menzies presented the Communist Party Dissolution Bill to the House, and after Labor opposition, amendments, temporary acceptance, and then High Court challenge, a referendum was held to attain Federal Constitutional power to pass the Bill.

Under the proposed legislation, organisations declared unlawful included not only the Communist Party and its affiliates, but also all organisations whose executive possessed a majority of CPA members, all organisations who advocated the policies or practices of Communism, and all organisations whose policies were decisively influenced by CPA members or advocates of Communism. The definition of 'Communists' used in the Bill was: "a person who supports or advocates the objectives, policies, teaching, principles, or practices of Communism as expounded by Marx and Lenin." As the ACCL argued, such a definition could embrace socialists, as well as those who advocated policies which had no necessary connection to Communism, but which the Communist Party may have advocated. The situation was made more dangerous by the fact that Communists were simply 'declared' by the...
Government, and would have to prove that they were not Communists in an open Court.\textsuperscript{43} The legislation's reversal of the onus of proof hence opened the door for "the liar, the perjurer and the pimp to make charges and damn men's reputations and to do so in secret without having either to substantiate or prove any charges they might make."\textsuperscript{44}

Pollsters attached to the major newspapers estimated that the 'Yes' vote in the referendum would be between 70\% and 80\%, but there was a 'No' majority when the referendum was held in 1951.\textsuperscript{45} However, this was little more than a hiccup in Menzies' attempt to quash the Communist and Socialist threat. Other legal measures were attempted during the '50s. The radical wharves were attacked with a law requiring permission to address wharf meetings.\textsuperscript{46} The Crimes Act was dusted off, and prosecutions for sedition proceeded apace against CPA members Chandler, Ogston and Bone,\textsuperscript{47} as well as WWF leader Jim Healy.\textsuperscript{48} When the Communist Review published an article which mentioned revolution, other prosecutions were mooted.\textsuperscript{49} Communists were often denied citizenship upon the basis of their political views,\textsuperscript{50} and left-wingers felt the power of the Courts like a gavel to the head.

This was especially so in the trade unions. Employer and media arguments that Communists had won union elections through ballot-rigging had led the Chifley Government to introduce legislation making Court-controlled ballots possible. Under the Chifley legislation, if malpractice could be proven by an aggrieved Party, then the Arbitration Court was empowered to intervene, and to hold a new, supervised ballot. Even this legislation had caused uproar in many unions, and a motion in support of the legislation at the ACTU's 1949 Conference was only passed by 187 votes to 156.\textsuperscript{51} However, the Menzies Government was unsatisfied with the scope of this legislation, and introduced amendments to the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act in 1951. The most vital of the changes insisted that if either 10\% of trade union members, 500 branch members, or 1000 members of a Federal union petitioned the Court, then the Court would order a Government controlled ballot.\textsuperscript{52} This legislation opened the way for Communist counter-charges of rigging on the part of the Security Services,\textsuperscript{53} and whether or not this is accepted, it remains true that trade unions - that is, 'free' civil associations, were increasingly regulated and supervised by State agencies over the 1950s.

More generally, the 1950s were marked by a greatly expanded role for the State's armed forces. Under the Menzies Government's 'Operation Alien', the use of troops became a routine part of anti-communist planning, and they were deployed to counter perceived threats.

\textsuperscript{43} Chifley, J.B. \textit{The Things Worth Fighting For}, Melbourne University Press, 1952, 353
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 324
\textsuperscript{46} This was ruled invalid by the High Court - 'High Court Says Wharf Rule Invalid', Age, 23/9/50
\textsuperscript{47} CPA Tasmanian State Executive to all Branches 4/8/53 Australian Archives, A 6122/16, 10004, Box ACT 1 S2 2875 6 - 2875 6.
\textsuperscript{48} Buckley, K. \textit{Doc Evatt}, 367
\textsuperscript{49} 'Examination of Red Publication', SMH, 16/10/52
\textsuperscript{50} Acting Minister of Immigration L. Bury to E.J. Ward 20/6/62 E.J. Ward Papers, NLA MS 2396, Box 16, Series 7.
\textsuperscript{51} ACTU 'Federal Arbitration Court Controlled Ballots' IP & P Co, n.d. John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 3
\textsuperscript{52} Ballot-riggers at work! \textit{Defend the unions}. CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021. Box 148, 1-2
\textsuperscript{53} See ibid.
on places like the waterfront. Security services were also very active. The Labor Government had resisted American pressure to create a thoroughgoing Security apparatus. However, the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation was eventually created under Labor rule, and was to grow enormously in scope and influence under Menzies' tenure. A standard three pounds per week retainer was apparently offered to prospective informants, and even a brief sweep of the massive declassified files in Canberra attests to the appeal of such an offer. Other devices included the planting of microphones in CPA offices, and cyclical raids on Communist buildings and homes. For example, in the lead-up to the Communist Party Dissolution Bill, the Government raided the homes of at least 21 Western Australian members, as well as Party offices in most States. Another wave of raids occurred in 1953, and leading Party members like Ernie Campbell expressed fears that material was being planted to incriminate members.

The threat the Security Service represented to the labour movement reached its apogee with the defection of Soviet diplomat Vladimir Petrov on the 2nd of April 1954, and with the subsequent Royal Commission into Espionage. The Royal Commission was already sitting by the 17th of May, and was fortuitously timed to ensure Menzies' reelection in the tight poll held on the 29th of that month. The enquiry proved to be a circus. Petrov's claim about passing money from Moscow to the CPA's Secretary Lance Sharkey was contradicted by Security's own records - which placed Sharkey at a Central Committee meeting. There was indiscriminate naming of citizens (including two of Evatt's personal staff), admission of hearsay evidence from Petrov, and refusal of adequate cross-examination - the very best McCarthyite techniques, in short. Evatt suspected a conspiracy to prevent Labor's election, and claimed so in appearances before the Commission. Whether or not this claim is accepted, it remains clear that Communists and Communism were placed at the centre of the public stage over the 1950s, and that the Commission kept the interrogative spotlight firmly upon them.

And this did not effect Communists alone. For Security agents, opposition to the attack on civil liberties was equated with Communist sympathy. One report from October 1952 lists the members of one of the Referendum's "Vote No" Committees, stating:

"These persons had not previously shown any interest in the Australian Labour Party, and by offering their assistance in the "No" Referendum campaign, indicated in some measure their support of the Communist Party."

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4 Louis, L. "Operation Alien" and the Cold War in Australia, 1950-1953; Labour History, 62 May 1992
5 McKnight, D. Australia's Spies and their Secrets, Allen and Unwin, 1994, Chapter 1
6 Menzies' Secret Police - Threat to Democracy, R.S. Thompson publishers, 1955, 7
7 A microphone was found in CPA offices in Elizabeth St Melbourne in 1959 - Sharkey, L. General Letter to all Trade Unions 1/4/59 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 85
8 Memorandum W.J. Roberts (Deputy Crown Solicitor of W.A.) to Secretary Attorney General's Department 17/11/50 Australian Archives A 6122/17 977 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 6 - 2815 6
9 Records are collected in Ibid.
11 Petrov's 25,000 Dollar Story Exploded, R.S. Thompson, 1955, 8
13 Minute for ASIO Director General 17/10/52 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 364 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5.
The man who was to become Australia's Deputy Prime Minister, Jim Cairns, was described in a report on the Toorak branch of the ALP as "definitely a Communist." The editor of Meanjin, Clem Christesen, was interviewed by ASIO officers and called as a witness before the Royal Commission. The text of Christesen's interview makes for painful reading, as he volunteers information about his activities in the peace movement, makes "disparaging comments on Soviet art and literature", and unsuccessfully pleads that his name not be given should he be called as a witness. He was later to express his horror on the pages of Meanjin at the 'lunatic formula' which identified "all dissent and non-conformity with 'disloyalty' and service to the 'enemy's' cause." This 'lunatic formula' was to make the early 1950s a time of generalised State repression for communists, socialists, and concerned liberals.

State Repression and CPA Retreat

Continued attacks on the Communist Party were effective enough to fundamentally shape its activity over the early 1950s. Obviously, the threat of illegality directed the Party's energies away from other campaigns, and toward the fight for its own survival. The referendum campaign was marked by massive Communist propaganda efforts, with Tribune (perhaps unreliably) suggesting that Sydney alone saw the distribution of 5 million leaflets and 140,000 posters. But the threat of illegality and ongoing surveillance was to structure the Party in more fundamental ways. As one Central Committee member admitted, the CPA developed into an increasingly conspiratorial organisation.

Indeed, the Party spent much of the '50s preparing itself for an illegal existence. Extensive plans for an illegal apparatus were developed, and in late 1950 the CPA's official Melbourne office consisted of only a telephonist, a table and a chair. The failure of the referendum did nothing to ease Communist fears about imminent illegality. Late in 1953 there were renewed organisational preparations, and Party members were requested to find possible places for printing machinery and fugitive Party leaders. Again in 1955, Jack Hughes discussed the setting up of a flat for illegal Party work.

The increasingly insular and conspiratorial nature of the Party was expressed in other ways. In 1952 a new method of registration was developed, and numbered cards were issued to members in preference to the use of names or initials. This method was used right up

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64 Minute for ASIO Director General 20/10/52 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 364 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5.
65 Deputy Director General (Operations) Report Australian Archives A6119 XR1 94 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 2 - 2815 3.
66 CBC 'Comment: Culture, Congress and Freedom'. Meanjin, 13 (4) Summer 1954, 484
67 Estimate cited in Webb. L. Communism and Democracy in Australia, 71
68 Johnson. F., CC Plenum held approx middle 1951 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 474 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5, n.p.
69 An ASIO file suggests that 14 cadres were specially trained to operate the illegal apparatus - Australian Archives A6122/16 1010 Box: ACT 1 52 2875 6 - 2875 6.
70 Hardy. F. The Hard Way, Fontana, 1976, 19
72 Report No 11852 Australian Archives A6122/16 1013 Box: ACT 1 52 2875 6 - 2875 6.
through to the Central Committee. One CPA document which circulated in Brisbane advised members to "Clean up and destroy all traces connecting you with your political friends", "Cut out greeting comrades in public", and even "Get into the habit of talking in a low voice". The fortress mentality had reached such proportions that J. Blake argued in February 1953 that:

"Wherever we discern anyone who has a record of speaking well while undermining in practice the policy of the Central Committee of the Party, we must look very carefully at such a person...we must set out to know thoroughly the outlook and character of each Party member...our Party members should report to the Central Committee any evidence of anti-Party alien trends in the comrades."

There were also more purges and tighter organisation. Early in 1953 suspected agents were expelled. Later in that same year, raids led to the loss of Party documents, and the 'traitors' responsible for such losses were firstly accused of 'liberalism' and then interrogated closely. More generally, the Party practised an increasingly brutal form of criticism and self-criticism. This was explicitly valued as a means of uncovering traitors. The new Constitution, proclaimed at the Communist Party's 1955 Conference, regarded criticism and self-criticism as a duty practiced with two aims: "correcting mistakes and overcoming shortcomings in work; to display political vigilance against all attempts at provocation, terrorism and spying on the labour movement."

This urge towards secrecy and insularity heightened the most damaging tendencies in the Party. While the Party was already highly centralised and hierarchical by 1950, this tendency accelerated further over the decade. Party leaders like Lance Sharkey used the crisis in the CPA's fortunes to insulate himself from criticism. In 1951 he stated:

"The Party needs authority so that when we get confused and are looking for the way ahead we can go confidently to some authority we accept and set out to settle the problem...we must not approach things in a way that is harmful to the Central Committee itself or any other leading body of the Party or the leaders of the Party. Because if we do it in such a way that backward comrades lose confidence in the leadership of the Party...While we must have a Marxist critical attitude on one side, we must build up the prestige of the leadership, the national leadership and international leadership."

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73 How to Report CPA Card Issue, Queensland Guardian, 4/2/53
74 The document is cited in Adams, J. (Deputy Director) to Director CIS 14/6/50 Australian Archives A367/4 C97134 Box: ACT 1 25 435 5 - 435 5.
76 'Communists Begin Purge on "Traitors"', Tribune, 1/3/53
77 Report No 5597 27/7/53 Australian Archives A6122/16 1004 Box: ACT 1 52 2875 6 -2875 6.
78 Report No 5691 7/8/53 Australian Archives A6122/16 1004 Box: ACT 1 52 2875 6 - 2875 6.
81 Sharkey, L.L.. CC Plenum held approximately middle 1951 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 474 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5.
Rather than using the crisis in the Party's fortunes as a cue for self-analysis, Communist leaders insisted all the more strongly that cadres implement Central Committee directives to the letter. Internal propaganda insisted upon a greater expression of the Communist Party line in specific struggles, as it did upon closing the gap between theory and "its translation into life". The Party's 1951 Constitution increased discipline and hierarchy considerably. The right of appeal of individual Party members against Party decisions was removed. The emphasis was shifted from the Central Committee to the higher Political Committee. All reference to State and District organisation even disappeared, except for a new Rule 13 which provided that such organisations may be established. The Party's disciplinary code was also further developed into a series of 'levels' of disgrace. ASIO's analysis of the Constitutional changes found that:

"Power is concentrated in the hands of these smaller and indirectly elected committees, which would naturally be composed of tried and trusted members. The change is undemocratic but would mean greater efficiency during a period of illegality."  

Clearly, the Communist Party was becoming an isolated, marginal institution. It became progressively more secretive, less democratic and more disconnected from the tenor of working class life. This change was perhaps reflected most strongly in the Party's visions of socialism and political change. Socialism had always been treated as both inevitable and paradisal. However, it had also always been linked quite comprehensively to the current policies of the Party. In the early 1940s the Party believed that a united front around the war effort would build the movement towards socialism. In the middle '40s, it was post-war reconstruction which would accomplish this aim. In the later 1940s, it was the wages offensive which promised worker strength and worker triumph. However, with the defeats and the attacks of the 1950s, Party publications began less to emphasise the paths towards socialism and the political proofs of its imminence, and more to abstractly assert its benefits and its eventual inevitability. A process was at work that has been wonderfully captured by Antonio Gramsci:

"When you don't have the initiative in the struggle and the struggle itself comes eventually to be identified with a series of defeats, mechanical determinism becomes a tremendous force of moral resistance, of cohesion and of patient and obstinate perseverance. "I have been defeated for the moment, but the tide of history is working for me in the long term." Real will takes on the garments of an act of faith in a certain rationality of history and in a primitive and empirical form of impassioned finalism which appears in the role of a substitute for the Predestination or Providence of confessional religions."  

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82 Gains, weaknesses and lessons of the build Party campaign', Tribune, 12/11/52
83 Howard, J. Spies in Labour's Ranks, 24
84 The changes are listed and analysed in full in a memo - Spry to Professor K.H. Bailey (Solicitor-General) 9/10/51 Australian Archives M1509/1 7 Box: ACT 1 3 102 6 - 102 6.
Whistling to keep up its courage, the CPA's propaganda around socialism was of four varieties. Firstly, there were abstract assertions that capitalism was in its 'decadent phase', that an economic crisis was coming, and that it could not be escaped. Secondly, there were assertions that it was capitalism which led to war. Thirdly, there were detailed portraits of socialism drawn - lovingly crafted visions of a possible 'Socialist Melbourne', extensive lists of policies a 'People's Government' would implement, and so on. Fourthly, there were references to the Soviet Union as 'proof' that such policies could be successfully implemented. The wave of repression and defeat which had dogged the Party under Menzies led it to wrap itself in hopes for socialism like a child in a security blanket. Socialism was no longer evident in the struggles and practices of contemporary political struggle and advance. It was away in theory, away in the imagination, or away in Russia.

State Repression and ALP Division

The program of State repression was also to have a significant impact upon the health of the ALP. The policies of the Menzies' Government heightened already existent divisions within the Party, and thus hampered its ability to function in an effective manner. On the one hand, those within the Party committed to the fight against Communism endorsed many of Menzies' policies. Especially for leaders of the Industrial Groups, the banning of Communism and the introduction of Court-controlled ballots represented important and powerful weapons in their ongoing battles. However, on the other hand, many also remained opposed to the campaign of State intervention into the labour movement. This group included not only Communists and 'fellow-travellers', but also old-fashioned Laborites committed to the pursuit of social justice and anxious that meddling Courts had become a sort of "clearing-house for union and Labor disputes." These mainly ideological divisions were overlaid by the more mundane manoeuvres of careerist politicians, so that the Labor Party of the '50s became an increasingly conflictual, divided organisation.

Of course, conflict and division were hardly new to the Party. But as explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis, conflict was routinely bounded by two forces. Firstly, it was bounded by the disciplining elements of the Party - the power of the Executive and Conference, the 'Pledge', the Caucus and so on, which attempted to ensure that official, democratically-created policies would be implemented by Parliamentary leaders. Secondly, conflict and division were also bounded by a commitment to 'institutional solidarity' - that is, the internal discussion of policy differences was ideally matched by a public commitment to the official policies then held by the Party. However, neither of these forces were strong enough to hold back the...

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8 For example, see Program of the Communist Party of Australia 16th Congress August, 1951, Current Book Distributors, 1952, 3-5; Hutson, J. (ed) Steel Spark - factory bulletin put into Vickers Ruwolt plant, Burnley, Victoria - No 1, January 1953 CPA Papers ML MSS 5021, Box 86; Campbell, E.W. Political Economy - a simple outline, Current Book Distributors, 1954, 66

7 For example, see Program of the Communist Party of Australia 16th Congress August, 1951, Current Book Distributors, 1954, 10

6 For example, see Program of the Communist Party of Australia 16th Congress August, 1951, Current Book Distributors, 1954, 10

5 Gibson, R. Socialist Melbourne. International Bookshop, 1951

9 Program of the Communist Party of Australia 16th Congress August, 1951, 22-24

89 For example, see Thomas, P. Socialism - the Proof, Current Book Distributors, 1956; 'Soviet Congress Shows Way Forward for Australia', Tribune, 19/11/52

90 A good exponent of such a view is Ormonde, J. 'The Case Against the Executive'. VOICE - the Australian Monthly Review, August 1955, 5
massive differences between Groupers and non-Groupers within the ALP. Internal democracy, the control of Parliamentary leaders, and commitment to the Party as an institution were all cast aside in the increasingly bitter melee.

The level of fragmentation within the Party is best evoked through an analysis of Party views on the Menzies' Government’s Clean Ballots legislation. This legislation pit Grouper against non-Grouper. There was a division inside individual trade unions, as well as inside the ACTU. This division spilled over into the Australian Labor Party. Division within the ALP was so great that when a motion declaring faith in Court-controlled ballots reached the Executive in 1953, two sets of amendments were put and lost, and the motion itself was declared lost with 6 votes recorded for and 6 votes against. There was no possibility of consensus on such issues, and conflict rather than cooperation became the norm.

It was the Communist Party Dissolution Bill which provoked the most intense battle within the Party. Many wanted the Bill passed, while many also wanted the Labor majority in the Senate to block the Bill in its entirety. Fearful both of Party divisions and of a double dissolution and a subsequent election on the issue of Communism, the Federal Executive ultimately decided to pass the Bill, but to insist upon a number of amendments to ensure personal freedoms. When Labor's Federal Parliamentary Caucus voted on whether to implement this policy, division was such that 34 voted for implementation, and 27 for non-implementation of Executive policy. However, while the Parliamentary Party eventually pursued implementation, and with the legislation still in passage, the numbers on the Federal Executive now decisively shifted towards allowing the Bill to pass without amendment. In November, the Executive issued a new statement suggesting both that the Bill be passed and “leaving all members of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party free to criticise the controversial clauses.”

As a result, when Evatt successfully challenged the Bill in the High Court and a referendum was called, the Party was unwilling to unitedly support his "No" campaign. Although the Federal Executive now supported Evatt’s stand, most parliamentarians in Victoria and Tasmania were "passive non-cooperators", while there was also a perceptible lack of enthusiasm among Laborites in Queensland and South Australia. Victorian members of the Federal Parliament Keon, Mullens and Bourke publicly stated that they supported the referendum, and went unpunished by their State Executive. In the aftermath of victory, the Federal Executive stated that:

"we cannot allow to pass unnoticed the opposition to Labor Policy from a few persons within the Movement, and sternly rebuke those guilty by issuing timely

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92 For example, the ARU was divided 11-7 against Court control - ARU Minutes of the Australian Council 15/3/54 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 1, 18
93 Division within the ACTU was so great that it issued a leaflet explaining ACTU policy, and how it had been decided at successive Conferences since 1949 - Federal Arbitration Court Controlled Ballots, IP & P Co, John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16.
94 Federal Executive Minutes 9/11/53 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 12
95 Federal Executive Minutes 8/5/50 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 5
96 Webb, L. Communism and Democracy in Australia, 27
97 Federal Executive Minutes 16/10/50 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 2
98 Federal Executive Minutes 27/11/51 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 16
99 Webb, L. Communism and Democracy in Australia, 164-5
100 Statement by Dr Evatt 27/10/54 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 3-4
mention that this Executive will not in future tolerate such unjustifiable disregard for Federal Conference decisions and democratic principles."

However, the referendum victory had actually strengthened the hands of Conservatives and Industrial Groupers in many ways. In the course of defeating the Communist Party Dissolution Bill, Labor intellectuals had recourse to two primary arguments. Firstly, they emphasised the dangers to civil liberties, the threats of a powerful Federal Government, and the need for public vigilance. As a result, the referendum victory further excited community fears about State intervention, and shifted community sentiment away rather than toward radical Labor policies like bank nationalisation and political unification.

Secondly, the Labor Party argued that it could defeat Communists by more acceptable, less repressive means. As a result, victory in the referendum meant that the 'responsibility' for combating Communism was thrown decisively back upon the Labor Party and the moderate trade unions.

The net effect of 'victory' was therefore to strengthen the hand of Industrial Group supporters within the Party. The Industrial Groups increasingly grew in size and importance within the trade unions. By 1950, anti-Communists already had control of the ACTU Congress. During the 1950s, the Industrial Groups also gained control of large unions like the Clerks, the Ironworkers, and the Amalgamated Engineering Union, as well as control of one or more branches in the unions of the Boilermakers, the Waterside workers, the Builders labourers, the Railways, the Electrical trades, the Painters, and the Amalgamated Postal workers. This influence within the unions was used to ensure that the Labor Party hardened its attitude towards Communists and Communism.

The list of anti-CPA activities pursued by the ALP during the 1950s is extensive. The Labor Party placed Communist preferences last as a matter of policy. Any attempts to organise 'Militant Labor' (or united front) tickets in union elections were attacked. There was no cooperation between Labor and the Communist Party during the 1951 Referendum.

Nevertheless, it remains true that significant numbers of Labor supporters were critical of the Grouper policies. The Industrial Groups never attained enough support to be federally
constituted, and even a motion in support of the Groups could not be passed at the 1951 Commonwealth Conference. In South Australia, the shrewd organising of left-winger Clyde Cameron led to the disbanding of the Groups in 1951. If State repression increased the 'responsibility' and desire of some Laborites to defeat Communism, it led to an increasingly divided rather than a simply more right-wing Labor Party.

This conflict was important for the trajectory of Labor Party politics because it increasingly preoccupied the 'disciplining' institutions of the ALP. Whereas the State and Federal Executives were formed to supervise and control the actions of Labor's parliamentary representatives, they spent most of their time during the 1950s fighting themselves and each other. Groupers and anti-Groupers used the Party's disciplining machinery as weapons of battle against political opponents. They tinkered with the structure of the Party in the hopes of gaining some short term political advantage. The aim of ensuring already existent Labor policy be adhered to by MP's was largely forgotten.

Indeed, there were a multitude of Executive versus Executive battles waged during the 1950s. The failure of the Victorian State Executive to adequately discipline its Grouper Federal Parliamentarians led anti-Groupers to push for Federal Executive jurisdiction on such matters. The motion was put in 1951, but successfully amended by Groupers so that it became merely a suggestion, circulated to State Branches for their leisured "consideration". By 1953 it was the Groupers who were seeking to change the Party's Federal structure, and to strengthen their power as a result. At the Party's 20th Commonwealth Conference, the Victorian Executive put forward a motion that all Federal Executive decisions be referred back to State Executives for acceptance or rejection, and only become binding if accepted by a majority of States. Although this was defeated, a motion insisting that all items reaching the Federal Executive be first relayed through the State Executives was actually passed in August of the same year.

These battles and changes were important because they mitigated against the operation of the 'Labor theory of democracy'. This theory had seen the ALP as a means of transcending bourgeois representative democracy, a means by which union members and local Party members could generate reforms and ensure that their disciplined representatives actually carried them out. However, the battles between the Groupers and the Communists threatened the operation of this theory in a number of ways.

Firstly, the battles diverted attention away from the control of politicians, and therefore allowed independently-minded leader Doc Evatt to sidestep Party control. In the 1954 elections Evatt presented policies to the electorate which had not been officially endorsed. His appearance before the Petrov Commission, as well as before the Royal Commission on Television, also occurred without Party knowledge or approval. These actions were not merely manifestations of Evatt's 'erratic' personality. They were only possible in a deeply divided Party in which the principles of democracy and control had lost all meaning.

115 Federal Executive Minutes 2/7/51 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, S
117 Federal Executive Minutes 13/7/53 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, Item 48.
118 Federal Executive Minutes 12/7/54 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, p.3.
119 Crockett, P. Evatt: a life, 246
120 Ibid., 279
Secondly, the battles over the Industrial Groups also led to the breaking of Party confidences and a declining level of solidarity. This was important because it reduced the confidence of Evatt in raising issues inside the Parliamentary Caucus, and thus further contributed to a decline in Party democratic controls. Thirdly, the intensity of the Grouper versus anti-Grouper conflict led not towards debate and discussion, but towards the counting of numbers and the machinations of factions. It led to a marginalisation of debate, and to the decline of democratic Labor thought. In a very clear sense, then, the program of State repression, and the intra-movement conflict it intensified, led the Labor Party to become a less healthy institution, less able to articulate and represent the hopes and needs of ordinary Australians.

Moderate Policies as a Response to Retreat

Not only did the Labor Party and the Communist Party retreat as institutions, not only did they become increasingly disconnected from working class needs and views, they also began to propagate increasingly moderate political policies. This section of the paper examines each of these developments.

For the Labor Party, changes towards a more moderate program were ongoing and cumulative throughout the decade. Certainly, the extent of this change should not be overstated. The Labor Party continued to affirm old shibboleths like the necessity of manipulating national credit to foster economic growth. This was what made the ALP an "expansionist" Party, Evatt argued. It was consistently argued that greater public works, wages and pensions could all be funded, and that their affordability should be related to Australia's material resources, rather than Australia's access to private loan funds. As Evatt argued:

"The Labor Party believes that the good life, the abundant life, has to be earned. But once earned we will fight to the last ditch before we allow it to be forfeited.... We refuse to accept the dictum of the Menzies-Fadden coalition that all this is contingent upon adopting its peculiar manner concepts of financial and economic development, or lack of it. That Government would embalm this new young and vigorous nation in a crude pattern of its own frustrated political philosophy."

The Labor Party also maintained emphasis on economic controls as necessary for balanced economic development. Chifley's 1951 electoral campaign had insisted upon the need for Constitutional change to allow Federal control of prices and profits. This was an insistence

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121 Ibid., 281
123 Evatt, H.V., 'Budget Speech' 15/9/53 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 2
124 For example, see McKenna, N.E. 'Broadcast' 12/5/54 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16; Hendrickson, A. 'Broadcast Address typed 27/1/52' Donald Cameron Papers, NLA MS 1005, Box 5; Cameron, C. 'Pensioners and Profit Motive', Industrial Herald, 27/1/55
125 Evatt, H.V., 'Budget Speech' 15/9/53, John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 18
echoed in successive statements on inflation, and in subsequent elections. In 1955, for instance, Evatt believed that a Labor Government needed power over prices, rents, capital issues, and monopolies.

It must be emphasised that this was a set of policies firmly advanced by the grass-roots of the Party. As the effects of inflation were felt within the community, so the Labor Party Executives were met with an avalanche of branch resolutions on the need for economic controls. There were, for example, five resolutions insisting on constitutional change to allow either implementation of the Party Platform or of its Banking policy at an Executive meeting held in November 1952. And it must be remembered that this was despite both the fact that Labor was in opposition federally, and that these policies were already enshrined in the Federal Platform. Action in support of economic controls even extended outside the Party itself. For example, in late 1952 trade unions and Labor Party workers launched a campaign for the implementation of price controls - a campaign which was to include lunch hour factory meetings addressed by ALP-provided speakers.

Nevertheless, despite this ongoing radicalism, the Party's official ideology did become increasingly moderate and measured. The High Court's rejection of bank nationalisation had already caused Laborites to rethink the viability of the Socialist Objective, but this process was to accelerate with the defeat of the ALP and the years of Cold War and division. Already, in 1950, right-wing members like Beazley were making pronouncements about 'Museum pieces' in Labor's platform, and suggesting that the Socialist objective of the Party be redrafted. Others, like Lloyd Ross, were more specific, suggesting in 1950 that a new objective focus upon the avoidance of Depression and the primacy of collective approaches to national development. Also in 1950, Grouper MP Keon proposed an interpretation of the Socialist Objective which stressed the need for Governments to protect the "public interest" against those unnamed "private interests" which may place it in jeopardy. Propaganda around this issue was one of the few lively areas in the early 1950s. Again, in 1953, Lloyd Ross was pushing for the reformulation of socialism. This time he saw it in Bernsteinian terms as a "process", and defined its 'inner core' as "the recognition of the importance of the social problem, the belief that men ought to take some form of collective action in order to solve the social problem, and opposition to the doctrines of laissez-faire or individualism."

Labor intellectuals moved even further away from nationalisation than they had been in the 1940's. Arthur Calwell saw nationalisation in 1953 as a last resort, contemplated only when "supporters of great vested interests" threatened the common good. Although the Speakers' Notes distributed to ALP candidates typically attacked policies of privatisation and

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127 Dr Evatt - For the Press 6/8/52 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 19, n.p.
129 Federal Executive Minutes 10/11/52 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 6-7
130 Victorian Central Executive 1/8/52 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 121, 4
131 Beazley, K. 'Museum Pieces in Labor's Platform', Sydney Sun, 8/8/50
134 Ross, L. 'A Labour View of the Socialist Objective Today', Sydney Morning Herald, 27/11/53
135 Calwell, A. The ALP' Paper at First Winter Forum of the Victorian Group of the Australian Institute of Political Science, Sept 1953 Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 22. 8-9
laissez-faire, they did not suggest nationalisation would be pursued by a Labor Government.\textsuperscript{136} When sympathetic intellectuals like J.F. Cairns, Professor Arndt, Professor Webb, the Melbourne Fabians or Arthur Calwell contemplated policies for Labor advance, they shrunk from mentioning nationalisation.\textsuperscript{137} The \textit{Policies for Progress} produced by Fabian intellectuals in 1955 focused mostly on increased productivity,\textsuperscript{138} and on the need for a greater intellectual presence within the Labor Party.\textsuperscript{139}

This move away from nationalisation was to be expressed in changes to the Labor Party Platform which occurred at successive Federal Conferences. At the 19th Commonwealth Conference in March 1951, an 'interpretation' was added onto the Party's Socialisation Objective. The 'interpretation' insisted that:

"The Australian Labor Party proposes socialisation or social control of industry and the means of production, distribution and exchange to the extent necessary to eliminate exploitation and other anti-social features of industry, and anti-social features of the processes of production, distribution and exchange, such socialisation and social control to be in accordance with the Principles of Action, Methods and Progressive Reforms set out in this Platform."\textsuperscript{140}

This was a change valued by politicians for its ability to disprove conservative allegations that Labor would nationalise all businesses, industries, farms and homes.\textsuperscript{141} But further changes were also made. At the Party's next Federal Conference, a Committee was formed to specify Labor's ideals and to place these ideals inside the Platform. This Committee suggested that the Party's 'Principles of Action' be amended to emphasise both community service, citizenship, and the enforcement of human rights.\textsuperscript{142} These changes were further calculated to placate a restless, suspicious electorate, and were accepted and implemented at the 1955 Conference.\textsuperscript{143}

Accompanying this shift away from nationalisation was a shift toward cooperation and joint ventures between business and Government. Labor attacks upon the Menzies Government were particularly strong when the Conservatives broke up and sold off Government/Industry Cooperative endeavours such as C.O.R. and A.W.A.\textsuperscript{144} Evatt affirmed that his future Government would retain and further extend such cooperation.\textsuperscript{145} More adventurous labour intellectuals, such as Jim Cairns, envisioned a world in which Commonwealth Development Corporations would be funded by Central Banks, and would be

\textsuperscript{136} For example, see 'ALP Speakers' Notes for House of Representatives Election' 29/5/54 \textit{John Dedman Papers}, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16
\textsuperscript{139} See \textit{Ibid.} Contributions by editors 'The Background of Current Politics', 5; and 'Conclusion', 170-1
\textsuperscript{140} \textit{ALP Official Report of Proceedings of the 19th Triennial Conference, March 1951, IP & P Co}, 43
\textsuperscript{142} Report of Changes Proposed to Federal Platform by Committee comprising Hon P.J. Clarey, MP and Senators the Hons N.E. McKenna and P.J. Kennelly October 1953 \textit{ALP Papers}, NLA MS 4985, Box 4.
\textsuperscript{144} Evatt, H.V., 'Policy Speech 6/5/54' \textit{John Dedman Papers}, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 14
\textsuperscript{145} Evatt, H.V., to Federal Executive 10/1/52 \textit{ALP Papers}, NLA MS 4985, Box 122. 2
Government-run and capable of providing private consumers and businesses with cheap, reliable products. Elsewhere, as in Victoria, new legislation fostering the development of cooperatives was treasured as a means of advancing towards a socialist Australia.

In this environment of factional intrigue and political moderation, there was little interest in detailed questions of socialist policy research. Even a proposed book on the history of the ALP aroused almost no response. Theorists were less concerned with such questions than they were in attempting to close off opposition to Labor from the middle class and from Catholics. The primary energies of Labor intellectuals were channeled into attempts to demonstrate the compatibility of Catholic social teaching with the gradualist socialism which the Party claimed to stand for. In addition to the redefinition of 'socialism', Labor intellectuals such as Lloyd Ross were to explicitly devote themselves to the demonstration of such compatibility in the middle 1950's. The aim was the construction of political unity, and the intellectual articulations of people like Ross used socialism to achieve this end.

With the decline in nationalisation, there was an accompanying shift toward welfare policies in the arguments of Labor intellectuals. This was the 'positive' or 'creative' side of the changes in the ALP. Given that full employment continued into the 1950s, that nationalisation was closed off as an option, and that political divisions were ubiquitous, intellectuals used welfare policy as a means of drawing Laborites together and distinguishing them from their conservative opponents. Especially in the close-fought elections of 1954, Labor policy speeches, electoral broadcasts, and advertisements all stressed the caring, welfarist focus of a prospective Labor Government. The ideological significance of such an emphasis was undeniable - it transformed the stalled post-war reform of Australian society from a temporary political deadlock into an accepted, political consensus. From this point, debate between the Parties occurred at the margins of policy, and both practically endorsed the continuance of a mixed economy with a welfare state.

This transformation is reflected in the justifiable concerns of contemporary radicals that the "building up of the welfare State must not take precedence over the class struggle in society."

So, in addition to the divisions inside the Labor Party, and the consequent decline in effective democracy and 'class representation', Labor intellectuals increasingly moved away from class and from socialism in the 1950s. In an effort to maintain unity with Catholics and those influenced by the Cold War, the ALP came to redefine its socialism, and to emphasise milder, less transformative sorts of Government intervention.

148 Smyth, P. 'T-Bones and Television', 170
149 The Federal Executive solicited material from State Executives for such a book on 21/7/53 and 24/11/53 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 149
150 Smyth, P. 'T-Bones and Television', 206
151 For example, see Ross, L. 'Australian Labor Now', Twentieth Century, X (1) Spring 1955
152 Evatt, H.V., 'Policy Speech 6/5/54', John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 1-5
153 Dedman, J., 'Broadcast' n.d. (1954) John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, Item 458, 3
154 For example - Leaflet 'Labor will Protect these People!', ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 4, n.p.
Despite the fact that the Communist Party became more conspiratorial, less democratic, and more abstract in its treatment of socialism, it also adopted a more moderate, less class-based set of policies during the 1950s. The intensity of Cold War repression and the strains of battle with the Industrial Groups led the Party to identify itself more strenuously with the views of Labor moderates. Bob Gollan has argued that Communist union officials of the '50s were very hard to distinguish from other union officials, and declining membership had, by this time, made the CPA little more than a trade union Party. While Communists had once thundered at the edges of an advancing movement, they now pulled themselves closer into a retreating one.

While this image is true as far as it goes, it ignores the greatly expanded role that the struggle for peace played in Party activities. The peace movement actually supplanted explicitly economic struggles to become the CPA's primary campaign during the 1950s. There were early signs of this in the late 1940s. Indeed, the acceleration of the Cold War and the formation of the Cominform in 1947 demonstrated clearly that geo-politics were dominating the world Communist movement once more. The Cominform's inaugural declaration emphasised that the world was split into two rival camps - with the USA leading the forces of imperialism, war-mongering and opposition to democracy against the USSR and its allies. This resolution suggested that Communist Parties become opponents of war-making and bearers of "the banner of defence of the national independence and sovereignty of their countries." This was a directive which was to increasingly orient Party activities over the 1950s. By 1949 J.D. Blake was placed in charge of the Party's peace work, and he aimed to make all Party organisations place peace at the centre of their activities. Upper level Party committees and statements continued to emphasise the centrality of the struggle for peace into the 1950's. This centrality meant that economic struggles would take a back seat, as Ernie Campbell stressed:

"When economic issues do arise let us make our starting point an analysis of their relationship to the fight for peace and let our first consideration in approaching issues be how are we going to present this relationship of the economic struggle with the struggle for peace and then battle for the acceptance of our view."

More generalised Party propaganda was just as insistent. Electoral pamphlets argued both that the central question remained "war or peace?", and that an Americanist, pro-war foreign ...
policy "is a major cause of the economic and social evils besetting Australia." Factory bulletins produced by Party cadres continued to make similar claims. Theoretically buttressing this change in emphasis was a renegotiation of the relationship between the struggle for peace and the struggle for socialism. As a Party still dedicated to socialism, the CPA needed to justify the peace campaign in socialist terms. Communist intellectuals had recourse to two sorts of arguments. Firstly, it was argued that the prospect of war represented a threat to the gains of revolution. Capitalists aimed for war not only to make profits, but to destroy socialism, and as a result, the fight for peace and the fight for socialism could be conflated. Secondly, it was argued that a growing peace movement divided the ruling class and laid the path to peoples' power. The peace movement was thus a revolutionary movement in the classic sense.

Party activity in opposition to War was thus extraordinarily widespread. There was an enormous amount of propaganda produced which took foreign affairs as its theme. Specialized leaflets dealing with national liberation movements and civil wars in countries like Korea, Malaya, and Indo-China were all produced, and these helped to provide rare information and analysis to counter media hysteria and Government advocacy. However, most Communist Party propaganda followed Ernie Campbell's suggestion in attempting to integrate economic demands with the fight for peace. War preparations became the scapegoat for almost all of Australia's prevalent economic ills. It was the cost of war preparations which sapped the public budget, and led to a shortage of money for social security and education programs. It was war preparations which prompted attacks on the militancy and independence of the trade union movement. It was argued that such preparations led also to profiteering, to the disorganisation of the national economy, to shortfalls in the production of necessities, to high taxation, to the housing shortage, and to downward pressure on wages. The economic necessity of the struggle for peace was thus affirmed at every opportunity.

References:

163 'Stop the Quibbling' 1954 CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 95X, 3
164 For example, see the Factory Bulletin Steel Spark, edited by J. Hutson and put into the Vickers Ruwolt heavy engineering plant in Burnley, Victoria - CPA Papers ML MSS 5021, Box 86. See issues No 3, April 1952; No 2, March 1953 (sic).
165 Blake, J.D. 'The Party Branch and the Policiúal Struggle', 12
166 Gibson, R. The Soviet Way of Life, Current Book Distributors, 1954, 41
167 Sharkey, L.L., CC Plenum held approx middle 1951 Australian Archives, A6122 XR1 474 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5.
168 Watt, A., CC Plenum held approx middle 1951 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 474 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5.
170 Lockwood, R. Unconquerable Korea, Current Book Distributors. 1951.
174 Brown, J.J. 'Presidential Address' ARU General Secretary's Biennial Report 29/5/50, in Lloyd Ross Papers, NLA MS 3939, Box 1, 4
175 'For Economic and Social Security' n.d. CPA Papers, ML MSS 5021, Box 95X, 2
176 Hutson, J. (ed) Steel Spark, 50 October 1954, 1
179 Campbell, E.W. Political Economy - A Simple Outline, Current Book Distributors, 1954, 56
This activity was not only 'moderate' in that it deliberately sidestepped questions of class, capitalism and socialism. It was also moderate in the sense that it was part of a broad, popular front strategy. The primary campaign for peace was not fought by the Party itself, but by the Australian Peace Council. This organisation was formed in July 1949 by 70 or so representative citizens from different groups. But it was officially launched as a mass, democratic organisation with its own manifesto in 1950. The organisation deliberately attempted to draw the Churches into its activities, and it was largely successful in this quest. Mainly Protestant religious activists issued a statement declaring that although Christianity represented the only long term cure for war, the imminence of world conflict led to the necessity of cooperation with Marxists, and for the unity of all who supported peace. It was a legacy of this cooperation that the APC's policies focused on the peaceful elements of the United Nations Charter, and that organisational actions were typically mild and non-confrontational.

Indeed, the Peace Council was extraordinarily effective in organising open, broad collective activity for peace. Anti-nuclear documentaries like 'Children of Hiroshima' were shown in a great many Churches. There were public meetings to 'Ban the Bomb' which drew citizens from organisations like the Country Women's Association and the ALP Women's Branch. Sydney Town Hall meetings drew capacity crowds of 600, and 1300 attended an 'Anzac Day Peace Call' by the Dean of Newcastle. There was also a mass campaign to collect signatures for an anti-nuclear petition, with over 200,000 eventually garnered. But the highlights of the Peace campaign were probably two Conventions - the Youth Carnival for Peace and Friendship held in 1952 and the National Peace Convention held in September 1953. While both were great successes, and the latter netted over 1,000 delegates, it was the Youth Carnival which probably achieved most. One of the Conference organisers, Audrey Blake, justifiably claimed it as a "notable event in the history of the labour/democratic/socialist movement." The Carnival was important because it "drew in great numbers of workers, students and middle class people all over the country who got together to raise the money to send singers, dancers, artists, teams and individual sportsmen and women."

There is no doubt that this open attempt to build moderate unity between Communists and non-Communists was quite successful. Indeed, conservatives like W.C. Wentworth nominated Communist campaigns "through the Churches" as the "main reason why we lost the anti-Communist referendum. ", and even castigated the Attorney-General for his

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180 Australian Peace Council n.d. Australian Peace Council Papers, NLA MS 5683, 1
183 ASIO was concerned about this. Memo Regional Director Tasmania to Regional Director Victoria 24/8/55 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 216 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5, n.p.
184 Wynyard Discusses Action on Hydrogen Bomb Protest, Advocate, 30/6/55 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 216 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5, n.p.
185 Memo for ASIO HQ from Regional Director NSW 14/4/54 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 216 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5, n.p.
186 Dean's Anzac Day Peace Call, Tribune, 28/4/54
187 Editorial, Peace, 1 (2) June 1950, 3
188 Blake, J.D. 1949 to 1956, 12
189 Ibid., 13
190 Blake, A. A Proletarian Life, Kibble Books, 1984, 84
"inappropriate and inadequate" attempts to combat such campaigns. While the CPA was increasingly driven towards the margins by State repression, it attempted to claw itself back into political prominence through moderate, non-socialist, front-based activity. This was the primary outlet for Party energies during the 1950s, and it therefore signals a process through which direct questions of class were displaced from the public agenda. The campaign for peace was undeniably strong, yet whatever the hopes of communist activists, it did not feed immediately into a united, strong or socialist labour movement.

So, an analysis of what I have called the ‘first stage’ of labour movement decline is now complete. The analysis of this stage has focused upon the way in which Conservative Government ushered in a period of State repression of the labour movement, and therefore threatened its health in a number of fundamental ways. The effects of this repression were not simple or direct, but channeled through the already existent conflicts and institutional structures of Australian labour. It has been argued that the effects of State repression can be broken down into three categories. Firstly, repression effected the CPA by making it a more conspiratorial, hierarchical organisation, disconnected from working class life and increasingly unable to coordinate mass campaigns which took class and socialism as their themes. Secondly, State repression effected the ALP by heightening already existent divisions within the Party, threatening its solidarity, and preventing it from both expressing the views of Australian workers and ensuring that politicians respected such views. Finally, the process of retreat and division which effected the labour movement caused labour intellectuals to search for ways of reunifying their constituency. This, in-turn, caused both Laborites and Communists to de-emphasise both class and socialism - the ALP by redrafting its platform and focusing upon welfare policies, the CPA by building up the peace movement as a popular front. Together, these three processes signalled the direction of politics in the 1950s. The division and demobilisation within the labour movement prompted organisational changes which reduced the representation of the working class and marginalised class and socialist discourse, pushing it to the edges of the public sphere. Through the desperate agency of intellectuals and their host institutions, demobilisation had thereby been converted into the decline of class-based discourse and representation.

Stage Two: Cultural Intellectuals and New Images of Class

The previous section of this Chapter studied the decline of the labour movement in the political realm - the world of political institutions, mass campaigns and Party intellectuals. This section of the Chapter attempts to explain the decline of the labour movement during the 1950s through an analysis of changes in the intellectual field, and their implications for the cultural production of intellectuals. Put simply, its arguments can broken into three stages:

1. Changes in the prevailing demand for intellectuals led to further division and further pessimism among intellectuals.

191 W.C. Wentworth to Spicer (Attorney-General) 2/3/54 Australian Archives A6122 XR1 213 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5.
2. One legacy of this division and pessimism was the increasing prominence of a group of left-wing intellectuals, dedicated to writing about Australian workers in an accessible and moderate way.

3. This group contributed to the decline of class-based discourse because they wrote about Australian workers as historical, romantic and non-urban figures. They thereby contributed to the shift away from using class to explain the contemporary world, and added a cultural gloss to the sense that class inhabited the past, and not the 'affluent', 'consumerist' 1950s.

The Demand for Intellectuals

The demand for intellectual production was to shift quite substantially in the early 1950s. This was in three ways - firstly, the Cold War undermined political art; secondly, advertising and consumer culture became increasingly important; thirdly, the general market for publishing and art became further depressed. We will explore each of these changes in turn.

The Cold War was to have a quick and devastating impact upon the political art produced by Australian writers. Already in 1950, Frank Hardy was arrested for criminal libel for his book, *Power Without Glory*, which drew links between the world of gambling, the Church, and right-wing Labor politics. Hardy survived, but as State repression intensified, so left-wing writers came under increasing attack. In February 1952, Prime Minister Menzies authorised the investigation by Security of 'all names put forward' for Commonwealth Literary Fellowships. In August of the same year, Grouper Labor M.P. Standish Keon attacked the Literary Fund for promoting the welfare of Communist writers. The attack and its publicity were to have an enormous impact upon subsequent public funding of political art. No grants were made in the following year to Communists or fellow-travellers. Clem Christesen was to note desperately that:

"Writers are becoming very browned off; I think I told you quite a number won't apply for fellowships, fearing involvement in some indiscriminate Parliamentary attack. It is becoming increasingly difficult for me to continue editing *Meanjin* along genuinely liberal lines."
Just as State repression was to have implications for labour movement institutions, so it was to effect left-wing cultural intellectuals. They were demonised and denied the public funding so vital to effective cultural production in a nation as small as Australia in the 1950s.

The second shift in the intellectual field of the 1950s was the growth of advertising and mass culture. At the beginning of the 1960s, Australia stood second in the world on the basis of advertising expenditure as a percentage of national income - spending 2.3% of GDP. Employment in the advertising industry was thus readily available for cultural producers, and was strengthened by the mass culture which grew up alongside advertising. American ad agencies such as J. Walter Thompson produced radio serials for their clients such as 'The Lux Radio Theatre' and 'Australia's Amateur Hour', and these were to become staples for Australian listeners.

More broadly still, the whole world of mass culture began to develop in Australia during the '50s. United States comics companies had been established inside Australia during the 1940s, and they were to become profitable, stable fixtures of the post-war landscape. In 1954 total Australian comic sales were 60 million. The cultural consumption of 'teenagers' was also to rise. Transistorized radios, rock'n'roll and teen films all reached Australian shores during the 1950s, and soon developed indigenous spin-offs. Already in May 1954 the Australian Women's Weekly was issuing an insert for teenagers. In short, the opportunities for cultural producers within consumer culture were increasing at an almost exponential rate.

And as the opportunities for workers in consumer culture grew, so those for the so-called 'high art' writer declined. The Australian publishing industry was in bad shape. In 1946 there were 1228 books published in Australia; in 1949, 666; by 1953 only 516 books were published. One leaflet from the early 1950s lamented that "Even the best intentioned publishers are turning to high-priced limited editions or to reprints of American and British best-sellers." The situation was desperate enough that writers increasingly forfeited the life of the independent creator, and became part-time or 'Sunday-only' practitioners. In 1953, Elmer Rice estimated that between one third and one half of the 8,000 members of the Authors' League were "in the salaried category". Indeed, things had declined so seriously from the glory days of the 1940s that the whole of Australia did not possess an art journal of any kind during the decade of the '50s.

These changes in the market for intellectuals were to produce both pessimism and division within the intelligentsia. In the wake of repression, writers like Clem Christesen

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198 National Advertising Services Pty Ltd Central Bureau 22/3/63 Ref No 8' Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 29, n.p.
199 Bell, P. and Bell, R. Implicated: the United States in Australia, Oxford University Press, 1993. 104
201 Bell, P. and Bell R. Implicated, 167
202 Ibid., 165
203 Fabinyi, A. 'Australian Books Today', Meanjin, 13 (4) Summer 1954, 559
204 'Sensational Book News' n.d. (1952-3) Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 71, 2
205 Rice, E. 'The Industrialization of the Writer', Meanjin, 12 (2) Winter 1953, 187
206 Hinder, F. 'Painting and Public', Meanjin, 11 (2) Winter 1952, 145
207 Smith, B. Noel Counihan: Artist and Revolutionary, Oxford University Press, 1993, 333
drifted into a deep, abiding depression. Others clutched hold of "apocalyptic visions" or devoted time to documenting the hopelessness of idealistic quests. Poet Louis Johnson typically described the fate of a prospective hero:

Torn always out of dreams by the false heart
preparing to run the gamut of the dark
he will be baffled by iron rails of hurt
and suffer fangs of hate in the cruel park.

At the same time, those who worked in publicity and advertising were neither so scorned nor so scornful of the 1950s. Those not adversely effected by the Cold War divided off from its victims, so that there was a noticeable decline in 'intellectual classness', or what we have called the cohesion of the intelligentsia. The tensions of the Cold War impeded writers from giving each other mutual support. There were complaints that too few of Australia's 'leading writers' came to the defence of Communists. There were even dramatic scenes of conflict - like at the Moomba Book Fair in 1955, where red-baiting writer Frederick Howard's address was disrupted by the actions of Communist artist Noel Counihan. Political tensions divided off truth-producers from each other, and where there had been cohesion and common purpose there was separation and opposition. This was symbolised in the billowing number of literary and cultural journals. In the early 1950s, Australia was serviced by no less than 6 purely literary and 3 politico-cultural journals - most of them short-lived, and all of them expressing a scattering of energies and a variety of approaches.

The division was to have quite complex and various implications. In the fine arts, the realist painters which had emerged in the 1940s now found the going increasingly tough. Bernard Smith's biography of Noel Counihan documents the very great financial strains which he faced during the 1950's. More generally, there was a move away from the human figure, and a real fear that city-based images in particular would arouse "political associations". The abstract painting which grew up in realism's place centred on Sydney rather than Melbourne, and both its leading practitioners and promoters were trained in the advertising industry. So, in the case of painting those on the 'apolitical', pure side of the divided intelligentsia prospered, while their 'political' and 'traditional' counterparts were marginalised and declared anachronistic.

However, the implications of a changing intellectual field and a divided intelligentsia were to be different for Australian writers. Realist writers developed a healthy sense of community and common purpose which was lacking amongst the intelligentsia as a whole.

209 Phillips, A., noted this tendency in 'The Uneasy Chair: The Writer in Isolation', *Meanjin*, 11 (3) Spring 1952, 196
210 Johnson, L. 'Over or On the Rails', *Meanjin*, 12 (2) Winter 1953, 155
211 McKerman, S. "Literature in a Straitjacket", 151
212 Davison, F. *The Austrovert*, 9 Judah Waten Papers, NLA MS 4536, Box 24, 5
213 The scene is related in Smith, B. *Noel Counihan*, 297
214 Davison, F. *The Austrovert*, 9, 2
215 Smith, B. *Noel Counihan*, see esp 284
217 *Ibid.*, 323
From 1944 onwards Communist writers in Melbourne met regularly to discuss theory and its expression in each other's work, and similar groups were to form in Sydney and Brisbane.\textsuperscript{218} The cohesion and optimism of this group was strengthened by both the success of \textit{Power Without Glory}, and by the ties of collective production which it established and cemented. Sixteen thousand copies of the book were printed, folded, bound and distributed by the community of Melbourne volunteers grouped around Hardy.\textsuperscript{219} Their success, combined with the broad united front activities of Communists within the peace movement, gave realist writers the cohesion and mutual faith to assert themselves in the early 1950s.

At the 1952 Youth Carnival for Peace and Friendship, plans for a left-wing book society were put forward, to give eager Communist artists a chance for publication.\textsuperscript{220} This was a plan strictly formed outside the confines of the Party, but involving consultation with Party leaders\textsuperscript{221} and drawing upon CPA networks and resources. The nascent Australian Book Society (ABS) was validated via reference to the popular front struggle for peace and national independence. One attempt to drum up Party support suggested that:

"In defence of our national independence and the development of our literary tradition are more than just phrases. These related tasks are vital and fundamental to the present struggle for Peace and a new and better Australia.

The ABS has begun to play an important part in these struggles. It is a collective effort. You can help."\textsuperscript{222}

Other pleas linked the Book Society to the development of a united front in favour of peace.\textsuperscript{223}

Of course, the ABS was established for much more than this. Its published objectives were as much writerly as political. They included such aims as developing the realist tradition of Australian writing, promoting the publication of more and better books by Australians about Australia, and developing the whole of Australian culture in response to the inflow of 'degenerate' overseas cultural trends.\textsuperscript{224} But it was the Book Society's links to the peace movement, combined with its ability to satisfy the 'cultural needs' of the working class,\textsuperscript{225} which attracted Party institutional support and saved left-wing Australian writers from division and marginalisation.

The ABS was never a democratic organisation, but a hierarchical organisation built by the Party's resources and networks. According to the Society's articles of association, those who subscribed in advance for books were granted only 'associate member' status,\textsuperscript{226} and never possessed any real power to dictate its future direction. The cost of CPA support was erratic CPA control. The Communist Party's hierarchy sometimes asserted its views on ABS material to the detriment of the society - as in 1952, when it insisted that Frank Hardy's travelogue of
Russia *Journey Into the Future*, be published. But the benefits of CPA support were undeniable. On the occasion of the ABS's first birthday it already had 3,000 subscribers, and it had provided left-wing writers with an invaluable site of production.

And this opportunity for publication and exposure changed the focus of the realist writers in a number of important ways. By and large, Communist artists of the late '40s and early '50s held to the tenets of 'socialist realism'. Indeed, the journal *The Realist Writer* was filled with dictums and advice affirming two of its primary elements. Firstly, there was great emphasis on the need for literature to carve out a heroic role for the working class, and to show the imminence of working class triumph. The writings of Rurikov were reprinted, and the inevitability of 'positive' forces overcoming the 'negative' stressed.

Australian authors such as Ralph de Boissiere took up this view, arguing that the working class, and its 'advanced' elements in particular, should be the heroes of future novels.

Alongside this characteristic of socialist realist writing went a second - an insistence upon the creation of 'typical' characters as a novelistic device. This was a favourite theme of Frank Hardy's, and was the driving aesthetic philosophy behind *Power Without Glory*. It insisted that characters should be the conflation of all of the tendencies of their 'class type'. A character was therefore a sort of Communist caricature - a capitalist character would be 'typical' of his class, a male revolutionary worker typical of his, and so on. This approach to novelistic and aesthetic problems was still being endorsed by the CPA's literary theoreticians in 1957.

While this philosophy was to retain much respect, and was certainly prescribed as the official Party position on literary matters, it was increasingly discarded by practising realist writers. The urge to communicate with a mass audience, the popular front articulations of the peace movement, and the history of Australian working class literature caused large numbers of realist writers to adopt a more nationalistic, less socialist approach. In January 1954, an editorial in *The Realist Writer* signalled the change, with its assertion that contemporary writers still lagged far behind the achievements of Lawson and Furphy. The article went on to criticise contemporary exponents of realism for seeking "to impose on the workers the words, actions, thoughts that they think the workers and the people should be expressing; not what they really are." This was apparently a 'sectarian' technique, and a sure means of preventing the acceptance of Communist writing and the emergence of Communist workers. Such a critique marked a clear evolution away from the socialist element of realist writing. It was to be taken a step further with the establishment of a new magazine - *Overland*.

The new journal replaced *The Realist Writer* in 1954, and was closely tied to the other arms of Communist cultural production. It explicitly aimed to reach a working class audience. Editor Stephen Murray Smith argued that:

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227 Ibid., 138
229 Rurikov, B., 'It Isn't True to Life', *The Realist Writer*, 7 September-October 1953, 18
230 de Boissiere, R., 'How I Write', *The Realist Writer*, 3 September 1952, 14
231 Hardy, F., 'My Problems of Writing', *The Realist Writer*, 6 June 1953, 16
"it is our greatest need to make the magazine serve as a reflection of those issues and events of greatest interest and importance to the class of reader we are aiming at - and that class of reader, of course, should encompass the working class as a basic need for a cultural magazine based on reality."234

*Overland* also built up its circulation quickly through familiar Communist networks and institutional support. The personal efforts of Communists like Frank Hardy built up the magazine's subscriptions,235 as did the ABS's offering of *Overland* subscriptions to its members.236 *Overland* was also sold through the trade unions, so that it claimed the largest subscription of any of the 'little magazines' of the '50's.237

What made *Overland* notable was its self-conscious adoption (and promotion) of the 'Australian tradition' of writing practised by Lawson and Furphy in the 1890s. It took up the credo of Tom Collins as its own guide - 'Temper, democratic; Bias, Australian', and it dedicated itself to the "traditional dream of a better Australia."238 The journal reproduced the vision of the 'Australian character' produced by Lawson and company - a white, working class, anti-authoritarian male; a larrikin with egalitarian beliefs, and so on. This was a vision of the Australian best captured by Editorial Board Member and historian Ian Turner:

"contempt for the pretension of the would-be local aristocrats and the authorities who support them, the conviction that every Australian is as good as his neighbour, the tradition of the struggle against oppression, the ideas which inspired the diggers of Eureka to stand up one hundred years ago at Ballarat."239

The imagining of the Australian character and the Australian past as radical was so great that even timid patrician bard Banjo Paterson was claimed as a revolutionary forbear.240 The aim was to construct an image of the Australian which fit the CPA's hopes for the peace movement, and the *Overland* writers used all of their energies to manufacture that image, and to find it in Australian history.

This was a genuine period of cultural ferment. The Australian Book Society and *Overland* were surrounded by a whole range of festivals and activities. There were ABS discussion groups on Australian literature, film and history.241 There were 'bush tunes' and ballads performed, and events like the 1955 'Festival of People's Art' in Queensland.242 One typical ABS meeting, to promote a new novel by Judah Waten, involved both prose readings, dances and the performance of Australian bush ballads.243 The left not only developed and

234 Stephen Murray Smith to Overland Editorial Board Members 6/5/55 Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 38
235 Hardy gave a personal cheque of 80 pounds to Murray Smith for sales and subscriptions he attained personally - Stephen Murray Smith to Editorial Board Members 18/10/55 Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 38.
236 Stephen Murray Smith to Editorial Board Members 1/2/56 Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 38, n.p.
238 *Overland*, 1 Spring 1954, 2
239 Turner, I. 'Why We Celebrate the 166th Anniversary of Australia Day'. *Guardian*, 28/1/54
240 Manifold, J. 'The Banjo'. *Overland*, 2, 22
242 The Festival occurred in 1955, and is noted in *Australian Archives* A6122 XR1 451 Box: ACT 1 52 2815 4 - 2815 5.
243 'Judah Waten Speaks at Book Society Evening'. *Tribune*, 16/6/54
claimed the national literary tradition,244 it seemed in the early '50s to be the only group that cared about Australian writing at all.245 Communists dominated Australian cultural organisations because of their commitment and energy,246 and they drew others towards them through their achievements and resources.

The result was a flood of literature concerned with Australia's past - less socialist realist than nationalist and romantic.247 Anthologies like The Australian and Freedom on the Wallaby were published, and these joined with Overland in propagating the image of the Lawsonite worker.248 By the later 1950s this image had become so dominant that historians like Russell Ward and Vance Palmer devoted books to its historical basis in the nineteenth century.249 The 'Australian Legend' was firmly established in the mainstream of national literature.

In many ways this was clearly a considerable achievement. Socialist realist writers had resisted the repression of the Cold War, developed powerful institutions, connected with growing audiences, and dominated Australian letters. Politically, the image of the Lawsonite worker as the national type was an important counter-hegemonic achievement, and a valuable complement to Communist activity in the peace movement. However, this strategy also represented undeniable costs.

The deliberate focus on 'the tradition' shifted the perspective away from the problems of contemporary life in Australia. Almost none of the works of the 1950s focused upon the present. The Australia of the Cold War was not the 1890s, and the attention upon the past and its more rural themes could often become an escape from reality.250 Until Dorothy Hewett's Bobbin Up in 1959 there was a deafening silence about the life of modern factory workers, and even this was a romantic work, scornful of the suburbs as materialistic, and utopian in its hopes for change.251 If realist writers had set themselves the challenge of depicting the world around them, of illuminating its injustice and struggle, then they had clearly failed. Themes of class were so muted as to be almost undetectable, and the output of the period was later to be comfortably absorbed into the education system and the TV mini-series.252 The identification of the typical Australian with the Lawsonite rural worker represented, in a sense, the repudiation of the modern, urban working class as the source of 'true' and unique radical values.253 Such an identification could also be appropriated by conservatives, and thereby used to entrench the long-standing myth that Australia was a 'workers' paradise'.254

245 McKernan, S. A Question of Commitment: Australian Literature in the Twenty Years After the War, Allen and Unwin, 1989, 51
247 McKernan, S. A Question of Commitment, 43
250 Beasley, J. Socialism and the Novel, 3-4
251 Hewett admits as much in the introduction to a new edition - Hewett, D. Bobbin Up, Virago Press, 1985, xv
252 Frankel, B. From the Prophets Deserts Come, Arena Publishing, 1992, 36
253 Docker, J. The Radical Nationalist, the Marxist and the Cold War Inquisitor: Approaches to Culture in the 1950s, in Nationalism and Class in Australia, 1920-1980, Australian Studies Seminar Papers, 1982, 41
What had been won through energy and the mining of Australian history had also caused heavy losses. Just at the time in which political intellectuals marginalised class and socialism from their work, cultural intellectuals struck out along a parallel path. The two trends nourished each other so that class increasingly seemed a relic of the past, left behind by the modern world. Paradoxically, it was through the attempts of progressive writers to produce a literature which supported the Communist drive for a peace movement, that a socialist realist literature concerned with class would be replaced by a social realist literature concerned with 'the Australian'. This process, whatever its benefits, thereby contributed to the decline in class-based discourse, and to the sense that class concepts did not apply in the post-war world.

Stage three: ALP Splits and Modernization

This analytical stage of labour movement decline returns to the world of political institutions. It focuses upon the tensions in the Labor Party which culminated in the 'split' of 1955, and its consequences for Party democracy and the Party's fighting platform. It is argued that the Party became both less democratic and less socialistic in the wake of the split, and that this further contributed to the death of class in the world of politics.

With Labor's defeat at the 1954 elections, tensions and conflicts within the Party escalated further. Battles between 'left' and 'right' were now overlaid by widespread dissatisfaction with the performance of leader H.V. Evatt. Not only was the left unhappy with the increasing moderation of the Party under his leadership, the right defected in greater numbers as he acted without consultation and without success. Isolated, under threat, and preoccupied with the 'Petrov conspiracy', Evatt responded by publicly raising the penetration of 'the Movement' of Catholics inside the Victorian Party, and by declaring that the Federal Conference should act to reduce their influence.

The fallout was immense. At the Federal Executive meeting of October 1954, Evatt and Grouper MP's Keon, Mullens and Bourke brought charges against each other of disloyalty to the Party and hidden agendas. The Victorian Executive was investigated, and at Special Conference in November, all positions in the Victorian Party were declared vacant. This Conference was calculated to bring new results, because it was required that affiliated unions take new ballots for delegates, and (in contrast with usual practice) it was decided that delegates need not have been financial ALP members for two years. The Industrial Groups were also suspended in Victoria until a national debate on their future at the next Federal Conference. This, in-turn, led to disputes over the validity of Federal intervention, culminating in the 1955 Conference in Hobart, where both the old and the new Victorian delegates demanded recognition, and the new Central Executive was endorsed.

The Federal Conference also saw the disbanding of the Industrial Groups in all States and saw the 'excluded' Grouper sections of the Victorian Party leave to form what would become the

156 Labor Men Intentionally Handed Menzies Poll'. Sun, 6/10/54
157 Federal Executive Minutes 27/10/54 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 4
158 Federal Executive Minutes 29/11/54 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 122, 10-12
160 Ibid., 41
'Democratic Labor Party'. The Labor Party had split between Grouper and non-Grouper in Victoria, and the ALP was ripe to be reconstituted on a new footing.

The battles that culminated in the Party split had two important consequences. On the one hand, the move to increased centralisation and Federal control was intensified. Not only did the Federal Executive intervene in Victoria in 1954, it was also to intervene in New South Wales in the next two years - again overruling and disbANDING the old Executive and supervising the selection of a new one. The principle of Federal intervention into unruly or inappropriate State parties had been more firmly established, and was to occur under different circumstances in the following decades. Clearly, this represented a dilution of Party democracy. The principle that sentiments and ideas moved upwards from Branches to State institutions and then to Federal institutions was diluted by Federal propensities to determine what was good for the Party and to enforce such good upon the Party. More narrowly, the victory of the Federal Executive in the Party battles led it to regain its power to set out the ALP’s election policy, and to gain a new power to discipline those members it believed had not been adequately disciplined by State Executives. All in all, the evolution of the Party towards top-down control which the formation of the Industrial Groups had begun was to continue even as the Groups were disbanded. The ALP became more centralised and less democratic.

Just as the exclusion of the Industrial Groups led to the decline rather than the reinvigoration of Party democracy, so it also led to a reduced emphasis upon socialistic and materially based policies. Even more paradoxically, this moderation was actually associated with a closer, more cooperative relationship with the CPA. Indeed, the efforts of the Groupers in Victoria to form a new Party decimated the ranks of ALP stalwarts. Of the 300 or so Victorian branches, around 240 declared their loyalty to the Groupers, and it was only the assistance of trained and experienced Communists that kept the ALP afloat. The situation was mirrored on a smaller scale in States like Queensland where regional Labor Councils formed 'broad Defeat Menzies Committees' comprising both Communists and non-Communists. Moves towards a united front were clearly in evidence once more. In the unions, unity tickets between Communists and radical Laborites were concluded in the wake of Grouper dissolution.

However, this was not a united front collaboration in the same mould as that of the early 1940s. That collaboration had involved disciplining activity to avoid strikes, lift production, and unify the working class. The movement for labour movement unity at this time explicitly attempted to put the control of production and the passage to socialism on the agenda. In contrast, the movement for labour movement unity and cooperation which emerged in the mid 1950s did not coalesce around explicit questions of economics and production. Because both the ALP and the CPA had de-emphasised class and socialism over the early ‘50s, unity was not formed around material questions so much as around the desire for peace.

261 Federal Executive Minutes 10/6/54 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 2, 7; Clarke, F.G. 'Towards a Reassessment of Dr Evatt's Rule in the 1954-5 ALP Split', Labour History, 19 November 1970
262 Ibid., 51
263 Ibid., 51
264 McManus, F. National Library Oral History Collection TRC 12/1/72, 45
265 'Enthusiasm to Defeat Menzie', Tribune, 23/11/55
266 Stephens, A. 'Unity Tickets and the Victorian Branch of the ALP', Labour History, 44 May 1973, 56
At the Party's 1955 Conference there were a series of new resolutions passed on foreign policy and international affairs. The peaceful side of the United Nations was stressed, the need for the self-Government of Asian peoples noted, and the desire for action to prevent the use of atomic weapons expressed. This trend towards unity around a peaceful, activist foreign policy was to continue with Executive and Caucus resolutions on the Suez dispute which insisted that the U.N. conciliate, and virtually defined Britain and France as aggressors. There were also suggestions from New South Wales and Western Australia for other creative peace policies, such as Peace Conferences, and a national campaign in support of the international control of nuclear weapons. Such policies were openly acknowledged as a means of rebuilding unity after the divisions of the early 1950s. They were suggested both as a "practical step towards the achievement of peace and in order that the labor movement may work together with a common mind".

The new orthodoxy was given theoretical expression by John Burton in *The Light Grows Brighter*. This work was endorsed by both Labor leader Evatt and Labor President Chamberlain. It admitted that Labor "has not yet declared an elaborate policy on economic questions." It declared Labor's devotion to the welfare state, and toleration of "reasonable profits." Burton codified Labor's drift away from nationalisation and acceptance of the welfare state. He also expressed the Party's concern with foreign affairs. The diversion of resources from defence to welfare, long a staple of peace movement propaganda, was echoed by Burton himself. A new sort of Labor Party with a new sort of political philosophy had emerged.

So, the institutions of labour politics continued to become more disconnected from class over the middle 1950s. The split in the Labor Party led to a more centralised ALP, less able and less willing to represent the views of its working class constituency. At the same time, cooperation with the CPA did not reverse this trend. Cooperation and unity with the Communist Party was achieved through de-emphasising explicitly class based, economic issues. Peace increasingly dominated the articulations and collective action of the Labor Party, and this also contributed to labour movement decline, to the decline of class-based discourse, and to the decline of working class representation.

**Stage four: Class is Pronounced Dead**

All of these political and cultural trends were to reach their zenith with the outright declaration that class was dead in the later 1950s. This is what we have called the fourth stage

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268 Federal Executive Minutes 10/9/56 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 2, 6
270 NSW Branch Executive to Federal Executive 8/8/56 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 4, 2
271 Western Australian Executive to Federal Executive 17/4/56 ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 4
272 NSW Branch Executive to Federal Executive 8/8/56, ALP Papers, NLA MS 4985, Box 4, 3
273 Chamberlain provided the Foreword, and Evatt the Introduction to the work.
275 Ibid., 21-3
276 Ibid., 6
of labour movement decline - a stage linked to changes in the relationship between the CPA and its affiliated cultural intellectuals.

The combined impact of the invasion of Hungary and Kruschev's secret speech were to have a devastating impact upon the health of the Communist Party. The hierarchy of the CPA denied events in Hungary, while it attempted to suppress, and then sidestepped the significance of the CPSU's 20th Congress. Those who opposed leaders were expelled, while others were "invited" to leave the Party, or departed voluntarily. It has been estimated that all in all, just over 26% of the CPA's already small membership left the Party. Intellectuals were particularly targeted, and branches like those at Melbourne University were particularly effected by the crisis. Leading intellectuals like Helen Palmer, Ian Turner, Stephen Murray-Smith, (and his journal Overland) all left the CPA in this period.

In the wake of such events, many intellectuals shook off old ties and restrictions, developing not so much into conservatives as radicals and liberals who stood apart from 'political institutions'. After the discipline and control of the Communist movement, many cherished their new-found autonomy. As John Docker has noted:

"it wasn't just political, it was also a desire for freedom to move, to express themselves fully, as intellectuals with other intellectuals in an intellectual realm of non-party journals and exchange." To put it another way, this group of intellectuals increasingly saw themselves as intellectuals, and not as revolutionaries. They acted as part of the intelligentsia, rather than as worker-writers.

And it was in the context of disaffection with the CPA and intellectual closeness that this group of 'left writers' looked again at hopes for socialism and at the working class in the later half of the 1950s. They were no longer beholden to the CPA, but now anxious to gain other sources of funding from places like the Commonwealth Literary Fund. They were finally free of the Party's unrealistic dogmas concerning the inevitable growth and triumph of the working class, and no longer so hopeful about the prospects of an advance towards socialism. Hence when they looked at the working class they no longer saw the image of the Lawsonite worker - the egalitarian larrikin that they themselves had imagined into existence. But neither did they admit that such a worker was a construction, a 'myth' that existed as a result of self-conscious intent. They became increasingly nostalgic about the existence of that...

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227 For example 'Bid to Destroy Socialism Failed', Guardian, 1/11/56; 'Prague-Peking Dispatches on Events in Hungary', Guardian, 15/11/56
228 Political Committee of CPA '20th Congress and Stalin Issue', Guardian, 21/6/56
229 Blake, J.D., '1949 to 1956', 15
232 Watson, D. Brian Fitzpatrick: a radical life, Hale and Iremonger, 1979, 244
234 McKernan, S. A Question of Commitment: Australian Literature in the Twenty Years After the War, Allen and Unwin, 1989, 225
235 There were grant application to the CLF as early as 1955 - Murray-Smith, S. Grant Application to CLF October 1955 'Ian Turner Papers, NLA MS 6206, Box 38
worker in Lawson's Golden Age of the 1890's, but they also asserted that such a worker no longer existed.

In a celebrated article entitled *The Life of the Legend*, Ian Turner argued that consumer capitalism’s necessity for budgeting, its increases in mass entertainment and its pressures to conformity had all led to changes in the Australian character. The traditional sense of struggle, the egalitarianism and the independence were all disappearing, almost as if they had been "smothered in the T-bones and television of the welfare state". Lance Loughrey treated the same theme fictionally, in the tale of a worker obsessed with car-repayments, giving up gambling, collectivism and dignity in his quest for material goods. Around the same time, economic historian Brian Fitzpatrick chimed in with a questionnaire designed to explain changes in the labour movement as a direct translation of greater affluence. As Fitzpatrick put it:

"Working class family incomes, and incomes of unmarried workers, have in 'real' terms risen so much that for some years now there has been no vital difference between the economic position of large working class sections and that of many professional and clerical sections once markedly better off."

Left-wing writers had pronounced the working class dead. Such pronouncements were echoed elsewhere in the labour movement. V.G. Childe returned from Britain to argue that "teachers are worse paid than miners" and that "the working classes as a whole have got what they want." In the WEA, the division inside the labour movement, and the consequent marginalisation of debate and learning had a deleterious impact upon the health of the association. This was combined with the adoption by the Commonwealth Government of policies which assessed education programs on their ability to attract numbers, so that prospects seemed increasingly bleak. In NSW, the WEA's classes in literature, music and art increased from 92 in 1949 to 155 in 1955. However, classes in economics, politics and history declined from 45 to 17 over the same period.

Remarkably, intellectuals affiliated to the WEA did not interpret this changing make-up of their classes in the strategic and conjunctural terms used above. They used 'the working class' to explain such a decline. Indeed, it was argued that the old classes of the Workers' Educational Association were no longer popular because of factors such as "higher living standards" and "a changing class structure". These had apparently caused the labour movement to become less radical, and the WEA to become less popular. In some cases, this argument about the death of an impoverished, radical working class was deliberately tied to a belief that the intellectuals of the WEA "rethink and restate our aims in modern terms".
Of course, this belief in the demise of the working class was most stridently trumpeted by conservative politicians and intellectuals. It was an explicit campaigning motif of the Liberals in the mid 1950s that prosperity had made the Labor Party the 'reactionaries' of the period.\textsuperscript{297} Successive conservative victories gave this argument weight, so that it also became a theme in newspapers like \textit{The Sydney Morning Herald}.\textsuperscript{298} The idea was repackaged in other forms for middle-brow audiences, such as W.A. Townsley's assertion that rising equality had caused the labour movement to lose its driving force,\textsuperscript{299} or Pringle's assertion that Labor now had no policies, because all of its original objectives had been achieved.\textsuperscript{300} In the universities, pressure-group theory emerged as a persuasive, technocratic means of describing politics, and of marginalising class as a frame of reference.\textsuperscript{301} Assertions about the death of class now went almost uncontradicted, and passed into popular memory as political cliches - truisms that (mis)informed political debate during the later '50s and into subsequent decades.

**Conclusion**

Clearly, the 1950s contained quite fundamental changes in the labour movement. Both the ALP and the CPA declined as institutions, they each became increasingly disconnected from working class views and from economic, class-based discourse. At the same time, large numbers of intellectuals independently asserted that class was dead. However, there is no evidence to suggest that these changes were the result of changing levels of working class consciousness. All available indicators point in the opposite direction.

Despite all the backsliding and moderation of the Labor Party, class remained the main structural cleavage in voting from the late 1940s until at least the middle 1960s.\textsuperscript{302} Labor's electoral defeats did not necessarily signal the repudiation of class. Indeed, it has recently been argued that Labor lost the Federal election in 1949 not because of some attitudinal conversion to liberalism within the Australian population, but because of the Government's handling of two specific events - the coal strike and the dollar crisis.\textsuperscript{303} This is an interpretation which seems to be supported by subsequent electoral contests. The Labor Party gained the majority of votes in the 1954 poll, and only failed to win Government because of loaded electoral boundaries.\textsuperscript{304} The Menzies Government could not dismantle the reforms made in the early post-war years. The welfare state was retained, and the State used a whole panoply of interventionist measures, such as counter-cyclical budgets, monetary policy, statutory

\begin{thebibliography}{999}
\item Hubert Opperman Federal Member for Corio' 20/4/54 John Dedman Papers, NLA MS 987, Box 18, Series 16, 5
\item 'Whither the ALP', \textit{SMH}, 13/12/55
\item Townsley, W.A. 'The Labour Party in a Changing Society', \textit{Australian Quarterly}, 27 (1) March 1955, 36
\item Pringle, J.D. \textit{Australian Accent}, Chatto and Windus, 1958, 50
\item Jones, F.L. and McAllister, I. 'The Changing Structural Base of Australian Politics Since 1946', \textit{Politics}, 24 (1) May 1989, 11
\end{thebibliography}
marketing boards, import licensing and quotas to manage the economy. This expressed the ongoing hegemony of Labor's post-war agenda, and was reflected in contemporary claims that "it may be impossible for any type of Government in a democracy to escape, even if it wished, the evolution towards socialism."

This is not to claim that the Australian class structure was static. There were important developments over these years. The make-up of the labour force was changing, and immigrants and women were entering industry, forced into many of the most unskilled jobs.

There was full employment, and a welfare state - although, as was argued earlier, the impact of these developments should not be overstated. There were also some minor shifts in political culture. The generational cohort of voters who cast their first votes in the aftermath of the ALP split demonstrated very low support for a weakened Labor Party. This was a generational tendency mirrored in the universities, where the experiences of full employment and the Cold War combined with the shift away from the humanities to produce increasingly conservative campuses in the 1950s.

However, none of these changes were of sufficient scope to fundamentally shift working class consciousness. In 1958, Paul Lafitte's *Social Structure and Personality in the Factory* was published. In a qualitative study of seven Victorian factories, Lafitte found little evidence of declining class identity. Tradesmen, process workers and labourers by family succession all adhered to the "conventional working class view", which declared comparative satisfaction with pay, mates and tasks, and expressed dissatisfaction with bosses. The mythical 'affluent worker' or social climber, who had become a tradesman by promotion and who regarded his or herself as middle class, tended not to be satisfied with any of the elements of his or her work situation. It was only those workers from middle class backgrounds, who had come down in society to become tradesmen, process workers or labourers, who tended to evaluate their bosses favourably.

Therefore, we need to be more specific about the actual changes which occurred within the labour movement during the 1950s. Granted, there were quite important changes in the make-up of the labour force. There were also certain changes in the working class form of life, leading towards a more affluent society, but in no sense ending class divisions or class conflict. There was little evidence of declining class consciousness, although there was a limited generational shift in voting away from the ALP, which was tied to the institutional trauma of the Party split.

By far the most important shifts over the 1950s concerned the declining use of class-based discourse and declining class representation by political institutions. The labour movement's institutions and affiliated intellectuals shifted sharply away from working class representation, away from class-based language, and towards more moderate and 'modern' policies. These were political, institutional and intellectual *shifts*, and they need political,
institutional and intellectual explanations. These are precisely the sorts of explanations that have been offered during this Chapter.

In sum, these arguments insist that class declined not because of any fundamental structural or cultural shifts, but because of the way in which labour movement institutions and intellectuals responded to declining political opportunities. In their attempts to combat State repression and gain broad support, they increasingly deemphasised class-based language, and swung away from representing a working class constituency. This transformation was not solely the work of Michelsian technocrats, but also of committed socialists and communists, who were fighting impossible battles in circumstances not of their own choosing. Over four discrete analytical stages, the demobilisation and defeat of labour that had occurred over the later 1940s became understood as the decline of class in the 1950s. Moreover, because this decline was embodied in the adoption of less class-based discourses and practices by labour movement institutions and intellectuals, it thereby became entrenched as a decline. Intellectuals and institutions may have been wrong about the affluent worker and the reasons for the decline of class, but their actions ensured that class declined anyway. As a result, the politics of the later 1950s and early 1960s stepped off from a new, more 'modern', more technocratic and comparatively 'classless' political world.
9. Conclusion

This study has attempted to explain the trajectory of the Australian labour movement over the 1940s and 1950s - the mobilisation, the burst of reform, the division, and the eventual decline. The explanation offered has not presented such a trajectory as inevitable, but as a product of quite specific and conjunctural forces. The interactions between multiple institutions, intellectuals and classes have been given attention, and a more subtle, political analysis of the labour movement’s evolution has been achieved.

This sort of analysis differs sharply from those accounts which focus exclusively upon individual institutions as the primary explanations for the declining scope of working class mobilisation. It does not simply blame the Labor Party as an oligarchical institution that lost touch with its working class constituency and which was thereby reconciled with capitalism. Neither does it blame the Communist Party as a saboteur and arch-manipulator behind the destabilisation of the Labor Government and the division of the workers. Both of these institutional portraits are inadequate to explain the passage from mobilisation to demobilisation, and to the eventual decline of the working class. Instead, this account has attempted to explore both the about-faces within institutions, their interactions with each other, and their ongoing relationship (but never complete identity) with the working class and with socialism.

If the story of the failure to attain socialism is a tragedy, it is not simply the tragedy of the evil Labor leader who sells out his followers, nor is it the tragedy of the misguided Marxist and the God that failed. Instead, it is a tragedy in the sense that the fault was precisely not to be found exclusively in the fatal flaws of specific actors, but in the situation in which such actors were placed, and the existence of competing, useful and imperfect labour movement institutions, which made different connections with the working class. We cannot blame a single actor for the failure to attain socialism, but must understand a situation in which actors interacted. This is the more sensible and useful strategy.

The sort of analysis followed in this study also differs from that stream of labour history which uses consciousness as its key explanatory variable. Undeniably, such a form of analysis has proven highly useful in other studies of the emergence of working class institutions, or of the birth and early years of the working class as a cultural identity and a political actor. However, this biographical, consciousness-based analysis is far less useful in explaining the collective action of workers in a world of multiple, imperfect institutions, characterised by an established working class political presence. It is of little use in explaining how and why a formed labour movement, within a given context, culture and set of institutions, may initially be transformed into a mobilised movement, and from there into a demobilised and supposedly anachronistic one.

Rather than accepting this transformation of the Australian labour movement as an expression of a changing level of working class consciousness, this study has sought a more complex set of explanations. Rather than using consciousness as an intellectual explanation, it has documented how intellectuals continually imagined and projected consciousness into the heads of workers in the pursuit of their own particular interests. In this account, consciousness does not hover above the fray like some divine, perpetually-intervening angel. In place of consciousness, the focus has been on understanding working class action in terms of the ongoing interaction between institutions, intellectuals and classes. It does not treat intellectuals and institutions as non-material agents, but attempts to demonstrate both their material constraints and their material consequences for the ongoing trajectory of class action.
This is a different intellectual approach to both the traditions of labour history and the current vogue for the study of discourse. It is an analysis concerned with classes, but one which also attempts to draw intellectuals and institutions into its embrace. It pays great attention to the role of institutions and of language, but it also attempts to understand them in a materialist manner. This drawing together of intellectuals, institutions and classes has not simply been achieved by yoking two opposed traditions together, but by developing and refining the concept of the intellectual as a 'truth-producer'. This concept has allowed us to explore the role of labour movement institutions as sites of intellectual production, and to gain new purchase on the process of mobilisation and demobilisation. It is hoped that such an approach is suggestive for those seeking to widen their focus to include intellectuals and institutions, but who remain concerned with the problems of class and class mobilisation.

As applied here, this analytical technique has presented the mobilisation and demobilisation of labour in Australia as a process made up of 5 discrete moments:

1. War increases the political opportunities of the ALP and the CPA for influence and cooperation, and thereby feeds the disciplined mobilisation of labour.

2. War increases the political opportunities of intellectuals, and feeds the mobilisation of the intelligentsia.

3. Imperfect alliances around proposals for post-war reconstruction are formed between these mobilised actors.

4. The changing context causes these imperfect alliances to break apart, and institutional stances shift, making collective action for socialist advance impossible. This is a process of demobilisation.

5. Changing political opportunities lead to further changes in the stances of both institutions and intellectuals. As a result, the demobilisation of labour is understood as the decline of class.

Certainly, this is a new account of the labour movement's trajectory over the war and early post-war years - an account which fundamentally reconceptualises the period in Australian labour and intellectual history. More ambitiously, it is also hoped that the set of explanations offered in relation to the Australian labour movement may be suggestive for other societies over the same period. Nearly all British splinter societies were similarly characterised by a radical early 1940s, a divided later '40s, and a politically conservative 1950s. This is also true in much of Western Europe. The changes in these countries have also been explained via reference to simplistic nostrums about affluence, consciousness and the success of labour, and this study offers the intellectual tools and the logic of a different sort of explanation.

Secondly, and perhaps less obviously, there are also very strong links between debates about the death of class in the 1950s, and the current urge to abandon class analysis and lunge for post modernism. In both periods erstwhile left intellectuals were faced with disappointed hopes, and explained these disappointments through a rejection of the working class and working class consciousness. Even more evocatively, both periods were also marked by a swelling sense of 'intellectual classness' and by a growing intelligentsia. Certainly there are also very great differences between the two periods, but a materialist analysis of post
modernism which drew links between changes in the intellectual field and the emergence of such ideas would represent a highly promising project.

In taking seriously the problems of mobilisation and demobilisation, this study has been pushed towards the work of American theorists of collective action Charles Tilly and Sidney Tarrow. Their work differs from labour history in that it is generally concerned with collective action both outside institutions, and involving groups other than classes. Nevertheless, their attempts to understand such collective action have been useful precisely because their object of study has allowed them to avoid the determinism, the narrow focus on consciousness, and the ignorance of politics which characterises much class analysis. In particular, the concept of the political opportunity structure - developed by Tilly and systematised by Tarrow, has much to offer a labour history which has rejected teleology and is grappling with the possibilities of political change and its links to the economy.

However, it is also true that the lessons of this study, and its interface between labour history and Tillyite studies may also allow it to throw light upon this intellectual tradition from which so much has been borrowed. In particular, this study can make a contribution to American theories concerning the path of political mobilisation. The most innovative and widely accepted of these theories is Sidney Tarrow's vision of the 'Cycle of Protest'. Tarrow developed the idea of a cycle of protest in his study of Italian politics between 1965 and 1975. In that study he found that popular claim making or contention followed a cycle. It began with a series of limited claims being advanced within accepted institutions, but it leapt into life when such claims were taken up outside accepted institutions by innovatory protesters, who were creative and transgressive, and whose success changed the political opportunity structure for other groups. The success of these 'early risers' opened up the space for other groups to advance their claims (although in a more conventional way), but it did not necessarily signal a revolution. This moment of heightened mobilisation was followed in Italy by declining mobilisation, by increased violence, and by a reintegration of protest within the State. From integrated conflict to heightened conflict and back to integration formed a cycle Tarrow claimed to detect in other time periods and countries. He sees such periods as the crucibles for new 'frames' or interpretative schema, as well as new means of claim making.

While this may be a useful way of explaining politics in Italy during the late 1960s, claims for generality must be severely questioned. The analysis offered here has rejected three of Tarrow's primary claims. Firstly, it has rejected the implication that political opportunities expand and contract through a logic internal to the political realm and closed off from the social and economic context. Secondly, it has rejected the conception that contentious collective mobilisation is an inherently anti-institutional and disruption-driven phenomenon. Thirdly, it has rejected the idea that the trajectory of mobilisation will necessarily follow any pattern.

In place of the concept of the 'cycle of protest', the approach adopted here has been to argue that the form of mobilisation is influenced by interactions which occur in three discrete analytical phases. Firstly, the social and economic context, that is, the broad class structure, opens and closes the level of political opportunities for actors. As we saw in Chapter 4, it was the impact of the Second World War, and the changed footing of a war economy, that gave

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2 Tarrow, S. *Power in Movement*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, 18
labour renewed strength, and destabilised the political alliances of the inter-war years. Later on, in the middle 1940s (as we saw in Chapter 7), it was the fear of world economic instability, and the rise of the international Cold War that set the framework of political opportunities within which labour movement and intellectual actors pursued their aims.

The second analytical phase of interactions occurs when institutions manoeuvre in relation to these changed political opportunities, interpret them through 'ruling discourses', and form fluctuating levels of accommodation and competition. This, in-turn, sets the stage for the third analytical phase of interactions, when the prevailing state of institutional relations opens and closes the space available for groups to assert claims concerning their collective interests. When this occurs, claims may be asserted within institutions, against them, or in some combination of the two. However, it is vital that we cannot understand this group collective action without first locating the activities, stances and articulations of institutions. This was evident in Chapter 4, when it was the ALP's institutional war-time need for and toleration of the CPA which fed the disciplined mobilisation of labour and the growth of the Communist Party. This was an example of collective action being expressed through institutions. In a mirror image of this process, we understood the post-war strike wave of Chapter 7 (an enormous and powerful manifestation of collective action) as a product of the support of both the ALP and the CPA for maximum production, and the paucity of political, institutional support for wage rises.

This three-step approach to the explanation of collective action moves between the levels of economic structures, political opportunities, and institutional stances and articulations, in an effort to understand collective action. While it accepts that collective action often occurs outside of established institutions, it asserts that collective action may also occur within large, accepted institutions, and it does not treat collective action as a strictly anti-institutional phenomena. It insists that changes in economy and society will have an ongoing impact upon the dimensions of collective action. It does not imply that the trajectory of mobilisation will necessarily follow any pattern.

Indeed, this approach focuses less on the question of 'cycle upswing or downswing?' than on the type and implications of collective action. The periods during which the labour movement posed the greatest threat to the social order were also the periods in which workers were most contained within working class parties, were most institutionalised. The process by which workers stepped outside accepted institutions and launched a strike wave was also part of a larger process by which alliances for reform broke down and labour movement unity became fragmented. The concept of the cycle of protest is certainly useful for explaining a very limited range of anti-institutional protest activity. However, more complex accounts are needed if we are to come to grips with those institutionally-linked mobilisations that fought for socialism and helped to establish welfare states in the majority of the liberal democracies post-war. Certainly, in terms of their reforming affects, these were the most significant mobilisations of the century. Any general attempt to explain paths of political mobilisation must be able to explain their emergence, achievements and eventual fragmentation.

If this pressing task is to be undertaken then two sorts of strategies would seem to be most promising. Firstly, we should eschew the search for a single path or cycle of political mobilisation. In the place of such a search we should think more clearly about the sorts of generating mechanisms which fuel radical movements. In addition to those phenomena, such as a divided ruling class, which are grouped together under the rubric of the political opportunity structure, we also need to think about those broader processes which feed into and cause changes in political opportunities. In particular, the impact of the war on both the
footing of the economy, and the relationship between State and capitalist elites should be the object of further analysis. The importance of the war loomed large in the account offered here. This focus seems especially pertinent when the relationship between the growth of Communism in Western Europe and the hostilities of the Second World War is pondered, and when the more general correlation between periods of war and collective action this century is considered.

Secondly, we also need to conduct more self-consciously comparative works which explore the chain of interactions and successions which emerged both within different historical periods and within different countries. It is only when these comparisons are made that it will be possible to gain greater insight into the sorts of links between economic and social changes, political opportunities, institutional strategies, intellectual interventions and collective action.

Together, these two analytical strategies open up a promising vista - one that allow us to see the career of popular collective action as ongoing, and to grapple with the possibilities of future social change.
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