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The Politics of Organised Labour: An Analysis of South Australian Trade Unions in the Metal and Vehicle Industries

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Abstract

The thesis analyses the politics of union organisation at the State level in Australia. Three South Australian unions each within a federal structure provide the basis of the study. While initially the study is comparative in nature, the final chapters focus attention on the internal politics of the largest union, the AMFSU. The three unions are: the metalworkers' union (AMFSU) a composite union of skilled and less skilled workers with craft origins and a militant profile; the vehicle builders' union (VBEF) a largely unskilled union with a moderate and cooptive leadership; and the association of draughtsmen and technical employees (ADSTE) a smaller but highly skilled technicians union whose members are conservative but whose leadership is more progressive.

The thesis contends that analyses of unions that restrict discussion to internal institutional factors are inadequate. In contrast, this study locates the politics of unionism within the particular nature of capitalist development, the impact of state regulation, the historical development of labour organisation, the sociology of union organisation and the internal political processes of the specific union.

The study commences with a review of the theoretical literature on trade unionism and industrial relations. This is divided into three parts: the theoretical analysis of the relationship between unionism and economic inequality; theories of the political nature of unionism relating to the character of industrial conflict; and a review of the industrial relations and trade union research in Australia. The second and third chapters focus on the economic development of South Australia and on the historical limitations to the development of a class conscious indigenous union movement. It is argued that South Australia's peripheral economy, its late industrialisation, the corporate domination

of local manufacturing and the effective state regulation of union activity, each have contributed to the establishment of a remarkable degree of moderation that has characterised South Australian unionism in comparison with the eastern States of Australia.

Chapter IV provides an account of the political development and sociology of the three unions under examination. This chapter examines the historical emergence of the unions, their composition, coverage and size, their administrative and political structure, the characteristics and factional composition of their officialdom, their educational programmes and forms of communication with members, as well as membership dues and union finances.

Using survey and observational evidence, Chapters V and VI analyse the internal politics of the three unions. It is argued that within State-level unionism in Australia shop steward bodies essentially constitute a mediating role between officials and the rank-and-file. This is largely because stewards are not involved in the processes of bargaining with employers, and as such their positions rest on the internal political structure of the organisations. Further, an analysis of the State officialdom examines leadership tenure, the specific role of State officials and their electoral practices and voting support. This section concludes with an evaluation of executive dominance at the State level.

The seventh chapter explores the relationship between membership participation, union bureaucracy and mass mobilisation. A critique of theories of union government is presented in which especially those theories that are premised on oligarchic models or liberal democratic conceptions of union democracy are rejected. Conversely, it is suggested that the relationship between union bureaucracy and membership mobilisation lies in the nature of organised labour's control over the

labour process and its political expression through the structure of the organisation.

The final section of the thesis analyses the process of policy formation and implementation within the AMFSU involving the relationship between the State-level and the national-level of the organisation. Three case studies are considered: the 35 hour week campaign, a programme of internal union restructuring, and the 'social wage'-social agreement involving an exercise in wage restraint through negotiations over a social contract with the Labor Party/Government. It is argued that these policies demonstrate the limitations on State-level input into the policy formation process. The final chapter considers the contradictions of organisational incorporation. While vertical integration with the state apparatus has been a historical feature of Australian unionism such integration places severe constraints on the legitimacy of union leadership and on the capacity of unions to mobilise as collective organisations.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any University and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text. In accordance with University policy, I give my consent for the thesis to be made available for photocopying and loan.

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Abbreviations

AAESDA	Association of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Draughtsmen of Australia (now ADSTE).
ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics.
ACEF	Australian Coachmakers Employees' Federation (now VBEF).
ACSPA	Australian Council of Salaried and Professional Associations (now merged with ACTU).
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions.
ADSTE	Association of Draughting, Supervisory and Technical Employees.
AEU	Amalgamated Engineering Union (now part of AMFSU).
ALP	Australian Labor Party.
AMFSU	Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights' Union.
AMWSU	Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union (now AMFSU).
AMWU	Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union (became AMWSU).
APSAA	Australian Public Service Artisans' Association.
ASE	Australian Society of Engineers.
ATEA	Australian Telecommunications Employees' Association.
BBS	Boilermakers and Blacksmiths' Society (now part of AMFSU).
BHP	Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd.
CAE	College of Advanced Education (SA).
CAGEO	Council of Australian Government Employees Organisations.
CAL	Chrysler Australia Ltd.
CPA	Communist Party of Australia.
ETSA	Electricity Trust of South Australia.
ETU	Electrical Trades Union.
FCU	Federated Clerks' Union.
FEDFA	Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association.
FIA	Federated Ironworkers' Association.
GMH	General Motors Holden.
IAC	Industries Assistance Commission.
IMF	International Metalworkers' Federation.
MOA	Municipal Officers' Association.
MTF	Metal Trades Federation.
MTIA	Metal Trades Industry Federation (employers association).
NCC	National Civic Council.
PLP	Parliamentary Labor Party (ALP MP's).
POA	Professional Officers' Association.

Abbreviations continued...

SA	South Australia.
SMWIU	Sheet Metal Workers' Industrial Union.
SPA	Socialist Party of Australia.
SWP	Socialist Workers' Party.
TUTA	Trade Union Training Authority.
TWU	Transport Workers' Union.
UTLC	United Trades and Labor Council (SA).
VBEF	Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation.
WEA	Workers' Education Association.

A Note on Terminology and Thesis Structure

To avoid confusion, throughout the thesis 'the state' is used to mean the state apparatus, including government, the bureaucracy, the legal system, the arbitration system and the agencies of social control. Where the upper case is used 'the State' is taken to mean the territory of one of the States of Australia, for example the State of South Australia. 'Labour' refers to the broader labour movement usually in the sense of organised labour. It also indicates, as with 'capital and labour', the social position of wage workers engaged in production and distribution. 'Labor', on the other hand, is consistently used in relation to the Australian Labor Party.

Two unions under examination changed their names during the research for this thesis. First, the draughtsmen's association then known as the Association of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Draughtsmen of Australia (AAESDA) re-labelled itself more appropriately the Association of Draughting, Supervisory and Technical Employees (ADSTE). Second, as a result of amalgamation with the Moulders' Union, the Amalgamated Metal Workers' and Shipwrights' Union (AMWSU) became the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights' Union (AMFSU). For consistency, the latter names of the unions (i.e., ADSTE and AMFSU) have been used throughout the text, although where appropriate source citation used in the footnotes refers to the unions' previous names.

In terms of thesis structure, Volume I contains the main text, while Volume II for reference purposes contains appendices, documents and bibliography.

Introduction

The political development of the organised labour movement in South Australia is the main theme of the present study. Three union organisations operating in the private manufacturing sector in South Australia provide the subject of investigation. In the final section the analysis is confined to one union in particular to explore in detail the relationship between the State and federal levels of the organisation and the formation and implementation of union policy. The aim of the study is to contribute toward the understanding of the factors that shape forms of working class organisation. Accordingly, the central problem to which the thesis is directed is the role of unionised labour as a form of working class organisation in relation to contemporary capitalist society. This involves an analysis of the internal political processes of union organisation in the context of the structure and activity of the economy, the historical development of labour relations, the nature of state intervention in labour discipline and the role of political party mediation in articulating labour movement interests.

The three unions were chosen because they provided contrasting forms of union organisation; each possessed distinctive historical origins, displayed widely varying propensities to engage in industrial action, expressed dissimilar political orientations and involvement, and in their separate membership clientele represented different sectional compositions of the industrial working class. In particular, the two larger manual unions provided contrasting types. The largest union was a skilled, trade-based and militant organisation with a talented 'technocratic' and left-wing progressive leadership, while the other was a semi-skilled, industrial-based, moderate and politically centre organisation with a mediocre and quiescent leadership. The smaller draughting and technicians' union with a conservative membership and a

moderate industrial reputation, nonetheless enjoyed a relatively progressive and experienced leadership. Each of the three unions were State branches of federal unions.

The largest union, the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights' Union, represented mainly skilled manual workers throughout various industries but concentrated in the metal manufacturing and engineering industry. With craft society origins dating from the Amalgamated Society of Engineers of Britain and Australia, through the Amalgamated Engineering Union after 1920, to its present further amalgamated form, this union had traditionally been a strong advocate of sectionalised, occupational-based trade unionism. The union both federally and also in South Australia had established a reputation as a politically radical and militant organisation with emphasis on cadre organisation at the workplace level. Thoughout Australia the metalworkers' union has faced direct rivalry from a dual union within the engineering industry, the right-wing Australasian Society of Engineers.[1] In its industrial coverage the AMFSU was based on numerous and diverse worksites often involving small numbers of members. Nevertheless, the union maintained a high proportion of its membership under 'closed shop' conditions (around 70 per cent). The union had also negotiated a number of private (collective bargaining) agreements with metal employers and was instrumental in negotiating the social agreement with the federal Labor Party between 1981-3.

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1 Composed largely of 'dilutee' tradesmen (i.e., non-apprenticed and less skilled workers), the ASE while much smaller than the AMFSU has continued to operate with significantly lower membership subscription rates. The ASE is located principally in New South Wales with some membership in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. The ASE appears to be approximately one-quarter the size of the AMFSU in terms of 'book' membership (41,800 to 160,000 respectively in 1980), but the ASE is probably one-fifth the size in financial membership.

The second manual union, the Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation, was composed in the main of semi-skilled and unskilled workers in the single industry (the automotive engine, vehicle body building and assembly industry together with the vehicle retail and service sector). The union retained some earlier craft connections especially with the wood and leather-working coachbuilders and wheelwrights of the late nineteenth century. But, in contrast to the AMFSU, the contemporary Vehicle Builders' union adopted its present industrial form from the introduction of mass production in the motor vehicle industry after World War I. The union had since maintained a virtual 'closed shop' coverage of the industry's production workforce. Not surprisingly, the union has traditionally advocated the cause of industrial unionism with the intention of covering all workers in the automobile industry irrespective of occupational or supervisory status. Through its coverage under industrial award jurisdiction the union may technically cover all vehicle industry employees, including the skilled trades, all levels of production and inspection, clerical and retail employees. But, in practice other more sectional unions such as the engineering unions (AMFSU and ASE), transport workers (TWU), draughtsmen (ADSTE), electricians (ETU) and the clerks' union (FCU), largely control these sectors. While the union has displayed collaborationist tendencies in its relationship with management, the VBEF has adopted a politically moderate position and has played a historically significant role as one of the major centre 'machine' unions within the Labor Party and United Trades and Labour Council. In recent times the VBEF in South Australia has continued to support the 'centre' forces within the Labor Party and labour movement, on occasions tending toward alignment with the more conservative factional groupings.

The Association of Draughting, Supervisory and Technical Employees consisted entirely of highly qualified technicians and lower supervisory staff in both the private and public sector. This study is concerned only with those ADSTE members engaged in the private sector. The origins of ADSTE were relatively recent in comparison with the other two manual unions. Developing from an alliance of State-based draughting and technical associations shortly after World War II, ADSTE emerged as a composite and vertically integrated organisation, first under the name of the Association of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Draughtsmen of Australia and then adopting its present title. A highly sectionalised technical association, this union was characteristically more conservative than either the AMFSU or the VBEF. However, the leadership of ADSTE was comparatively progressive, relative to the membership, and generally aligned themselves with left-of-centre factions within the labour movement. ADSTE was the sole union in this study not affiliated to the Labor Party in South Australia nor in other States, and was adamantly non-political in the formal and party political sense. Strictly speaking ADSTE was not confronted with a rival union competitor for its occupational coverage, but industrial-type unions such as the VBEF and the telecommunication employees' union (ATEA) had declared interests in ADSTE's coverage within their industrial areas. In terms of union organisation, ADSTE operated without the resources of an active shop steward body although on-the-job union 'contacts' provided some measure of liaison between officials and members mainly in relation to the distribution of union literature. In the vehicle industry section of ADSTE, union 'job contacts' had emerged as embryonic shop stewards.

The Australian trade union movement in comparison with other union movements is essentially a decentralised union structure in which decision-making power has traditionally resided at the State branch

level, ratner than at a centralised or federal (inter or intra) union level. This decentralised structure is based on the political structure of the various Australian States, the previously self-governing colonies. The present study examines the degree to which State-based autonomy continues to exist through analysing the political status of State branch union organisations within a federal context.

It is inappropriate, moreover, to consider this confederation of regionalised labour movements, as some pioneering studies have, in terms of a relatively uniform development. Historically Australia has possessed not one but a number of distinct organised movements, each with very different characteristics. The comparatively moderate and compliant nature of the union movement in South Australia can be attributed, as will be discussed in Chapter III, to a profusion of factors, including: structural weaknesses of the economy particularly its narrow and late development, local unemployment, the prolonged dominance of conservative craft-based unionism, the impact of settler ideologies and religious beliefs, and the combined regulatory containment of labour by state arbitration and the Labor Party. The history of trade unionism in South Australia is a history of moderation and of organisational growth through legitimate and contained channels. In the nineteenth century along with other colonial labour movements, South Australian unionists enjoyed a series of important reforms such as the eight hour day, the recognition of trade unions, 'anti-sweating' and factory legislation and relatively high money wages in comparison with Europe. With a high degree of inter-colonial labour mobility, employers and governments in South Australia conceded these measures largely as a consequence of successful demands achieved in other colonial regions, most notably in NSW and Queensland.

Not generally at the forefront in the initiation of militant industrial campaigns, South Australia's union movement tended to evolve in the wake of union developments generated in eastern Australia. Rarely were South Australian unionists national pace-setters in gaining improvements in wages or conditions, but neither did they experience overt repression of the same magnitude as militant labour throughout eastern Australia. As in other States where arbitration was successful as a means of labour discipline, union attention was directed toward legal representation and a preoccupation with organisational concerns. The number of South Australian unions increased from approximately 60 in 1890, to 141 in 1981, while membership rose from 10,000 in 1890 to around 100,000 by the end of World War II, and to a total of 263,100 in 1981, having peaked in 1979 with over 272,000 members. In 1981 the crude unionisation rate was 56 per cent (62 per cent for males and 48 per cent for females) the same as the national average, and which by international standards indicated a substantial degree of unionisation. In this sense the politics of union behaviour in South Australia displays a paradoxical nature. Ostensibly, in terms of organisational development, the union movement appears to possess considerable strength and potentiality, yet little evidence of this thus far has been expressed. Moreover, the union movement in Australia and more particularly in South Australia has remained <u>within</u> the system of compulsory arbitration and not predominantly adopted the processes of workplace collective bargaining. This is especially significant regarding militant unions (to which label each of the unions in this study have on occasions qualified) that have under favourable labour market conditions possessed the capacity to operate outside state arbitration. One of the aims of this study will be to explore a number of explanations which throw light on these paradoxes.

The study of trade unions and labour politics has traditionally occupied itself with the specific empirical characteristics of labour organisation, institutional developments, aspects of union activity, growth patterns and particular episodes of crisis. The broader factors shaping the developments of labour organisation are less well represented in the literature. This study attempts to analyse the political processes of union organisation within that broader context. The thesis is intended as a contribution to the theoretical understanding of the specific character of labour organisation within capitalist society.

As Chapter I argues, a common view of unionism regards its existence purely in economic terms. In this view, union organisation represents the struggle over both the distribution of income and the nature of prevailing working conditions. Yet, in conducting this struggle, waged primarily over immediate concerns, unionism has developed its own organisational interests. Associated with this unionism has tended to present 'capital' as an inevitable component of industrial society. Consequently unionism has engaged 'capital' in quantitative terms over the cash nexus. Worker resistance, therefore, has sought some greater share of the value of production. As this chapter shows, a predominant concern within industrial relations research has been the institutionalisation of this resistance, where labour's relationship to capital is perceived as one of partnership in industry. Conflict between capital and labour is conducted, it is assumed, because unionism is overwhelmingly reactive while management by nature is innovative. Hence, an institutionalised political process develops around control over the labour process in which pay increments and concessions are exchanged in the short-term for the accommodation of both parties.

It is generally accepted by theories of trade unionism that unions operating under capitalism must exist and react within the specific

constraints of those social relations. Historically the relationship between unionism and capitalism has changed considerably from the original forms of exclusive trade union collectivities operating under competitive capitalism. Concomitant with these significant structural changes, the union movement has been characterised by a continuing assimilation with capitalism serving to routinise the process of capital accumulation. From its social base characterised by a fragmented consciousness located on everyday experience, unionism has assumed an accommodationist role within the class structure of capitalist society. For example, a common and persistent belief to which Australian unionism has adhered, consists of the view that together with economic growth general improvements in wages and living standards occur. As such, within these limitations the interests represented through the political processes of unionism concern organisational development and sectional interests. Rarely has unionism encouraged the articulation of class interests concerned to oppose exploitation and oppression.

From this point of departure, Chapters II and III present a contribution toward the explanation of the structure, values and organisational characteristics of unionism in South Australia. In particular the processes of containment and the reasons for the moderate nature of union development are considered. The implications of this containment has importance for the particular analysis of the political process of the unions in this study. Thus, the economic and political conditions under which unions have operated at the State level in South Australia has shaped their internal factors such as: the centralisation of leadership, the limited role of shop stewards, membership participation and the determination of union policy. Moreover, this study examines labour organisations in the midst of a long and severe depression after a period of post-war full employment. In this economic

depression a substantial structural, technological and organisational restructuring of the economy has rapidly taken place in Australia. Such economic restructuring has had a major impact on the South Australian economy, which had become dependent on a narrow range of manufacturing industries.

These chapters are followed by a comparative analysis of the contemporary structure and internal organisational aspects of the three unions under investigation. Some account of their historical development is also presented. The political history and sociology of the unions provides the basis for the more detailed examination of the internal politics of union organisation in Chapters V and VI. This analysis leads to an examination of union government, bureaucracy and particpation. A critique of many previous interpretations of union government is an essential part of this analysis. In the final section of the study the politics of policy formation and implementation are examined in relation to the AMFSU. The remaining chapter concludes this study with an examination of the limits of the incorporation or containment of labour in the context of the particular characteristics of union organisation.

The empirical research for this study comprised of a wide range of material involving diverse sources. Research on three distinct union organisations is confronted with the problem of commensurability. Each of the three unions under analysis possessed discrete organisational characteristics, structure and activities making comparative research difficult. Moreover, certain caveats were issued from some quarters at the outset of the project to the effect that the internal political process of a trade union was a closed, furtive business and that empirical analysis would be difficult. Unions would by nature be both uncooperative and uncommunicative. In the event the opposite proved to be the case. The problem with regard to the empirical research became not one of insufficient material but of selection and priority.

Access to the two larger unions was at first partial and somewhat tentative, but quickly became much more open and cooperative. By contrast from the outset access to ADSTE was relatively unrestricted. In particular, access to the organisational operations of the AMFSU increased substantially over the early period of research commensurate to the relationship of trust that developed. Within a short period of time open access to all levels of the AMFSU was achieved. Similarly access to the VBEF was relatively open with the exception of the facility to observe monthly State Executive meetings.[2] With this exception, all manner of formal proceedings and a considerable amount of informal activity in the three unions were observed. Experience at the more formal processes of organisational activity served to reinforce an earlier supposition that much of the important internal decision-making occurred outside these formal avenues. For the most part formal meetings served as agencies of affirmation and legitimation rather than initiation. Union minutes as formal records of organisational proceedings were largely vacuous and non-informative. Hence, observation and other evidence of the informal processes of union organisation assumed a major importance to the research project.

The various methods of empirical investigation used consisted of extensive non-participant observation at the union office, union meetings and worksite level, the accompaniment (on a daily basis) of union

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2 Despite a number of attempts to gain permission to observe VBEF State Executive meetings, the union refused to allow access. According to the State Secretary of the union this was because of the union's rules and principles of organisation that required that no person not a member of the union be allowed access to Executive meetings. Indeed, as a vestige of its earlier covert existence, the union's General Meeting on each occasion that this observer was present ritualistically moved a motion and voted on the acceptance of a non-member at meetings. However, State Executive minutes were read in full at the General Meetings, and access to the written minutes (State Executive, General Meetings and Federal Council) was granted.

officials, in-depth interviewing and informal discussion, the examination of union records, minutes, correspondence, and union publications, as well as the execution of two extensive questionnaire sample surveys of shop stewards and union members. Observation techniques were used with the intention of establishing a coherent first-hand understanding of formal union organisational activities at various levels over a lengthy time period. The aim of this research was to explore the nature of the internal operations of the unions considered in terms of both the particular issues that were raised and those that were not raised, and in terms of the behaviour and relationships between the union participants. Here it was recognised that oral communication, in the formal and informal context, provided the major internal medium of union operation. Accordingly, an attempt was made to assess and analyse verbal interchange both across the open agenda of union activity and in relation to the hidden agenda. This method of empirical research became much more significant in revealing the internal workings of the union organisations than written or published documentation.

Upon completion of the investigation a whole series of recorded observations at a range of union gatherings had been undertaken. These consisted of union executive committee meetings, council meetings, general membership or branch meetings, shop steward conferences and committees on an industry and regional basis, mass meetings, strike meetings, union schools and special union conferences and forums. In addition, part of the research strategy involved accomanying union organisers for whole days to monitor their activities and interactions. These activities comprised of office duties, workplace servicing, convening meetings, election organising and low-level negotiations with management. Finally, attendance at arbitrational sessions where the unions under investigation appeared completed this section of the research. A complete breakdown of the nature of the forms of observation, accompaniment and attendance is presented below.

DETAILS OF OBSERVATION ATTENDANCE

Union Involved	Activity	Duration/Time	Number of Occasions or Attendances
ADSTE	Executive Meetings (monthly)	Evening	11
	Branch Council Meetings (monthly)	Evening	13
	Ann. General Meetings	Evening	1
	Accompanying Organiser	Full Day	3
AMFSU	State Council Meetings (monthly executive)	Full Day	10
	Branch Meetings (monthly)	Evening	9
	General Meetings	Afternoon	4
	Shop Steward Conferences	Full Day	3
	Shop Steward Area Councils	Afternoon	7
	Union Schools	Full Day	9
	Mass Meetings	Afternoon	3
	Accompanying Organiser	Full Day	3
VBEF	General Membership Meetings (monthly)	Evening	15
	Ann. General Meetings	Evening	2
	Mass Rally	Morning	1
	Accompanying Organiser	Full Day	4
General	ULTC/MTF/Union-Public Forum	Various	6
	Arbitrational Proceedings	Various	7

Meeting attendance was supplemented with in-depth interviewing. These interviews mainly involved shop stewards, organisers and other full-time officials although a number of members were also interviewed. Generally the interviews were conducted at various times throughout the period of research centred on a particular issue or problem of immediate concern, but involving broader aspects such as the individual's relationship to the union, the officials or members, the perception of the processes of internal union regulation, the nature of the individual's duties and responsibilities, and the way in which those interviewed perceived and acted upon their political role. A more structured and detailed interview was undertaken with each of the State Secretaries of the three unions.

Written union material provided a good deal of supplementary information. Union records in the form of journals, minutes and reports served as historical background though much of this material was skeletal. More useful for research was the continual stream of union documentation, discussion papers, policy statements, union bulletins, wage rate information, workplace newsletters, shop steward information and the like. In particular this includes the AMFSU's extensive range of union publications ranging from well-researched and produced political booklets (such as Australia Uprooted and Australian Ripped Off) designed for mass circulation to the more specific union oriented pamphlets and mobilisation campaign material. Furthermore, union correspondence as a major item of formal union affairs, and which was introduced and discussed on an item-by-item basis or tabled at union meetings, provided a rich source of information on organisational activities and their internal workings. Throughout the research period local and national newspapers were monitored, a sizeable press-clippings file was established and a survey of press coverage of unions in the Advertiser was undertaken.

To produce further information on union organisation two questionnaire sample surveys were designed. One aim of these surveys was to gain some comparative participant perception of union processes. Following a trial-run with a pilot survey, the two major surveys were launched. These surveys were designed to provide respondents with a combination of closed questions and a series of open ended questions. This was undertaken in an attempt to retain some statistical consistency but allow for respondents to use their own expressions and provide their own thoughts in a less constrained manner. Questionnaires were administered to shop stewards and rank-and-file members respectively in February/March and April/May 1980. The method of distribution was through union organisers, although ADSTE with relatively few stewards posted the shop steward survey to each of their thirty private industrial stewards. Those undertaking the sample survey were interested stewards and members of the AMFSU, VBEF and ADSTE engaged in private industry. The questionnaires sampled the metal industry (involving various workshops which included Johns Perry Engineering, Clyde Engineering, Tubemakers of Australia and Simpson Pope) and the vehicle industry (General Motors' Elizabeth and Woodville sites and Mitsubishi's Tonsley Park and Lonsdale sites - formerly Chrysler of Australia). It was intended to sample the unions active in these industries across various levels of skill; unskilled, production workers, the skilled manual trades and highly skilled technicians (for example, draughting technicians and technical engineers). In all a total of 515 questionnaires were distributed and an overall response rate of 41.7 per cent achieved, with the return of 215 completed questionnaires.[3] The shop steward survey

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3 As a comparative measure here of the response rate achieved in these samples, two similar studies are worth mentioning. In 1980 E. Davis (University of NSW) conducted a survey of ADSTE members and from a

involved 178 questions and consisted of 12 pages, while the membership survey asked 60 questions over 3 pages. The 64 shop stewards and 151 members from whom completed returns were received originated from the following union sources:

Shop Steward and Membership Questionnaire: Distrubution and Response

Shop Steward Questionnaire	No. distributed	No. of respondents	Response rate %
AMFSU	75	29	38.6
ADSTE	30	11	36.6
VBEF	60	24	40.0
Total	165	643	38.8
Membership Questionnaire			
AMFSU	125	51	40.8
ADSTE	100	36	36.0
VBEF	125	64	51.2
Total	515	215	41.7

The survey results were collated and entered into the computer using the programme Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (D.H. Bent and H.N. Nie, Stanford University). The entire questionnaires and complete survey results appear in the appendices. At the conclusion of the questionnaires space was provided for the respondents' own comments either concerning the issues raised in the survey or on the survey itself. A broad selection of these comments is also included in the appendices. The collation of the responses to the open ended questions

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footnote 3 continued
total of 1,000 posted questionnaires received a response rate of 27.3 per cent (see ADSTE, Blueprint, Vol. 5, No.1, February 1981, p.6). Secondly, in 1978 the AMFSU conducted a survey of 650 shop stewards throughout Australia involving five questions over working hours and work changes. Only 9 shop stewards replied indicating a response rate of 1.4 per cent (see AMWSU, State Council Minutes, 1.11.1978).

was undertaken with some sensitivity. Only when all survey responses were returned were the responses ordered into indentifiable categories. These categories were entirely created in light of the available responses: to the extent that some conceivable reply categories do not appear within the responses indicates that no respondent answered in that vein. Finally, in relating the above survey material to the themes of this study, a number of similar union sample surveys were useful. These related findings served both as a measure of control for present results, and as a valuable source of comparative data in the interpretation of them.[4]

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4 For example: E.A. Chaples, 'A Survey of Members of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union in the Sydney Metropolitan Area', Field Studies, Dept. of Government, University of Sydney, 1977; and G. O'Brien, P. Dowling and B. Kabanoff, Work, Health and Leisure, Report No.1, Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, October 1977.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM

CHAPTER I

Theories of Trade Unionism and Industrial Conflict

In recent years there has been a growing interest in examining the assumptions which underly theories of trade unionism and industrial relations. Such interest has generally classified the literature in terms of either historical chronology or the theoretical framework and value assumptions employed. Where the object of review has been to categorise various approaches, there has been a tendency to condense the literature in this field into a narrow range of scholarly debates that have marked the broad social sciences.[1] Often this has resulted in exercises concerned with academic demarcation.[2] But the problem with such exercises is not simply one of arbitrary classification. Rather, the construction of chronological and theoretical typologies has tended to distort the work of contributors and compress the dimensions of the subject.[3] This is particularly so where reviewers differentiate the literature according to political ideology placing emphasis on the import of the theoretical apparatus in place of the subject of research.[4] Among evaluative reviews of the literature on trade unionism, attempts aimed to provide schematic coverage of influential contributors have

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1 For example V.L. Allen, Social Analysis: a Marxist Critique and Alternative, Longman, London, 1975; G. Schienstock, 'Towards a theory of Industrial Relations', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 2, July 1981. A recent Australian example is B. Dabscheck and J. Niland, Industrial Relations in Australia, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981.

2 M. Perlman, Labor Union Theories in America, Row Peterson, New York, 1958.

3 For example M. Poole, Theories of Trade Unionism, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981.

4 C. Crouch, Trade Unions: the Logic of Collective Action, Fontana, Glasgow, 1982. Despite the empirical assessment of Part 2 this is also the import of J.A. Banks, Marxist Sociology in Action: a Sociological Critique of the Marxist Approach to Industrial Relations, Faber, London, 1970.

prevailed, based in general on idealist principles in which the interchange of theoretical ideas has in an incremental way produced greater understanding and analytical precision.[5] Less pronounced has been concern for the major themes that characterise the literature.[6]

A common distinction often made involves 'classical' in contrast to 'modern' theories of the labour movement. Various 'classical' theories, such as those surveyed in Perlman's five-fold taxonomy of the ethical, revolutionary, psychological, economic-welfare and social institutional traditions,[7] have little in common except for their pre-modern status, the emphasis on manual trade organisation and a certain endurance as distinctive theoretical explanations.[8] Many of these diverse 'classical' theories, such as those advanced by Marx, Marshall, Mill, the Webbs, Cole, Lenin, Commons, Hoxie and Perlman, were premised on specific historical appreciations of the formation of labour collectivism under emerging industrial capitalism.[9] As such these early and typically

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5 An approach conveyed, for example, in H.A. Clegg, Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976.

6 Nevertheless, a recent introductory survey of the trade union literature which attempts to classify debate according to analytical themes is M.P. Jackson, Trade Unions, Longman, London, 1982.

7 M. Perlman, op.cit. especially Chapter 8. Cf. also the perfunctory attempt to classify the literature in this manner in M. Poole, op.cit., pp. 6-19.

8 The designation of classical theories is often arbitrary, in general relying on date of publication rather than the nature of the analysis. For instance, it appears paradoxical to regard the study by S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism, Longmans, London, 1920[1894], as part of a 'classical' tradition without considering the more recent study by H.A. Turner, Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962, as a continuing contribution to that tradition. Cf. G.S. Bain and H.A. Clegg, 'A Strategy for Industrial Relations Research in Great Britain', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 12, No. 1, March 1974, especially pp, 97-100.

9 See: K. Marx, Wages, Price and Profit, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1970; and K. Marx 'Resultate' [The Sale of Labour-Power and the Trade Unions'], Capital, Volume 1, Appendix IV, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp. 1066-75; A. Lozovsky, Marx and the Trade Unions, Martin Lawrence, London, 1935; A. Marshall, The Economics of Industry, Macmillan, London, 1879; J.S. Mill, Principles of Political

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empirical studies attempted to explain the evolutionary progress of organised labour as involving: the quest for legal status, state abstentionism, early union growth and morphology (old unionism to 'new model' artisan societies), the reliance on mutual insurance, the extension of political economism to supplement industrial economism, the horizontal development of organisation (through mass solidarity and new unionism), and the deployment within the capitalist labour process of restrictive practices and job regulation ('working rules'). Principally unionism was depicted variously as a means of sectional limitation over the labour supply in response to the developing cooperative labour process controlled by employers.[10]

Conversely, 'modern' theories taken together exhibit markedly eclectic and inter-disciplinary characteristics. For many the essential debate in recent years has involved contending theoretical frameworks. Union theories exhibit paradigm clashes both between the artificial boundaries of academic disciplines (principally: economics, politics, history and sociology), as well as between ideological and methodological approaches such as: liberal pluralism, neo-Weberianism, Marxism, behaviouralism, and radicalism.[11] Indeed, many secondary

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Economy, Longmans, London, 1878; S. and B. Webb, op.cit.; G.D.H. Cole, Attempts at General Union, London, Macmillan, 1953; V. Lenin, What is to be Done?, Oxford University Press, London, 1963; J.R. Commons et al., History of Labour in the United States, 4 vols., Macmillan, New York, 1935; R.F. Hoxie, Trade Unionism in the United States, Appleton, New York, 1919; S. Perlman, A Theory of the Labor Movement, Kelley, New York, 1949.

10 See generally: S. and B. Webb, op.cit.; and S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, Longman, London, 1920; F. Williams, Magnificent Journey: the Rise of the Trade Unions, Odhams Press, London, 1954; H. Pelling, The History of British Trade Unionism, (3rd Edition), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976. Cf. the perceptive hegemonic account in K.D. Brown, The English Labour Movement, 1700-1951, Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1982.

11 For instance, see R. Crompton, 'Approaches to the Study of White-Collar Unionism', Sociology, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1976. Crompton's exchange with J.A. Banks was conducted explicitly on the grounds of paradigm comparisons (Sociology, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1978 and Vol. 13, (continued over page)

classifications of the literature resort to the somewhat sterile differentiation according to 'schools' of approach, of which the most notable are: unitary-conservative, institutional pluralist, radical sociology, and Marxism.[12] In some cases this differentiation lapses into polemic; more fruitfully it is discussed in terms of qualitative and distinct levels of analysis.[13]

Despite theoretical debates which have characterised the literature, research interest in trade union and industrial relations remains, with a few notable exceptions, concerned with improving the performance of the existing economic system.[14] Although attempts have been made to analyse trade unions in the wider context,[15] much of the literature is confined to an ideology of mutual interdependence in management labour

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No. 1, 1979). In relation to the politics of industrial relations Crouch is a keen proponent of contending theoretical paradigms (principally liberalism and corporatism) see C. Crouch, Class Conflict and the Industrial Relations Crisis, Heinemann, London, 1977.

12 A. Fox, 'Industrial Sociology and Industrial Relations', Research Paper 3, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, HMSO; M. Poole, op.cit., Chapters 2-8, C. Crouch, op.cit., Chapter 1 and passim. For an Australian classification in this vein see G.W. Ford and J.M. Hearn, 'Industrial Conflict: an Overview', in G.W. Ford, J.M. Hearn and R.D. Lansbury (eds.), Australian Labour Relations: Readings, 3rd Edition, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1980.

13 R. Hyman, The Workers' Union, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, pp. 173-226.

14 Specifically The Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 1965-1968, HMSO, 1968 (and 12 Research Papers); L.R. Sayles, Behaviour of Industrial Work Groups, John Wiley, New York, 1958, Chapter 5; A. Flanders, Industrial Relations: What is Wrong with the System?, Faber, London, 1965; and more generally A. Flanders, Management and Unions, Faber, London, 1975. An Australian study in this vein is J. Niland, Collective bargaining and Compulsory Arbitration in Australia, NSW University Press, Sydney, 1978.

15 For example: D. Kruijt and M. Vellinga, Labor Relations and Multinational Corporations, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1979; D. Gallie, In Search of the New Working Class, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978; R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: a Marxist Introduction, Macmillan, London, 1975; V.L. Allen, The Sociology of Industrial Relations, Longman, London, 1971.

relations. Indeed, many of the directions of theoretical debate have remained within this ideological framework where the major concern of problem resolution is pronounced.[16] In this sense, to paraphrase Ross, the literature on trade unionism has tended to lead a life of its own independent of the nature of trade unionism. As such, both the theoretical and empirical literature tends to debate within itself, counterbalancing existing overt emphases rather than explaining the subject matter under investigation. In the Australian literature, as will be discussed below, academic studies have tended to follow in the wake of theoretical directions from British and American sources with little concern for the relevancy of those theories to the Australian situation.[17]

Essentially, two problematics characterise existing theories of trade unionism and both rest on diverse interpretations of social conflict and conflict resolution. The first addresses the nature of resource allocation and access to resouces (income) in the context of economic development. Focussed principally in terms of market assumptions, this problematic involves the character and determination of socio-economic inequality within work relations. From an alternative perspective this can be interpreted as the discussion of social inequality both between and within classes. While the emphasis on inequality and resource allocation under different historical phases of capitalism is not intrinsically a matter of economic analysis, this issue has been pursued

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16 Cf. S. Wood and R. Elliott, 'A Critical Evaluation of Fox's Radicalisation of Industrial Relations Theory', Sociology, Vol. 11, No. 1, 1977. In criticising 'sociological' problem resolution some authors have argued instead for an eclectic 'all-embracing world view', S. Hill and K. Thurley, 'Sociology and Industrial Relations', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 12, No. 2, July 1974.

17 Two examples here are S. Frenkel (ed.), Industrial Action: Patterns of Labour Conflict, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1980; and B. Dabscheck and J. Niland, op.cit.. For a review of this development see J. Wanna, 'Groups in Contention: Industrial Relations Theory', Arena, No. 64, 1983.

predominantly as a function of economic determinism from both competitive market and production relations paradigms.[18] By reducing resource allocation to the mechanics of economic forces, trade unionism is characterised by an inherent impotency. It is neither capable of effectively countering market forces beyond short term distortions, nor of redressing unequal access to material production through an inability to challenge the entire wage labour system. Such reductionism merely presents one dimension of trade unionism; and in the trade union movement leads to conservatism in union activity.

The second problematic concerns the social relations of power and the political character of trade unionism. A major concern here has been the evaluation of the historical contribution made by unionism toward social and political change. In many studies relations of power receive implicit discussion. For example, in trade union literature, as Allen has suggested, the analysis of structures of ownership and control often appears either unproblematical or natural and accordingly qualifies for little explicit debate.[19] Certainly, the politics of labour control and industrial conflict has received less attention than the economic factors of labour relations.[20] But, in modern sociological accounts such as Flanders, Fox and Batstone et al., the politics of workplace relations of domination provide a behaviouralist backdrop to theories of job regulation.[21] However, the wider political relations in society

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18 Cf. C.E. Lindblom, Unions and Capitalism, Archon, Hamden, 1970; C. Mulvey, The Economic Analysis of Trade Unions, Martin Robertson, Oxford, 1978; and V.L. Allen, The Sociology of Industrial Relations ... op. cit..

19 V.L. Allen, op.cit., Part I. With few notable exceptions, power relations in industry have not generally constituted a major object of inquiry.

20 But cf. T. Nichols and P. Armstrong, Workers Divided, Fontana, Glasgow, 1976.

21 For example: A. Flanders, The Fawley Productivity Agreements, Faber, London, 1964; A. Fox, A Sociology of Work in Industry, Macmillan, London, 1971; and E. Batstone, I. Boraston and S. Frenkel, The Social Organization of Strikes, Blackwell, Oxford, 1978.

have only attracted attention infrequently, and this is especially the case with regard to the nature of state activity and state regulation of industrial relations: a lacuna which is receiving greater attention in the contemporary literature.[22]

In contrast to the issue of social power relations, the political character of union organisation has been a major topic in trade union studies. Two aspects associated with the political character have sustained interest. First, the ideological character of and forms of consciousness in labour organisation have received attention from both Marxists and non-Marxists. Basically debates over these issues relate either to the degree of socialist or collectivist development or more generally to the impact of trade unionism within the conventional political process. Second, despite the absence of comparable studies on employer organisations, the internal arrangements of power with emphasis on the decision-making processes have been extensively investigated, not least for the purposes of critically situating trade union practice within preconceived concepts of democratic theory.[23]

To date, critics have already exposed many of the inadequacies of conventional theories of trade unionism and labour relations.[24] In particular, the assumptions of systems functionalism and behaviouralism, liberal pluralism and neo-classical economics have attracted extensive

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22 D. Strinati, 'Capitalism, the State and Industrial Relations', in C. Crouch (ed.), State and Economy in Contemporary Capitalism, Croom Helm, London, 1979.

23 This is discussed more fully in Chapter VII below.

24 V.L. Allen, The Sociology of Industrial Relations, Longman, London, 1971; R. Hyman, 'Pluralism, Procedural Consensus and Collective Bargaining', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. XVI, No. 1, March 1978; and R. Hyman, Strikes, 2nd Edition, Fontana, Glasgow, 1977, Chapter 3. For a recent non-Marxist critique see G. Schienstock, op.cit..

criticism.[25] These critiques already exist and it is not the intention of the present chapter simply to repeat the contours of debate. Instead, the remainder of this chapter focusses on two themes which underlie the theoretical debates, each of which is premised on the nature of industrial and social conflict and the institutional processes of conflict resolution. These themes are: trade union theory in relation to social and economic inequality; and, the political and organisational character of unionism. Finally, Australian studies on trade unionism are examined in order to assess their contribution to the research and analysis of Australian union organisations.

Socio-Economic Inequality and the Allocation of Resources

Classical and neo-classical economic theory held that labour combinations could raise wages under specific circumstances but that competitive forces in capitalism contained either equalising (Smith), normalising (Marshall) or minimising (Marx) pressures on real wages.[26] Unionism could raise real wages and living standards over an unspecified 'short term' assuming that low levels of capital concentration or non-enduring monopolisation existed. But, increasingly the effect on income distribution was assumed to diminish through the operations of capitalism as an economic system. For example, market competition incorporating an 'invisible hand' eroded income differentials through

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25 Many of such critiques are premised on the assumption that the nature of existing knowledge and theory in the literature revolves largely around analytical assumptions. This is particularly the case with M. Poole, op.cit..

26 A. Smith, An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, Clarendon, Oxford, 1976; A. Marshall, The Principles of Economics, Macmillan, London, 8th Edition, 1938; K. Marx, Wages, Price and Profit ... op.cit., pp. 3-18 and 63-70. Also cf. E.G. West and R.W. Hafer, 'J.S. Mill, Unions, and the Wages Fund Recantation: a Reinterpretation', Quarterly Journal of Economics, Vol. 92, No. 4, Nov. 1978. In neo-classical theory, J.R. Hicks, The Theory of Wages, Macmillan, London, 1932, presented wage levels as entirely determined by the marginal product based on supply and demand.

tendencies to increase the supply of labour attracted by higher wages,[27] whereas disincentive existed for entrepreneurs to invest in sectors with high labour costs as a factor of production. Further, Marx argued that higher real wages served to encourage the substitution of labour by capital, increasing the organic composition of capital and contributing to declining profit rates and the tendency of crises of over-production.[28]

Although never undertaking a major study of trade unionism, Marshall produced a characteristically ambivalent consolidation of marginalist thought on the economic impact of unionism.[29] From a market inspired perspective, Marshall argued that separate employee bargaining with employers over the conditions of work ('freedom of contract') possessed important disadvantages for the individual labour seller.[30] In Marshall's example, management with 1,000 workers on the payroll inherently operated as an employer 'combination', in that under one authority the negotiation of 1,000 work contracts were consolidated.[31] Unionism relied in some part on four conditions within the market relations for the securing of higher wages.[32] But as organisations

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27 A. Smith, op.cit., Book 1, Chapter 10.

28 See: K. Marx, 'Strikes and Combinations of Workers', in The Poverty of Philosophy, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, Chapter II(5); K. Marx, Wages, Price and Profit ... op.cit., Chapters 13 and 14; K. Marx, 'Wages', in K. Marx and F. Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 6, pp. 415-437.

29 Cf. A. Petridis, 'Alfred Marshall's Attitudes to and Economic Analysis of Trade Unions: a Case of Anomalies in a Competitive System', History of Political Economy, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1973. Petridis notes that Marshall's position on trade unions changed 'from a favourable and hopeful one in the 1870's to one of doubt and uncertainty in the 1880's and to a final position bordering on hostility', p. 183.

30 A. Marshall, The Economics of Industry, Macmillan, London, 1879, Book 3, Chapter 6.

31 A. Marshall, Elements of Economics of Industry, Macmillan, London, 1892, pp. 380-3, and more generally Book 6, Chapter 13.

32 Ibid., pp. 378-9.

concerned principally to redress economic inequality, unions basically counterbalanced the disproportionate bargaining power of management. As such, organised labour reciprocated the 'unity' possessed inherently by the employer. Thus, unionism as a form of defence of class interests prevented employers from further benefitting from the vulnerable position of individual workers.

It is not the case, therefore, that unionism must demonstrate the capacity to increase wages relative to profits to constitute an organisation of sectionalised class interests aimed at economic redistribution. Thus, as Prandy and colleagues have argued, to disregard unions as agencies affecting the social distribution of income along class lines, as some modern theories have attempted, merely because unionism can be regarded as not having 'secured greater returns for the working class vis-a-vis capital' is to foreclose serious discussion.[33] Indeed, given the far greater concentration and internationalisation of capital over the past century, unions as sectional class formations retain credibility in that they have also resisted capital in ways other than via the cash nexus. Conversely, unionism has contributed to reducing the erosion of the working class share of income. Flanders recognised this point explicitly in maintaining that the collective action of labour was mainly motivated by sectional pecuniary interest via job regulation. Unionism had 'to be regarded as an institution freeing labour from being too much at the mercy of the market'.[34] Thus, whereas unions seek improvements in wages and yet find it at times necessary to be party to decreases in pay, ultimately their existence rests on their ability to modify managerial control and provide some

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33 K. Prandy, A. Stewart and R.M. Blackburn, White Collar Unionism, Macmillan, London, 1983, p. 3.

34 A. Flanders, 'The Nature of Collective Bargaining', in A. Flanders (ed.), Collective Bargaining, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 24.

measure of joint regulation at work. To this extent it is fallacious to dismiss the relationship between social class divisions and trade unionism on the grounds of secured returns.[35]

Where unions are recognised primarily as agents of wealth distribution, the organisational structure of unionism is regarded by many such as the Webbs, Kerr, Dunlop, Wootton and Allen to be determined by the most efficient systematic means of attempting to satisfy these imperatives.[36] This conceptualisation often stresses the decision-making and administrative role performed by the organisational leadership strata. Strong centralised leadership is able to engineer its own legitimacy and efficacy constrained within the 'maximisation' thesis as Dunlop among others has argued.[37] In other words, the dominant position of a particular union leadership relates to the degree of satisfaction delivered to membership. Leadership it is argued must maximise its clienteles' economic expectations to secure and enhance its own position.[38]

Following the ascendancy of systems functionalism, trade union theory was characterised by two debates on this question concerning the nature and determinants of union action, and the effects of unionism on wage determination. Instead of the large-scale controversy predicted by some

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35 For a critique and discussion of some of the problems involved in determining the economic impact of unionism see B. Burkitt and D. Bowers, Trade Unions and the Economy, Macmillan, London, 1979.

36 S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, 2nd Edition, Longmans, London, 1920, Parts II and III; C. Kerr, 'Wage Relationships - the Comparative Impact of Market and Power Forces', in J.T. Dunlop (ed.), The Theory of Wage Determination, Macmillan, London, 1957; J.T. Dunlop, Wage Determination Under Trade Unions, Kelley, New York, 1950; B. Wootton, The Social Foundations of Wage Policy, 2nd Edition, Unwin, London, 1962; V.L. Allen, Power in Trade Unions, Longmans, London, 1954.

37 J.T. Dunlop, Wage Determination ... op.cit., Chapter 3.

38 A point emphasised by V.L. Allen, op.cit. pp. 15-24.

commentators,[39] the first debate developed into a sterile controversy in which arguments over economic perception were interpreted as theory. On the one side, advocates of the 'economic' viewpoint argued that unionism operated to pursue the principle of income maximisation, and that the organisational form adopted by unions necessarily augmented the power of union labour as an economic force in that organisation was a reflection of the optimal means to attain maximum concessions.[40] On the other side, the 'political considerations' school instead argued that the existence of trade unionism essentially relied on the institutionalisation of human activity. While criticising the individualistic-oriented and instrumental presentation of the 'economic' view, the 'political' approach maintained that large organisations by definition were capable of maintaining themselves as an integral political sub-system operating within the wider pluralist society.[41] Thus, labour organisations served to promote their own well being through the institutionalisation of the behavioural criteria responsible for their continuation, especially in relation to relativity claims or as Ross termed the 'orbits of coercive comparison'.[42] In this sense, while the 'economist' approach emphasised that the economic ends prefigure the means, the 'political' view concluded, echoing Michels, that the sociological means became in themselves organisational ends.

The second debate was more centrally concerned with the issue of unionism and wealth distribution. The debate focussed on the perennial

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39 See Introduction to W. Galenson and S.M. Lipset (eds.), Labor and Trade Unionism, John Wiley, New York, 1960.

40 See M.W. Reder, 'The Theory of Union Wage Policy', in W. Galenson and S.M. Lipset (eds.), op.cit., pp. 3-17.

41 A.M. Ross, Trade Union Wage Policy, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1950, Chapter 2. See also H.M. Levinson, 'Wage Determination Under Collective Bargaining', in A. Flanders (ed.), Collective Bargaining, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969.

42 A.M. Ross, op.cit., Chapter 3.

question of the effects of union organisation on wage rates. Discussion presumed either the primacy of the competitive market forces with a corresponding elasticity of demand for labour, or of the structural and monopolistic tendencies reducing the elasticity of demand for labour.[43] This debate was difficult to reconcile in that analysis of the effect of competitive forces on wages was again reduced to preconceived assumptions. Statistically the debate was beyond conclusive evidence in that the measure of union effectiveness was confined to disputable economic criteria (and not other variables such as social esteem, psychological benefit, organisational provision or political awareness).[44] Furthermore, it was analytically unsatisfactory to compare union with non-union sectors in gauging the impact of unionism on wages, and impossible to separate empirically the effects of union bargaining from that which may have spontaneously occurred relative to market demand or job control.[45] Subsequent substantive discussion located the impact of unionism within the context of technological efficiency and business cycle fluctuations.[46] Ultimately, this overall debate tended not to analayse unionism per se. Instead it investigated the impact of trade union bargaining on levels of efficiency across industry: a relationship believed not only by economists but also by some political scientists to affect considerably the rationality of trade

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43 Summaries of these theories are C. Mulvey, op.cit., Chapters 5 and 8; and A. Rees, The Economics of Trade Unions, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962. Also C. Kerr, op.cit., pp. 173-193, provides a useful introduction to these debates.

44 See: L.G. Reynolds, 'The Impact of Collective Bargaining on the Wage Structure in the United States', in J.T. Dunlop (ed.), op.cit.; C. Kerr, op.cit.; and J. Pfeffer and J. Ross, 'Unionization and Income Inequality', Industrial Relations, Vol. 20, No. 3, 1981.

45 B. Burkitt and D. Bowers, op.cit., Chapter 3; C. Mulvey, op.cit., pp. 105-117.

46 G.S. Bain and F. Elsheikh, Union Growth and the Business Cycle, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976.

union behaviour.[47]

With a similar concern for technical efficiency, Fabian socialists viewed trade unions not entirely as economic maximisers but as economic social movements concerned with the distribution of both wealth and the means of production. Unionism expressed labour's instinctive solidarity to protect organised sections of the working class against the abuses of capitalist exploitation.[48] Importantly, unionism was an organisational development serving the public interest in that it contributed to the social well-being by advancing the economic security of those with only the power of their labour as economic means. Rejecting the Marxist viewpoint that trade unions applied mere 'palliatives' to the effects of the capitalist production process, the Webbs, for instance, regarded two interrelated functions responsible for the continuation of unionism as an institution of income determination. First, the efficiency and technological improvement of industry matched by an efficiency of organisation, resulted in the production of greater social material provisions which in turn allowed unions to increasingly 'deliver the goods' to members.[49] Second, because unionism attracted mass involvement within their organisations, assisting the trend toward worker autonomy on the shop floor (works committees and shop stewards), this encouraged the expansion of labour control and allowed for greater

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47 See F. Meyers and R. Bowlby, 'The Inter-industry Wage Structure and Productivity', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 7, No. 1, October 1953.

48 G.D.H. Cole, Organised Labour, Allen & Unwin, London, 1924, p. 2; and G.D.H. Cole, A Short History of the British Working Class Movement, 1789-1947, George Allen & Unwin, London, 2nd Edition, 1948.

49 S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy, ... op.cit., pp. 730-732. Hence, with unionism, they argued, 'the enforcement of a Common Rule, by progressively eliminating the worst equipped employers and concentrating the whole pressure of competition on securing the utmost possible efficiency of production, tends constantly to the development of the highest type of industrial production', (p. 732). Cf. also R. Hyman, The Workers' Union, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, pp. 173-5 for a discussion of this concept of efficiency.

sharing of the industrywide or national allocation of resources.[50]

Subsequently, the Webbs recorded that unions had historically considered themselves as little other than

> organisations to secure an ever-improving Standard of Life by means of an ever-increasing control of the conditions under which they worked. They neither desired nor sought any participation in the management of the technical processes of industry ... [51]

But, responding to the 'new intellectual ferment' of the twentieth century, unionism addressed itself with more application to the social dimensions of inequality. With the rise of direct action and industrial syndicalism, the issue of inequality was translated, the Webbs and other evolutionary socialists noted, through the extension of unionism toward programmes of participation in management.[52] Social equality was contingent upon social reconstruction. Discounting revolutionary change and expropriatory strikes, various contemporary political strategies including nationalisation of industry, municipalisation and industrial syndicalism, served to broaden the objectives of unionism toward self-determination and the political control of industry.[53]

While the Webbs were sceptical of both syndicalism due to its revolutionary and anarchistic elements, and 'co-partnership' or corporatist developments because of their sectional anti-social interests, they identified two developments that they considered would erode social inequality. First, the manifestation of workplace political

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50 S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism ... op.cit.; and S. and B. Webb, A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Britain, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2nd edition, 1975.

51 S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism, p. 653.

52 S. and B. Webb, A Constitution ... op.cit., pp. 149-163. Cf. E. Bernstein, Evolutionary Socialism, Schocken, New York, [1899] 1961.

53 G.D.H. Cole. The World of Labour, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1913. Cole at this stage advocated the workers' ownership and control of industry rather than nationalised. See G.D.H. Cole, Guild Socialism Re-stated, Parsons, London, 1921.

autonomy through both works committees and the shop steward movement, although not implying a radical reconstruction of society, nevertheless increased levels of activism, rank-and-file involvement and possibly militancy.[54] Moreover, such workplace initiatives constituted government from below, and to the extent that they formulated democratic grass root policy augmented the experience and consciousness of workers as a class.[55]

The second development, upon which the Webbs placed greater emphasis in that it corresponded to their gradualist appreciation of labour protection through legal enactment, was the extension of labour organisation to the formal electoral process at both the local and national level in the form of the political party of labour.[56] The participation of the labour movement in elections meant for the Webbs that an extended parliamentary-municipal constitution would ultimately provide the 'Democratic Control of Industry'; in other words, that the Fabian view of a socialist state would follow constitutionally upon the permeation of universal suffrage. More immediately, however, union involvement in formal political structures supplemented the legal and social status of the union movement.[57]

That this latter development into the parliamentary sphere remained of limited importance has provided grounds for much criticism. While recent critics have generally attacked Fabianism as an elitist doctrine

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54 S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism ... op.cit., pp. 654-676. This activity was later documented by J. Hinton, The First Shop Stewards' Movement, Allen & Unwin, London, 1973.

55 S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism ... op.cit.. This point was made more forcefully by G.D.H. Cole, in The World of Labour, Chapters 11 and 12.

56 S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism ... op.cit., Chapter 11.

57 Ibid., p. 364-6.

promoted by ineffective 'technicians of reform'[58] whose values were located within the 'established assumptions of the prevailing social order',[59] contemporary writers such as Lenin had earlier qualified reformist perceptions of state intervention.[60] For Lenin, under constitutional government and extensive enfranchisement, the sectional economism of trade unionism developed progressively into political economism.[61] In Britain, but also in Australia, the tendency for unions to engage in conventional political activity reflected their limited class consciousness in extending workplace regulation toward legislative regulation.[62] As Lenin argued, in criticising economist tendencies within Russian Social Democracy, the process of 'lending the economic struggle itself a political character' essentially involved limited labour protection under the bourgeois state; a process which had traditionally occupied unionism.[63] Referring to the study undertaken by the Webbs, Lenin presented unionism as a social movement less concerned

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58 T. Nairn, 'Anatomy of the Labour Party', in R. Blackburn (ed.), Revolution and Class Struggle, Harvester Press, Hassocks, 1978, p. 325.

59 G. Therborn, Science, Class and Society, New Left Books, London, 1976, p. 235.

60 V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done?, Oxford University Press, London, 1963.

61 See generally V.I. Lenin, On Trade Unions, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, pp. 59-65, 70-80, 171-179, 237-8, 355-361. In What is to be Done? Lenin maintained that 'the spontaneous labour movement by itself is capable of creating (and inevitably creates) only trade unionism, and trade unionist politics of the working class is precisely bourgeois politics of the working class', op.cit., p. 117. See also T.T. Hammond, Lenin on Trade Unions and Revolution 1893-1917, Columbia University Press, New York, 1957, Chapters 3, 4 and 10.

62 Lenin's comment of 1913 referred to the Australian Labor Party as 'the unalloyed representative of non-socialist workers' trade unions. The leaders of the Australian Labor Party are trade union officials, everywhere the most moderate and "capital-serving" element, and in Australia, altogether peaceable, purely liberal'. V.I. Lenin, On Trade Unions, p. 247.

63 V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done?, p. 88.

with overcoming social inequality per se, rather with union consciousness remaining at the level of extracting temporary concessions from the social organisation of capitalism.[64] In other words, economism tended to associate the level of wages not with levels of profitability but with previous wage levels and comparative wage movements. This attitude toward economism has permeated the ambivalent position Marxists have held on the nature of trade union activity.

In this regard, the basic disagreement between Fabian and Marxist views involved the ideological issues of whether unionism could sustain 'ever-improving' conditions to wage earners and in what terms social improvement was meaningful. Marx did not rule out improvements in living and working conditions, particularly since capitalism unleashed considerable productive potential, but his analysis placed primacy upon the class struggle.[65] Tendencies toward the minimisation of wages were exerted by the accumulation process with wages paid not according to value produced in production but according to the costs of basic subsistence, ('subsistence plus' wages necessary for the reproduction of labour power). While living conditions from generation to generation could improve for sections of the world's labour force, real wages or labour's relative share of the social product tended to remain the same or decline.[66]

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64 Ibid., Part 3(a), passim.

65 Marx at one stage claimed that unions were 'applying palliatives, not curing the malady', see Wages, Price and Profit, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1970, p. 78. The Webbs refuted this in The History of Trade Unionism, pp. 670-676.

66 While wages of todays workers appear higher (and with the rise of credit facilities together with the declining real price of certain commodities), the income ratio between the labourer and the employer in the nineteenth century was considerably less than that between multinational corporations and the process worker in todays terms. In other words, rises in nominal or real wages are essentially problematic. Marx discussed this in Wage Labour and Capital, Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1978,
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For Marx the activity of trade unionism unless it challenged the wage labour system remained within a vicious circle, continually striving to improve wages but continually subordinate to more determinate countervailing forces.[67] Thus, moves to conduct bargaining according to productivity increments represented attempts by unions of skilled and less skilled workers to augment the consumer price or subsistence aspect of wages with components of the actual change in value produced. Such moves relied on innovation in production and on the capacity of employers to withstand or eliminate competitive market forces. The extent to which unionism secured cumulative gains in productivity bargaining relative to prices constituted an improvement in real wages through a sectional transfer of part of the social product to labour. But, such improvements did not necessarily constitute a relative increase in labour's real share of the social distribution of income. Debate over this question, between the absolute and relative level of income accruing to labour, has continued to fuel controversy within Marxist theories and between

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> (e)ven the most favourable situation for the working class, the most rapid possible growth of capital, however much it may improve the material existence of the worker, does not remove the antagonism between his interests and the interests of the bourgeoisie .... If capital is growing rapidly, wages may rise; the profit of capital rises incomparably more rapidly. The material position of the worker has improved, but at the cost of his social position. The gulf that divides him from the capitalist has widened. [And again] relative wages can fall although real wages rise simultaneously with nominal wages, with the money value of labour, if they do not rise, however, in the same proportion as profit. (p. 40-41).

In Australia a Commonwealth government report concluded that labour's share of national product had fallen in the post-war period. See Labour's Share of the National Product: the Post-War Australian Experience, Department of Labour and Immigration, AGPS, Canberra, 1975.

67 K. Marx, 'Resultate', in Capital, Vol. 1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp. 1066-1070.

Marxists and non-Marxists.[68]

In Marxist theory the essential feature of trade unionism was its contradictory nature. For Marx unions existed to bargain collectively over the price of labour and were as a consequence inseparable from the maintenance of the wage labour system.[69] In Capital Marx identified the cooperative form of the labour process based on the increasing division of labour as a structural inducement tending to reduce competition between employees and establish preliminary conditions for worker organisation.[70] Similar to other classical economists, Marx emphasised the potential of worker combinations to redress some of the market disadvantages suffered by 'free' labour in individual contracts. Yet in Marx's view unionism presented workers with the political power of organisation. While not principally determining income distribution under capitalist production relations, unionism engineered forms of social consciousness which could ultimately address inequalities. Thus, Marx could argue dialectically that although unionism was embedded within capitalism, its historical significance rested on its ability to promote the abolition of the wage labour system.[71] The implication here was

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68 For example see J.H. Westergaard and H. Resler, Class in a Capitalist Society, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, Parts 1 and 2; and J.H. Westergaard, 'The Rediscovery of the Cash Nexus', in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds.) Socialist Register 1970, Merlin, London, 1970. See also J. Kuczynski, A Short History of Labour Conditions Under Industrial Capitalism in Great Britain and the Empire, 1750-1944, Muller, London, 1972 [1945], especially the important argument on labour conditions in Australia, (Part 2, Chapter 3).

69 K. Marx, Wages, Price and Profit, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, pp. 71-9. For Marx labour organisations being tied inseparably to the wages system and the process of labour commodification were economically conservative organisations.

70 See H. Draper, Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Vol. II, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1978, Chapters 4 and 5, for the development of Marx's views on the trade union question. For an analysis in similar vein, cf. V.L. Allen, Militant Trade Unionism, Merlin Press, London, 1966, pp. 11-12 and 149-169.

71 K. Marx, 'Resolution of the International Workingmen's Association on Trade Unions', Geneva 1866, quoted in A. Lozovsky, Marx and the Trade Unions, p. 17.

not that unions were the metaphorical 'vehicles toward socialism' or the 'transmission belts' of organised revolutionary parties, but that they performed the vital function of unifying the fragmented working class allowing workers to develop elementary socialist consciousness. Accordingly, trade unionism assisted the establishment of structural conditions necessary for revolutionary change. But, the revolutionary potential of trade unions contrasted starkly with the concrete limitations imposed on trade union activity.[72]

The issue raised here and which has subsequently occupied Marxist writers, is the political nature of organised labour and the interpretation of the economic impact of unionism as a facet of its political and indeed revolutionary development. Despite the tendency of later Marxists (including Engels' work)[73] to present more pessimistic interpretations of union behaviour,[74] the question of the relationship between class inequality and unionism was increasingly subordinate to the political character of organised labour under modern capitalism and to the

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72 See H. Draper, op.cit., pp. 99-103 for a discussion of Marx's appreciation of the limitations of trade unionism.

73 See F. Engels' series of articles in the Labour Standard, 7.5.1881; 21.5.1881; 28.5.1881, 4.6.1881; 23.7.1881; 6.8.1881. On trade unions Engels argued that unions tended to be locked in a 'vicious circle' based on the notion of a 'fair day's wages for a fair day's work'. Cf. the discussion of later Marxist views in T. Clarke and L. Clements (eds.), Trade Unions Under Capitalism, Fontana, Glasgow, 1977.

74 In an attempt to classify the 'classical' Marxists into two distinct schools of thought regarding the revolutionary potential of trade unionism, Hyman has developed an interesting argument around what he identified as the optimistic-pessimistic dichotomy. Having created these positions Hyman argued the merits of a synthesis position. In this reading, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Gramsci, especially in relation to their stress on the vanguard role of the party or class activists over the embryonic consciousness of the general labour movement, may be interpreted in such a way as to contradict Marx and Engels. On the other hand, both Marx and Engels stressed a broadly pessimistic appreciation of such economic resistance relative to political struggle. Yet despite the varying emphases distinguishing these Marxists, all were sympathetic and encouraging toward worker collectivism to the extent that circumstances allowed. R. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism, Pluto, London, 1971.

structural changes engendered in the class structure. Hence, classical Marxists including Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Gramsci retained an interest in unionism insofar as it prepared wage labour as a class against capital and as a class for itself.[75] In this respect, their main concern was with the political tactics of variously conscious organised labour movements.

In advanced capitalist societies the relationship between trade unionism and economic inequality has once again come under scrutiny, mainly because of the patent inability of modern 'welfare' capitalism to redress social inequality despite periods of post-war full employment. However, no small part of this renewed interest was contributed by the extensive debates within contemporary Marxism and the emergence of more independent and innovative Marxist theory. A common point of departure among recent studies of this ilk involves the incorporation of unionism into the maintenance and development of corporate capitalism.[76] As such trade unionism was not premised upon the extent to which social inequality was ameliorated but upon the intermediation of existing class interests.[77] Accordingly, unionism emerged as a hegemonic, functional and institutional feature of capitalism, which was pervasive being

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75 Ibid.; and P. Anderson, 'The Limits and Possibilities of Trade Union Action', in R. Blackburn & A. Cockburn (eds.), The Incompatibles: Trade Union Militancy and the Consensus, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967.

76 A clear exposition of this is P. Anderson, op.cit.. Cf. also: V.L. Allen, The Sociology of Industrial Relations, pp. 46-48; B. Warren, 'Capitalist Planning and the State', New Left Review, No. 72, 1972, pp. 6-8; and E. Mandel, An Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory, Pathfinder, New York, 2nd Edition, 1973, Part 3.

77 V.L. Allen, op.cit.; P.C. Schmitter, 'Modes of Interest Intermediation and Models of Societal Change in Western Europe', Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 10, No. 1, 1977; and C.F. Sabel, 'The Internal Politics of Trade Unions', in S. Berger (ed.), Organizing Interests in Western Europe, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

permanent.[78] Organised labour had become a facilitative structure assisting the continuation and expansion of the dominant production process. Trade union organisation was viewed as commensurate and conducive to capitalist social relations in that unionism served to 'incarnate the difference between Capital and Labour which defines the society'.[79]

Not all recent studies from this perspective have interpreted unionism as incidental to the distribution of income. While much research has oriented toward either Goodrich's 'frontier of control' in workplace politics or following Schmitter and Panitch the political structures of corporatist involvement,[80] the study by Glyn and Sutcliffe put the main reason for the economic crisis in British capitalism on the structural capacity of established organised labour to effectively 'squeeze' profit levels.[81] This theory despite various refutations and later qualifications, calculated union activity in terms of traditional economistic objectives.[82] While other Marxists located

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78 Although, as will be discussed below, V.L. Allen (Militant Trade Unionism, p. 11) has argued that 'where labour is freely bought and sold trade unionism is endemic, universal and permanent', the hegemonic institutional view is typified by: A. Gramsci, Selections from the Prison Notebooks, (Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith eds.), International Publishers, New York, 1971; and A. Gramsci, The Modern Prince and Other Writings, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1957. This is also the view of trade unions within N. Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, New Left Books, London, 1973, Parts 1(2) and 3.

79 P. Anderson, op.cit., p. 264.

80 See, for instance: C.L. Goodrich, The Frontier of Control, Pluto, London, 1975 [1920]; R. Hyman and T. Elger, 'Job Controls, the Employers' Offensive and Alternative Strategies', Capital and Class, No. 15, Autumn 1981; L. Panitch, Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976.

81 A. Glyn and B. Sutcliffe, British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972.

82 Ibid., pp. 189-207, but see their reservations in Chapter 10. Cf. also V.L. Allen, Militant Trade Unionism ... op.cit., pp. 118-135.

problems of redistribution within the role of the capitalist state relegating trade unionism to a relatively minor role in overcoming social inequalities,[83] Glyn and Sutcliffe focussed on the militant determination of organised workers as a major contributing factor in increasing labour's share of the functional distribution of income.[84] Using conventional statistics relating to a particular recessionary economy, the authors hinged their argument on the progressive devolution of national co-ordinated unionism towards more autonomous workplace activism which in turn produced wage pressure from plant level earnings 'drift'.[85] In this sense, the economistic thrust of unionism served in conjunction with other factors to restructure capitalism by placing continual pressure on the distribution of income within capitalist society.

From a non-Marxist perspective the incorporation of trade unionism has been portrayed as the institutionalisation of the class conflict itself.[86] In Dahrendorf's prescription, unions are institutional conflict groups consisting of those occupying similar 'positions of

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83 I. Gough, The Political Economy of the Welfare State, Macmillan, London, 1979, Chapters 2 and 3; D. Strinati, op.cit..

84 A. Glyn and B. Sutcliffe, op.cit., pp. 50-129. See also A. Glyn and J. Harrison, The British Economic Disaster, Pluto Press, London, 1980. The debate over labour and the functional distribution of income has been raised in Australia, see B. Catley, 'Australia and the World Crisis', in G. Duncan (ed.), Critical Essays in Australian Politics, Edward Arnold, Melbourne, 1978; B. McFarlane, 'Equity in Australian Politics', in P.N. Troy (ed.), A Just Society?, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981; and in relation to debate over R.W. Connell and T. Irving's, Class Structure in Australian History, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, see D. Clark's review 'Wages, Profits and Class Analysis', Labour History, No. 42, May 1982.

85 From a non-Marxist perspective this aspect has been examined by W. Brown, Piecework Bargaining, Heinemann, London, 1973.

86 R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1953; D. Lockwood, 'Arbitration and Industrial Conflict', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 6, 1955; R. Dubin, 'Constructive Aspects of Industrial Conflict', in A. Kornhauser, R. Dubin and A.M. Ross (eds.), Industrial Conflict, McGraw-Hill, New York, 1954.

subjection' with respect to authority relations. Such positions are characterised by 'underlying (latent or manifest) interests' extant under the contested terrain of managerial dominance.[87] Thus, as capitalist society emerged toward post-capitalist society, it was argued, it reduced both the centrality of (ownership) property relations and the congruency of 'industrial' and 'political' lines of conflict. Industrial conflict was still endemic and remained effectively regulated. For the industrial system as a whole, this meant that specific authority strata existed in that wage labour as an industrial class was separate from and subordinate to management. The broader question of social inequality rested upon management's greater access to power and resources through the hierarchic form of authority relations. Dahrendorf's main claim on this point was that greater social equality had arisen as a consequence not of acute class struggle but of the permeation of more egalitarian status and 'service' strata as well as through wider access to opportunity.[88] Identifying similar social tendencies as Weber, a conflictual consensus developed in that three factors, namely: social organisation, the increasing routinisation of behaviour and social mobility, increasingly served to temper the causes and patterns of economic conflict. Yet unlike Perlman, Ross and Harman, Kerr and Siegel, Dahrendorf argued that conflict was irrepressible due to its continual regeneration from authority relations.[89] The raison d'etre, then, of unionism, as for

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87 R. Dahrendorf, op.cit., p. 181.

88 R. Dahrendorf, 'Recent Changes in the Class Structure of European Societies', Daedalus, Vol. 93, No. 1, Winter 1964.

89 See R. Dahrendorf, 'Conflict and Contract: Industrial Relations and the Political Community in Times of Crisis', 2nd Leverhulme Memorial Lecture, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool, 1975. For the more integrative approacnes see S. Perlman, op.cit.; A.M. Ross and P.T. Hartman, Changing Patterns of Industrial Conflict, John Wiley, New York, 1960; and C. Kerr and A. Siegel, 'The Interindustry Propensity to Strike - an International Comparison', in A. Kornhauser et al., (eds.), op.cit..

Lockwood, Goldthorpe and Giddens, involved the increasing institutionalisation of the sub-system of industrial conflict, in order that social differences could be levelled and subsequent conflict regulated more consistently.[90]

Essentially, for institutionalists, unionism performs a utility-functional role serving individuals as well as the structure of industrial society. For example, while the union acts as intermediary between management and labour ensuring the continuation of production, it is also in Lockwood's view a 'utilitarian association' for the achievement of pecuniary-oriented private goals and improved living standards.[91] Further extensions of this discussion have involved both Marxist and non-Marxist institutional theorists emphasising pragmatic instrumental criteria within unionism. Trade unions appear as creatures of capitalism, like Allen's 'class of sellers', providing those who offer labour power 'protection in a situation where all the odds are against them'.[92]

As with Lockwood and Goldthorpe's research, the underlying assumption in this pragmatic perspective centres on the latent instrumentalism of individual or 'privatised' workers.[93] Thus, whenever the position of

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90 D. Lockwood, The Blackcoated Worker, Allen & Unwin, London, 1958; J.H. Goldthorpe, 'Attitudes and Behaviour of Car Assembly Workers', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 17, 1966, especially 235-241; A. Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies, Hutchinson, London, 1973. Cf. R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict ... op.cit., p. 63 and 253. See also J.H. Goldthorpe's critique of (minor) reformism from liberal and Tory positions in 'Industrial Relations in Great Britain: a Critique of Reformism', in T. Clarke and L. Clements (eds.), op.cit..

91 D. Lockwood, 'Sources of Variation in Working Class Images of Society', Sociological Review, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1966, p. 258. Cf. also S.M. Lipset, 'The Political Processes in Trade Unions: a Theoretical Statement', in M. Berger, C. Page and T. Abel (eds.), Freedom and Control in Modern Society, Van Nostrand, New York, 1954, pp. 82-124.

92 V.L. Allen, Militant Trade Unionism...op.cit., p. 11.

93 See J.H. Goldthorpe, D. Lockwood, F. Beckhofer and J. Platt, The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour, Cambridge

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such workers is threatened they automatically tend to collectivise around their 'rational' interests becoming 'institutionalised sellers' of the commodity of wage labour.[94] In this vein, Allen identified the inequalities of the market situation as the cause of collectivism by suggesting 'that under conditions where labour is freely bought and sold trade unionism is endemic, universal and permanent'.[95] The assertion made here is that social groups whose labour is 'freely bought and sold' tend to collectivise with the intention of reducing the individual vulnerability experienced in negotiating 'free' one-to-one labour contracts. In other words, for institutional theorists with more aggregative perceptions of society, unionism addresses inequality not simply as a reciprocal force countering the market supremacy of employers, but through an institutional structuring of specific market interests relative to extrinsic criteria such as human capital compensation, comparative labour contracts, relative deprivation, and the maintenance of consumption patterns.[96] Union activity is, therefore, conceived as political responses within the labour market designed to

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University Press, Cambridge, 1968. A sociological critique of this view of worker orientations is M.H. MacKinnon, 'Work Instrumentalism Reconsidered: a Replication of Goldthorpe's Luton Project', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 31, No. 1, March 1980. Allen can also be regarded as sharing similar assumptions with the 'sociological' approach (cf. R. Crompton, op.cit.), in that he defines social class essentially in terms of market relations. Allen's view of labour's 'relationship of inferiority' approximates Dahrendorf's 'relations of subjection'. However, Allen places greater emphasis on the realm of labour market situation and property relations as a cause of class conflict. See V.L. Allen, 'The Differentiation of the Working Class', in A. Hunt (ed.), Class and Class Structure, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1977, pp. 65-68.

94 V.L. Allen, ibid. p. 68. See also pp. 73-9 where Allen defines trade unionism as the 'propensity to take collective action against employers to protect and improve ... living standards', p. 74.

95 V.L. Allen, Militant Trade Unionism ... op.cit., p. 11, (emphasis mine).

96 W.G. Runciman, Relative Deprivation and Social Justice, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1966.

guard or enhance the status of groups throughout the occupational structure. As others have already noted, such assumptions should remain valid when applied to managers, professionals, white-collar and service workers as well as skilled, less skilled and casual workers.[97]

Accordingly, Bain, Coates and Ellis have argued that methods employed by union organisations appear relatively universal throughout employment groups including professional bodies.[98] In their view, unionism displays techniques which are functional and non-class specific. The essence of union organisation then emerges as a social process of stratificational job regulation. To this effect, collective bargaining over access to job regulation represents beneficial and stabilising qualities within industrial relations where the parameters of the relationship between employers and employee groups are viewed, in the words of Bain and colleagues, as involving conflict, separateness of identity as well as 'benevolent dependence or functional interdependence'.[99] In relation to social stratification, the political processes of job regulation, therefore, establish some balance between harmony and conflict where unionisation is causally linked with notions of socio-economic expectations. This argument views unionism as a feature of cultural and institutional power where social stratification is mediated through the market and workplace situation.[100]

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97 K. Prandy, A. Stewart and R.M. Blackburn, White-Collar Unionism, Macmillan, London, 1983, pp. 1-10. Some evidence for this proposition (although he did not stress such implications himself) can be found in A. Flanders' neutralist conception of collective bargaining 'as an institution freeing labour from being too much at the mercy of the market', A. Flanders, 'The Nature of Collective Bargaining' in A. Flanders, op.cit., p. 24; and more generally A. Flanders, Management and Unions, Faber, London, 1975.

98 G.S. Bain, D. Coates and V. Ellis, Social Stratification and Trade Unionism, Heinemann, London, 1973.

99 Ibid., p. 150.

100 Ibid., Chapters 4 and 5. For an account which traces the growth of (militant) unionism to a decline in the status and control of white

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In direct contrast to these 'rational institutional' arguments, controversy has arisen over the rationality of individual behaviour within a logic of social organisation initiated to influence the allocation of scarce resources in the marketplace. For instance, in relation to union organisation, Olsen argued that under given circumstances individual workers could avoid the associated costs of membership yet enjoy the full benefits of union provisions.[101] To the extent that organisations provide indiscriminate 'goods' to the workforce, then from the individual point of view (assuming few others did likewise) the maximisation of immediate self-interest would be achieved by neither participating in nor contributing towards the provision of the 'good' organisation (the union). This view may explain why workers particularly in the U.S. either do not join unions or withdraw membership following the outcome of claim campaigns, and secondly why unionists may appear to act with economic 'rationality' in allowing other unionists to win concessions without themselves actually striking. For the calculative individual, retaining membership in a labour organisation would involve some noticeable contribution (in time or money), while in return the person may receive no apparent benefit. Such assumptions are based on the continuing functioning of a mass organisation irrespective of the individual role of the non-contributing 'free-rider'. 'Rational' action for this methodological individualist view involves discrete motivations rather than consideration of structural

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collar/technical workers see B.C. Roberts, R. Loveridge, and J. Gennard, Reluctant Militants: a Study of Industrial Technicians, Heinemann, London, 1972.

101 M. Olsen, The Logic of Collective Action, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1965, pp. 38-9, 48-9, 66-97. Union organisations therefore are voluntary associations of rational individuals which offer the membership certain benefits and services for a stipulated price. Each employee, it is assumed, with some degree of rationality in terms of that person's pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests, weighs up the advantages gained against the losses incurred in joining a union.

relationships.[102] Indeed, as Offe and Wiesenthal have argued, there exists not one but at least two logics of collective action.[103] In addition to the atomic liberal view, the second logic acknowledges the class specific nature of collective action where the different location of collectivities in the class structure produces different logics of action in terms of associational practices and organisational power.

Neo-Weberian studies, while conscious of individual motivation have instead tended toward this second logic of collective action, emphasising the increased institutionalisation and integration into managerial decision-making procedures promoted by union organisation.[104] Such studies consider that unionism expresses a structural utility in performing valuable functions for the prevailing system of social organisation including: nurturing industrial stability, defining the limits of confrontation, recruiting 'responsible' leaderships and providing regulatory institutions suitable for strategies of industrial democracy, consultation, co-determination or the wider schemes of

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102 It is further necessary to adopt *a priori* the validity of the unremitting self-interest of human nature, its immediate and instrumental appeal and indeed the insular or non-social definition of its character. Cf. the criticisms made of Olsen's schema by C. Crouch, *Trade Unions: the Logic of Collective Action*, Fontana, Glasgow, 1982.

103 C. Offe and H. Wiesenthal, 'Two Logics of Collective Action: Theoretical Notes on Social Class and Organizational Form', (mimeo), Dept. of Sociology, University of Bielefeld, West Germany, Dec. 1978. Offe and Wiesenthal propose a 'class-specific' conceptualisation of organisational action in which the

> differences in the position of a group in the class structure ... do not only lead to differences in power that the organizations can acquire, but also lead to differences in the *associational practices*, or logics of collective action, by which organizations of capital and labour try to improve their respective position vis-a-vis each other; these differences tend to be obscured by the 'interest group' paradigm and the underlying notion of a unitary and utilitarian logic of collective action that covers all associations. (pp. 17-18).

104 Cf. A. Fox, *A Sociology of Work in Industry*, Macmillan, London, 1971, pp. 92-134.

corporatism.[105] However, while certain processes of conflict institutionalisation can be established empirically, an underlying tension within these studies emerges.

This tension is clearly expressed in attempts to amalgamate trends toward the political structuring of interests within the overt emphasis on the market allocation of resources. For some this tension is reduced to the proposition that the capitalist system is socially remunerative and generally efficient.[106] Others, most notably institutional pluralists, subscribe to the view that the market diffusion of power predetermines the particular distribution of resources.[107] Hence, where power shared throughout society becomes the key to social equality, unionism is seen as an institutional mechanism designed to exercise market or political power. Both the organisational form and substantive action of unions become intrinsic to interest negotiation.[108] This is not an expression of a pervasive bureaucratic ethos but remains sensitive to underlying and changing market relations.[109] Finally, in some

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105 Ibid.; as well as A. Flanders, Management and Unions, Faber, London, 1970; H.A. Clegg, Industrial Democracy and Nationalization, Blackwell, Oxford, 1951. M. Poole, Theories of Trade Unionism, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981, pp. 47-71. C. Crouch's, Class Conflict and the Industrial Relations Crisis ... op.cit., may be regarded as a more radical study from this perspective.

106 While this was advocated by early neo-classical economists (e.g. A. Marshall, op.cit.) it has also been advocated particularly by social democratic theorists, see A. Crosland, The Future of Socialism, Macmillan, New York, 1957; and for a recent example of this argument applied to Australia; F. Castles, 'The Working Class and Welfare: Speculations on the Nature and Causes of Australasian Exceptionalism', (mimeo) Politics Department, University of Adelaide, May 1984.

107 F. Parkin, Class, Inequality and the Political Order, Paladin, London, 1971. A. Fox, 'The Myths of Pluralism and a Radical Alternative', in T. Clarke and L. Clements (eds.), op.cit., provides a critical overview of this perspective.

108 A critique of this view based on the relationship between norms, values and structure is S. Hill, 'Norms, Groups and Power: the Sociology of Workplace Industrial Relations', British Journal of Industrial Relations', Vol. 12, No. 2, 1974.

109 J.E.T. Eldridge, Sociology of Industrial Life, Nelson, London, 1971.

recent accounts of political structuration through corporatist developments, the tension has been subsumed within a paradigm of organisational-oriented 'rational-choice' strategies of the participant actors given recognisable political and economic constraints.[110] Trade unions, thus, emerge as 'rationality-choice' maximisers premised upon an array of complex social values rather than mere homo economicus motivations within the apparent determinations of social action. This emphasises the political maximisation of collective labour in addition to classical economic 'rationality'. In essence, this latter view approximates something of a radical Weberian restatement of the 'conditions of existence' position articulated by some recent Marxian writers, which adopts a virtual phenomenological approach to social 'reality' in place of more orthodox Marxist theoretical explanations.[111]

Much recent research on trade unionism from both Marxist and non-Marxist sources has focussed on the relationship between sectional interest pursued through union activity and the broader question of the social division of labour in capitalist society.[112] Here debate concerns the class speciticity of trade union organisation: over the extent to which unionism constitutes an inherent class-oriented collectivism under capitalist social relations. In general, unionism is considered as particular expressions of social class organisation, in which mobilisation is mediated through specific experiences and involves both the immediate and instrumental interests associated with trade union

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110 C. Crouch, Trade Unions ... op.cit., Chapters 2 and 4.

111 A. Cutler, B. Hindess, P. Hirst and A. Hussain, Marx's 'Capital' and Capitalism Today, 2 Vols., Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1978.

112 For a recent selection see: R. Hyman and R. Price (eds.) The New Working Class? White-Collar Workers and their Organizations, Macmillan, London, 1983; S. Hill, Competition and Control at Work, Heinemann, London, 1981; D. Lockwood, The Black-Coated Worker, Allen & Unwin, London, 1958; R.M. Blackburn, Union Character and Social Class, Batsfield, London, 1967.

consciousness.[113] Such arguments challenge the view that the activities of labour organisation are simply those of universal pressure group behaviour inspired by market forces and the composition of power. Thus, from non-Marxist perspectives, while Lockwood had earlier concentrated on the sectional nature of 'class' consciousness,[114] Blackburn attempted to combine the complex concept of 'class consciousness' within his own empirically measurable scale of 'unionateness'.[115] Based on a seven-point list of definitive principles, Blackburn's term 'unionateness' referred to the 'whole-heartedness' of a trade union's behaviour. In effect, however, Blackburn's earlier work provided an arbitrary index of trade union consciousness rather than class consciousness.[116]

In later work Blackburn and colleagues have refined their concept of 'class' in a more sophisticated manner to one 'organised around' market relations but based essentially on structured inequality.[117] While

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113 For Marxists and many non-Marxists the concept of class is used both as a method of analysis and categories of empirical application with respect to union composition and policies. Sociologically, many recent studies have indicated the partial and fragmented nature of worker consciousness. For example: T. Nichols and P. Armstrong, op.cit.; H. Beynon, Working for Ford, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973; and M. Mann, Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class, Macmillan, London, 1973.

114 D. Lockwood, Black-Coated worker ... op.cit.; and D. Lockwood, 'Sources of Variation ...' op.cit.. For an Australian application of Lockwood's model see R.J. Kriegler, Working For the Company, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980, Chapter 9.

115 R.M. Blackburn, op.cit. especially pp. 18-19. See also the criticisms of G.S. Bain et al., op.cit., Chapter 3.

116 Moreover, Blackburn's criteria is contradictory. To illustrate the point; using Blackburn's seven criteria a revolutionary or syndicalist union would apparently display less 'unionateness' than a 'rule-book' business union. To draw the conclusion that the latter organisation demonstrated greater potential for class action is a weakness of the specific criteria. Blackburn's 'unionateness' is essentially an attempt to categorise the white-collar/blue-collar union distinction within a reformist appreciation of British unionism.

117 See their series of research reports: K. Prandy, A. Stewart and R.M. Blackburn, White-Collar Work, Macmillan, London, 1982; K. Prandy, A. Stewart and R.M. Blackburn, White-Collar Unionism, Macmillan, London, 1983.

rejecting the Marxist view that class rests on the relationship to the means of production, they claim that their distributionist 'sociological' approach applies to both manual and non-manual worker organisations, to private and public sector employees. In this interpretation, 'class' as a tool of analysis becomes the

> processes of socially structured advantage and disadvantage, the ways in which these are reproduced and changed, and the consequences in terms of experience for groups differently located within the processes.[118]

Unionism in its many forms of 'collective representation' promotes a basic 'challenge' to 'market criteria of distribution by its emphasis on more universal, egalitarian criteria'.[119] Yet, while the approach of Blackburn and colleagues is central to the problematic of socio-economic inequality, their analysis concerns the generation of commitment to 'class' organisations largely within a framework of social democracy.[120] Following a well established British tradition, the concerns of class develop into an analytical preoccupation with the dimensions of class consciousness.[121] Nevertheless, such studies have continued to refuel controversies over class theory which underlie recent debates on the nature of white collar, technical and public sector unionism. However, the directions pursued within this debate have principally involved the political and ideological character of unionism,

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118 K. Prandy, A. Stewart and R.M. Blackburn, White-Collar Unionism, p. 145.

119 Ibid., p. 9.

120 A point made by G.S. Bain, et al., op.cit., pp. 100-108; and which K. Prandy, et al. have defended in arguing that the parameters of social democratic practice provides 'the frame of reference in which the British labour movement has, in any significant way, acted', (p. 12).

121 Cf. E.P. Thompson, The Making of the English Working Class, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1968; J. Foster, Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, Methuen, London, 1977 [1974]. (See also the arguments by J. Saville, 'Class Struggle and Industrial Revolution', in R. Miliband and J. Saville (eds.), Socialist Register 1974, Merlin, London, 1974).

such as: 'class' or 'status' consciousness, social imagery, union character, attitudes toward collectivism and militancy.

Social inequality under advanced capitalism has been interpreted from many perspectives of class theory as a consequence of antagonistic economic class relations. In Marxist theory class is not a reflection of inequality, nor is inequality a direct result of specific class positions. Rather, at a general level inequality is a consequence of the social class structure and is conditioned through the hegemony of bourgeois values involving ideologies of 'fairness' and subjective comparability.[122] Modern theoretical attempts in the identification of social class have raised important considerations for the study of trade unionism. Recent Marxist debates have tended to identify structural criteria as generic either from capital-specific or class-specific perspectives.[123] For contemporary Marxists such as Poulantzas, Carchedi, Wright, Hall, and Hindess, the issue at stake here has involved the extent to which the spheres of economic, political and ideological criteria have modified the composition of both class places and consciousness given an increasing disaggregation of the technical division of labour.[124]

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122 R. Hyman and I. Brough, Social Values and Industrial Relations, Blackwell, Oxford, 1975.

123 These debates in relation to Australia have been discussed in J. Wanna and S. Reglar, 'Working Towards a Marxist Class Analysis for Australia', Australasian Political Science Association, Conference Paper, Hobart 1979; while R.W. Connell and T. Irving, op.cit. have relied on power, property and production (using such theorists as Marx, Gramsci and Weber) in elaborating their class-specific perspective on Australian history. See also S. Macintyre, 'The Making of the Australian Working Class: an Historiographical Survey', Historical Studies, Vol. 18, No. 71, Oct. 1978.

124 See: N. Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975; G. Carchedi, On the Economic Identification of Social Classes, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1977; E.O. Wright, Class, Crisis and the State, New Left Books, London, 1978; A. Hunt (ed.), Class and Class Structure, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1977; B. Hindess, 'The Concept of Class in Marxist Theory and Marxist Politics', in J. Bloomfield (ed.), Class, Hegemony and Party, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1977.

Of significance to organised labour's relationship to class is the secular trend within advanced capitalism towards the deflation of the 'productive' manual working class and the augmentation of the contentiously defined 'middle class' or 'new working class' positions.[125] Such social transformations have taken place in the context of the dissipation of skill in the traditional manual occupations and the resurgence of new and often routine techniques in non-manual sectors. This trend is significant, according to some, because of the structural obfuscation of the dimensions of control following the separation of legal from real ownership. Yet, contrary to some suggestions, this does not imply that as real control assumes predominance in class determination, the composition of social classes predominantly adopts political and ideological expressions distinct from economic factors.[126] Recent debate, however, centres on the appreciation of power within class relations: on whether either the limited exercise of power in private or state enterprises influences class location and class interests, or, the process of proletarianisation effectively displaces apparent control. With regard to union activity this raises the question of whether unionism encompasses not only sectional interests within a class but also distinct class interests. As such, the particular theory of class adopted relates directly to both the conceptualisation of the rationale behind unionism, and whether unionism functions simply according to economic (relative) deprivation or maintains

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125 J. O'Connor, 'Productive and Unproductive Labor', Politics and Society, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1975; K. Prandy, A. Stewart and R.M. Blackburn, 'Concepts and Measures: the Example of Unionateness', Sociology, Vol. 8, No. 3, September 1974. A useful recent survey of the debate appears in R. Hyman, 'White-Collar Workers and Theories of Class' in R. Hyman and R. Price, op.cit., pp. 3-45. While a survey of the 'class' debates is found in the collection P. Walker (ed.), Between Labor and Capital, South End Press, Boston, 1979.

126 Criticism has been levelled against a number of such control-oriented studies for their artifical separation of such criteria leading to in many cases arbitrary or eclectic determinations of classes which often closely resemble non-Marxist accounts.

wider (and class specific) organisational and political purposes.[127]

For instance, some recent studies, most notably those by Mallet, Gorz, Herding, Mann, and Crompton, have explicitly regarded unionism as an outgrowth of particular processes of production related to the functions performed by labour for the system of capital accumulation.[128] Crompton, for example, has argued that white collar and technical workers are 'agents of the capitalist function' technically necessary within the modern rationalised processes of production.[129] Her case that 'middle class' workers were characterised by a 'structural ambiguity' rests on three points:

> (i) .... the capitalist function is increasingly performed by agents who do not own or control the means of production,
>
> (ii) .... 'white collar' labour is predominantly employed in sectors of the economy which are peculiar to the capitalist mode of production, and
>
> (iii) .... some white collar workers perform <u>both</u> capital <u>and</u> labour functions.[130]

This resulted in a process of 'proletarianization' as

> the <u>class</u> situation of technicians has become less ambiguous. .... It is not surprising, therefore, that technicians have shown ambivalence or outright antipathy towards company-oriented schemes of consultation and company-encouraged staff associations and have chosen instead to join trade unions.[131]

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127 For an attempt to critically evaluate the theory of proletarianisation to white collar unionism, for example, see M.P. Kelly, <u>White-Collar Proletariat: the Industrial Behaviour of British Civil Servants</u>, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980, especially Chapter 7.

128 For instance see R. Herding, <u>Job Control and Union Structure</u>, Rotterdam University Press, Rotterdam, 1972; and M. Mann, <u>Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class</u>, Macmillan, London, 1973.

129 R. Crompton, <u>op.cit.</u>, p. 417.

130 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 416.

131 <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 421.

Other 'new working class' theories based less on the degradation of non-manual work, have attributed the increase in non-manual unionism to the rising technical composition of the modern workforce.[132] Thus, in Mallet's view, technicians, engineers, scientific and research workers have adopted unionism because of their relationship to the technical situation in the production process. This situation as distinct from that of the more traditional manual working class, provides these technical employees with some discretionary power in corporate organisations, but more importantly with a significant degree of collective control over the labour process.[133] Over and above the traditional wage concerns of manual unions, Mallet argued, a new workers movement was emerging which was both organically integrated into the economic system of automated corporate capitalism, and was simultaneously formulating 'possibilities for a human liberation which does not reject technological progress and which rises against its distortion'.[134] Social inequality, as addressed by the new divisions of organised labour, was essentially a question of the technicians levering control over technology in order to achieve social remuneration and promote socially useful directions in technological development.

The particular relationship between the social and technical division of labour, class interests and union organisation, for the present study,

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132 Cf. the critique of such theories in D. Gallie, In Search of the New Working Class, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978. Gallie in contrast stressed managerial styles, worker expectations, the social integration of the workforce and institutions of decision-making. He concluded that the determination of worker consciousness in the labour process depended rather than on technological imperatives, 'on changing cultural expectations within the wider working class, on changes in management attitudes, and on changes in trade union objectives', p. 317.

133 S. Mallet, The New Working Class, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1975.

134 Ibid., p. 12. In this sense new working class organisation is 'revolutionary' in the sense of wishing 'to modify the existing social relations fundamentally', p. 28.

shaped the choice of unions adopted for research.[135] Indeed, the class nature of unionism provides an underlying theme throughout the work. In the context of socio-economic inequality, unionism mediates class interests along the lines of organisational dimensions and within institutional frameworks that both reflect the latitude accorded by the dominant class interests and the regulation by the state apparatus. This establishes organisational forms of collective action that represent class interests both within the structural limiting conditions and to some extent against them. The internalisation of class interests based on unequal access to material resources by different forms and compositions of labour organisations, while it provides some coherency to union structure, considers only one side of the collective labour resistance to capital. The other side, to which the discussion now turns, considers the political responses of unionism.

Industrial Conflict and the Political Character of Trade Unionism

Debate surrounding the political character of unionism is both immense and in many cases explicitly ideological. The debate ranges from the narrow political processes of specific unions to the location of unionism as a social force in the context of the broader social relations of power. There is little agreement over the actual and potential contribution made by trade union organisation toward the historical process of political change. Many of the differences and interpretations of basic issues separating protagonists in these debates are unresolvable

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135 For instance, the analysis of the technicians' union (ADSTE) in this study considered whether the 'new working class' theories were convincing in their ascription of new dimensions of (radical) consciousness to such workers' organisations. Moreover, the degree of awareness among technicians toward the proletarianisation of their position in production was also of concern.

for two reasons: first, most disputes concern contending theoretical frameworks and involve underlying assumptions and methodological approaches; and second, the integration of unionism within advanced capitalism essentially constrains the political character of unionism to the wider problematic of modern capitalism. For the purposes of the present study, nevertheless, it is important to distinguish the more significant boundaries of the debate.

A major theme in the analysis of the historical emergence of unionism, and one which has attracted a certain following in Australian studies, has been the emphasis on the civilising mission performed by the labour movement within the constraints of capitalism.[136] In a political sense, the objective of wage labour was to establish and maintain collective entities which initially shaped the political relations between employers and workers, and extended labour's influence through informal and formal political avenues. The political character of trade unionism, therefore, was interpreted in terms of the institutional development of particular unions qua continuous organisations.[137] Thus, for example, Turner presents unionism as a process of crystalisation relative to either the degree of union control over the labour supply or the 'institutional stability' achieved both through the entrenchment of the officialdom and extra political activity.[138] In other words, such interpretations focussed essentially

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136 For example: F. Williams, Magnificent Journey: the Rise of the Trade Unions, Odhams Press, London, 1954; H. Pelling, A History of British Trade Unionism, (3rd Edition), Penguin, Harmondsworth. An Australian study of this type is B. Nairn, Civilising Capitalism, ANU Press, Canberra, 1973. For critiques of the 'civilising' interpretation see T. Nairn, op.cit., passim; and the alternative account provided by J. Hinton, Labour and Socialism, Wheatsheaf, Brighton, 1983.

137 S. and B. Webb, The History of Trade Unionism, Longmans, London, 1920 [1894].

138 H.A. Turner, Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962, p. 242 ff. and more generally Part 5.

on the political character of unionism relating to the struggle over the right to organise, to establish and maintain political collectivities.

Other interpretations of labour organisational development have emphasised unionism's gravitation toward political protection as a means of securing organisational continuity. As already mentioned, the Webbs and to some extent Michels considered efforts to secure reformist legal enactment with respect to the conditions of employment by indirect and subsequently direct (political party) means as a natural supplement to union industrial activity.[139] Extending the Webbs' argument, Cole, for example, argued that 'class solidarity' was an essential element in the rise of trade unionism.[140] In similar vein to Marx, the political importance of unions was as organisations which mobilised the working class in the class struggle through cooperative interaction and the inculcation of common values.[141] Unionism according to Cole could surpass the embryonic sectional boundaries of occupation and pass beyond the limits of a single trade to embrace many different types of workers in a class solidarity 'animated by a common idea'.[142] Yet unlike Marx, Cole dismissed revolution as a major element of social change, and instead maintained that the political directions of unionism would promote a system of Fabian industrialism. The political character of continuous labour organisation would establish preconditions necessary either for the collective ownership or co-management of the economy where the social control of industry was shared with a democratic socialist state.[143]

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139 S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy ... op.cit., Part 2, Chapter 4.

140 G.D.H. Cole, Organised Labour, Allen & Unwin, London, 1924.

141 G.D.H. Cole, The World of Labour, G. Bell & Sons, London, 1913, p. 370.

142 G.D.H. Cole, Organised Labour ... op.cit., p. 2.

143 G.D.H. Cole, The World of Labour ... op.cit., pp. 352-69. Although Cole had a more class-based understanding of trade unionism than the Webbs his conclusions suffer from a similarly restricted theoretical

(continued over page)

Despite the rejection of both revolutionary Marxism and other forms of intellectual ideology that confronted worker collectivism, Perlman, Hoxie and Tannenbaum in their theories of American unionism regarded the quest for wider political protection as a consequence of the internal political character of unionism.[144] This political character, rather than assume an inevitable social democratic nature, could sustain the 'non-partisan' sponsorship of professional political parties.[145] Such activity stemmed from the fundamental role of unionism to provide political mediation between the worker and the job. Thus, Perlman's main point with regard the emerging political nature of unionism concerned the insistence on and maintenance of rules, shop rights, job territory or specifications, and the practical administration of job opportunities.[146] From a more normative position Flanders similarly identified the modification of market relations through the political process of rule-making as the essential ingredient of unionism. As has been pointed out, this view represented a critique of the more orthodox economic conceptualisation of unionism which was premised on collective labour protection through the cartelisation of labour.[147]

In contrast to Hoxie, Tannenbaum and Perlman's emphasis on the internal factors shaping unionism, much more common in theories of trade

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framework. Both the Webbs and Cole tended to overlook the 'labourist' corporation of both the union organisations and the Labor Party into the capitalist state. Indeed, based on unionism, parliamentarism and an acceptance of the political order, as Nairn has argued, 'labourism was the product, the incarnation of class stasis and intellectual statis; it was the negotiation of any moving dynamic between theory and practice', T. Nairn, 'Anatomy of the Labour Party' ... op.cit., p. 371.

144 S. Perlman, A Theory of the Labour Movement, Kelley, New York, 1949; R. Hoxie, Trade Unionism in the United States, Appleton, New York, 1917; F. Tannenbaum, A Philosophy of Labor, Knopf, New York, 1952.

145 S. Perlman, op.cit., pp. 169-176.

146 Ibid., pp. 272-279. Tannenbaum emphasised the psychological unity of unionism which countered anomic displacement.

147 A. Flanders, Management and Unions ... op.cit., pp. 213-220.

unionism is the view that the political character of unionism is dependent on external factors. The various types of both pluralism and functionalism as theoretical models applied to industrial relations provide cases in point here. It is significant in the context of industrial relations, as Hyman has recently argued, to distinguish between (British) institutionalist interpretations of pluralism based on the consociational assumptions underlying classical and radical sociology, from the dominant American conceptions of liberal-conservative pluralism and elite pluralism.[148] With the latter, pluralism of the conservative genre is defined in terms of competitive consensual politics within an activist society based on non-antagonistic interests. While the former interpretation is concerned with the political processes of the regulation of manifest conflict, American studies have concerned themselves more with the establishment of predictable patterns of integration under which the political form of control is pronounced. Here group rivalry rather than normative strain is inevitable through the existence of legitimate interest groups and patterns of decision-making.[149] Management-worker rivalry is subsumed within reconcilable and mutually advantageous norms of behaviour. In this conceptual framework, union activity and even rank-and-file militancy at times posed problems to the maintenance of industrial relations, but was entirely consistent with the emergence and integration of diverse pressure groups constituting society.

In this theoretical perspective, unionism contributed to the dynamism and democratic fabric of modern industrial pluralist societies, provided

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148 R. Hyman, 'Pluralism, Procedural Consensus and Collective Bargaining', op.cit., pp. 17-27. On the consociational assumptions of British pluralists, for example, see A. Fox and A. Flanders, 'The Reform of Collective Bargaining: from Donovan to Durkheim', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 7, No. 2, July 1969.

149 R. Hyman, op.cit., p. 19. Cf. also for a discussion and critique of liberal pluralism relating to the rise of rival interest groups, A. Cawson, Corporatism and Welfare, Heinemann, London, 1982.

that union action conformed to the prevailing social values. Thus, societal pluralists of the Dahlian perspective argue that the growth and character of unionism is a function of the constitutional relationship between business interests and labour interests.[150] Unions, therefore, facilitate the participation of desiring individuals in pluralist groups which contend for influence within society's polyarchic elite. The coalescence of like interests from the individual to the group and toward the polyarchy serves to reinforce the perceived 'democratic ethos' of society.[151]

The American pluralist models in general assume that the political character of unionism assists the establishment of societal participatory democracy, in which the progressive redefinition of an ambiguous 'common interest' is paramount. Collective bargaining is often presented as providing the mechanisms necessary for such 'democratic' mediation. As Dubin asserts,

> collective bargaining is the social process that provides a common framework within which management and worker views of the disputed matters that lead to industrial disorder can be considered, with the aim of eliminating the causes of the disorder ..... collective agreement represents a compromise between what management wants and what the union wants. It is the fact of both the expectation of compromise and its actual achievement that is most relevant in delineating collective bargaining as a mode of institutionalizing industrial conflict .....[152]

This interpretation of the constructive and pervasive role of industrial conflict is premised on the theory of competitive pluralism, where the existence of structural conflict is more pronounced than earlier consensus models of pluralism. Indeed, Dahl subsequently distinguished this conceptual approach as 'conflictive pluralism' and found it

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150 Cf. H. Blumer, 'Social Structure and Power Conflict', in A. Kornhauser et al. (eds.), op.cit., pp. 232-239.

151 R. Dubin, 'Constructive Aspects of Industrial Conflict', in ibid., p. 47.

152 R. Dubin, ibid., p. 44.

necessary to incorporate the notion of 'relatively enduring cleavages' within his own reappraisal of pluralism.[153]

More elite models of pluralism are located within the sociological tradition arising from interpretations of Weber, Michels and Pareto.[154] In relation to the general nature of trade union politics, much interest has centred on the telos of organisation to the extent that the character of bureaucracy is regarded as autonomous and socially determining. Concern over this question has been preoccupied with the contradiction between 'rational' or inevitable efficiency of organisation and the socialised values of democratic citizen participation. Thus, for C. Wright Mills labour unions became 'mass organisation pressure group[s]' led by 'procapitalist, hardheaded pressure group captains' that used unions less as 'levers for change' rather than as 'instruments for more advantageous integration' with the corporate power elite.[155] The political character of unionism, therefore, is subordinate to the sociological determinism of organisation. From this, the political oligarchic structure of unions forms an inherent feature of social interaction. As such, bureaucracy within unionism integrates workers demands into the prevailing social order by ensuring that the organisational means serve the dominant interests of the corporate hierarchy.

Thus, the organisational form of unionism, based on Weber's criteria,

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153 R. Dahl, 'Pluralism Revisited', Comparative Politics, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1978, p. 191-2.

154 Often this has taken the form of the managerial 'logic of industrialism', see C. Kerr, J.T. Dunlop, F.H. Harbison and C.A. Myers, Industrialism and Industrial Man, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973 [1960].

155 C.W. Mills, 'The Labor Leaders and the Power Elite', in C.W. Mills, Power, Politics and People, (ed. I. Horowitz), Oxford University Press, London, 1963, p. 108 (Cf. also Mills' discussion in The Power Elite, Oxford University Press, New York, 1956, pp. 262-4). Thus, for Mills, union leaders 'seek, in the first instance, greater integration at the upper levels of the corporate economy rather than greater power at the lower levels of the work hierarchy', pp. 108-9.

principally

> fulfils organizational imperatives for efficiency, predictability, and 'responsibility', and the leadership's needs for stability and control.[156]

Despite the elite plurality found in his study of union government,[157] Lipset argued that

> trade unions, and all other large organizations tend to develop a bureaucratic structure, that is, a system of rational - predictable - organization hierarchically organized. The sheer problem of administration necessitates bureaucracy.[158]

But the political character of bureaucracy was not simply neutral; it served to stabilise the pursuit of group interests within legitimate bounds, such that

> trade unions, like many other internally oligarchic organizations, serve to sustain political democracy in the larger body politic.[159]

As Lipset concluded in a later discussion of political sociology's 'preoccupation with social disintegration',

> when the conflict of interest groups is legitimate, these 'conflict' organizations contribute to the integration and stability of the society. Trade unions should not be viewed primarily in their economic-cleavage function. They also serve to integrate their members in the larger body politic and give

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156 S.M. Lipset, 'The Political Process in Trade Unions: a Theoretical Statement', op.cit., p. 87.

157 S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, Union Democracy: the Internal Politics of the International Typographical Union, Free Press, Glencoe, 1956.

158 S.M. Lipset, 'Introduction', to R. Michels, Political Parties, Collier Books, New York, 1962, p. 16.

159 S.M. Lipset, 'The Political Process ... op.cit., p. 121. In the first version of this paper Lipset argued that this viewpoint represented the 'political pluralists' position, whereas in a subsequent version the notion that trade unions 'help sustain political democracy in the larger body politic' had emerged as a 'general proposition'. Cf. S.M. Lipset, 'The Political Process in Trade Unions: a Theoretical Statement', in W. Galenson and S.M. Lipset (eds.), Labor and Trade Unionism, John Wiley, New York, 1960, p. 238.

> them a basis for loyalty to the system. Marx's focus on unions and workers' parties as sources of revolutionary tension was incorrect. It is precisely in those countries where workers have been able to form strong unions and obtain representation in politics that disintegrative forms of political cleavage are least likely to be found.[160]

Such emphasis on social integration presents the character of unionism in a socially positive light where the role unions fulfil contributes toward 'compromise and understanding among conflicting groups'.[161] In many respects these assumptions of organisational integration are remarkably similar to the more system-oriented approach of the structural functionalist school. Within the systemic functionalism of Parsons and Dunlop, the political character of unionism lies in its normative rule preoccupation and organisation form.[162] This political nature is effectively constrained within the inter-related functions of the system, in such a way as to assist the permeation of a normative consensus. At this level of abstraction, union activity represents an institutionalisation of norms approaching value consensus and systems equilibrium. Such theories became particularly pervasive in industrial relations after the 1950's. This was partly because the approach aimed to provide explanatory models based on predictable patterns of behaviour within an integrated theory applicable to post-war corporate capitalism.[163] The prime concern of this methodology was with the interconnection between agents or institutions within the system

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160 S.M. Lipset, 'Political Sociology', in R.K. Merton, L. Broom and L.S. Cottrell (eds.), Sociology Today, Basic Books, New York, 1959, p. 113.

161 S.M. Lipset, 'The Political Process in Trade Unions' in W. Galenson and S.M. Lipset (eds.), op.cit., p. 239.

162 T. Parsons, The Structure of Social Action, Free Press, New York 1968, [1937]; J.T. Dunlop, Industrial Relations Systems, Holt, New York, 1958. For an attempt to apply this methodology to Australia see K.F. Walker, Australian Industrial Relations Systems, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1970.

163 For example see the collection by A.M. Ross (ed.), Industrial Relations and Economic Development, Macmillan, London, 1966.

as a whole, rather than on detailed analysis of the constitutive parts. In other words, employee organisations were analysed within the broader context of enduring processes of industrial relations. Unions participated in rule-formation and rule-implementation. They contributed both to the cohesion of the system and to the accommodation of internal friction.[164]

Subsequent behaviouralist interpretations of functionalism have located levels of non-antagonistic conflict which are deemed internally functional.[165] Indeed, the existence of strain between the principal agents, as Coser has maintained, facilitates the emergence of institutionalised mechanisms of conflict resolution.[166] System

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164 Subsequent critiques have eroded the explanatory power of systems models. (M. Poole, op.cit., Chapter 2). Indeed, much of the recent industrial relations theory has emerged using critical evaluations of systems theory as a catalyst toward alternative conceptualisations. Generally emanating from more substantial appraisals of social relations and organisation theory, such critiques have directed criticisms toward four main areas:

(i) the conservative bias of functionalist assumptions and the failure to consider prevailing structural relationships;
(ii) the limitations of the systems model as a whole and the circularity of explanation;
(iii) the unsatisfactory presentation of formative elements subsumed in the model, for example, power interests, objectives, ideology;
(iv) the managerial frame of reference toward the labour contract resulting in a confined and formal interpretation of rule content.

165 In particular, R. Dubin, op.cit., pp. 37-47; C.J. Margerison, 'What do We Mean by Industrial Relations? - a Behavioural Science Approach', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 7, No. 2, July 1969.

166 L. Coser, The Functions of Social Conflict, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1956, Chapters 2 and 3 and pp. 130-137. Coser discusses conflict in terms of 'realistic' and 'nonrealistic' categories but argues that

> social systems provide for specific institutions which serve to drain off hostile and aggressive sentiments. These safety-valve institutions help to maintain the system by preventing otherwise probable conflict or by reducing its disruptive effects .... Through these safety valves, hostility is prevented from turning against its original object. (p. 48).

maintenance is reinforced rather than detracted by the existence of manageable conflict. These views are distinguished from previous cohesive functionalism by their presentation of conflict as a socially constructive phenomena inherent within modern complex societies. As Margerison has argued

> industrial relations as it has been concerned so far has been a study of specific industrial institutions and not a study of behavioural relationships in industry .... It has occupied itself with the problem of conflict resolution at the expense of the problem of conflict generation.[167]

Therefore, it is suggested, theories that view strain in industrial relation as a negative element requiring exclusion are premised on a basic misunderstanding of the nature of social conflict. Rather than a nuisance value in need of curtailment, legitimate expressions of conflict,[168] as in conflictive pluralist models, should be stimulated across the democratic constitution of society to extend the areas of compromise between management and labour.

Within institutional pluralist interpretations the political character of unionism as a component institution has attracted attention. Predominantly the political character of unionism is seen to

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167 C.J. Margerison, op.cit., p. 275. Margerison outlined three behavioural dimensions of conflict generation (distributive, structural and human relations) which as 'deeper causes must be understood if any long-lasting resolution of conflict is to be gained through the institutional mechanism', p. 275.

168 Cf. S.M. Lipset, 'Political Sociology', op.cit., passim. Flanders acknowledged similar assumptions regarding industrial conflict, in arguing that unions

> have a legitimate function to fulfil in protecting the interests and values of the workers in industry, and that, for this reason, they can never be eliminated in a free society, is axiomatic. Moreover management may even welcome them, because, it knows that workers (and unions) who feel secure are more likely to be co-operative than those whose insecurity drives them to be aggressive.

A. Flanders, 'Restrictive Practices and Productivity Bargaining', in A. Flanders (ed.), Collective Bargaining, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1969, p. 337.

be shaped by external factors.[169] In British research a major preoccupation in this regard traces the different political forms of unionism to the significance of the institutional conditions of existence that have arisen between the parties. A relevant example here, for instance, is the widely accepted view (indeed virtual orthodoxy) that both the types of collective bargaining and the character of job regulation to emerge historically, have shaped the political character, organisational structure and policy orientations of unionism.[170] Turner's identification of three forms of political leadership within unions based on types of relationships between officials, active and passive members, provides a case in point.[171] Such classifications involve the degree of union control over the conditions of union recruitment and access to the occupation or trade. Yet, the coherency or accurateness of Turner's typologies based on the axis of closed/open membership, has been discussed more in terms of the relevance of the recruitment environment in shaping union government,[172] rather than the methodology of regarding certain institutional criteria as the causal source of class based organisations.

British institutional theory, accordingly, presents unionism as an institution of reciprocal control relative to management. Unionism

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169 There is an extensive literature on union government. Useful classifications of the various approaches to the internal political order of unionism are: G. Strauss, 'Union Government in the U.S.: Research Past and Future', Industrial Relations, Vol. 16, No. 2, May 1977; M. Dickenson, Democracy in Trade Unions, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1982; and J. Hemingway, Conflict and Democracy: Studies in Trade Union Government, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1978. This literature is examined in more depth in Chapter VII below.

170 Cf. H.A. Clegg, Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining ... op.cit.; R. Martin, 'Union Democracy: An Explanatory Framework', Sociology, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1968.

171 H.A. Turner, op.cit., pp. 285-308.

172 Cf. J. Hughes, 'Trade Union Structure and Government', Research Paper 5 (Part 2), Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, HMSO, 1968, pp. 8-15.

mediates the arrangements of power in industrial relations.[173] Principally, this was achieved through the establishment of job regulation provisions often involving informal practices based more or less on mutual acceptance and directed through avenues of collective bargaining. Unions, therefore, serve to regulate social relations through the codification of behaviour both at the workplace and in the bargaining process. In other words, unions participate in a 'rule-making process' that maintains conditional 'rights' and 'obligations' designed to protect workers from 'market fluctations and the arbitrary will of management'.[174] Thus, in Flanders' view, unionism could display different types of political leaning, but the essential political dimension of unionism involved institutionalised voluntarism resting on the relative institutional autonomy of management and unions.[175] Further, it was not the economic functions of unionism that were essential in determining union behaviour but the political process of norm-creation in bilateral regulation.[176] In this way, Fox maintained that

> the legitimacy and justification of trade unions in our society rests not upon their protective function in labour markets or upon their success, real or supposed, in raising the share enjoyed by their members, but on social values which recognise

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173 See M. Poole, op.cit., Chapters 2 and 3.

174 A. Flanders, 'What are Trade Unions For?', in A. Flanders, Management and Unions, Faber, London, 1975, p. 42.

175 A. Flanders, 'The Tradition of Voluntarism', in B. Barrett, E. Rhodes and J. Beishon (eds.), Industrial Relations and the Wider Society, Collier Macmillan, London, 1975, pp. 374-384. Flanders identified voluntaristic traditions as the pursuit of 'free collective bargaining' independent from direct state involvement, which in the British case appeared as 'not so much a distrust of legislation as a distrust of courts of law', (p. 375).

176 See A. Fox and A. Flanders, 'The Reform of Collective Bargaining: From Donovan to Durkheim', op.cit., especially pp. 156-163. Many of the workplace norms were informal see W. Brown, op.cit.; and M. Terry, 'The Inevitable Growth of Informality', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 15, No. 1, 1977.

> the right of interest-groups to combine and have an effective voice in their own destiny.[177]

In large part, the interpretation typified by Flanders and Fox (and maintained by the 'Oxford-Warwick' school, including most notably: Clegg, Bain, McCarthy, Marsh, Batstone, Brown, and Terry) is characterised by its adherence to a normative model of the plurality of interests in industrial relations where explanation of social interaction hinges on the dimensions of authority, influence and procedural order.[178] Without doubt the major preoccupation of this group has involved the processes of job regulation in bargaining, under which to a greater or less degree beneficial and stabilising procedural practices emerge.[179] For Flanders the political character of unions in a practical sense was coterminous with their advancement of job rights. Such advancement operated outside state control, but was in many respects (for example, with incomes policies) subordinate to state direction and supervision.[180] Their political axis, therefore, was concerned with the evolution of adaptable and orderly rules, where in the absence of voluntarist agreement the state as a representative third party would stimulate negotiation toward agreement. Clegg continued the concept in his view of the union as a participant with representative rights in the mutual enterprise.[181] Unions in this framework assumed the permanent status of 'industry's opposition' because they contribute subordinate rule-making sanctions and as a consequence could 'never hope to become

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177 A. Fox, 'Industrial Sociology and Industrial Relations', Research Paper 3, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, HMSO, 1966, p. 7.

178 See J.H. Goldthorpe, 'Industrial Relations in Great Britain: A Critique of Reformism' .... op.cit..

179 One of the major contributions towards this approach was A. Flanders, The Fawley Productivity Agreements, Faber, London, 1964.

180 A. Fox and A. Flanders, op.cit., p. 180.

181 H.A. Clegg, Industrial Democracy and Nationalization ... op.cit..

the government of industry'.[182] This almost constitutional status was guaranteed by three systems of rules (substantive, procedural and disciplinary) and three processes of regulation (employer, bilateral and statutory regulation).

Subsequent studies have recognised the encouragement of management as well as criteria of enterprise size and workplace leadership characteristics as major factors in the proliferation of voluntarist practices.[183] Nevertheless, these studies suggest that struggles over substantive relations such as pay, working conditions or power relations are of less theoretical import than the procedural processes. In this way, they maintain the view put forward by Fox and Flanders that 'agreement on substantive relations can never be enough by itself to maintain order .... What is, in a sense, more fundamental is building up agreement on procedural norms on how substantive relations are to be regulated'.[184] The politics of unionism consisted of the effect that their norm-oriented activities had on managerial decision-making. Or in terms of the pluralist ideology, as Fox believed,

> preoccupation with the union's economic role in labour markets has meant that an even more important role has been neglected and insufficiently understood. This is the role of union organisation within the workplace itself in regulating managerial relations, i.e. the exercise of management authority in deploying, organising, and disciplining the labour force after it has been hired. The value of the pluralist reference is that it both focuses our attention upon this crucial union role and illuminates the ground upon which union legitimacy rests - its character as a representative institution which participates with management in a process of joint decision-making on issues of day-to-day management. It is the method that is valued here, not necessarily the results.[185]

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182 Ibid., p. 22.

183 See W. Brown, R. Ebsworth and M. Terry, 'Factors Shaping Shop Steward Organisation in Britain', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1978.

184 A. Fox and A. Flanders, op.cit., pp. 178-9.

185 A. Fox, 'Industrial Sociology and Industrial Relations', op.cit., p. 7.

As Hyman has subsequently noted, this preference for the methods of institutional job regulation has resulted in a 'procedural bias' within which only managerial control over the labour process is accommodated.[186] This, then, reduces the process of political regulation from the workers' point of view to a supplementary and reactive dimension in which the degrees of labour 'control' over the labour process are in effect subsidiary controls. From this it is worth noting only certain parameters of unionist job regulation satisfy the institutionalists' method; namely those encompassed within a normative order under managerial control but not, as Hyman has indicated, those involving worker control.[187] The reciprocal nature of the institutionalists emphasis on job regulation therefore, is clearly premised on the dominant and prevailing order of managerial control.

The political character of unionism in Marxist theory is analysed essentially at two levels: on the one hand, interpretations of the existing political nature of unionism given particular capitalist social relations, and on the other, the nature of unionism in regard to the development of forms of consciousness and their potential to sponsor social change.[188] Of major concern to classical Marxists was the extent to which organised labour formed a 'political' movement distinct from an 'economic' basis.[189] Marx and Engels while stressing the interrelation of the two, noted the disjuncture between economic and

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186 R. Hyman, 'Pluralism, Procedural Consensus and Collective Bargaining', op.cit., pp. 33-6.

187 Ibid., pp. 18 and 34-5.

188 There is much debate among Marxists regarding the class nature of unionism and the impact of union organisation on the class struggle. Some recent assessments are: R. Hyman, 'Theory in Industrial Relations: Towards a Materialist Analysis', (mimeo) University of Warwick, 1979; and the collection by T. Clarke and L. Clements (eds.), op.cit..

189 Cf. A. Lozovsky, Marx and the Trade Unions, Martin Lawrence, London, 1935; H. Draper, Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Vol. II, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1978.

political development. Marx discussed the economic basis of unionism in terms of the cooperative form of the competitive capitalist labour process, the technical division of labour, the commodity of wage labour and class collectivism.[190] Nonetheless, the realised as distinct from potential political character of unionism was circumscribed by its limited and reformist objectives and the sectional nature of its resistance activities.[191]

Engels conceived of this disjuncture in light of the emerging entrenchment of an aristocracy of labour brought about through opportunism and the extension of craft and guild traditions within craft sectionalism. Yet, labour combinations, on the other hand, recognise

> the fact that the supremacy of the bourgeoisie is based wholly upon the competition of the workers among themselves; i.e., upon their want of cohesion ..... If the competition of the workers among themselves is destroyed, if all determine not to be further exploited by the bourgeoisie, the rule of property is at an end.... The moment the workers resolve to be bought and sold no longer, when, in the determination of the value of labour, they take the part of men possessed of a will as well as of working-power, at that moment the whole Political Economy of today is at an end.[192]

Unionism, therefore, was not simply a market mechanism to attack the 'vital nerve' of capitalism by reducing or even eliminating competition between workers; it also aimed to regulate the degree of exploitation experienced by labour under the capitalist mode of production. For both Marx and Engels unionism was not simply a political function of social improvement; it was a concrete political form of class mobilisation within the class struggle.[193] Put concisely, the political character of

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190 See for example Marx's early view in The Poverty of Philosophy, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, pp. 153-161; and R. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism, Pluto Press, London, 1971.

191 K. Marx, Wages, Price and Profit ... op.cit., pp. 73-9.

192 F. Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, Panther, St. Albans, 1969, p. 245-6.

193 Expressed most clearly through the International Workingmen's Association, see A. Lozovsky, op.cit., pp. 15-25.

unionism was embedded in its collectivist potentiality.

The position adopted by Lenin did not suffer from the same ambiguity, as clearly trade union consciousness was subordinate to bourgeois ideology. Political conditions in Tsarist Russia prompted Lenin to analyse the relationship between the role of the trade union movement and the role of the revolutionary party.[194] Lenin identified the political essence of trade unionism as the development of a sectionalised and 'spontaneous' character of resistance.[195] The nature of labour spontaneity involved fragmented, immediate and undisciplined actions from workers. Spontaneity followed the 'line of least resistance' in developing an embryonic consciousness among the industrial working class.[196] However, Lenin added, without the revolutionary activity of the party, such embryonic consciousness remained constrained within an economistic frame of reference ('Nur-gewerkschaftlerei') determined by the familiar work environment. Lenin argued that because in the main working class organisations were subordinate to bourgeois ideology,[197] the economic and political dimensions of class organisation were distinct in that

> the history of all countries shows that the working class, solely by its own forces, is able to work out merely trade-union consciousness, i.e., the conviction of the need for combining in unions, for fighting against the employers, and for trying to prevail upon the government to pass laws necessary for the workers.[198]

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194 T.T. Hammond, Lenin on Trade Unions and Revolution 1893-1917, Columbia University Press, New York, 1957, Chapters 3 and 10. See also V.I. Lenin, 'Once Again on the Trade Unions', Collected Works, Vol. 32, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965, pp. 70-107.

195 V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done?, Oxford University Press, London, 1963.

196 Ibid., pp. 52-72.

197 Ibid., pp. 66-91 and 105-118.

198 Ibid., p. 63.

The important point here was not that trade unionism deviated the working class from its objectives,[199] but that both the organising and policy momentum of unionism was itself sufficient to achieve major changes in society and as such needed political extension (the party). Unionism provided wage labour with a structure geared to the pursuit of concessions within socially defined constraints.[200] This position has subsequently emerged as an orthodox Marxist critique of trade unionism, a position that was revived by Anderson and Nairn in their 'new left' critiques of 'reformist' institutions under bourgeois culture.[201]

Because of trade unions expressed narrow forms of class consciousness some Marxists have directed attention to the mechanics of organisation and in particular the politics of the leadership strata as reason for such limited action. Prefiguring the recent critiques by Miliband,

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199 Hence, Lenin's critique of economism examined the translation of economic needs at the spontaneous and sectional level into limited political expression. Following Engels, economism involved the working class preoccupation with sectional and immediate economic interests relating to wage levels, living standards and working conditions. As such economism within trade union consciousness focusses on the relative shares of the social product between capital and labour and throughout the labour sector itself. Typical economistic struggles were based on spontaneous worker initiatives, as for example, with localised strikes over wages and conditions directed towards specific employers or factories, but without wider organisation or strategic coordination. The pursuit and advocation of such objectives by leaders of the labour movement merely served in Lenin's view to reinforce both the cash nexus and the authority structures under which labour power was hired. Economism, therefore, was the pursuit of narrow sectional short-term interests in place of class interests. For many Marxists economism constituted a degenerative and regressive step in proletarian activity. Conversely, for an emerging proletariat unexperienced in class activity, economistic struggles constituted a progressive development in collective action. The problem then was not the avoidance of economism but how to move beyond it.

200 V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done? ... op.cit., p. 136. Nonetheless, although Lenin accepted that unions tended to pursue narrow self-interest and limited aims, he also recognised that they could under critical circumstances contribute substantially to the class struggle and possibly toward revolutionary consciousness, (a point noted in What is to be Done?, Part 4(c) but more especially in On Strikes, see V.I. Lenin, On Trade Unions .... op.cit., pp. 57-67).

201 T. Nairn, op.cit.; P. Anderson, op.cit., especially pp. 263-268.

Coates, Mandel and Cliff of the integration of worker representatives, Pannekoek argued that 'trade union mandarins' had established the trade union movement as 'a limb of capitalist society itself'.[202] The political character of unionism served increasingly to integrate the organisations into the state apparatus by means of the structural role of trade union leadership.[203] Pointing to the similarities between trade unions and the state bureaucracy, Pannekoek continued

> there has grown up within them a class of officials, a bureaucracy, which controls all the organisation's resources - funds, press, the appointment of officials; often they have even more far-reaching powers, so that they become its masters, and have identified themselves with the organisation. And the trade unions also resemble the state and its bureaucracy in that, democratic forms notwithstanding, the will of the members is unable to prevail against the bureaucracy; .... The trade union officials collaborate with the state bureaucracy not only in using their power to hold down the working class on behalf of capital, but also in the fact that their 'policy' increasingly amounts to deceiving the masses by demagogic means and securing their consent to the bargains that the unions have made with the capitalists.[104]

In stressing the opportunism and cooptation of leadership, Luxemburg and later Lukács considered that the typical union organisation through its functionaries developed a conservative 'over-valuation' of its own

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202 A. Pannekoek, Pannekoek and Gorter's Marxism, (ed. D. A. Smart), Pluto Press, London, 1978, pp. 114-5. These more recent critiques of the integration of the labour movement leadership are discussed in Chapter III of the present work. T. Cliff, The Employers' Offensive: Productivity Deals and How to Fight Them, Pluto Press, London, 1970, pp. 163-195 provides a concise argument relating to union leaders.

203 Pannekoek emphasised less the opportunist view of leadership and instead depicted trade union leadership as a psycho-structural role. For instance he argued,

> just as parliamentary activity incarnates the leaders' psychological hold over the working masses, so the trade-union movement incarnates their material authority.

A. Pannekoek, op.cit., p. 113.

204 Ibid., pp. 114-115.

worth.[205] The leadership conducted short-term skirmishes with employers in what was essentially a 'disconnected' economic campaign. The whole emphasis in union struggles was on immediate tactics rather than on a more embracing strategy, or as Luxemburg argued,

> the trade union leaders, constantly absorbed in the economic guerrilla war whose plausible task it is to make the workers place the highest value on the smallest economic achievement, every increase in wages and shortening of the working day, gradually lose the power of seeing the larger connections and of taking a survey of the whole position.[206]

This she claimed was the internal contradiction expressed in the political character of organised labour under capitalism. The trade unions, thus, formed types of class institutions without forming class organisations.[207]

The diffusion of rank-and-file 'spontaneity' by trade union leaders assisted the 'collaboration' and 'degeneration' of the trade union movement according to Trotsky. In the context of imperialist expansion, bureaucratic centralisation emerged as an intrinsic element within unionism serving to defuse fundamental class conflict and integrate unionism into corporate capitalism and the state apparatus.[208] Labour leaders, striving for bourgeois recognition, became distanced from the rank-and-file through exchanging concern over wider political change for

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205 R. Luxemburg, The Mass Strike, Merlin Press, London, n.d. [1906], pp. 73-85; and G. Lukács, 'Towards a Methodology of the Problem of Organisation' in History and Class Consciousness, Merlin Press, London, 1971, pp. 295-339.

206 R. Luxemberg, op.cit., p. 81. This point was made earlier by F. Engels, op.cit., pp. 239-251.

207 Thus, as a consequence, while the union movement could never achieve 100 per cent union membership throughout the labour force, the trade union leadership awaited this level before class political action could be risked. R. Luxemburg, op.cit., p. 60.

208 L. Trotsky, 'Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay' in Leon Trotsky on the Trade Unions, Pathfinder, New York, 2nd Edition, 1975 pp. 68-75.

that of their own careerist opportunism.[209] Union bureaucrats with their own interests to serve existed to modify the relationship between capital and labour, and in doing so manipulated unions into compliant, non-revolutionary bodies that accepted the value system of modern bourgeois society. Similarly, Gramsci using the concept of hegemony pointed to the '"spontaneous" consent given by the great masses of the population' to the capitalist mode of production.[210] A central role performed by the trade union apparatuses was that they organically connected the working class to the interests of the hegemonic or dominant class. In other words, unionism was an important instrumental mediating agent in capitalist society; a position Poulantzas and Althusser shared in regarding unionism as an 'ideological state apparatus' because of its socially cohesive function.[211]

Gramsci's position amended the arguments offered by Lenin that trade unionism, as an embryonic form of working class mobilisation, was generally a neutral force which could augment its traditional 'bread and butter' reliance with political consciousness. For Gramsci unionism contributed both directly and indirectly to the stability of the dominant position of the ruling class. Union organisations functioned as social hegemonic bodies whose institutional hierarchy was predisposed toward reaction in place of initiation.[212] As an integral part of the hegemonic bloc, union discipline of its membership or shop councils 'can

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209 Ibid., pp. 53-7.

210 A. Gramsci, Selections from ... op.cit., p. 12. See also pp. 225-6 and 232-3 for discussion of the limitations of spontaneity.

211 L. Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, New Left Books, London, 1977, pp. 135-149; N. Poulantzas, Classes in Contemporary Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975, pp. 24-35; and N. Poulantzas, 'On Social Classes', New Left Review, No. 78, March-April 1973, pp. 47-52.

212 A. Gramsci, 'Soviets in Italy', New Left Review, No. 51, 1968, pp. 33-41.

only be a service to capital .... [and] judged as reactionary'.[213]

Thus, unions under modern capitalism

> are in a certain sense an integral part of capitalist society, and have a function which is inherent in the regime of private property.... The union's essential nature is competitive, not Communist. The union cannot be the instrument for a radical renovation of society, it can provide the proletariat with proficient bureaucrats, technical experts on industrial questions of a general kind, but it cannot be the basis for proletarian power.[214]

In contrast to the official hierarchy of unions, in the Italian situation of the 1920's according to Gramsci, the major revolutionary strength was to be found at the level of factory organisation. Factory councils or shop committees embodied the real political character of unionism because of their positive consciousness and 'mutual education' based on the experiences at the point of production, not on the experiences of bureaucratic leadership and 'industrial legality'.[215] It was this internal relationship within such working class institutions that Gramsci regarded as the fundamental problematic in determining the political nature of organised labour. Gramsci's sensitivity to this is expressed clearly in his attitude toward the specific nexus between the union officialdom and factory organisation:

> if the conception that makes the Council a mere instrument in the trade union struggle is materialized in a bureaucratic discipline and rights of direct union control over the Council, the Council is sterilized as a force of revolutionary expansion .... The emergence of the Councils is a result of the position the working class has won on the terrain of industrial production; the Council is a historical necessity of the working class. Thus any bid to subordinate it hierarchically to the trade union will sooner or later result in a clash between the two institutions. The power of the Councils consists in the fact that they are close to and coincide with the consciousness of the working masses who are seeking their autonomous emancipation .... the whole mass participates in the life of the

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213 Ibid., p. 41.

214 Ibid., p. 36.

215 Ibid., p. 37-9.

> Council and feels itself to be something through this activity. Only very small numbers of the members participate in the life of the union; its real strength lies in this fact, but this fact is also a weakness that cannot be put to the test without grave risks.[216]

And yet, Gramsci maintained that for those concerned with political change, they 'cannot wish that the union lose any of its disciplinary control and its systematic centralization'.[217] This contradictory perspective cogently expressed the paradox of union activity under capitalism. It recognised a political contradiction expressed within the various levels of working, or in Gramsci's terms subordinate, class organisations. Whether unions displayed a reformist or revolutionary nature, this contradiction limited political mobilisation through the containment of politics within classes rather than between them.

The themes raised in Gramsci's work have long been important in syndicalist theories. In contrast to Marxist hegemonic interpretations of the political nature of trade unionism, syndicalist theorists along with many non-Marxist theorists[218] have tended to consider political awareness within union organisation as a function of technological progress and technical arrangements in production. In the argument presented by Mallet, highly organised and technologically divided labour reflected the need for control and technical knowledge in advanced capitalism. Traditional union organisation presented workers with little opportunity to challenge the existing system in that they were incapable of formulating systematic anti-capitalist strategies due to the fact that

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216 Ibid., p. 40.

217 Ibid., p. 41.

218 For example C. Kerr and A. Siegel, op.cit.; J. Woodward, Industrial Organization: Behaviour and Control, Oxford University Press, London, 1970.

the very heterogeneity of the labour movement became debilitating.[219] Traditional unionism simply haggled over the price of labour and thereby given the market situation continued to maintain the position of employers. Gorz, on the other hand, saw wage claims as revolts against alienation, against the 'systematic mutilation of the "worker's self-hood"'.[220] Alternatively, modern production processes allowed for 'non-reformist' political strategies based on the workers' self-determination over the utilisation, purpose and reproduction of labour power.[221] The new working class movement at the workplace level regenerated the control of organised labour at the point of production, and replaced traditional union structures external to the workplace with greater degrees of workers' autonomy and control bodies.[222] Thus, Gorz has suggested that the new unionism

> would be in a position to exercise control over development (technical, productive, professional, etc.) and to direct it

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219 S. Mallet, op.cit., Part 1, especially pp. 25-32. The traditional trade unions protect the only 'property' left to the traditional industrial workers: namely, the wage. The political nature of these unions (which are experiencing according to Mallet a 'Malthusian' decline) was inherently limited because 'trade unionism accepts the system in which it lives and grows as an objective reality, [and] it leaves to others (for example, political parties) the job of transforming its structures', p. 53. Workers in the advanced sectors of industry would form the vanguard of the labour movement through the establishment of shop level assemblies, rather than the adoption of the bureaucratic characteristics which mark the traditional unions organised and controlled away from the workplace.

220 A. Gorz, 'Trade Unionism on the Attack', op.cit., p. 132.

221 A. Gorz, Strategy for Labor, Beacon Press, Boston, 1967, Chapters 1 and 2.

222 Political consciousness surfaces therefore in the trends toward a movement of workers' control. Reminiscent of Sorel and in some respects the anarchist philosophy of Proudhon, Bakunin, Morris, Kropotkin and Malatesta, this theoretical tradition has identified an innate capacity to control the social organisation of production within the modern working class. While this is conceived often independently of the existing patterns of control, modern worker control philosophies rely on expanding technological parameters in some cases with a neutralist conception of technology. Cf. K. Coates and T. Topham, The New Unionism, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974.

> towards the optimum social, human and economic ends .... (I)nstead of fighting against dismissals and plans for reorganization, it would fight for a plan of reorganization .... Instead of fighting against new machines and new work patterns they impose, it would fight over the type of the machines, the way they were installed, what kind of work pattern to anticipate, what classifications to set up before the reorganization takes place. Instead of fighting against a worsening of exploitation, it should fight to submit amortization and investment programmes to its own control, imposing those which would benefit the workers.[223]

From this factory level initiative, worker self-determination would spread, Gorz believed, to the local, provincial, national and international level. The increased technical training embodied in the modern worker, together with the increasing internationalisation of capitalism and its division of labour, would establish preconditions necessary for the international intervention of the working class in the planning and production process.[224]

Theorists of this genre have elaborated a critique of the traditional political character of trade unionism, pointing instead to the dual nature of organised labour distinguishing the 'union' hierarchy from the unionism of the organised workplace. A number of criticisms of this participatory technocratic strategy for labour are important here. Specifically, these theorists draw inspiration from a historically specific phase of capitalism in which near full employment was extant. Even in Gorz's account with its emphasis on impoverishment, 'squalor within affluence', and the superfluous needs of mass consumption,[225]

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223 A. Gorz, 'Trade Unionism on the Attack', op.cit., p. 145. Gorz predicted that through a progression of compromises, unions would politically after long and hard battles control the decision-making within enterprises.

224 See A. Gorz, Strategy for Labor ... op.cit., pp. 179-190. See also Gorz's concept of the tactic of 'leapfrogging' between national labour movements.

225 Ibid., Chapters 1-4. Gorz's thesis is based on the tendency of the rate of profit to fall (although this is not demonstrated) and that science and technology are linear and accelerating. This tends to

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his strategies are premised on substantially full employment where conditions of managerial oppression rather than unemployment are fundamental. Moreover, such theorists present versions of radical technological determinism, viewing social control in organisation and technique as the essence of modern capitalism rather than as particular manifestations of the increasingly concentrated and differentiated accumulation of capital. Hence, this approach locates the technical division of labour within the advancement of technology not within capitalist accumulation, and as such perceives some implicit instrumental-neutral quality evident in such factors as education, technology, work and 'optimum' techniques of production. This is not to say, nevertheless, that these authors have not been sensitive to the general nature of capitalist domination in society. Touraine and Gorz in particular have demonstrated a real awareness of this.[226] Less evident in the work of theorists such as Mallet, Gorz, Coates and Topham is an appreciation of the nature and major role of the state in the regulation of union activity, and especially in relation to state intervention in the 'centralizing and formalizing processes of reproduction'.[227] Any serious analysis of trade unionism must confront the role of the state to achieve any semblance of authenticity.

Contemporary Marxist and radical theorists, while they have often made significant contributions toward critiques of the predominant

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ignore the business cycle and the tendency of science to follow technology. Indeed, it is the state, as Marglin pointed out, through patent rights on postponed or non-intended technology that legitimises this cartelisation of innovative technology.

226 A. Gorz (ed.) The Division of Labour, Harvester Press, Hassocks, 1976, pp. 159-189.

227 T. Johnson, 'What is to be Known?', Economy and Society, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1977, p. 228.

pluralist and systems approaches,[228] have treated the political character of unionism in two ways. First, it has been discussed in terms of the tensions between union bureaucracy and rank-and-file politics,[229] and second, in terms of the limited development of political consciousness as a consequence of the ambit of constraints imposed by advanced capitalist society.[230]

Allen regarded union bureaucracy as a cumbersome and conservative medium complicated by 'long-standing vested interests and traditions'.[231] Unlike Lenin who once maintained that union officials were corrupted, privileged strata separated from the wage-earning proletariat,[232] Allen emphasised the lack of manoeuvrability of and general restrictions on leadership positions in relation to the protective, conservative and rigidly bureaucratic union constitutions.[233] These constitutions evolved through traditional interaction with employers in the labour market, and as such were

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228 R. Hyman, 'Pluralism, Procedural Consensus and Collective Bargaining', op.cit.; and R. Hyman and I. Brough, Social Values and Industrial Relations .... op.cit.; S. Wood and R. Elliott, 'A Critical Evaluation of Fox's Radicalisation of Industrial Relations Theory' .... op.cit..

229 J. Hinton, The First Shop Stewards' Movement, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1973; B. Pribicevic, The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers Control, Blackwell, Oxford, 1959; R. Herding, Job Control and Union Structure, Rotterdam University press, Rotterdam, 1972; R. Hyman and B. Fryer, 'Trade Unions: Sociology and Political Economy', in J.B. McKinlay (ed.), Processing People: Studies in Organizational Behaviour, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, London, 1975, especially pp. 157-160 and 170-194; R. Hyman, 'The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism' ... op.cit.; T. Lane and K. Roberts, Strike at Pilkingtons, Fontana, Glasgow, 1971.

230 D. Strinati, op.cit.; H. Beynon, op.cit.; M. Mann, op.cit.; and T. Nichols and H. Beynon, Living with Capitalism, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1977.

231 V.L. Allen, Militant Trade Unionism ... op.cit., p. 37.

232 V.I. Lenin, The State and Revolution, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1949, p. 105.

233 V. L. Allen, op.cit., pp. 35-8.

generally unsuited to political mobilisation. Like many Marxist critics including Hobsbawn or Anderson, Allen viewed unionism as a form of organised labour which developed customs and patterns of action which, while historically specific, often served to undermine the present potential of collective action. Unions, thus, were labour organisations constituted at a particular juncture, which subsequently and contradictorily both tended to share and impede the political development of those organised.[234]

Other writers have proposed that union bureaucracies need not necessarily fossilise unions as capitalist institutions. Despite the integrational pressures reinforcing the 'bias toward wage consciousness', Hyman has stressed the potential counter-power possessed within the union movement.[235] Hyman, who has produced overall the most significant contribution within this field, has criticised the one-dimensional approach to the institutionalisation of unionism, relating this process conversely to the 'more general attenuation of internal democracy'.[236] With regard the political character of unions, he suggested that,

> the deprivations and aspirations which drive workers to create collective organisations, to seek to exert control over work relations, lead them naturally to react forcibly when their unions appear to retreat from their original purposes.[237]

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234 In this way, union functionaries unable to respond effectively in contemporary situations then are forced into making Quixotic tilts against the prevailing economic climate. Historically this is apparent with regard union strategy in relation to varying levels of employment and job security. According to Allen the frequency of 'unofficial' strikes indicates the degree of bureaucratic unresponsiveness and rigidity inherent in the operational mechanics of labour organisations. In this respect Allen presents an interpretation not dissimilar to the view of bureaucratic limitations expressed by Gouldner.

235 R. Hyman, Industrial Relations ... op.cit., pp. 22-29; and R. Hyman, Strikes, Fontana, Glasgow, 1977 2nd Edition, pp. 115-127.

236 R. Hyman, Industrial Relations ... op.cit., p. 92.

237 Ibid., pp. 92-3.

In other words, unions possessed the inherent capacity toward regeneration. The bureaucratic processes in unions, from which even shop stewards were not immune,[238] were a visible manifestation of the complex and contradictory nature of the social forces which confront union organisation. Sympathetic toward Gramsci's concept of ideological hegemony and tacit consent, Hyman considered union bureaucracy as the expression of the hiatus between bread and butter activity and revolutionary consciousness. Accordingly, union officials may consistently react rather than instigate, but they cannot be expected to fulfil this function indefinitely. The educational role performed by the unions' structure in relation to trade union consciousness, he concluded, 'can vary markedly between different historical contexts and can shift radically with only a brief passage of time'; a point Blackburn highlighted with regard the 'affluent worker' studies.[239] Hence, unionism is not so much frozen within the established order as Anderson suggested, rather it exhibits dimensions of accommodation and resistance, which because they are continually present and contending directions within union activity are continually undergoing change.

Elsewhere, Hyman noted the process of 'goal displacement' and the limitations on membership involvement and democratic control.[240] From his study of the Workers' Union these features were subsumed within organisational practice based on the assumption

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238 R. Hyman, 'The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism', op.cit..

239 R. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism ... op.cit., p.52. Hyman concluded that 'under specific objective conditions the educative potential of collective action may be immense; in other, perhaps more typical circumstances the spontaneous development of workers' consciousness may fail absolutely to transcend the confines of bourgeois ideology', p. 52. Cf. also R. Blackburn, 'The Unequal Society', in R. Blackburn and A. Cockburn (eds.), op.cit., pp. 48-51.

240 See R. Hyman, The Workers' Union, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1971, pp. 195-221. See also R. Hyman and B. Fryer, op.cit. especially pp. 156-201.

> that elections could function as a major mechanism of democratic control in a situation of institutionalized rank-and-file passivity.[241]

Yet in a different context, Hyman has argued, and this has an important bearing for the analysis in this present work, that the analysis of the political character of unions needs to be cognisant of the ways in which

> the distinctive traditions of their historical development in each country - often reflecting the long superseded material context of their origins and early growth - help determine the degree to which union organisation encompasses the working class, the internal structural delineations within the movement, the nature of the linkages between unions, the types of attachment to political ideologies and parties, the orientation towards collective bargaining as a dominant mode of activity, the extent of internal democracy and the forms of articulation between membership and leadership. Such factors in turn have a profound bearing on .... the extent to which unions intensify or help damp down crises of profitability and struggles over the labour process; their contribution to the unity or the internal hierarchisation and division of the working class; their accommodation or resistance to different strategies of state intervention.[242]

Furthermore, the tendency for the modern trade union leadership to become integrated 'into the processes of state'[243] in order to accommodate state policies (in the 'era of post-war collaboration'), constrains the political character of trade unions to institutions and processes of mediation within class conflict.[244] While some Marxist and non-Marxist writing in this respect has developed this argument along

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241 Ibid., p. 218.

242 R. Hyman, 'Theory in Industrial Relations: Towards a Materialist Analysis', (mimeo) University of Warwick, 1979, p. 16.

243 R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: a Marxist Introduction ... op.cit., pp. 140-5.

244 R. Hyman, 'Theory in Industrial Relations' ... op.cit., p. 6. Moreover, Hyman emphasised that 'the state of "industrial relations" or class struggle cannot be simply "read off" from a generalised characterisation of the economic and political conjuncture, but equally cannot be understood except against this background. What is at issue is the specificity of institutions and processes of mediation which are in some respects distinctive in each nation, industry, company and individual workplace; and which can alter in their effects over time', (p. 16).

the lines of corporatist intermediation,[245] Hyman as well as Panitch has stressed that the political character of modern unionism possesses an essential 'dualism', that is often not explicit in much political analysis of unions. Consequently, where 'state-structured' schemes of 'class collaboration' seek to incorporate organised labour, they

> require of trade unions, as their contribution to the operation, not that they cut their ties with their base, but rather that they use those ties to legitimate state policy and elaborate their control over their members.[246]

Therefore, as Panitch has argued, in 'legitimating and administering working-class sacrifices "in the national interest"',[247] the inherent political contradiction and instability within union accommodation to state policies becomes pronounced, in that when

> trade unions are readier to cooperate within corporatist structures when social-democratic parties are in office, they still are unable to escape indefinitely the central contradiction of remaining responsive to their base while administering corporatist wage restraint.[248]

Thus, politically trade unions constitute collective mass organisations in which if the rank-and-file membership is unable to express itself through the existing leadership, then it will tend to seek alternative routes often of an informal and spontaneous nature. Hyman addressed this same point in concluding that as

> a major component of the interface between antagonistic class forces, trade unions embody a contradictory potential which consigns on their organisation and action a persistent dualism: a dualism moreover which derives not merely from the internal dynamics of unionism but from the material interests and

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245 See for a critical survey of this literature L. Panitch, 'Recent Theorizations of Corporatism: Reflections on a Growth Industry', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 31, No. 2, 1980.

246 L. Panitch, 'Trade Unions and the Capitalist State', New Left Review, No. 125, 1981, p. 42.

247 Ibid., p. 40.

248 Ibid., pp. 40-1.

> relations of production which they mediate. The dominance of a particular tendency (militancy or acquiescence, democracy or oligarchy...) should thus be interpretated as the determinate, but to some degree always provisional, outcome of a particular combination of circumstances.[249]

Industrial Relations and Trade Union Research in Australia

Trade union and industrial relations research in Australia is marked by the policy-oriented nature of its analysis of labour problems.[250] Australian industrial relations has attracted commentators concerned to chart the exigencies of management labour relations.[251] Traditionally such applied research was located within the narrow perspectives of economics and legal studies.[252] Given Australia's history of state arbitration involving statutory wage fixation and the judicial determination of disputes, much of this research was occupied with the apparent activities and characteristic effects of the conciliation and arbitration process. The major topics of research have been the maintenance of labour discipline, wage fixation and dispute

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249 R. Hyman, 'Theory in Industrial Relations' ... op.cit., p. 17.

250 See J. Niland, Collective Bargaining ... op.cit.; and J. Niland, 'Research and Reform in Industrial Relations', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 23, No. 4, Dec. 1981. For recent bibliographic surveys see: J. Niland and M. Prothero, 'Industrial Relations Research in Australia', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 18, No. 3, Sept. 1976; and L. Sitsky, 'Australian Union Bibliography', in B. Ford and D. Plowman (eds.), Australian Unions: an Industrial Relations Perspective, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1983.

251 For instance, S.J. Frenkel, 'Inter-Industry Strike Patterns: Towards a New Analytical Framework', Australian Journal of Management, Vol. 5, Nos. 1 and 2, October 1980.

252 Cf. D. Plowman, S. Deery and C. Fisher, Australian Industrial Relations, McGraw-Hill, Sydney, 1980, Chapter 1, especially pp. 3-13. Moreover, this narrow perspective was also characterised by a framework of analysis that was both insular and empirical. Compare, for example, the approaches and different theoretical perspectives included in the assembled collection by B. Barrett et al. (eds.), op.cit., with those included in J.E. Isaac and G.W. Ford (eds.), Australian Labour Relations: Readings, Sun, Melbourne, 1st Edition, 1966, 2nd Edition, 1971.

settlement.[253] Moreover, because of the absence of a strong heritage of decentralised collective bargaining, industrial relations research has concentrated, rather than on the workplace level, on the general character of labour relations, involving predominantly guidance principles, legal precedent, strike incidence, award variations and test cases of major significance.[254] From a very different perspective, the low profile of collective bargaining tended to stimulate the labour historians' interest in the union movement's tolerant acquiescence to arbitration, based on the analysis of the ways in which unions welcomed state regulatory intervention or proved incapable of leading opposition in the face of it, were internally fractured and disorganised or saw state regulation as a visible means to consolidate defensive economism.

Australia's relatively high rate of unionisation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as the labour movement's early industrial and political 'successes', each contributed to the encouragement of a vibrant indigenous study of labour history. In contrast to the industrial relations field, the historiography of the Australian labour movement has produced a substantial if at times superficial body of research of an essentially radical nature, which encompasses theoretical argument, some empirical and documentary evidence as well as narrative historical accounts.[255] In the main, such

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253 See J.H. Portus, The Development of Australian Trade Union Law, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1958; O. de R. Foenander, Trade Unionism in Australia, Law Book Co., Sydney, 1962; and N.F. Dufty, Industrial Relations in the Australian Metal Industries, West, Sydney, 1972.

254 Two early exceptions of note that focus on intra-plant industrial relations are K. Hince, 'Unions on the Shop Floor', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1967; and K.F. Walker, Australian Industrial Relations Systems, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1970, Chapter 11.

255 For an insightful discussion of labour history interests and themes see J. Merritt, 'Labour History', in G. Osborne and W.F. Mandle (eds.), New History: Studying Australia Today, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982.

Australian labour history has displayed a keen awareness of the relationships between labour organisation, class structure and the development of Australian capitalism. Within this literature, the form of labour organisations have served both as the object of analysis and the object of criticism. In other words, the political history of organised labour has been analysed in its own terms often with critical evaluation stemming from alternative conceptualisations of the behaviour and objectives of organisation and class politics. Within this labour history three related but distinct subdivisions can be identified: participant and observer accounts of the labour movement; academic labour history of a general or episodic nature; and academic history of specific labour institutions (e.g. trade unions, peak councils, and political parties).

The first often involved personal reminiscences or arguments from particular experiences as represented in the works of Reeves, Spence, Black, Childe, Harris, Hutson, Mundey, Wilshire, and Cameron.[256] Contributions to academic labour history have established an impressive tradition[257] encompassing works from an overt 'radical' if not polemical nature (e.g. Fitzpatrick, Gollan, Ward, Turner, McQueen,

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256 W.P. Reeves, State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969 [1902]; V.G. Childe, How Labour Governs, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2nd Edition, 1964; J. Harris, The Bitter Fight, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1970; J. Hutson, Penal Colony to Penal Powers, AEU, Surry Hills, 1966; J. Mundey, Green Bans and Beyond, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1981; J. Mundey v. G. Polites, Union Power, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1975; T. Wilshire, 'Australia Up-Rooted: a Discussion', Journal of Australian Political Economy, No. 1, October 1977; C. Cameron, Unions in Crisis, Hill of Content, Melbourne, 1982. In recent years many union leaders have presented economic analyses, socialist proposals and union strategies concerning the nature of Australian capitalism and union responses, see, for example, G. Crough, T. Wheelwright and T. Wilshire, Australia and World Capitalism, Penguin, Ringwood, 1980.

257 But not without criticism, for example: T. Irving and B. Berzins, 'History and the New Left: Beyond Radicalism', in R. Gordon (ed.) The Australian New Left, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1970; R.W. Connell, Ruling Class, Ruling Culture, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1977, Chapters 1 and 2; while a more recent critical evaluation is J. Merritt, op.cit..

Macintyre, Rickard, Curthoys, Connell and Irving),[258] to the more historically descriptive and political sociological works of Métin, Sutcliffe, Coghlan, Ross, Nairn, Martin, Rawson and the collections assembled by Murphy and Iremonger.[259] As well various authors of the Communist parties such as Sharkey, Campbell, Aarons, Moss and Hill have historically contributed interpretations of labour movement history as the manifestation of practical struggles for socialism.[260] From these different sources, this literature has engineered its own debates largely upon the basis of the social and theoretical implications drawn from what Connell has term a 'categorical' approach to the notion of class in labour history.[261] Much debate has occurred less over class per se, than over the internal divisions within the working class such as between

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258 Representative works are B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, 1834-1939, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969; R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1960; R. Ward, The Australian Legend, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 2nd Edition, 1966; I. Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1979; H. McQueen, A New Britannia, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970; S. Macintyre, op.cit.; J. Rickard, Class and Politics, ANU Press, Canberra, 1976; A. Curthoys et al., (eds.), Women at Work, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Canberra, 1975; and R.W. Connell and T. Irving, op.cit..

259 A. Métin, Socialism Without Doctrine, APCOL, Chippendale, 1977; J. Sutcliffe, A History of Trade Unionism in Australia, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1967; T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, 4 Vols. Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969 [1918]; L. Ross, 'Australian Trade Unionism in the Twentieth Century', Trade Unions in Australia, A.I.P.S., Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1959; B. Nairn, Civilising Capitalism, ANU Press, Canberra, 1973; R. Martin, 'Trade Unions and the State in Australia', Ph.D. Thesis, ANU, 1958; D.W. Rawson, Unions and Unionists in Australia, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1978; D.J. Murphy (ed.), Labor in Politics, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975; J. Iremonger et al. (Eds.), Strikes, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1973.

260 Representative of this group is E.W. Campbell, History of the Australian Labor Movement, Current Book Distributors, Sydney, 1945; and L.L. Sharkey, The Trade Unions, Current Book Distributors, Sydney, 4th Edition, 1961.

261 R.W. Connell, op.cit., Chapter 1. For an early sociological account of the Australian labour movement see K.F. Walker, 'Australia', in W. Galenson (ed.), Comparative Labor Movements, Prentice-Hall, New York, 1952.

craft and mass unions. In the main, this literature has focussed on major specific events or the origins of organisational formation, without devoting much attention to intermediate periods.[262]

The third source of labour history, institutional accounts, has investigated case studies generally of some political import within the labour movement. Researchers have analysed major federal trade unions, State level unions, the ACTU, and federal and State branches of the Labor Party.[263] Much of this research consists of chronological organisational analysis in which the progression of issues, incidents and political faction rivalry establishes the parameters of discussion.[264] In comparison with the present work, these institutional histories are generally less concerned explicitly with the theoretical concerns of trade union sociology, involving the themes of power, democracy, bureaucracy, organisational behaviour and the formation processes of organisational policy.

Debates over the sociology of trade unionism in Australia have in the past canvassed the class or social stratificational nature of manual and non-manual unions. While Rawson initially attempted to classify manual and non-manual in terms of working class and middle class identification, Martin criticised this distinction as misleading and imprecise.[265] Martin's account introduced instead the more universal pluralist notion

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262 A good example of this is P. Macarthy, 'The Harvester Judgement: an Historical Assessment', Ph.D. Thesis, ANU, Canberra, 1968.

263 See K. Buckley, The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia, 1852-1920, ANU, Canberra, 1970; R. Gollan, The Coalminers of New South Wales, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1963; J. Hagan, The History of the ACTU, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981. For further discussion of this literature see Chapter IV below.

264 Cf. T. Sheridan, Mindful Militants, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975.

265 D.W. Rawson, 'The Frontiers of Trade Unionism', Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol. 1, May 1956; R.M. Martin, 'Class Identification and Trade Union Behaviour: the Case of Whitecollar Unions', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1965.

from Clegg that 'the role of "industry's opposition" is fundamental to all employees' organisations'.[266] Martin, however, did not discount subjectivist orientations to class positions; rather he argued that class identification did not constitute a prime determinant of union behaviour.[267] Despite such criticisms, Rawson continued to affirm his belief that unionism was a class-based 'social movement as well as an economic interest group'.[268] Much later, after suggesting, as will be discussed below, that unions displayed a 'diminished strength' of 'class consciousness', Rawson still maintained that 'it would seem that workers and unionists of various kinds are moving towards a common position .... we can say that this means that they are acting more as a class'.[269] Yet, while unionism was increasingly covering common class groupings, the diminution of 'class consciousness' (party voting, support for party affiliation and a 'feeling of generalised deprivation') meant that class politics were no longer shaping the politics of unions.[270] Conversely, 'common union action increasingly involve(d) governments' because the expansion of unionism to the white-collar sector coupled with the decline in 'class consciousness' had made

> the manual 'orthodox' unionists a less distinctive section of society than in the past. It is now easier for unionists of all kinds to collaborate [with the state] and increasingly they are doing so..... But by acting together they are not, except in a tautological sense, acting as a class.[271]

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266 R.M. Martin, 'Trade Unions and the State' .... op.cit., p. 5.

267 R.M. Martin, 'Class Identification' .... op.cit., pp. 142-6.

268 D.W. Rawson, The Impact of the Trade Unions, AIPS Monograph, No. 3, 1959, p. 4.

269 D.W. Rawson, 'Unions in Politics: the 'Working Class Movement' or the 'New Corporatism', APSA Conference Paper, Hobart, 1979, p. 4.

270 Ibid., p. 5.

271 Ibid., p. 7.

Thus, the concept of class relative to trade unions is used in a behaviouralist way to denote distinctive common action involving greater unity between blue and white-collar union sectors, rather than a more structural understanding of social class based on production relations, the realisation of capital accumulation and the character of service sector roles in advanced capitalist societies.

With the exception of an indirect concern for the embourgeoisement of the working class and a perennial interest in political affiliation, the theme of the class character of unionism has been neglected in Australia.[272] Apart from the above debate and the labour historians' pursuit of classes in action, the concept 'class' rarely enters the vocabulary of industrial relations and trade union sociology in Australia. Indeed, in a recent attempt to apply 'capitalist' and 'communist' theories of unionism to 'the Australian case', Howard virtually ignored class as a characteristic of union development preferring instead to attribute union growth and behaviour under Australian conditions to a favourable institutional climate predicated on the industrial relations contest which was administered by a benign state.[273] Accordingly, Howard rejected the 'capitalist' theories of Perlman and Commons as a description of job regulation in business unionism without sufficient weight given to the wider political interests. 'Communist' theories of unionism based on class interest and drawn from Marx and Lenin were also inappropriate, he suggested, because

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272 For example in Walker's major work on Australian industrial relations class is ignored except for a dismissive reference on p. 60, K.F. Walker, Australian Industrial Relations Systems ... op.cit.. Moreover, in the standard introduction to Australian trade unions R.M. Martin (Trade Unions in Australia, 2nd Edition, Penguin, Ringwood, 1980) avoids mention of class despite his attempts to describe union history, character, ideology and interests.

273 W.A. Howard, 'Australian Trade Unions in the Context of Union Theory', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1977, especially pp. 260-273.

workers and unions were witnout a revolutionary tradition.[274] This latter point is dually confounding because Australian workers have engaged in episodic attempts that have challenged the social relations of power fundamentally, and because this point insufficiently acknowledges the 'pessimistic' interpretation of trade unionism held by Lenin and to some extent by Marx.

Dating from relatively recent origin, the most innovative sociology of Australian trade unionism has discussed the internal government and policy formation within specific case studies. In comparison with overseas studies into union government these studies have essentially gauged the effectiveness of the internal constraints on union leadership or factional dominance.[275] For Davis in a study of the Victorian branch of the metalworkers' union (now the AMFSU) based on an assessment of decision-making bodies and a survey of four workshops, the union represented an 'instrumentalist' organisation (but more tolerant of non-industrial objectives) that was not only satisfactory to members but was demanded by them.[276] Moreover, Davis found that the union frequently considered the formal structure of the organisation to facilitate greater membership involvement (an aspect that has continued, as will be discussed in the present work).[277] On the question of union government, Davis refuted Michels' view that an 'iron law of oligarchy' affected large organisations, and indeed found that despite its size as

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274 Ibid., pp. 256-260.

275 For example T. Sheridan, 'Opposition, Factions and Candidates in AEU Elections in Australia 1907-72', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 22, No. 3, 1980.

276 E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the AMWSU', M.Ec. Thesis, Monash University, 1977 especially Chapters 5 and 7 and pp. 186-8. Some of these findings were presented in E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the AMWU', Industrial Relations, Vol. 16, No. 2, 1977; and E. Davis, 'Decision-Making in the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1977.

277 Ibid., pp. 354-365.

Australia's largest union at the time the metalworkers' union 'appeared a relatively democratic organisation'.[278] While some of Davis' findings are controverted in this work, his research has continued to focus on the relationship between size and forms of participation and democracy.[279]

Also exploring the dimensions of membership participation and control, Dickenson has investigated branches of the ironworkers' union (FIA) and government clerks (ACOA).[280] Her concern, as indicated in an earlier argument,[281] is for the representation of membership control through contests within the electoral process between rival institutionalised factions or parties.[282] In other words, insofar as electoral contests are significant and opposition groups exist, unions are democratic and provide avenues for higher membership control over union leaders. In the tradition of Lipset, Martin, Edelstein and Warner,[283] Dickenson regarded the

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278 E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the AMWSU', M.Ec. Thesis, op.cit., p. 191. Davis noted elsewhere that 'while the views of the officials may be more radical than those of the bulk of the members, this did not appear to have diverted them from the traditional pursuit of improved job conditions.... This suggests that the AMWSU's popular reputation as a political rather than industrial agent is ill-founded, and that the time is ripe for a re-assessment of the nature of this important union'. E. Davis, 'Who are the Decision-Makers? - a Study of the Nineteen Full-Time Officials of the Victorian Branch of the AMWSU', ANZAAS Conference Paper, 1977, p. 12. Moreover, in Davis' M.Ec. thesis he argued that there was 'a need for more attention to the formative years of the AMWU (1972-75) to facilitate a thorough assessment of the development of the policies and activities of the union, and the process of their determination', p. 185.

279 E. Davis, 'Participation in Six Australian Trade Unions', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1981.

280 M. Dickenson, Democracy in Trade Unions: Studies in Membership Participation and Control, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1982.

281 M. Dickenson, 'The Effects of Parties and Factions on Trade Union Elections', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1981.

282 M. Dickenson, Democracy in Trade Unions ... op.cit., pp. 22-41.

283 This tradition is further discussed in Chapter VII below.

> most useful way to assess 'democracy in trade unions' is by using the same standards as are applied to public government. After all, the formal constitutional arrangements of representative public government form the basis of the governmental systems of most union organizations, and in Australia these arrangements are imposed on unions by law. Furthermore, political theory and practice as developed around national government provide the language in which we can seek to understand union government.[284]

This liberal representative conception of union democracy is directly challenged in the present study. However, from the above definition Dickenson attempted using a comparative study between blue and white-collar unions to identify the impact of Australia's comparatively extensive legal regulations on trade unions. For Dickenson, ultimately law offers little more than 'formal institutional safeguards' and does not ensure what she regards as democratic and effective membership control, that is the 'existence of an effective choice of leaders and effective control over them'.[285] In criticism of approaches that emphasise solely participatory theory, Dickenson maintained that

> participation in elections and participation in other forms of union activity are not incompatible alternatives. Rather, they tend to be found together, and to be mutually reinforcing.[286]

Hence, Dickenson's justification of the state's legal regulation and indeed disciplining of trade unionism is an integral part of her liberalist perspective that maintains the cogency of electoral choice and political competition as important determinants of internal democracy, union structure and behaviour.[287] Outside her own particular conceptualisation of union democracy her findings have much less relevance to the nature of membership involvement and control in union

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284 M. Dickenson, Democracy in Trade Unions ... op.cit., p. 23.

285 Ibid., p. 226.

286 Ibid., pp. 226-7.

287 Ibid., pp. 3-21 and 207-225.

organisations. Her attention to factions within the strata of officials and activists is nonetheless a welcome insertion into the sociology of unionism.

More generally, Australian union organisation is noted for both its relative underdevelopment of workplace union organisation as well as its lack of decentralised collective bargaining.[288] In terms of workplace union organisation this comparative underdevelopment is manifested in the relative absence of shop steward or rank-and-file committees. Indeed, until recent years the union lay representative on the job was neither widely in evidence across the Australian labour movement, nor in those unions with such representatives, granted much by way of official recognition. In view of this, the Australian shop stewards in the manual sectors have attracted comparatively little attention in the literature.[289] Further, an even more noticeable deficiency is the dearth of studies into the relationships existing at the workplace level of union organisation.[290] Although in recent years a number of studies have addressed specifically this level, for the most part these case

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288 Cf. K.F. Walker, op.cit., Chapters 2 and 11; for a sociological view see R. Kriegler, op.cit., pp. 216-248; M. Rimmer and P. Sutcliffe, 'Slaves to our own Apathy: the Growth and Decline of the Shop Committee Movement in Australia', (mimeo), University of Sydney, NSW, n.d. (1978?). Clegg, while perceiving compulsory arbitration as part of a system of collective bargaining, has noted the comparatively underdeveloped nature of shop floor union organisation in Australia, H.A. Clegg, Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, pp. 65-7.

289 For example V.G. Taylor, 'Researching Australian Shop Stewards: Some Pointers from a Comparative Study', (mimeo) University of Newcastle, n.d.. Some useful empirical research on shop stewards was reported in D.D. McBeath, 'The Shop Steward and Industrial Relations: a Study of the Western Australian Metal Trades', M.Ec. Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1973. Nonetheless, even when Australian shop stewards have been the subject of research, the discussion has tended to follow British analysis. This is discussed further in Chapter V.

290 Cf. R. Lumley, 'Workplace Level in Industrial Relations', Working Paper Series No. 47, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, SA, September 1982.

studies have relied principally on questionnaire methods.[291] Despite this, the sociology of union organisation involving workplace relationships as well as the more formal or official levels of union leadership, is a subject awaiting serious investigation.

In recent years, particularly since the early 1970's, industrial relations research in Australia has moved to embrace overseas research developments especially from Britain and the U.S. As tertiary training and research increased in this field, the emphasis on judicial wage fixation was supplemented by a greater concern for general institutional models from sociological theory.[292] As a consequence of this, recent industrial relations theory in Australia is almost entirely dominated by derivative theoretical frameworks.[293] Such interpretations derive predominantly from various 'total system' based theories inspired for example by the works of: Dunlop, Kerr, Flanders and Dahrendorf. These theories are generally perceived to offer penetrating and authoritative models applying to the broad processes of the industrial relations system, which may be suitably qualified to fit Australian circumstances but not substantially disputed.[294] In this sense, Australian studies are rarely of an expressedly comparative nature, yet seek to adapt domestic

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291 For example E. Davis, 'Decision-Making in the AMWSU', M.Ec. Thesis, op.cit.; and N.F. Dufty, 'The Shop Steward in Western Australia', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1980.

292 J. Wanna, 'Groups in Contention: Industrial Relations Theory', Arena, No. 64, 1983.

293 For example B. Dabscheck, 'The Australian System of Industrial Relations: an Analytical Model', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 22, No. 2, 1980. A recent attempt to introduce derivative sociological explanations to industrial relations studies in Australia is S.J. Frenkel (ed.), Industrial Action, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1980, (see pp. 12-13 for Frenkel's legitimation of the 'greater interest in alternative perspectives and overseas studies').

294 See, for example, J.D. Hill, W.A. Howard and R.D. Lansbury, Industrial Relations: an Australian Introduction, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1982, Chapters 1-3.

conditions to borrowed overseas theories. Accordingly, to consider that a body of 'Australian industrial relations' exists is a clear misnomer; researchers in Australia have reproduced derivative adaptations.

In the recent literature, the erosion of the economic-legal positivist approach has been engineered by a widespread concern for a more sophisticated and inter-related theoretical framework sensitive to systems and sociological grounded theory.[295] Indeed, one recent view argued that the field of industrial relations was 'properly regarded as a branch of sociology' and that much of the earlier narrowly conceived approach can be regarded as 'nonsense'.[296] Yet while such developments in theory have followed systems, pluralist and radical frames of reference, research has still been marked by an explicitly positivist and consensual bias.[297] Despite some sociological sophistication, such

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295 For instance, S.J. Frenkel (ed.), op.cit., Chapters 1, 2 and 6. Pursuing as adversary framework based on the more recent eclectic sociological approach, Frenkel is concerned with strike-prone industries and with identifying the 'essential lubricants' sufficient to maintain the system, (pp. 12-13). Following Crouch and the earlier study by E. Batstone, I. Boraston and S. Frenkel, The Social Organization of Strikes, Blackwell, Oxford, 1978, Frenkel specifies the concept 'accommodation structure' maintained by 'the interaction of the policies and power of the organisations involved', p. 16. In short, the 'accommodation structure' is a sociological construct denoting the nature of the regulative processes involved in industrial conflict.

296 D. Plowman et al., op.cit., p. 13.

297 Thus, Dabscheck and Niland conceptualise theory

> as evolving through a series of stages. The first and most rudimentary stage is to provide an ad hoc classificatory system in which empirical data is ordered and classified in a relatively simple way. The second stage involves the development of a more rigorous classificatory system in which interrelationships are specified and simple generalisations are feasible. At the third stage a simple theory emerges which enables causes and effects to be identified, and empirical generalisations to be made. The fourth and final stage involves a full theory which can be tested to determine how well it explains actual experience and how well it facilitates predictions.

B. Dabscheck and J. Niland, Industrial Relations in Australia, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981, p. 31. As such, the theoretical model

(continued over page)

industrial relations theory is therefore essentially a matter of codification with regard to viable generalisations arising from observed empirical data. Or, more accurately, the construction of theory in Australia has involved the empirical testing of theoretical models derived from Britain, Europe and the U.S.. This construction locates the concept of theory merely at one level of analysis, rather than at other theoretical levels which retain a more central concern for the major power relations and structural inequalities that underlie behavioural activity.[298]

From an industrial relations perspective, the study of trade unionism has been subordinate to an explicit consensual moral bias toward the maintenance of smooth-running processes of industrial relations. An evident characteristic of industrial relations in Australia has been its empirical and positivist emphasis, and this includes many studies like Martin, Rawson, Dufty, and Cupper that have directly focussed on unionism.[299] Nonetheless, even such empiricist research has not been appreciably consolidated. In fact researchers have tended to work in isolation preferring to explore tangential, unconnected and ad hoc policy-oriented aspects of labour relations. Within academic research many have been less concerned with a dialogue towards better understanding of union behaviour than with re-working existing material

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employed by industrial relationists in examining trade unions involves the incremental sifting of observed and predictable behaviour patterns to sustain generalisations with a degree of reliable verification.

298 This positivist concern is characteristic of a dominant scholarly tradition across social science, and is not peculiar to industrial relations. For a recent statement of this view see A.J. Geare, 'The Field of Study of Industrial Relations', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1977.

299 A recent survey of Australian unionism in this vein is L. Cupper and J.M. Hearn, 'Australia', in E. Owen Smith (ed.), Trade Unions in the Developed Economies, Croom Helm, London, 1981.

or ideas and empirically investigating ignored areas of study.[300] Trade unions as institutional parties in the industrial relations system have attracted a disproportionate volume of such research: a feature that reflects both the managerial values of industrial relations and the sociological fascination that labour collectivism appears to have held.

It remains a basic inconsistency within industrial relations research in Australia that studies should concentrate on only one group of the major parties. From an industrial relations viewpoint, based more or less on 'institutional-system' theories, the overt emphasis on the analysis of trade union behaviour would appear anomalous being unmatched by research on either the role of the state or of employer associations and single enterprise bargaining bodies.[301] Indeed, placing primary emphasis on the role of union organisation in conflict orchestration or in response to conflict situations, and significantly less on the agencies of government, arbitration and employer bodies, serves to distort the apparent premises of the subject. Unions are presented and analysed not as the sole cause of industrial disruption, but as the central instrumental factor in the formulation and proliferation of

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300 Cf. M.A. Gurdon, 'Patterns of Industrial Relations Research in Australia', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1978. While Gurdon called for a greater questioning of the 'underlying premises of the industrial relations (and socio-economic) system', (p. 460), his claim that published articles by Australian authors were increasing while those from non-Australian authors were decreasing, ignores the fact that many researchers resident in Australia completed their training overseas (and often retain non-Australian interests). Hence while promoting the appearance that 'local authorship' is high much of their analysis is derived from overseas trends.

301 Cf. J.D. Hill et al., op.cit., pp. 111-133; and J.E. Isaac and G.W. Ford (eds.), op.cit., 2nd Edition, pp. 291-319. Moreover, research on trade unionism concentrates on militancy or strike-proneness (including strategic unions, industries or regions) with little attention directed to the analysis of non-militant unions, industries or regions, (e.g. Frenkel, op.cit.). One major exception to this was the debate surrounding the nature of white-collar unions, see R.M. Martin, 'Class Identification and Trade Union Behaviour: the Case of the Australian White Collar Unions', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 7, No. 2, 1965.

disputes.[302] This paradigm, which has emerged as a conventional orthodoxy among labor, liberal and conservative theorists,[303] rests on the notion that the control of organised labour and certain conceptual ways of appreciating the characteristics of its organisation and activities, are essential components to the institutionalisation of industrial conflict.

Rarely, in Australia has it been explicitly recognised that the nature of Australia's export-oriented commodity production together with the state regulation of industrial relations through compulsory arbitration has established definite parameters to the processes of labour control.[304] Despite some accounts that attribute the highly interventionist role of the state to cultural and physical factors,[305] much of the orthodox literature in this respect has either neglected the

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302 For example S. Frenkel (ed.), op.cit.; and for a general collection in this vein see B. Ford and D. Plowman (eds.), Australian Unions: an Industrial Relations Perspective, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1983.

303 W.A. Howard, op.cit.; D.W. Rawson, Unions and Unionists ... op.cit.; and more generally see J. Aldred (ed.), Industrial Confrontation, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984.

304 For example, around the turn of the century the character of the Australian economy and its international role within capitalism together with domestic factors (such as labour shortages, high unionisation and state intervention) produced a national system of compulsory arbitration. The reliance on exports meant that employers and the state could not withstand lengthy disputes. As a pioneer economy dependent on foreign investment and earnings, industrial disputes had to be curtailed. Compuslory arbitration was used to 'abolish' strikes because the state was sufficiently powerful (relative to major employers) to hold the capacity to regulate capital-labour relations to offset the shortage of labour. R.M. Martin, op.cit., notes in passing the 'dependent' nature of Australian unions (pp. 143-7), but defends this aspect against 'leftist' advocates of collective bargaining, (in fact many recent advocates of such bargaining have been employer advocates).

305 For example W.K. Hancock, Australia, Benn, London, 1930, K.F. Walker, Australian Industrial Relations Systems ... op.cit.; and D. Yerbury, 'The Main Characteristics of Trade Union Law in Australian Compulsory Arbitration Systems', in J.E. Isaac and G.W. Ford (eds.) op.cit., 2nd Edition. See also T. Rowse, Australian Liberalism and National Character, Kibble, Melbourne, 1978, Chapter 3.

role or the state or attempted to downplay its significance.[306] In a recent study of Australian trade unions, for example, Rawson stated that 'certainly no one would have supposed .... that Australia was to be characterised by quite exceptional intervention in industrial affairs, including the fostering and the control of trade unions'.[307] Thus, to the extent that commentators discuss government involvement in industrial relations, such action tends to be regarded variously as a result of historical accident and coincidental occurrences, the sovereign or natural right of parliamentary government as specified in the written constitution, or the creation of experimental institutional patterns aimed to control industrial conflict, which due to their own institutional momentum have persisted over time.[308]

In Australia state intervention involving legal enforcement, repressive legislation and compulsory arbitration, has historically been based on the explicit assumption that the state could minimise if not abolish industrial disputation and associated industrial action by establishing mechanisms for the summary accommodation of conflict. In other words, the state regulation of labour in Australia assumed that the state as an institution above the industrial protagonists of capital and labour guarantee, or at least perform some guardianship over, peaceful

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306 The highly interventionist role of the state with respect to industrial development and industrial relations provides the main theme developed in Chapter II below.

307 D.W. Rawson, Unions and Unionists in Australia, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1978, p. 46.

308 See, for instance: J. Niland, Collective Bargaining and Compulsory Arbitration in Australia, NSW University Press, Kensington, 1978, pp. 22-7; R. O'Dea, Industrial Relations in Australia, 3rd Edition (P.J. Moore), West Publishing, Sydney, 1974, pp. 1-48; O. De R. Foenander, Trade Unionism in Australia, Law Book Co., Sydney, 1962; H.B. Higgins, A New Province for Law and Order, Dawsons, London, 1968; K.F. Walker, 'Australia', op.cit.. Moreover, these viewpoints have in recent years led to a re-discovery of Dahrendorf's work, see B. Dabscheck, op.cit., pp. 199-200.

industrial relations through labour discipline.[309] This specific role of the state existed neither in Britain nor the U.S.. Indeed, whereas in Australia the state intervened in hegemonic fashion to coerce parties in the negotiation process, in these other economies the role of the state has rarely exceeded the stimulation of negotiation between parties in order that labour relations could operate according to voluntarist traditions of collective bargaining.

Moreover, in Australia during the period of existence of compulsory arbitration, organised labour has sought to participate in the state institutions and contest government office through the avenue of parliamentary political parties (principally the Australian Labor Party). This in effect has served to incorporate the organisations of labour into the state apparatus thereby modifying labour movement policies through the electoral and parliamentary process and the ideology of social democracy.[310] The integration of the dynamics of the labour movement into the state apparatus is a feature of Australian politics that is entirely neglected by a wide range of commentators.[311]

The formal relationship between the Labor Party and the labour movement has not suffered from a lack of analysis, rather it has suffered from a restrictive analytical concern. From different perspectives the

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309 G. Sorrell, 'The Arbitration System', in J. Playford and D. Kirsner (eds.) Australian Capitalism, Penguin, Melbourne, 1972.

310 The classic account of this remains V.G. Childe, How Labour Governs, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964 [1923]. More recently see R. Catley and B. McFarlane, From Tweedledum to Tweedledee, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1974; and H. McQueen, 'Labor Versus the Unions', Arena, No. 20, 1969.

311 This is particularly the case in recent years from those operating from a social democratic paradigm, see the collection by K. Cole (ed.), Power, Conflict and Control in Australian Trade Unions, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982. This integration within parliamentary social democracy is often unrecognised by 'radical' approaches to the question. For instance, Theophanous acknowledges the incorporation of unions into the state via arbitration but not via the ALP, see A. Theophanous, Australian Democracy in Crisis, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 264-275.

issue of the impact of unions on the Labor Party has been well documented.[312] Such accounts dwell in particular on the degree of influence of both union leaders and formal union policies on the parliamentary party. The concern here is principally to determine the extent to which the union movement gives shape and substance to the ALP as a political party mediating the relationship between state and class interests.[313] Furthermore, while this involvement of the union base with the party political superstructure is accepted (despite being internationally uncommon) there is less analysis of Labor Party involvement in the union movement.[314] In this case it would appear that the traditional principle opposing any 'political' interference from the Labor Party in the internal affairs of the unions has helped generate a hiatus in the literature that overlooks the long-term and pervasive constraining influence of the parliamentary party on the unions.[315]

The contrary position, that the Labor Party reflects and defends the broad social and economic policies of the labour movement, is most apparent within the literature. For example, in a cost/benefit survey of the political consequences of union affiliation to the ALP, Houseman has suggested that

> the strength of tradition, the realization by the ALP that the unions continue to be its greatest source of strength, and the remnants of class feeling in Australia all tend to mitigate

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312 D.W. Rawson, Labor in Vain?, Longmans, Croydon, 1966; W. Denning, Caucus Crisis, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1982; D.J. Murphy (ed.), op.cit.; G. Duncan, 'The ALP: Socialism in a Bourgeois Society?', in G. Duncan (ed.), Critical Essays in Australian Politics, Edward Arnold, Melbourne, 1978.

313 Cf., for example, S. Clegg, G. Dow and P. Boreham (eds.), The State, Class and the Recession, Croom Helm, London, 1983.

314 Cf. D.W. Rawson, 'The ALP Industrial Groups', in J.E. Isaac and G.W. Ford (eds.), Australian Labor Relations: Readings, 2nd Edition, Sun, Melbourne, 1971.

315 But see H. McQueen, 'Labor Versus the Unions', Arena, No. 20, 1969.

> against any conceivable breaking of the ALP-trade union connection.[316]

Moreover, this connection according to Houseman is maintained essentially because

> one of the clearly indicated goals of the ALP, then, is to bring better industrial relations law into existence. All ALP leaders and activists are united in this goal.[317]

Yet, among the rank-and-file unionists, as Rawson has indicated, the endorsement of union partisanship (generally toward the ALP) was paradoxically not only not high but often majorities have opposed such support.[318] While increased support for partisanship was related to the members length of membership and political experience, much of the evidence of showing that partianship was unpopular was based on ignorance.[319] These findings that class identification and political support for partisanship were declining among workers have been replicated in a number of Australian studies using more recent data.[320] Such studies testing the 'classlessness' of affluent workers, are 'found to be based on mistaken assumptions about social change',[321]

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316 G.L. Houseman, 'Trade Unions and the Australian Labor Party: a Study of the Political Consequences of Affiliation', Ph.D. Thesis, University of Illinois, 1971, p. 78. Houseman in fact discusses the electoral consequences for the ALP rather than the political consequences.

317 Ibid., p. 72.

318 D.W. Rawson, 'The Paradox of Partisan Trade Unionism: the Australian Case', British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 4, October 1974. See also D.W. Rawson, Unions and Unionists in Australia ... op.cit., pp. 80-100.

319 Rawson noted in the survey published in 1974 (based on figures from a survey undertaken in 1969) that only 38 per cent of union members could indicate whether or not their union was affiliated to a political party, and if so name the party to which they were affiliated, (p. 415).

320 D. Kemp, Society and Electoral Behaviour in Australia, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1978.

321 See L. Minkin, 'The Party Connection: Divergence and Convergence in the British Labour Movement', Government and Opposition, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1978, p. 475.

the dubious use of subjectivist notions of class and the presumption of the existence of significant differences between the major political parties. Moreover, the findings often demonstrate the prominence of hegemonic values cultured through the political and the economic system, the media, and the instrumental fragmented consciousness reproduced within the ideology and form of union organisation.

Nevertheless, the social democratic reformist perspective, which has become more assertive and evident among commentators in recent years, presumes that the Labor Party encapsulates the interests of the wage-earners,[322] attempts to confer considerable benefits to affiliated unions,[323] seeks the redistribution of income along more egalitarian lines and promotes alternative economic strategies based on reducing industrial confrontation and on more technocratic economic and industrial planning.[325] Much of this social democratic discussion of trade unionism since the early 1970's has sought to justify the imposition of incomes policies on the labour movement.[326] Rather than discussing

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322 For example this was a major theme of the Labor Essays 1981, (eds. G. Evans, J. Reeves and J. Malbon), Drummond, Richmond, 1981, especially contributions by B. Hawke, B. Harnett, A Cunningham, J. Marsh, B. Hughes and C. Hurford. Cf. also J. Aldred, op.cit..

323 See K. Cole, 'Unions and the Labor Party', in K. Cole (ed.), op.cit.. While Cole attempts to document the benefits to unions of ALP affiliation (and indeed suggests that were the Labor Party to be in office more frequently then more benefits would result), she was nonetheless perplexed that 'under the most recent Labor government, the advances of affiliated unions were overall fairly limited, and during that period it must have been ironical for the ALP's affiliates to observe the significant improvements in salaries and conditions which accrued to unaffiliated white-collar unions in the public sector, the one area where the federal government could legislate', (p. 99).

324 A. Theophanous, op.cit., pp. 244-264.

325 See F. Stilwell's critique 'Towards an Alternative Economic Strategy', Journal of Australian Political Economy, No. 12/13, June 1982.

326 B. Hughes, Exit Full Employment, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1980; K. Hancock (ed.), Incomes Policy in Australia, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1981; and K. Cole 'Unions and the Labor Party', in K. Cole (ed.), op.cit..

the integration of labour organisations within the policy constraints of the capitalist state, such accounts have generally stressed the consensual character of wage restraint schemes backed up by either moral suasion or more real sanctions. As Bentley has argued, incomes policies have become the principal issue within the social democratic policy agenda, where the compliance or suppression of the union movement is necessary to establish security and institutional compatibility in industrial relations.[327] To this end trade unions appear as adjuncts of the state apparatus, where the power relations behind the instititutional relations are presented in terms of national versus sectional interests.[328] Hence, the traditional ALP-trade union 'connection' is analysed in this literature relative to the normative and functional role trade unions may contribute to harmonious industrial relations mediated through the ALP.[329]

In the Australian context, while the extent of state intervention is less widely recognised among liberal pluralist or social democratic viewpoints, of far more central concern has been the high degree of legal

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327 P. Bentley, 'The Industrial Relations Consequences of Incomes Policies', in K. Hancock (ed.), op.cit.. Although Bentley was not overly optimistic of a consensus-style politics emerging, he argued that 'governments are operating in a much more volatile political environment and considerable pressures are being placed on them to devise, or be seen to be devising, anti-inflation policies. Governments will continue to be subjected to such pressures and are likely to introduce forms of incomes policies because they are the most obvious way in which the electorate can be convinced that the government is attempting to contain inflationary pressures', (p. 256).

328 See for example R.J. Hawke's criticism of the Fraser Government's sectionalism with regard to 'those with power in the labour market', including employers and strong trade unions in 'Perspectives in Industrial Relations - the Labor Alternative', in J. Aldred (ed.), op.cit., pp. 23-25.

329 Cf. R.J. Hawke's characterisation of problems in industrial relations as stemming from 'that imperfectible element, human nature', about which the Labor Party can do very little although such problem identification 'is useful in setting the right directions' of policy, (ibid., p. 25).

regulation in industrial affairs.[330] Premised on left liberal values, much Australian research has debated the effects or existence of 'comparative wage justice',[331] where the growth, structure and policies of unionism have been significantly influenced by the system of compulsory arbitration. For instance, from the social democratic perspective, emphasis is placed on the role of the arbitration system in 'rationalising' industrial disputation, encouraging unionism, protecting weak unions, establishing minimum wages and conditions, and on the humane aspect of socially determining wages to the principles of the living wage.[332] In contrast, other research has attempted to establish that vis-à-vis market forces the social institutional influence of arbitration has produced minimal effects.[333] This debate is essentially over the extent to which the rule-making process contingent upon the arbitration system, as opposed to the supply and demand for labour, fundamentally determines the context of industrial relations.[334] For some this has developed into a debate over the nature of the constraints imposed by arbitration on the labour market.[335] In particular, the issue of

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330 See B. Dabscheck, 'Theories of Regulation and Australian Industrial Relations', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 23, No. 4, 1981.

331 J.N. Timbs, Towards Wage Justice by Judicial Regulation: an Appreciation of Australia's Experience Under Compulsory Arbitration, Nauwelaerts, Lovain, 1963.

332 For instance, A. Cunningham, 'Conciliation and Arbitration: Is There an Alternative?', in Labor Essays 1981 ... op.cit..

333 A recent example of this is R. Blandy and S. Richardson (eds.), How Labour Markets Work, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1982.

334 See W. Brown, 'Antipodean Contrasts in Incomes Policy', in J.K. Bowers(ed.), Inflation, Development and Integration, Leeds University Press, Leeds, 1979. Cf. J. Niland, op.cit.; and J.E. Isaac, 'Professor Niland on Collective Bargaining and Compulsory Arbitration in Australia', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 21, No. 4, 1979.

335 See R. Blandy, 'The Future of Australia's Industrial Relations System', in Australian Industrial Relations: Future Perspectives, Australian Bulletin of Labour Supplement, No. 5, N.I.L.S., September 1984. Some recent debate and proposals are recorded in G.F. Smith and R.C. McCallum, 'A Legal Framework for the Establishment of Institutional Collective Bargaining in Australia', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 26, No. 1, 1984.

whether wage relativities have been contracted in Australia due to the effects of judicial wage fixation has been investigated. Economists have extended this to calculate or postulate whether allocative 'distortions' in the labour market supply have resulted against comparative economies or against a projected market model.[336]

Of more recent concern with arbitration has been the identification of trends within the settlement of industrial disputes toward either greater reliance on tribunal determination or private negotiation outside the arbitration system.[337] Lansbury, for example, traced the return to arbitration in conjunction with the introduction of national wage indexation (partial indexation).[338] This was in the context of the trend from the late 1960's to early 1970's toward private wage settlement negotiations through collective bargaining in a tight labour market.[339] Ironically, despite Lansbury's claim, the number of disputes settled through arbitration remained less than that of the disputes settled through private negotiation.[340] Moreover, the identified trend toward arbitration was far less significant than the

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336 See W. Brown, J. Hayles, B. Hughes and L. Rowe, 'How Far Does Arbitration Constrain Australia's Labour Market', Australian Bulletin of Labour, Vol. 4, No. 4, September 1978.

337 See J.E. Isaac, 'Equity and Wage Determination', Australian Bulletin of Labour, Vol. 7, No. 4, September 1981.

338 R.D. Lansbury, 'The Return to Arbitration: Recent Trends in Dispute Settlement and Wages Policy in Australia', International Labour Review, Vol. 117, No. 5, 1978.

339 As well as in the context of the use of partial indexation as a incomes policy restraint, see H. Suzuki, 'Wage Indexation in Industrialised Market Economies', International Labour Review, Vol. 119, No. 4, 1980.

340 R.D. Lansbury, op.cit., pp. 616-8. Thus, for example, between 1971 and 1981 the percentage of disputes settled by arbitration fell from 17.1 per cent in 1971 to 10.6 per cent in 1979 but then rose to 15.0 per cent in 1981. Between 1971 and 1981 the percentage of disputes settled by private negotiation fell marginally from 23.5 to 22.3, although in 1973 32.1 per cent of disputes were settled in this way, (ABS, Cat. No. 63220.0).

continuing movement toward privately negotiated resolutions. This latter movement led many commentators, most notably those concerned to allow 'free market forces' to operate (including many employers, the Liberal and National Parties, some Labor parliamentarians and some academics), to welcome moves toward voluntarist and stable collective bargaining in order to avoid 'through benign neglect, the drift toward dispute resolution outside the tribunal system'.[341] Such developments have, however, been the object of intense review by the state apparatus at both the national and State level.[342]

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has attempted to examine trade unionism and industrial conflict in light of the controversies that characterise the literature. The chapter discussed two major problematics concerning analytical themes which focus either on resource allocation or on the political character of trade unionism. A number of criticisms were directed at major preoccupations of existing analysis. For example within much of the literature a general concern exists over the improvement of the existing economic system based on the legitimation of social inequality.

Research on the nature of resource allocation for the most part assumes the preeminence of competitive market forces, under which the

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341 J. Niland, op.cit., p. 91. Niland's objective of stable collective bargaining faced four 'possible policy options'. The first is included in the text; the second the enforcement of 'a return to compulsory conciliation and arbitration simpliciter'; the third, 'a shift to conventional collective bargaining'; and the fourth involved a 'system of dual procedures', (p. 91). In preferring the fourth option Niland listed twelve aspects that would characterise a joint arbitration/bargaining system, and ten strategic elements to be observed in order to encourage stable bargaining. His method basically involved the perfection of institutional relationships premised on 'fair and reasonable' behaviour.

342 See F.K. Cawthorne, Review of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1972-1981: The Discussion Paper, February 1982.

economic operations of trade unionism appear either essentially market conditioned or influenced by some degree of social determination over market allocation. In recent debates where unionism is perceived as a mechanism aimed at reducing social inequality, union activity becomes a political response to the structural allocation of resources. For some, this involves universal, non-class practices over the specific distribution of power, whereas for others unionism remains class oriented and located within the wider social relations of power.

Research into the political character of trade unionism is premised on evaluations of the nature of industrial conflict. Conventional accounts display an institutional bias where trade unions emerge as political entities engaged in the regulation of the terms of employment. The political character of unionism, therefore, despite leadership orientations relates to the politics of regulation and the establishment of a normative order. In contrast, Marxist accounts have considered the political character of unionism as a contradictory expression of the politics of collective wage labour under capitalism. A central theme within these writings has been the political limitations that forms of union organisation place on class struggle.

In Australia research on trade unionism and industrial relations has been policy oriented and directed toward specific problems within an industrial relations paradigm. While labour history has provided a fruitful canvass detailing the significance of main episodes and institutions, this material has not been integrated within the industrial relations field. Instead, the study of industrial relations in Australia has relied on theories derived from the United States and Britain and applied these in ad hoc fashion to local issues in industrial relations behaviour. Accordingly, for example, a major analytical inadequacy exists regarding the relationship between organised labour and the state; a relationship which is central to Australian labour relations but which

has thus far not attracted significant debate. Within industrial relations, too often theoretical models generated overseas have been applied to Australia, which have in due course determined the nature of the empirical research; less common has been the analysis of the characteristics of Australia's economic and political development in generating theoretical explanations of trade unionism and industrial relations in Australia.

CHAPTER II

THE STATE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN S.A.

South Australia covers one-eighth of Australia and is reputedly the driest State of the driest continent in the world. Rainfall particularly in country areas is often irregular and undependable. Nevertheless, primary industry involving wheat, wool and some mineral resources constituted the prime source of the State's economic prosperity for the first one hundred years after colonisation. Employment in secondary industry did not exceed that of primary industry until World War II, with the net value of production from manufacturing not overtaking that of the rural industries until 1955. Furthermore, South Australia is often regarded as a city State due to the heavy concentration of urban population. In 1981 South Australia had a population of 1.3 million, approximately 9 per cent of the Australian population. Yet, while the State possessed an exceptionally low population density of 0.79 persons per square kilometer, the urban Adelaide area housed 69 per cent of that population and a further 16 per cent resided in regional urban areas. Economically, the State is divided into six major geographical regions: the commercial and manufacturing based Adelaide metropolitan area, the Iron Triangle (Whyalla, Port Augusta and Port Pirie), the Green Triangle (Mount Gambier, Naracoorte, and Millicent), the pastoral hinterland, the agricultural belt of the central, south east and Riverland regions, and the burgeoning mid-north and northern resource region. In this study the focus is on the manufacturing industry in the Adelaide urban area.

I. Background

British colonial expansion in South Australia, the last Australian colony to gain approval for settlement, began in 1836.[1] By Act of Parliament and through the Colonial Office, the British state imposed administrative control and monitored capitalist development in the colony. The South Australian Colonisation Act of August 1834 provided that the self-financing colony be settled by free persons rather than convicts.[2] While the colony was administered by the British Crown through the Colonial Office and by the installation of a Governor, the responsibility for land sales, immigration and subsequently trading and finance was assumed by a non-resident Board of Commissioners (and later by a private monopoly, the South Australian Company).[3] Unlike the eastern penal colonies and with much more success than the abortive Swan River settlement in Western Australia, the colony of South Australia was planned from its inception as a capitalist enterprise in its own right.[4] It was not, as some would maintain, primarily commissioned as an intellectual exercise in British-sponsored 'responsible self-government' offering religious freedom.[5]

1 I have developed some of the analysis and ideas which appear in this chapter in an earlier article which also provides additional historical material. See J. Wanna, 'The Economic Development of South Australia: A Marxist Analysis', Journal of Australian Political Economy, No. 9, November 1980. For a more general account of the role of the state in economic development, see J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance: The Development of Organised Labour in South Australia, Adelaide C.A.E., Adelaide, 1981, Chapters 3 and 4.

2 D. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, (2nd ed.), 1967. Pike gives a detailed view of early settlement but concentrates on the religious dissident aspects. The book provides insights into the relationship between the Colonial Office and the main colonists.

3 An interesting but eulogistic account is provided by G. Sutherland, The South Australian Company: A Study in Colonisation, Longmans Green, London, 1898.

4 This argument is developed in Defence not Defiance, Chapter 2. Further, R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, make a similar point in arguing that 'in the new settlement of South Australia there was practically a dissenters' colony, where religion was ingeniously interwoven with the hope of profit in the South Australian Company', (p. 64).

5 Cf., G.D. Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1957.

Furthermore, as a capitalist venture the role of the colonial and post-colonial state apparatus was of instrumental importance in this endeavour.

At this time English political economy was substantially influenced by Malthus' theory of overpopulation, Ricardo's theory of differential ground rent, and Wakefield's 'modern' or 'systematic' colonisation theory.[6] These three viewpoints influenced the British state apparatus in both its domestic and colonial policies. Malthusian principles eschewed social charity through pointing out the apparently contradictory nature of Poor Law relief.[7] Government expenditure was better directed towards emigration, where it would lessen the domestic population pressure and present the prospect of expanding food resources in the colonial regions. Ricardo's notion of ground rent emphasised diminishing returns in agriculture due to the limited availability of fertile land.[8] This, together with the price maintenance of the means of subsistence associated with the Corn Laws, succeeded in placing pressure on manufacturing profits.

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6 T.R. Malthus, First Essay on Population (An Essay on the Principle of Population as it affects the Future Improvement of Society), Macmillan, London, 1926 [1796]; D. Ricardo, The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo - Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, (Vol. 1), P. Sraffa and M. Dobb (eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1951; and M. Blaug, Ricardian Economics, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1958, Chapter 2. E.G. Wakefield, 'A Letter from Sydney', in The Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, M.F.L. Pritchard, (ed.), Collins, Glasgow, 1968. See also P. Deane, The Evolution of Economic Ideas, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge,1978, Chapters 3 and 5. E. Roll, A History of Economic Thought, (4th ed.), Faber, London, 1973 [1938], Chapter 4; G. Routh, The Origin of Economic Ideas, Macmillan, London, 1975, Chapter 3.

7 Here the contradiction rested on the logic of two opposed 'natural laws'. As Routh put it, recognising that food resources were severely limited, 'people must eat', but 'sex is here to stay'. See G. Routh, op.cit., pp. 107-9.

8 D. Ricardo, The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, Chapters 2, 24, 25, 28 and 29. For discussion of such distributionist theory, see M. Dobb, Theories of Value and Distribution Since Adam Smith, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973, Chapters 3 and 4. While the colonisation link between Malthus and Wakefield is commonly noted, the similar link with the Ricardian school is less often made. For a geographic 'Ricardian' type analysis of the limits to S.A. agricultural expansion, see D.W. Meinig, On the Margins of the Good Earth, Rigby Seal, Adelaide, 1970.

In a closed economic system a counterproductive struggle emerged between rentier and industrial factions of capital, in which rising money wages served as a barometrical indicator of the conflict. In contrast, Wakefield's aim, as Marx argued, was the transportation of capitalist social relations to the colonies, with the intention of expanding the sources of capital accumulation, raw materials and markets in a manner that would correspond to Britain's civilising mission. 'Systematic colonisation' meant the systematic accumulation of capital. To achieve this end, colonial settlement had to be designed to generate and sustain a class of wage labour.[9] Consequently, with regard to English political economy of the day, colonisation along systematic lines satisfied a number of immediate objectives: it relieved pressure on the domestic population and on food

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9 The three major principles of Wakefield's theories demanded that:

(1) the cost of land should be set at an artificial price, high enough to prevent wage-earners from purchasing it;
(2) land revenue from the 'sufficient price' would be used to assist the passages of chosen emigrant labourers;
(3) the creation of a God-fearing, civilised, white society, which while economically subordinate to Britain would achieve political independence automatically as its population reached 'fifty thousand souls'.

Marx noted the 'anti-capitalist cancer of the colonies' in allowing wage labour to escape from their class position with the intention of becoming independent farmers or artisans. In Capital Marx surveyed Wakefield's colonisation theory pointing out that

> 'it is the great merit of E.G. Wakefield to have discovered, not something new about the colonies, but, in the colonies, the truth about capitalist relations in the mother country. Just as the system of protection originally had the objective of manufacturing capitalists artifically in the mother country, so Wakefield's theory of colonization, which England tried for a time to enforce by Act of Parliament, aims at manufacturing wage-labourers in the colonies. This is what he calls "systematic colonization"...
> "If", says Wakefield, "all the members of the society are supposed to possess equal portions of capital...no man would have a motive for accumulating more capital than he could use with his own hands. This is to some extent the case in new American settlements, where a passion for owning land prevents the existence of a class of labourers for hire". So long, therefore as the worker can accumulate for himself - and this he can do so long as he remains in possession of his means of production - capitalist accumulation and the capitalist mode of production are impossible".

K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976 [1867],pp.932-3.

supplies; served to extend fertile agricultural land thereby acting to reduce the price of grain; and provided British capitalists and landowners interested in exporting their capital with a measure of security to realise lucrative returns on their investment.

White settlement in South Australia commenced in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars when Britain was more able to exercise its imperial designs. With the constraints of war removed, sections of the naval fleet were used in the transportation of convicts and free settlers. Indeed, for the first time in over thirty years Britain, in the 1820-1840s, was in a position to proceed with its international economic expansion unimpeded by internal European conflicts. Throughout the Georgian and Victorian eras Britain was at pains to consolidate the crystallising Empire and the Australian colonies served this purpose admirably.[10]

The development of capitalism in Australia as a whole was unlike the origins of capitalism in Britain, Western Europe, the United States, or other British colonial economies of Canada, South Africa, Rhodesia or India. Historically, white settlers in Australia killed a sizeable proportion of the indigeneous people, but Australia experienced little rural depopulation for the purposes of constituting a domestic urban labour force prior to World War II. The aboriginal people were not, as in South Africa, used as available wage labour. Asian sources of labour were also by and large avoided, although some Chinese and Pacific Islanders (Kanakas) in the capacity of guest workers augmented the European workforce in the

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10 B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, 1834-1939, (2nd ed.), Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969 [1941].

nineteeth and early twentieth centuries.[11] Rather, the labour force was recruited through various policies of transportation and immigration, supplemented by the attractive pull of high domestic money wages and of course gold fever. Australian capitalism developed, as McQueen has argued, under the ideology (accepted by a cross-section of Australian settlers of different social class backgrounds) that Australia was the frontier of western capitalism and white civilisation existing dangerously close to Asia.[12] The labour force developed an ethos which was contradictorily characterised by elements of nationalism, racism, opportunism, sturdy independence, fraternal mateship and in terms of class imagery and political party organisation by a 'petty bourgeois' mentality founded on 'pre-industrial socialism'.[13]

On the other hand, this labour force brought with it the evolving traditions of British labour organisational experience. Craft unionism was one such imported tradition. Indeed, a number of transported convicts were sent to Australia for the very reason of their illegal trade union activity in friendly societies, secret brotherhoods, urban and rural combinations. Many had been instigators in the embryonic British labour movement, and upon reaching Australia continued their operations.[14] In

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11 For a sensitive discussion of the Pacific Island labourers in Queensland and its relationship to the labour movement and labour process intensification, see A.A. Graves, 'The Abolition of the Queensland Labour Trade: Politics or Profits', in E.L. Wheelwright and K. Buckley, (eds), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Vol. 4, ANZ Book Company, Sydney, 1980.

12 H. McQueen, 'Glory Without Power', in J. Playford and D. Kirsner, (eds), Australian Capitalism, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972.

13 H. McQueen, New Britannia, Chapter 15. Cf. R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1960; and V.G. Childe, How Labour Governs, (2nd ed.), Melbourne University Press, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964, [1923].

14 See Trades Union Congress (W.M.Citrine), The Martyrs of Tolpuddle 1834-1934, T.U.C., London, 1934.

addition, a number of craft unions, such as the London compositors, the Amalgamated Carpenters, the Ironmoulders Society and the Amalgamated Engineers, instituted union emigration schemes, in which surplus craftsmen and their families were given financial assistance to migrate mainly to the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.[15] These union assisted emigration schemes paid for by membership levy were themselves of minor significance, but they offered real encouragement to the wider emigration designs of government and other emigration or colonisation societies.

II. State Intervention and State Theory

The development of capitalism in Australia was characterised by periodic relative shortages of labour, and by a disproportionate concentration of capital, which led both to problems of capital imbalance and irregular growth. Without undue distortion, economic development was marked by periods of boom and depression, with two long booms (the first from the 1850-70s and the second from 1950-73), intersected by decades of much less spectacular growth and by three major economic depressions (1890s, 1930s and the 1970-80s).[16] Australia's development was directed to economies of scale in primary production (wool, wheat and minerals) involving a protracted relationship of dependency or 'neo-mercantilism' with the industrialised

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15 R.A. Leeson, Travelling Brothers: The Six Centuries' Road from Craft Fellowship to Trade Unionism, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1979, Chapter 11.

16 See: C. Forster, (ed.), Australian Economic Development in the Twentieth Century, George Allen and Unwin, Melbourne, 1970, especially Chapters by W.A. Sinclair and N.G. Butlin; and E.A. Boehm, Twentieth Century Economic Development in Australia, Longmans, Camberwell, 1971; B. McFarlane, 'Australia's Role in World Capitalism', in J. Playford and D. Kirsner (eds), Australian Capitalism, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972, pp. 32-64; and R. Catley and B. McFarlane, Australian Capitalism in Boom and Depression, APCOL, Sydney, 1981.

economies of Britain, the United States and Japan respectively.[17] Subsequently, domestic industrialisation developed in piecemeal fashion following import substitution strategies, subsidised and protected through state interventionist policies. Not only did foreign subsidiary and indigenous capital advocate economic protection, but so too did the trades and labour organisations.[18] Indeed, protectionism emerged as keynote in the Australian union movement's attitude to economic development. Such protectionist attitudes within organised labour represented on the one hand the politics of class compromise, and on the other a basic economistic plank from which the labour movement has only rarely been dislodged.

The geographical proportions of the continent served to prohibit entrepreneurial capitalists from developing certain traditionally occupied spheres; namely, transport, communications and certain infrastructural

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17 On the nineteenth century, see N.G. Butlin, Investment in Australian Economic Development, 1861-1900, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1964; more recently see B. Fitzpatrick and E.L. Wheelwright, The Highest Bidder, Lansdowne Press, Melbourne, 1965; and D.T. Brash, American Investment in Australian Industry, ANU Press, Canberra, 1966. For an analysis of the mercantile bourgeoisie in Australia, but one which maintains a degree of autonomy for that class, see R.W. Connell and T.H.Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, especially Chapter 3.

18 E.O.G. Shann, An Economic History of Australia, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1930 (Book 3, especially Chapters 23 and 24). Cf. N.G. Butlin, A. Barnard and J.J. Pincus, Government and Capitalism: Public and Private Choice in Twentieth Century Australia, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1982.

provisions.[19] These spheres, together with the other major public works and social provisions necessary to colonial capitalist development became the expressed responsibility of government, such that state activity in the economic system assumed an early prerogative which was qualitatively different than other established capitalist economies.

The involvement of the state in protecting capitalist expansion in Australia was not inconsistent with the objectives or attitudes of the labour movement in general. Rather, this state involvement together with the later arbitrational prerogatives introduced after the Great Strikes of the 1890s, was perceived as compulsory paternalism, which as a quid pro quo appeared to guarantee the 'living wage'.[20] The prevailing

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19 State provisions to primary producers included the nineteenth century network of wharfage, jetty and port facilities throughout the central and south east coastline, and extensive country rail services (e.g. the Broken Hill/Port Pirie railway 1887/8). These public transportation provisions were designed to unlock the hinterland, connecting productive regions with the coast to facilitate export. Rural production was instrumentally assisted in capitalisation and financial assistance through the state owned banks, the Bank of South Australia, 1836, and the Savings Bank of South Australia, 1840. See H.G. Viney, A Century of Commerce in South Australia, Adelaide Chamber of Commerce, Adelaide, 1936, especially Chapter 2. Pressure from commercial farmers effected the enactment of the Strangways Act (1869) designed to release unused land from large estates, and later the Advances Act (1895) which provided public investment at cheap rates to commercial farmers hit by the 1890s depression. At this time, one state experiment which achieved less measure of success, was the village-homestead settlement schemes. These state-funded cheap housing schemes were established in Adelaide (1886) and as rural settlements on the Murray River (1893). Whereas the Murray settlements largely failed, the Adelaide cottages provided some cheap working class housing for manufacturing labourers. See W.P. Reeves, State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand, (2 vols.), Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969 [1902], pp. 299-321. After both world wars the state acted to promote rural industry and alleviate the problem of returned soldiers, see H. Le Lacheur, 'War Service Land Settlement in South Australia', M.A.Thesis, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 1968.

20 B. Fitzpatrick, 'The Basic Wage: What is its basis?', Left Book Club - Victoria, Melbourne, 1941.

ideology of the labour movement, sustained by the 1907 Harvester Judgement, presumed the right of the state to determine a 'fair and reasonable' level of remuneration and associated living standards to which workers were entitled. As a consequence, Labor Party parliamentary candidates, including a substantial number not of labour origin, received the union movement's endorsement to represent their interests in the parliamentary sphere of the state apparatus. In this way the movement hoped, misguidedly or otherwise, that the state could be won over and become a state of and for labour.[21]

The continuing debate on the role of the capitalist state under capitalism is too extensive for the constraints of this thesis, although important aspects of this debate underlie much of the present discussion. Theories of the role of the state often display inconsistencies and a lack of concern for specific empirical

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21 Cf., N.B. Nairn, 'Some Aspects of the Development of the Labor Movement in New South Wales 1870-1900: and the Effects of that Development on the formation and Early History of the Labor Party in New South Wales, 1889-1900', M.A. Thesis, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1955; R.M. Martin, 'Trade Unions and the State in Australia', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1958 (especially Pt.1); J. Rickard, Class and Politics: New South Wales, Victoria and the Early Commonwealth, 1890-1910, ANU Press, Canberra, 1976.

application.[22] There has been a tendency, given the methodological difficulties that discussion on the nature of the state has involved, to engage in preliminary theoretical work.[23] This was largely a result of the attention directed at the abstract conceptualisation of

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22 That much of the theoretical expositions of the capitalist state are less than satisfactory is often noted. The incongruity between theoretical explanation and empirical application has come under increasing concern, see P. Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, New Left Books, London, 1974; and B. Jessop, The Capitalist State, Martin Robertson, Oxford, 1982, especially Ch 5. The recent burgeoning of marxist theoretical reviews of state activity initially served to revitalise classical marxist accounts. To date, the emphasis has been directed toward explanations of modern state activity relative to contemporary capitalism where theoretical and methodological approaches have raised controversy. For some, the state occupies dimensions not usually attributed to it in a more traditional state-civil society dichotomy, for example, in terms of ideology and ideological state apparatuses, L. Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, New Left Books, London, 1971; and H. Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, Sphere Books, London, 1968. Under such instances, the state tends to lose its main significance, becoming a general political-bureaucratic structure operating as bourgeois hegemony; see G. Therborn, What Does the Ruling Class Do When it Rules?, New Left Books, London, 1978. On the other hand, other marxist critiques based on modern empirical examples have made contributions in focussing attention on the state's specificity, policy formation, and the various historical contexts within which state apparatuses have developed. Examples of the latter, include: T. Nairn, The Break-Up of Britain, New Left Books, London, 1977; I. Gough, The Political Economy of the Welfare State, Macmillan, London, 1979; J. O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State, St. Martins, New York, 1973. B. Jessop, op.cit., has produced the most coherent taxonomy of state theories to date.

23 B. Jessop, op.cit., on the exorcism of the general theory of the state. For a critique based on the theoretical work of the 'state derivation' or 'capital logic' school, see J. Holloway and S. Picciotto, (eds.), The State and Capital: a Marxist Debate, Edward Arnold, London, 1978. Altuater's four areas of state activity represent the distilation of the 'capital-theoretical' approach. These areas are:

(i) the infrastructural and material conditions necessary to develop and expand production;
(ii) capitalist legal relations (bourgeois law) through which the economic relationships of production are maintained;
(iii) the regulation and repression of wage labour and the defusion of class conflict;
(iv) defending the national 'capital in general' both domestically and in terms of the capitalist world market.

E. Altvater, 'Some Problems of State Interventionism', in Ibid., p.42. In relation to Altvater's brief theoretical discussion, cf. E. Mandel, Late Capitalism, New Left Books, 1975, chapter 15; and B. Jessop, op.cit., pp.220-8, concerning the state's role in relation to its institutional form, its asymmetrical class power, its relational orientation and its role in capital accumulation.

the state's role following the now well traversed arguments between Miliband, Poulantzas and others.[24] Nonetheless, the Marxist debate concerning the role of the state in capitalist economies provides a useful departure point from which to advance an understanding of the specifics of a particular capitalist state.[25]

At one level the examination of the development of the modern state apparatus relates to the more basic question of the method of

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24 R. Miliband, The State In Capitalist Society, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1969; R. Miliband, 'Marx and the State', in T.B. Bottomore, (Ed.), Karl Marx, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1973; and R. Miliband, 'Marxist Theory and the Modern State', (Toronto 1975) Arena, No.39, 1975. Miliband has summarised a number of themes and responses in Marxism and Politics, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977. For critiques of Miliband and the British left, see N. Poulantzas, 'Marxist Political Theory in Great Britain', New Left Review, No.43, May/June 1967. Also the Poulantzas-Miliband debate in New Left Review Nos. 58, 59, 78, 82. Parts of this debate have been reprinted in R. Blackburn, (ed.), Ideology in Social Science, Fontana, London, 1972. Before his death Poulantzas had moved more towards a classical Leninist position in opposition to social democracy. This involved the notion of a 'dual assembly' in infiltrating the state apparatus. In orthodox Leninist terms the state became 'the battleground' of class warfare, but his critique of 'statism' led him to reject the mere capturing of state power and instead to seek a transformation of the state with the preservation of representative democracy together with self-management and popular assemblies. See, N. Poulantzas, 'Towards a Democratic Socialism', New Left Review, No. 109, May/June, 1978, pp.75-87; and more generally, N. Poulantzas, State, Power and Socialism, N.L.B., London, 1978. Beneath the abstraction there is a strong empirical basis to Poulantzian analysis.

25 On the development of Marxist theories of the state see, B. Jessop, 'Remarks on Some Recent Theories of the Capitalist State', Cambridge Journal of Economics, Vol.1, No.4, 1977; D.A. Gold, C.Y. Lo and E.O. Wright, 'Recent Developments in Marxist Theories of the Capitalist State', Monthly Review, (Pts. I & II), Vol.27, Nos. 5 and 6, October and November 1975; C. Offe and V. Ronge, 'Theses on the Theory of the State', New German Critique, No.6, Fall, 1975; and C. Offe, 'The Theory of the Capitalist State and the Problem of Policy Formation', in L.N. Lindberg et al. (Eds.), Stress and Contradiction in Modern Capitalism, D.H. Health, Lexington, 1975; B. Frenkel, Marxian Theories of the State: a Critique of Orthodoxy, Arena Publications, Monograph No.3, Melbourne, 1978.

conceptualisation of the state within capitalist society.[26] There is no reason for assuming a priori the synonymity of state structures within the capitalist mode of production.[27] Marx, in relation to this problem, saw the need for general analysis based on common tendential criteria relating to social change within a characteristic mode of production.[28] However, in comparison with other distinguishable modes of production the tendential criteria assume the properties of a 'pure' form. The distinction between this 'pure' form and Weber's 'ideal types' is not so much a matter of the political commitment of the respective

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26 Cf., L. Althusser, Lenin and Philosophy, New Left Books, London, 1971, pp. 121-173; with R. Miliband, Marxism and Politics, pp.43-74. Miliband has been criticised (Laclau/Poulantzas) over his lack of appreciation of structural constraints. In a rejoinder Miliband argued that 'hyper structuralism' passed for structural analysis and that in fact a friction between 'agents' and 'forces' within the human bounds of class struggle effectively circumscribed the nature of the state within capitalist society. This position is more plausible, but the emphasis in his work remains one which conceptualises the state as external (or as an institutional phenomena above class society) but tailored to the needs of class society.

27 B. Jessop, op.cit., ch.4.

28 Marx, for one, was not unaware of the complexities involved in analysing the state. This may explain his preference for timely empirical analyses on particular states rather than expending effort in conjuring a 'grand' theory of the state. (K. Marx, The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, International Publishers, New York, 1963; and K. Marx, 'The Civil War in France', in Selected Works, Vol. II, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1969, pp. 178-244). Marx had intended to devote volume IV of his major work to the state, see 'Letter to Lassalle', Feb. 22, 1858, in K. Marx and F. Engels, Selected Correspondence, Moscow, 1965, p.103-4. While never consistently unambiguous on the state, Marx nevertheless noted that the complex emerging modern state on the one hand represented the 'table of contents' of bourgeois society. At the same time, this does not deny that to some extent the particular ordering of the 'tabular' items within the 'contents' was not purely the expression of the will of the 'executive committee'. See, K. Marx, 'Letter to Ruge', in D. McLellan (Ed.), Karl Marx: Early Texts, Blackwell, Oxford, 1971, p.81; cf. also K. Marx and F. Engels, 'The Manifesto of the Communist Party' in Selected Works, Vol.1, op.cit., pp.98-137.

authors,[29] but is related to the structural constraints implicit in the formulation of the concept. For, while Weber's 'ideal types' were ahistorical and subjective, representing a positivist attempt to classify forms of behaviour; Marx, on the other hand, introduced a 'pure' form to explain the political economy of social relations in different historical contexts.[30]

Basically, Marx used the 'pure' form metaphor to capture the structural essentials of definite and given social relations in a particular epoch of production.[31] For Marx these essential criteria constituted the productive social relations of the capitalist period in which he wrote. They emphasised social change according to the antagonistic relationship between capital and labour. This relationship, he argued, rested on the social division of labour maintained by a process involving the appropriation of surplus labour. Such surplus labour was generated from the productive capacity of the cooperative use of the commodity labour power within a

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29 G. Therborn, (What Does the Ruling Class Do When it Rules?) argues not so much that Weber constitutes the 'bourgeois' theorist versus Marx the 'socialist' theorist, but that Lenin represented the 'proletarian Marx' as opposed to Weber, the 'bourgeois Marx'.

30 Cf., H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, (Eds.), From Max Weber, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1948; K. Marx, Capital, Vol.1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976; and K. Marx, Grundrisse, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973. A brief discussion of 'pure forms' and 'ideal types' in Marx and Weber's usage is found in A. Swingewood, Marx and Modern Social Theory, Macmillan, London, 1975, pp.43-57.

31 K. Marx, Preface and Introduction to a Critique of Political Economy, Foreign Languages, Peking, 1976. There are, of course, more or less deterministic interpretations of this passage, but one that stresses a definite correspondence between the 'mode of production of material life' and the 'social, political and intellectual life-process in general' is more appropriate.

society in which private appropriation of productive capacity existed through a particular wage system. The accumulation and distribution of realised surplus labour gave the economic order its specific and dynamic character.

Locating the analysis of the state within the capitalist mode of production assists in clarifying certain major theoretical issues. The clarification of common conditions under capitalism sets the parameters for a framework of analysis within which economic development, social relations and state activity can be discussed.[32] Two distinct interpretations of the concept of the capitalist mode of production require mention. The first assumes that the 'pure' form abstraction provides a general theory and method of analysis of capitalism as a whole.[33] The second relates the concept to specific case-study examples of

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32 For a 'development' introduction see A. Foster-Carter 'The Modes of Production Debate' New Left Review, No. 107, Jan/Feb. 1978. It does not necessarily follow, as Cartelier argues, that to examine the relationship between the state and capital, presupposes the externality of the state from the production process. Her argument that the 'state is constitutive of the wage labour relationship' as a form of social subordination is particularly relevent to (ex)colonial societies. But she confuses the point that the state reproduces and may even extend the subordination of labour, with the notion that the state autonomously constitutes the wage labour relationship. This in effect reduces social relations to political power which holds economic consequences. See L. Cartelier, 'The State and Wage Labour', Capital and Class, No. 18, Winter 1982.

33 L. Althusser, For Marx, New Left Books, London, 1977. In addition N. Poulantzas, Political Power and Social Classes, New Left Books, London, 1975, presents a structural-hegemonic analysis along these lines, which is extended (and qualified) in State, Power and Socialism, New Left Books, London, 1978.

capitalist society at various levels of maturation.[34] Both interpretations must, in addition, provide for changes within capitalism since Marx, such as the rise of modern corporations, transnational corporations, sectors of monopoly capitalism, and the role of the modern Keynesian and post-Keynesian state.[35]

One of the major strengths and weaknesses of Marxist research using such conceptual techniques as the mode of production, is precisely this attempt to combine various levels of analysis. The present study attempts this combination but in a manner that is not entirely orthodox with respect to Marxist theories of the state. In the context of this present study it is argued historically that through the apparatus of the capitalist state the capitalist mode of production was introduced into the colonial region. This is not to assert that the state created outright the

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34 This has been taken to suggest, as with Giddens, that the term capitalist mode of production can be equated with a specific example. For Giddens Marx's 'pure' form of capitalism approximated the pinnacle of nineteenth century British capitalism. A. Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies, Hutchinson, London, 1973. Lenin also lends some weight to this interpretation in The Development of Capitalism in Russia (Collected Works), Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972; when he discusses opinions of Marx 'about a different historical epoch', p. 33. However, this perspective lacks an appreciation of the common aspects included in Marx's use of the general concept, which while based to some extent on Britain was not exclusive to Britain. Nairn and Anderson have instead argued that the aberrant aspects of British capitalism shaped its social direction but that the British structure of capitalism was not the sole 'pure' form. Indeed, Thompson's polemic with these authors reinforces their views in relation to the position Giddens takes. The 'pure' form of capitalism, then, does not relate to the specific social relations of one society, but relates to general structural conditions within which social relations are formed. See T. Nairn, 'The Twilight of the British State', New Left Review, Nos. 101-102, February/April 1977; P. Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, New Left Books, London, 1974; E.P. Thompson, The Poverty of Theory, Merlin Press, London, 1978.

35 A. Shonfield, Modern Capitalism, Oxford University Press, London, 1965.

capitalist mode of production in the colony, nor that it established a state mode of production, but that capitalist (primarily British financiers, investors, landowners and wealthy settlers) used the state to induce a particular form of capitalism to the area.[36] In other words, in the absence of colonial primitive accumulation the colonial state apparatus served to mediate and plan the inflow of metropolitan surplus in the form of foreign investment.

The outcome of the recent extensive debate on the role of the capitalist state has tended to conclude on the necessity for theories of the state which are more specifically oriented.[37] Despite the

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36 This is not to put forward the view that the pattern of state intervention established an embryonic 'state mode of production', as Szelenyi has inferred, but that the colonial state was central to the inducement and construction of capitalism. In Australia the state's role was to facilitate the accumulation of capital through the expansion and subsidisation of constant capital and to regulate and offset the relative costs of variable capital. This process was in no way unique but the degree to which it was implemented in the colonies of Australia is noteworthy. On the conceptual aspects involved in the 'state mode of production', see I. Szelenyi, 'The Relative Autonomy of the State or State Mode of Production?', Paper presented to the 9th World Congress of Sociology, Uppsala, 1978 (mimeo, Sociology Department, Flinders University). See also the extension of this argument as presented by E.O. Wright, 'Capitalism's Futures: A Provisional Reconceptualisation of Alternatives to Capitalist Society', Paper presented to the conference on the State in Contemporary Capitalism, Mexico City, October, 1979 (a revised version of this paper appears in Socialist Review, No. 68, March-April, 1983).

37 Various 'schools' have emergedwith differing perspectives on the role of the capitalist state. Basically, these perspectives differ on the degree of determinism, primacy orientations and levels of analysis. Such differing views include: ruling class-elite theory (Domhoff, Lundberg, Mills); class theoretical-relational/hegemonic (Poulantzas, de Brunhoff); capital logic theory (Muller, Altvater); neo-Ricardian theory (Glyn and Sutcliffe, Gough); Marxist fundamentalism (Yaffe); idealist or Hegelian-inspired theory (Marcuse, Habermas); state monopoly capitalist theory (Sweezy, Mandel); anthropological interpretations (from Engels or Godelier); together with more general theories emphasising historical processes of class experience, popular and democratic struggle (Thompson, Hobsbawm, Williams). See. B. Jessop, op.cit.; J. Holloway and S. Picciotto, op.cit.; R. Miliband, Marxism and Politics; and M. Wirth, 'Towards a Critique of the Theory of State Monopoly Capitalism', Economy and Society, Vol. 6, No. 3, August 1977.

controversy that surrounds the many conflicting avenues of theoretical approach, Marxist views on the state can be seen to have approached some commonality of understanding on the nature of the state, particularly vis a vis non-Marxist accounts. This consists of the rejection of the neutrality of the capitalist state, a qualification of its instrumental or institutional nature, and an awareness that the state reflects the antagonistic struggles of capitalist society. As well, a general awareness exists on the incremental importance of the state's economic role and its patterns of intervention. Emphasis is given to the complexities of the relationship (over which there is much contention) between the state, the economic structure and the modern protracted social and technical division of labour. In this sense, the state is not generally the necessary precondition for capital accumulation, but performs conditional intervention regulating the scale of the capital accumulation process and to the nature of the particular reproduction/ non-reproduction of production relations upon which that process operates. Finally, an awareness is emerging in the wake of more abstract discussions, of the crucial task of understanding the nature of the particular state apparatus with some theoretical sophistication at both national and global levels of analysis.

Given the widespread and unfinished nature of this Marxist debate the analysis in this thesis chooses not to espouse the merits of one theory in preference to others with the intention of shaping the empirical to the abstract. Rather, the analysis of the South Australian state will serve to substantiate facets of certain theories of states where specific insights contribute toward an explanation. The following sections examine the specific ways in which the parameters of state intervention, its

social legitimising character and its relation to the accumulation process, are dependent upon the antagonistic nature of the particular social/technical division of labour in the extant production process.

III. The State's Role in the Development of the Capitalist Economy

For the most part South Australian colonists were unable to appropriate any significant material forces of production remaining from the pre-capitalist (semi-nomadic hunting and gathering) society. British capitalists and settlers inherited no productive infrastructure, nor did they find much of interest in terms of immediate commercial prospects. Despite what some historians proclaim British capitalism did not seek to establish itself en bloc in South Australia.[38] Landed capital and finance capital predominated over mercantile capital, whilst direct manufacturing capital generally eschewed the new colonies. The landed and financial bourgeoisie attracted to South Australia were anxious to guarantee the survival and expanded reproduction of a colonial capitalist form of production dependently integrated into the British market. This was achieved, as I have argued elsewhere, by nurturing 'marsupial capitalism' through the sustained intervention and subvention of the state apparatus.[39] In other words, the early colonial state was constituted to offset the 'anti-capitalist cancer of the colonies' by forging a degree of artificial dependency between emigrant labour and advanced capital.[40] Accordingly, the early colonial administrators and

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38 As conveyed in A.G.L. Shaw, The Economic Development of Australia, (4th edition), Longmans, Melbourne, 1960; and D. Pike, The Quiet Continent, Cambridge University Press, London, 1962. Cf. also B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, 1834-1939, op.cit. for a more particular economic argument.

39 J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance, Chapter 3.

40 K. Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, p. 938; and K. Marx, Grundrisse, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 278.

Colonial Office functionaries (e.g. Hindmarsh, Gawler, Angas, Grey, Robe and Young) were either preferentially granted the opportunity to purchase huge expanses of land, or were given such tracts in lieu of salary. The consequences of this government policy reduced land speculation by establishing a class of state-protected landowners. This imposed restrictions on the petty bourgeoisie especially on the expansion of small-holding farmers, merchants and independent artisans. With the successful transportation and construction of a colonial landowning bourgeoisie, this class commenced its domination as a local ruling class enshrining its political control in parliament where its class base survived in the upper house until the 1970s.[41] Thus, the local landed bourgeoisie lent an immediate class-instrumental character to the colonial state apparatus. This initial dominance of the local bourgeoisie over the state (local class hegemony within the constraints of British and US capital interests), which underwent substantial changes particularly with the arrival of the Labor Party after 1891, declined in significance particularly during the present economic crisis.

The establishment of the interventionist state apparatus represented a fundamental pillar in the colonial struggle to create semi-periphery capitalist societies in the manner of Rostow-inspired experiments.[42] The state became a 'table of contents' of capitalist colonial development which involved a high degree of interpenetration and reconciliation between the political constitutional state and class interests in society.[43] To

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41 J. Lonie, 'Conservatism and Class in South Australia', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1973.

42 W.W. Rostow, The Stages of Economic Growth (2nd edition), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge [1960] 1971.

43 K. Marx, 'Letter to Ruge', in D. McLellan (ed.), Karl Marx: Early Texts, Blackwell, Oxford, 1971, p. 81.

this extent, the state experimented with a range of highly interventionist policies not generally considered as within the responsibility of the nineteenth century liberal state.[44] Following Wakefield's colonisation system, the intervention behind the actions of the early coalition of landed capital, finance capital and the state apparatus was to discourage and, if possible guarantee against, the emergence of an emigrant class of petty ruralists possessing 'equal portions of capital'. For if this were to occur, it was argued, economic development would be retarded because 'no man, consequently, would have a motive for accumulating more capital than he could use with his own hands'.[45] Hence, political intervention in the economy matured, not because the political state was intellectually needed, representatively desirable, or even repressively necessary at the outset against outbursts of working class dissent, but because it was the need of private colonial interests to constitute a particular form of state which facilitated expanding scales of capital accumulation and reproduction.

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44 Here the pattern of state intervention became a contradictory one of paternal liberalism. In South Australia economic policy aimed to regulate the economy and protect existing interests. Laissez faire doctrine was rejected in the short-term in the anticipation of a future laissez faire society dominated by the colonial bourgeoisie. This is because the British colonists attracted to South Australia were economic liberals in Britain, but in the role of colonial gentry adopted conservative economic protectionism. Accordingly, the colonial bourgeoisie often held conflicting views on the role of government: much of this conflict surfaced in the social and political context where progressive measures (votes for women, the recognition of trade unions, secular education etc.) emerged under conservatism. For a preliminary discussion related to Australia generally, see D. Clark, 'Australia: Victim or Partner of British Imperialism' in E.L. Wheelwright and K. Buckley, (eds), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Vol. I, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1975.

45 E.G. Wakefield, in (M.F.L. Pritchard (ed.)), The Collected Works of Edward Gibbon Wakefield, p. 326 . For a more critical discussion, see, K. Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, pp. 934-5.

The purpose of this form of state activity related both to the need to guard against the formation of a 'less-than-capitalist' petty commodity class, and to prevent the development of alternative patterns of state intervention, rooted in contending interests, as could have occurred, for example, with the expansion of the British manufacturing bourgeoisie. To achieve this purpose the state apparatus articulated the interests of landed and finance capital by pursuing the extensive regulation of labour power, so that in the process of the colony becoming a 'stream tributary to the broad river of English wealth' the local landed class could itself accumulate capital with security.[46] The explicit and constant danger to be found in the neglect of the sphere of state regulation, best epitomised by the collapse and subsequent retardation of Western Australia, was the very real threat of the over-expansion of land appropriation creating a proportionate shortage of hirable labour power.

What is significant in this formative phase is the subventionist commitment to capital provided by government. Government restrictions on imports (1875-76 and 1885) facilitated the creation of an export surplus in the 1880s and as a consequence stimulated the establishment of an embryonic manufacturing base. Public spending was given priority by the class of commercial landowners through their control of Parliament. Throughout this era, political power was congruent with property: men of property guaranteed the survival of this arrangement through their domination of the upper house and concessions to reformist liberal ministries in the lower house such as those of Playford, Cockburn, Holder and Kingston.[47] The extensive public

46 B. Fitzpatrick, op.cit., p. 348.

47 R.L.Reid, L.C.L.Blair and K.A.F.Sainsbury, 'The Government of South Australia', in S.R. Davis (ed.), The Government of the Australian States, Longmans, Melbourne, 1960, especially pp. 336-8; and R.L. Reid, 'South Australia', in J. Rorke (ed.), Politics at the State Level - Australia, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1971.

debt, almost entirely raised from government bonds issued in Britain, was used to serve 'primarily as means of development'.[48] Between the years 1890 and 1935 the public debt was maintained constantly at an annual rate ten times the annual state revenue. Thereafter the ratio fell gradually until the public debt approximately equalled annual state revenue by 1980. Thus table 2.1 below demonstrates this commitment on behalf of the state apparatus.

TABLE 2.1: Public Finance, South Australia 1885-1981

Year	Public Debt $'000	State Revenue $'000
1885-6	36,680	4,558
1895-6	48,433	5,043
1905-6	60,165	5,612
1915-6	79,049	8,714
1925-6	160,521	20,948
1935-6	211,397	22,819
1945-6	221,498	32,687
1955-6	512,179	118,805
1965-6	955,128	236,816
1975-6	1,394,702	1,036,985
1980-1	1,872,699	1,548,299

Placing the high level of state subsidisation in a chronological context, the public debt ranged from 400-600 per cent of exports around the turn of the century, by the height of the depression it reached 990 per cent of exports, and has fluctuated between 100-360 per cent since World War II. The bulk of this public debt was expended on what O'Connor terms 'social capital'.[49] In other words, state expenditure produced necessary infra-structural provisions to stimulate and cater for private capital expansion.

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48 B. Fitzpatrick, op.cit., p. 273.

49 J. O'Connor, The Fiscal Crisis of the State, St. Martins, New York, 1973. Cf. H. Mosley, 'Is There a Fiscal Crisis of the State?' Monthly Review, Vol. 30, No. 1, May 1978.

TABLE 2.2: State Expenditure in South Australia, 1861-1981

	Total State Expenditure ($'000,000)	Total Public Debt ($'000,000)	State Expenditure as Percentage of Exports	Public Debt as Percentage of Exports	Welfare Percentage of Total State Expenditure (Health, Education & (Social Security)
			%	%	%
1860-1	.9	1.7	5	94	
1865-6	2.1	1.5	75	55	
1870-1	1.5	4.3	41	119	
1875-6	2.6	7.6	45	129	
1880-1	4.1	22.3	65	355	
1885-6	7.5	36.6	128	624	
1890-1	6.1	43.3	55	387	
1895-6	5.9	48.4	73	597	
1900-1	6.5	52.1	74	588	
1905-6	6.3	60.1	46	437	
1910-1	11.6	56.0	57	276	5.9
1915-6	13.8	79.0	-	-	6.6
1920-1	24.4	104.7	69	296	6.6
1925-6	33.7	160.5	86	(a) 412	7.2
1930-1	31.6	199.0	157	990	8.8
1935-6	25.0	211.3	81	688	14.9
1940-1	28.5	219.5	108	831	(c) 12.6
1945-6	38.9	211.4	96	549	11.8
1950-1	100.7	296.7	46	137	11.0
1955-6	164.2	512.1	84	262	15.1
1960-1	214.9	722.0	108	363	21.5
1965-6	298.6	955.1	100	(b) 322	27.5
1970-1	458.3	1,256.3	116	319	33.7
1972-3	642.1	1,415.1	123	271	39.9
1975-6	1,195.3	1,349.7	174	197	40.7
1977-8	1,363.4	1,605.8	206	242	66.9
1979-80	1,534.2	1,781.6	96	111	64.1
1980-1	1,704.2	1,872.6	122	134	

(a) After 1929 Fed. Govt. assumed 1/3 state debts.
(b) After 1970 Fed. Govt. assumed 1/5 state debts
(c) Since 1945 unemployment benefits paid by Fed. Govt.

Sources: South Australian Year Book, No. 13, 1978; No. 16, 1981; No. 17, 1982, ABS, Adelaide.
Auditor General's Report, 1977-8, Government Printer, Adelaide.
Statistical Register of South Australia 1972-3,(Part VII, p. 30), ABS, Adelaide.

In general 'social capital' includes: public enterprises, public 'service' utilities, technical and research institutions, transport facilities and the provision and maintenance of urban structures. The state's expenditure on various forms of welfare, O'Connor's 'social expenses', represented a pittance of the annual budget until the mid-1960s. Even so, the main 'expense' within the welfare commitment was to education, which falls in both categories; namely as indirect welfare to student recipients and as the social capital formation of intellectual capital.[50]

State intervention through state expenditure between 1860 and 1945 largely followed the pattern of subvention to private capital in the form of concrete infrastructural provision. In the post-war phase the emphasis shifted to the provision of public enterprises to subsidise production costs. The state's direct subvention was channelled into private industry through a variety of forms, including: concessions and loans on an interest-free basis, cash payments to expanding firms, long-term 'service' indentures and 'one stop shopping' (i.e. state designed and built factories progressively sold to investment firms at 13.5 per cent interest under the factory construction scheme).[51]

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50 J. O'Connor, op.cit.; cf. I.Gough, 'State Expenditure in Advanced Capitalism', New Left Review, No. 92, July-August, 1975. Also. P.Baran and P. Sweezy, Monopoly Capital, Monthly Review, New York, 1966, especially compare Chapters 6 and 10.

51 'South Australia: Incentives for Industry', Department of Economic Development, October, 1978. Further, more recent schemes are listed in Development and Development Digest, Department of Economic Development, Adelaide, 1973-78. The S.A. Establishments Payment Scheme was launched in September 1978 providing financial incentives (regional grants and interest-free loans) to attract investment, see 'Important Information for Industry', September 1978 and 'S.A.'s New Temptation for Industry', September 1978, D.E.D. Adelaide; and 'S.A. the State of Industry', Adelaide n.d., for more general promotion. On the development of government economic policy see J. Warhurst, 'The South Australian Premier's Department', Politics, Vol.17, No.1, May 1982; J. Warhurst, 'The Politics of the South Australian Economy', Australian Quarterly, Vol. 51, No.2, June 1979; and M. Stutchbury, 'The Dunstan Government and Industrial Planning in South Australia', Australian Quarterly, Vol. 53, No. 2, Winter 1981.

It is possible to infer from the high degree of state activity, that the state apparatus became engaged in 'Keynesian' economic policies in an era long before Keynes came to the fore. At face value this seems plausible. Indeed, one factor which favoured pre-Keynesian economic intervention related to the apparent synthesis between effective (profit enhancing) governmental activity and investment responsiveness at the macro level. If 'Keynesian' policies were discriminately pursued prior to Keynes, then they were simply geared to substantial public investment through public works and infrastructure development rather than to any notion of multiplier effects of raising effective demand to raise economic activity generally. However, at no time was any broad attempt made to implement a coordinated Keynesian policy that required fiscal and monetary management, publicly accumulated and directed ('socialised') investment, macro economic planning and the aim of attaining full employment by raising capacity utilisation in the capital and consumer goods sector. None of these Keynesian criteria were evident at the state level until perhaps the 1960s.[52] But, by then, with regard the broader Keynesian planning initiatives, the South Australian state resorted more to the position of a liberal 'nightwatchman' state. Consequently, while the state moved to stimulate economic development through infrastructural provision, it thereby attempted to secure private

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52 Federally, Keynesian policies gained weight from the mid-1930s, reaching their main influence during the war and post-war reconstruction phases. The Commonwealth Bank Act of 1945 and the Commonwealth White Paper Full Employment in Australia, Government Printer, Canberra, 1945, best symbolise this policy direction. See P. Boreham and G. Dow, (eds), Work and Inequality, Vol. 1, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1980 especially Chapters 1, 9, 10 and 11; B. McFarlane, Economic Policy in Australia, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968; and more generally R. Catley and B. McFarlane, Australian Capitalism, op.cit., Chapters 2, 3 and 4; M. Beresford and P.Kerr, 'A Turning Point for Australian Capitalism: 1942-52', in E.L. Wheelwright and K.Buckley, (eds), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Vol. 4, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1980.

investment by enhancing profitability and not by intentionally fostering employment. In this way the state sought to retain the confidence of its local landed gentry and increasingly of capital-exporting British financiers and later American corporations. In so far as the state did socialise investment, it socialised the burden of enormous public debt repayments across the community to cater for the expense involved in encouraging private investment. To put it another way, the state socialised the debt repayments of the cost of providing access to and development of the means of production sufficient to attract further private capital. In accordance with this conception of its role the state found it necessary to nationalise certain operations which private capital found onerous.[53]

IV. The Economic Development of South Australia

The economic development of South Australia can be divided into three distinct and cyclic phases: (i) 1836-1890, the first long boom, (ii) 1890-1933 the arrested expansion culminating in the depression, and (iii) the second long boom ending in the present recession.

The First Phase (1836-1890)

The characteristics of the South Australian economy in the period 1836-1890 arose in the context of the colonial establishment of the economic base. High economic growth was recorded primarily through the impact of British investment and government-to-government interest bearing loans. British and some German migrants provided a population and workforce, which reached a total of 320,000 residents with a labour force in secondary industry (manufacturing and milling) of 13,183 by 1890.[54] Following the land grabbing

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53 For example, B. Muirden, When Power Went Public, Australasian Political Studies Association, Monograph No. 21, Adelaide, 1978.

54 South Australian Statistical Register 1890, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1982, part 3, p. 69-70.

associated with Wakefield's colonisation scheme, a relatively cohesive class of wealthy landowning capitalists emerged along with a small rural gentry.[55] In the labour force, craft unionism developed for the purposes of collective bargaining against the Master and Servants Act provisions and the employers' attitude of 'freedom of contract'. By the end of this period mass unions emerged in the maritime, building, textile and pastoralist industries and a United Trades and Labour Council was established in 1884.[56] In the 1880's schemes for the voluntary arbitration of industrial disputes were tried, as in the case of the 1885 Bootmakers' strike.

In this period South Australia became a capitalist-mercantilist economy restricted to primary production.[57] Such economic development is best illustrated by the massive expansion in acreage of land under cultivation, the sharp rise in wheat production and pastoral (largely sheep) production, and, though still relatively small-scale, the rise in value of mining.[58] South Australia became the 'granary of the continent' due to the fact that the annual domestic wheat production was not uncommonly in excess of the total of all the other five Australian colonies. Prior to the Great Depression wool production was also a staple product with the number of sheep trebling to over 6 million between 1856-76. The rapid expansion of primary industry is demonstrated in the following figures.

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55 J.B. Hirst, Adelaide and the Country: 1870-1914, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1973.

56 By 1890 South Australia had an estimated 57 unions, mainly small craft societies, and a total estimated membership of 10,000 at the onset of the Great Strikes of 1890. See B. Dickey, 'South Australia', in D.J. Murphy (ed.), Labor in Politics: The State Labor Parties in Australia, 1880-1920, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975; also J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance, Chapters 2 and 3.

57 Prior to the penetration of U.S. capital and monopoly forms of capitalism during the twentieth century, the South Australian economy does appear to have occupied a structural position closely resembling that of a peripheral neo-mercantilist relationship with the United Kingdom.

58 H.G.Viney, A Century of Commerce in South Australia. By 1890 South Australia had nine acres under cultivation per capita, ahead of Victoria with 2.3 acres per capita, and N.S.W. with only one acre of cultivated land per head of population.

TABLE 2.3: South Australian Primary Production 1856-1933

	SHEEP million head	WOOL million lbs.	WHEAT AREA thousand acres	MINING Value in thousand £
1856	1.9	8	162	412
1876	6.1	36	1,084	602
1896	6.3	47	1,693	248
1933	7.7	79	4,067	1,226

Source: South Australian Yearbook, 1973.

After 1886 consistent trade surpluses were registered. In fact, the exports of primary produce from the 1880s to the 1930s approached double the value of imports and by the Great Depression export earnings were three times the amount of imports. It was in this phase of agricultural/pastoral capitalism that many of the wealthy families of the 'Adelaide Establishment' emerged such as the Angas, Barr-Smith, Bonython, Downer, Gosse, Hawker, Hayward and Rymill families, and the mercantile family of Elder.[59] Indeed, South Australia was tied to primary production until after the Great Depression, when, stimulated by war-time expansion and reconstruction, some diversification of production occurred and manufacturing emerged for the first time as a substantial sector within the economy. Thus, unlike New South Wales and Victoria with regard to the early trade union movement, this 'open' economic pattern of development meant that for over a century

59 See 'Who Runs South Australia', Bulletin, 31.7.1976, pp. 56-9; R.L. Reid, 'South Australia', in J. Rorke, (ed.), op.cit.; H. Stretton, Ideas for Australian Cities, Orphan Books, North Adelaide, 1970, Chapter 7; and J. Moss, Monopoly Owns South Australia, Young, Adelaide, 1961. See also, J. Playford, 'Myth of the Sixty Families', Arena, No. 23, 1970; and for a later apology, J. Playford, 'The Myths of the Adelaide Club', (mimeo) University of Adelaide, 1981 (a version of which appeared in Quadrant, July 1981).

unions had to contend with an overwhelmingly rural sector which was difficult to mobilise.[60] For over two-thirds of the post-settlement history the union movement remained largely within a supplementary sector of urban trades where it necessarily took the form of relatively small, craft-based employment societies.

The Second Phase (1890-1933)

British and American capital investment increased in this period but the dependence on primary production remained. At the end of this period the primary industries sector accounted for around 60,000 (or 25 per cent) of the workforce. In comparison manufacturing industry employed 41,000 (or about 18 per cent) of the workforce.[61] Some manufacturing development became concentrated within the narrow and vulnerable consumer durable sector, making South Australia the third most industrialised State in Australia. An increased flow of British migrants increased the population of the State to almost 600,000 by 1933. The local ruling class, the 'Adelaide Establishment', consolidated its position behind British and American interests. According to some, this class enjoyed an 'unparalleled' degree of financial and economic control at the State level within Australia.[62] This consolidation was mainly achieved through the operations of the locally owned Bank of Adelaide, the extensive network of interlocking directorships and family interests, and by the creation of, what Lonie termed, an 'ontological pretentiousness' maintained through prestigious private schools, the University of Adelaide, the

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60 B. Fitzpatrick, A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement, Rawson, Melbourne, 1940.

61 The remaining 57 per cent of the workforce were engaged in construction (12 per cent), transport (9), commerce (18), public administration (8) and other areas (10). In 1933 the South Australian workforce was 234,025.

62 See N. Blewett and D. Jaensch, Playford to Dunstan, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1971, Chapter 1; and A. Carmody, 'Industrialisation in South Australia', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1975. Cf. T.O'Shaughnessy, 'Joh and Don: Capital and Politics in Two Peripheral States', Intervention, No. 12, April 1979.

exclusive Adelaide Club, and the Legislative Council (upper house of Parliament).[63] Within the labour force trade union growth proceeded rapidly with 110 unions in existence servicing 57,000 union members by 1931. Compulsory arbitration and conciliation, introduced in stages between 1896 and 1907, represented the state's strategy for alleviating industrial disputation, regulating wage levels and controlling organised labour. The Industrial Code (1920-1972) as a consequence of the Harvester Judgement of 1907, provided for a Board of Industry to set a 'living wage' across occupations, which in effect became merely a legally enforced amount that employers in general would pay, not an amount wholly determined by subsistence need criteria.[64]

The Third Phase (1933-1982)

British capital continued to occupy the largest share within the total inflow of overseas capital. Figures for 1948-60 indicate that 69 per cent of new overseas investment in Australia was from the United Kingdom with 17 per cent from U.S. sources.[65] Over the period 1948-82 the major contributors to the inflow of foreign investment in enterprises in Australia remained principally from the above sources but with the incremental growth of Japanese capital penetration late in the period. Inflow trends by country of origin are shown in Table 2.4.

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63 J. Lonie, 'Conservatism and Class'...op.cit.; on the influence of 'Schools and Dynasties' see R.L. Reid, 'South Australia', in J. Rorke, (ed.), op.cit., pp. 24-27.

64 See. P. Macarthy, 'The Harvester Judgement: An Historical Assessment', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, 1967; G. Sorrell,'Basic Wage - Basic Myth', Arena, No. 14, Spring 1967; and G. Sorrell, 'The Arbitration System', in J. Playford and D. Kirsner (eds), Australian Capitalism, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1972; B. McFarlane, 'Australia's Role in World Capitalism', in ibid.; also J. Wanna, Defence not Defiance, pp. 58-62. For an official review of the history and operation of the arbitration system in South Australia, see South Australian Year Book, No. 4, C.B.C.S., Adelaide, 1969.

65 E.L. Wheelwright, 'Overseas Investment in Australia', in A. Hunter (ed.), The Economics of Australian Industry, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1963, p. 165 and passim.

TABLE 2.4: Inflow of Overseas Investment in Australia: Country of Origin, 1948-1982
(Excluding Undistributed Income)

	United Kingdom		United States*		Japan		Other**	
	$M	% total	$M	% total	$M	% Total	$M	% Total
1948-57	928	64	381	26	-	-	141	10
1958-67	1,865	43	1,851	43	-	-	602	14
1968-72	2,143	36	2,275	38	-	-	1,539	26
1973-77	953	23	1,599	42	492	12	981	23
1979-82	3,964	25	3,960	25	2,008	13	5,752	37

* Includes Canada
** 1948-72 includes Japan

Sources: Foreign Investment Review Board, Report 1978 and ABS Foreign Investment Bulletin 5306.0.

In this period Australia rapidly expanded both its domestic labour force and its domestic market. Australia's population, swelled by substantial migrant numbers, mainly from Britain but also from southern and eastern Europe and Asia, provided a population growth rate that was double most other advanced capitalist countries.[66] Australia's population grew from 7.5 million in 1946 to 12.9 million in 1971, an overall increase of 5.4 million at an average annual rate of 2.75 per cent. South Australia housed 8.4 per cent of the national population in 1941, 9.2 per cent in 1971 and 8.79 per cent in March 1982.[67] In 1949 the South Australian population

66 First Report of the National Population Inquiry - Population and Australia, (Chairman W.D. Borrie), Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1975.

67 The distribution of Australia's population 1941-81 by States and territories is shown thus:

State	1941 distribution	1971 distribution	1981 distribution
NSW	39.36	36.07	34.98
VIC	27.19	27.46	26.36
QLD	14.60	14.32	15.90
SA	8.44	9.20	8.79
WA	6.68	8.08	8.77
TAS	3.37	3.06	2.84
NT	0.14	0.68	0.84
ACT	0.21	1.13	1.52
AUST	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: First Report of the National Inquiry, Vol.I, P.435, and Australian Demographic Statistics, ABS, Cat.No.3101-0,March 1982.

numbered 695,000 and had almost doubled to 1,302,500 by 1980. In comparison the State's total wage and salary workforce increased from 209,300 in 1949 to a peak of 445,000 in 1976 and thereafter had declined to 429,700 by 1979 with the onset of depressed economic conditions. (By August 1982 wage and salary earners totalled 453,500 but these figures were based on different sampling criteria and are not strictly comparable).[68]

As will be discussed below, the 1933-82 phase was marked by the economic importance of secondary industrial development. Key sections of the narrow manufacturing base centred on the motor vehicle, metal manufacturing and whitegoods industries, all consumer goods industries highly vulnerable to economic fluctuations. For the period 1949-1964 manufacturing in South Australia employed 36 per cent of the total wage and salary workforce. By 1982 this had been reduced to 24 per cent.[69] Throughout this phase the subordination of the local ruling class to multinational interests continued resulting in the eventual dissipation of the local bourgeoisie's interests in confrontation with overseas and interstate capital particularly from 1978 onwards.[70] The locally owned Bank of Adelaide, the lynch-pin of the

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68 See South Australian Year Book 1982, Government Printer, Adelaide, pp. 316-7, for notification of this change.

69 Source: ABS unpublished survey data supplied on request. The data was compiled for Labour Force statistics Cat.No. 6201.4, August 1982.

70 A.Carmody, 'Industrialisation in South Australia...', op.cit., Chapters 1,4 and 7. Subsequently this decline became the topic of two major conferences ('Accelerate or Stagnate - the Challenge for S.A.'s Business Future', Adelaide, February 1979 and 'South Australia - Our State! Does it Rate?', Adelaide, February 1982, both sponsored by Advertiser Newspapers Ltd and various accountants societies). At the latter conference Mr. B. Sallis, General Manager, Advertiser Newspapers Ltd, referred to SA as a 'low-income, branch office State', where investment priorities were determined externally (Advertiser, 20.2.1982, p.4). In a spate of takeovers mainly between 1979 and 1982 the interconnected bulwarks of local capital were consecutively taken over and controlled by inter-State interests. These S.A. companies included: the Bank of Adelaide, John Martins, Elders G.M., Southern Farmers, Quarry Industries, Onkaparinga Textiles, Horwood Bagshaw, D.& J. Fowler, S.A. Brewing and Allied Rubber. This loss of local identity resulted in two reports produced by the State Development Council, see South Australia - A Strategy for the Future, No. 1, November 1981, No. 2, September 1982; see Advertiser, 22.9.1982, pp. 5 and 10; and CPA, SA Tribune Supplement 23.9.1982.

'Establishment's' economic power, surrendered to British capital interests in the form of the ANZ Banking Group.[71] This followed a fight to retain its traditional financial identity that included a survival attempt launched by the then Corcoran Labor Government, and which was subsequently foiled by the Reserve Bank, the Federal Liberal-NCP Government, by local mismanagement and through some local complicity with the outside interests.[72]

At the end of this phase the penetration of overseas transnational capital was directed toward the natural resource sector. A number of resource projects of enormous scale were developed from the mid-1970s, including: the Cooper Basin region (hydrocarbon fuels, oil and natural gas), the huge mineral deposits worth in excess of $50 billion at Roxby Downs-Olympic Dam (copper, uranium and gold), coal deposits in the mid-north, and off-shore oil exploration in the Great Australian Bight, as well as state sponsored moves to establish a petrochemical plant (initially at Redcliff

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71 See T. O'Shaughnessy, op.cit.; T. Corrigan, 'Labour and Capital: Behind the Labor Defeat in S.A.', Arena, No. 54, 1979; C. Nyland, 'The Labor Governments of South Australia 1965-1979 - A History', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1980, Chapter 2; H. McQueen, Gone Tomorrow, Angus and Robertson, Sydney 1982, Chapter 2.

72 This series of obstructions to the survival of the Bank of Adelaide (particularly local capitalist complicity) became the object of a judicial inquiry. This inquiry was particularly interested in the relevant actions of major shareholders and the Bank directors. See, Report of the Master to the Full Court on Inquiry, In the Matter of the Bank of Adelaide and the Companies Act 1962-79, S.A. Supreme Court No. 1914 of 1979; and J. West, 'Death of a Bank', National Times, 15 December 1979, pp. 9-10. For an account of the local bourgeoisie's decline from within see Sir N. Young, 'Chairman's Address - Annual General Meeting', Elder Smith Goldsborough Mort Ltd, November 1981; and Sir N. Young, 'Chairman's Address - Annual General Meeting', News Corporation Ltd, November 1981.

then towards Stony Point) and a uranium enrichment plant. The state apparatus was integrally involved in both subsidising and planning these resource ventures.[73]

Unionism continued to develop in the wake of the expansion in the secondary and tertiary industries. Union membership in South Australia increased from 60,000 in 1933 to a peak of 272,200 in 1979.[74] This increase was particularly due to the increase in unionisation among women entering or re-entering the workforce as from the 1960's.[75] The crude unionisation rate by 1981 was 56 per cent with a higher proportion among males (62 per cent) than females (48 per cent).[76] This compares favourably with the Australian unionisation rate (56 per cent) and is far in excess of other advanced capitalist economies.[77] Table 2.5 gives an overall view of union growth at the State and national level.

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73 T. Corrigan, 'Australia: The Politics of the Mineral Boom', Raw Materials Report, (Stockholm), Vol. 1, No. 1, Autumn 1981; G. Stokes, 'Resources Politics in South Australia', Paper to the 24th Australasian Political Studies Association Conference, Perth, August 1982; 'South Australia - On the Road to Recovery', Australian Stock Exchange Journal, Vol. 10, No. 6, June 1981, pp. 8-23; Bulletin, 3.7. 1976, pp. 12-13, Bulletin, 5.12.1978, pp. 106-9.

74 A.B.S., Trade Union Statistics, December 1981, Cat. No. 6320.0.

75 By 1981 women constituted 32.3 per cent of the unionised workforce in South Australia (178,000 male unionists to 85,000 female unionists). Moreover, by 1981 almost half of all female employees were unionised - the highest level ever achieved. Source, ibid..

76 Comparative figures for 1979 illustrate the drop in unionisation levels with the economic depression. Between 1979 and 1981 South Australia experienced a decline in total union membership of 9,100 persons. While the proportion of male employees with union membership declined from 67 per cent to 62 per cent, females increased from 44 to 48 per cent. Source, ibid..

77 This compares with estimates of union density of U.S.A. 20-25 percent, France 23 per cent, Germany 34-40 per cent, Britain 45-50 per cent, the Netherlands 35-40 per cent. Australia's union membership density is similar to that of Austria (58), Norway (55), Israel (56) and Denmark (60), but is lower than Sweden (85), Finland (65+), Belgium (70) and Ireland (75). See K. Von Beyme, Challenge to Power: Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Capitalist Countries, Sage, London, 1980, pp. 73-8; H. Clegg, Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, pp. 12-13.

TABLE 2.5: Trade Unions - Australia and South Australia, 1890-1981

	No. of Unions		No. of Members '000s		S.A. members '000s		Proportion of Employees S.A. %			Proportion of Employees Aust. %		
	Aust.	S.A.	Aust	S.A.	M	F	M	F	Pers.	M	F	Pers.
							%	%	%	%	%	%
1890	-	57*	100*	10*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1891	124	60*	55*	8*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1901	198	-	97*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1906	266	23	121	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1912	408	78	433	37	35	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
1921	382	108	703	55	50	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
1931	362	110	769	57	50	7	-	-	-	49	35	47
1941	374	117	1075	95	81	14	-	-	-	53	39	49
1951	359	137	1690	140	118	22	-	-	-	66	42	60
1961	355	134	1894	151	129	22	58	28	50	63	41	57
1971	351	142	2452	216	172	44	59	29	49	58	38	51
1975**	323	142	2833	257	188	68	63	37	53	62	46	56
1977	324	143	2797	267	190	76	66	41	55	61	46	55
1979	328	142	2873	272	191	81	67	44	58	61	47	56
1981	324	141	2994	263	178	85	62	48	56	60	48	56

* Estimate

** Revised after 1975

Source: Labour Reports and Trade Union Statistics, December 1981, ABS no. 6323.0.

In this third era, with much of the pnysical infrastructure extant, state action and expenditure assisted private capital through alternative means. Although the government had regulated the private South Australian Gas Company in 1861, the state apparatus did not extend its provision of subsidised energy and service utilities until after the Great Depression. In order to restrict the rise in the 'C' index of prices for arbitration wage-fixing purposes, sewerage (1929) and water (1932) utilities were state monopolised, followed by the Playford administration's nationalisation of the industrial and domestic electricity supply (E.T.S.A., 1946).[78] Earlier the Liberal-Country government had established the South Australian Housing Trust (1936) on the premise that subsidised housing would attract a permanent workforce and serve to reduce the pressure of subsistence costs on money wages.[79] Moreover, in 1972 the state entered into low-cost public insurance with the establishment of the State Government Insurance Commission, which subsequently monopolised

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78 See South Australian Year Book, No.9, Government Printer, Adelaide, 1974, pp. 382-7; Report of the State Energy Committee S.A., May 1976, State Energy Committee, Govt. Printer, Adelaide, 1976; B. Muirden, When Power Went Public, A.P.S.A. Monograph No. 21, Adelaide, 1978. The 'C' index of prices was a cost of living estimate based upon prices of subsistence commodities and services, including: rent, food, energy, health costs.

79 S.A. Premiers Butler and Playford along with senior public servants J.W. Wainwright (Auditor General) and A.M. Ramsay (Manager of the S.A. Housing Trust) established the Housing Trust under the assumption that it was preferable to advocate low-cost public housing in order to attract secondary industry. Furthermore, such state 'Bolshevism', as one L.C.L. member in Parliament described it (S.A.P.D., 1936, p.2042) was seen to cushion social hardship and reduce social tension, see T. Mitchell, 'Industrialisation of South Australia', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1957, p. 33. Ramsay later recounted that Playford worked to the principle of: 'You house the people who work the machines and house the machines that the people work', (A.M. Ramsay in D. Nicholas, The Pacemaker, Brogla Books, Adelaide, 1969, p.90). Certainly, the state's urban policy to establish working class housing estates at Whyalla for B.H.P.'s steel-workers, and at Elizabeth for G.M.H.'s vehicle builders, conforms with this objective. See H. Stretton, op.cit.; and S. Aungles and I. Szelenyi, 'Industrial Decline and Urban Crisis: Structural Conflicts between the State and Monopoly Capital', in P.Boreham and G.Dow (eds), op.cit., Vol. I, Chapter 5.

costly insurance services, workers' compensation and motor vehicle insurance.[80]

Public expenditure was committed to the subsidisation of private capital, but in an ad hoc fashion. It often involved, as Connell and Irving have noted, a measure of wheeler-dealing or investment piracy on behalf of state agents to secure the investment of such as Philips, British Tube Mills, Chrysler, General Motors and B.H.P.[81] In such instances, state subsidisation was oriented towards the highest corporate bidder in terms of investment capacity or employment provision. Yet, as Fitzpatrick pointed out, state instrumentalism to facilitate capital accumulation possessed a degree of arbitrariness, which under specific circumstances became unpredictable. In this sense, all State governments, sometimes 'misunderstood the accepted purpose of public undertakings, and entered into competition with private enterprise', although private capital 'at no time lost its control' over the Australian 'economic organisation and life'.[82] South Australia's increase in direct government involvement in energy and service provisions, transport, mineral development, textiles, housing, insurance,gambling, and the entertainment and the food industries, may appear to represent a high degree of arbitrariness in which private capital is 'crowded out' by nationalisation. But, in spite of this market-oriented objection, the measure of state arbitrariness in the economy was severely limited by the restrictions placed upon it by the private sources of public funding. Indeed, the first Commonwealth statistician, Sir George Knibbs, captured the essential aspect

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80 Cf. L. Rivers and J. Hyde, 'The Dominance of Finance Capital', Arena, No. 39, 1975, on finance capital's reaction to the federal Labor Government's proposed Australian Government Insurance Corporation during 1974-5.

81 R.W.Connell and T. Irving, 'The Making of the Australian Industrial Bourgeoisie', Intervention, Nos. 10/11, 1978; parts of this article appeared in R.W. Connell and T. Irving, op.cit., Chapter 5.

82 B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, 1834-1939, p. 273. The best example of such public sector 'displacement' remains the Queensland State in the inter-war period.

of these limitations when, in commenting on government propensity to borrow overseas to fund economic growth, he maintained that '"Australia's progress is largely the result of Australia's debt'".[83] British capital in providing this public finance controlled the economic parameters within which the state apparatus could operate. What this meant, in relation to the economic structure of South Australia, was that British funding of the public sector defined the interventionist character and the directions of capitalist development pursued by the state apparatus. The thrust of the preceding argument rejects the view that the state entertained any long-term socialist motivation in its nationalisation schemes.

V. The Development of Manufacturing in South Australia: State Induced Industrialisation

The structure of the Australian manufacturing industry is derivative in nature with low levels of indigeneous new process innovation.[84] Manufacturing is highly concentrated, particularly in economically significant areas such as capital and producer goods and certain consumer durable industries.[85] Since Australian federation this development has enjoyed relatively high

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83 Ibid., p. 310.

84 See A. Hunter in A. Hunter (ed.), The Economics of Australian Industry, op.cit., Chapter 1.

85 P.H. Karmel and M. Brunt, The Structure of the Australian Economy, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1962.

economic protection through the operation of direct tariff barriers.[86] Manufacturing industry generally has developed according to criteria of import substitution.

Prior to the Great Depression South Australia was a rural based economy. At its highest level, the annual gross value produced in manufacturing was less than half that of primary production. In 1925-6 the total domestic manufacturing production was only two-thirds of exported primary production. Manufacturing industries produced $25 millions while almost $50 millions were added by the farm sector; and the exports of wheat, flour, wool and minerals alone equalled $35 millions in comparison with the exports of all non-farm produce of less than $5 millions. Official statistics put the manufacturing workforce at 40,051 in 1926. These employees were engaged in 1,791 factory establishments but around 60 per cent of these factories were small workshops owned and worked by single proprietors.[87] The major manufacturing activities serviced the local market or processed primary products, and included the following: saddlery and harness making, coach and motor vehicle body building, ore smelting, flour and grain milling, brewing, wine making, hide and skin treatment, fertiliser production, butter and cheese processing and some farm machinery and agricultural implement engineering.

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86 In comparison with national averages, South Australian manufacturing was proportionally more heavily protected. South Australia had an above average concentration of industries with tariff protection in excess of 30%. In the mid-1970s, these industries (motor vehicles and whitegoods in particular) accounted for 41 per cent of manufacturing employment in South Australia, but only 29.8 per cent for Australia as a whole. See R.D. Bakewell, 'Economic Development in South Australia', address to Australian Society of Accountants, Adelaide, July 1978. Cf. N. Holloway, 'The Raw Economy, Australia: A Survey', Economist, 31.10.1981; and J. Warhurst, 'S.A. and the Industries Assistance Commission: The Making of Tariff Policy in a Federation', (mimeo), Australian National University, October, 1978.

87 Statistical Register of South Australia, C.B.C.S. Government Printer, Adelaide, 1926, part 5, Section 2, p. 101. In 1925-6 the manufacturing workforce included 1,421 working proprietors. Thus, the wage and salary workforce in 1926 was 38,630.

As a direct result of the Depression the South Australian state together with local manufacturing capitalists was determined to develop the industrial base using overseas sources of capital. With the notable exception of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company's industrial and extractive investment in the Iron Triangle region, the main contributions towards industrial expansion after 1933 were made by overseas controlled capital.[88] Industrial development was viewed by the state as complementary to the asymmetrical development of primary industry.[89] Under the L.C.L. premierships of Butler and Playford the state sought to induce industrialisation and concentrate manufacturing in order to expand the State's economic base. State policy encouraged manufacturing development through import substitution but without long-term industrial planning.[90] A series of comparative advantages assisted these moves.

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88 A. Carmody, 'Industrialisation in South Australia...', op.cit. On B.H.P.'s industrial expansion and on their capacity to negotiate with the state apparatus, see B.H.P. Company's Indenture Act 1937-40, No. 2362 (1937) and B.H.P. Company's Steel Works Indenture Act, 1958, No. 28 (1958). For a more general introductory account see R. Kriegler, Working for the Company, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980. On the corporate ideology of B.H.P. see M. Beresford, 'Australian Business Ideology: The Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1972.

89 See. T. Playford, 'Preface' to G.D. Combe, Responsible Government in South Australia, p. viii. For an account of the L.C.L. government's policy changes throughout this period, particularly emphasising the roles performed by key individuals, see T.J. Mitchell,'J.W. Wainwright, The Industrialisation of South Australia, 1935-40', Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1962; M.L. MacIntosh, 'Industrial Development Administration in South Australia', B.A. Hons. Thesis,University of Adelaide, 1969; N. Blewett and D. Jaensch, Playford to Dunstan, provide a useful summary of this period; as does H. Stretton, op.cit. Essentially, the lack of employment opportunities in the expansion of primary production (the 'grow more grain' campaign), together with the threat by General Motors to relocate in Victoria in 1935, provided the impetus for change within which advocates of industrialisation operated.

90 S.B. Abdullah, 'Aspects of South Australian Industrialisation Since 1945', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1968; A. Carmody, op.cit., Chapters 2 and 3; T. Sykes, 'Will S.A. Become the Peasant State', Bulletin, 28.11.1978, pp. 40-62. Much of the state's activity was centred on programmes to vertically integrate the established manufacturing sector.

For instance, wage rates in Adelaide were substantially lower than Sydney or Melbourne.[91] As well, South Australia was administered by a continuous L.C.L. administration from 1933 to 1965 which was most sympathetic to foreign-led industrial development. These administrations, through the wage-fixing Board of Industry and through executive powers, restrained wage levels and minimised the effect of components of the consumer price index. This reduced the impact of both inflation and subsistence on the Board's review of the 'living wage'. To aid the state's industrial inducement policy, South Australia possessed some degree of vehicle building-engineering skills in the domestic workforce.[92] Moreover, figures for industrial disputation were substantially less (in both aggregate and per capita terms) than those of the eastern States, with trade union bodies in Adelaide displaying a much lower propensity to resort to industrial action.[93] Finally, the impact of the Depression and Second World War greatly assisted the industrialisation drive. The Depression provided favourable take-over circumstances for transnational corporations interested in producing behind Australia's tariff wall. Throughout

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91 T.J. Mitchell 'J.W. Wainwright: The Industrialisation of South Australia 1935-40...', op.cit. In the metal industry, overaward payments were 30 per cent lower in Adelaide than the eastern centres.

92 This argument is to be found in A. Carmody, 'Industrialisation in South Australia...', op.cit.; and F. Daley, 'The Story of G.M.H.', unpublished manuscript, G.M.H. Ltd., n.d. (1960?). The South Australian Year Book 1977, No. 12, Government Printer Adelaide, 1977, offers the skilled workforce as the main reason for the vehicle industry expansion, despite the fact that the labour process was continually being deskilled and that new immigrants were generally recruited to work the car plants. T.J. Mitchell, op.cit., notes that workforce skills provided the state apparatus with some bargaining strength vis a vis the vehicle corporations. C. Fenner, The Geography of South Australia, (10th edition), Whitcome and Tombs, Melbourne, 1958, Chapter 9; and T. McKnight, 'The Anatomy of Manufacturing in South Australia', Australian Geographer, Vol. 10, No. 5, March 1968, both cite workforce skills as a major reason for the geographic location of manufacturing industry in South Australia.

93 This low propensity to take strike action among S.A. unions is the subject of the following chapter. See also R.G. Jackson, 'The Future for Investment in South Australia', Address to the Seminar: Accelerate or Stagnate - The Challenge for S.A.'s Business Future, Adelaide, February 1979. Historically, on the State government's promotion of labour moderation regarding industrial location, see 'The Survey of the Main Factors Affecting the Choice of the Location of a Large Textile Industry in Australia', (internal document), State Auditor General's Dept., Adelaide, 1940.

the war industrialisation proceeded based on the established vehicle industry, and because the State provided the most safe industrial location relative to a Japanese invasion. After the war the vehicle industry provided the backbone of the State's industrial expansion.

VI. The Motor Vehicle Industry in South Australia

Vehicle production in Australia expanded rapidly in the period of post-war reconstruction.[94] British imported vehicles initially increased their market share from approximately 40 to 80 per cent between the years 1938-49, but by 1961 only 10 per cent of the vehicles sold in Australia were imported.[95] General Motors-Holden as the largest domestic producer (with an annual net profit of £15 million by 1959) accounted for half the entire vehicle market, with Ford under 20 percent, B.M.C. (Leyland) and Volkswagen under 10 per cent, and Chrysler with less than 3 per cent. In 1961 six vehicle manufacturers, all overseas owned, operated in Australia, namely: General Motors-Holden, Ford, British Motor Corporation, Volkswagen, Chrysler and International Harvester.[96] The distribution of labour within the industry and between States appeared as shown in Table 2.6.

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94 A more detailed history of the motor vehicle industry in South Australia is provided in Appendix VI. See also P. Sweezy, 'Cars and Cities', Monthly Review, Vol. 24, No. 11, 1973.

95 G. Maxcy, 'The Motor Industry', in A. Hunter (ed.), op.cit., pp. 505-8,

96 Ibid., p. 507. Between 1945 and 1973 the automobile industry invested $1,000 millions in Australia, S. Encel, 'Capitalism, the Middle Classes and the Welfare State', in E.L. Wheelwright and K. Buckley (eds), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Vol. 2, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1978.

TABLE 2.6: Australia: Distribution of Manufacturing Employment, Motor Vehicles, 1958-9.

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Q'land	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	TOTAL
Construction and assembly	4,965	11,208	857	641	n.a.[1]	n.a.[1]	18,670
Motor Bodies	4,938	7,546	1,306	10,780	969	343	25,882
Motor Accessories	4,829	3,521	362	1,002	90	-	9,804
	14,732	22,275	2,525	12,423			54,356

1 Included in total

Source: Commonwealth Statistician

In South Australia both G.M.H. and Chrysler expanded their plant operations in the 1950s and 1960s. After receiving generous concessions from the Playford L.C.L.government, G.M.H. established a large hardware and vehicle assembly plant at Elizabeth in 1958-9.[97] Chrysler, in turn, established a vehicle assembly and stamping plant (the largest single-housed assembly plant in Australia) at Tonsley Park in 1963-4 and invested $42 million in a second plant for the production of Valiant engines at Lonsdale in 1967-8.[98] By 1969

97 For historical background see R. Keeley, 'Politics and the Motor Industry in South Australia', B.A. Hons.Thesis, Flinders University, 1979; and P. Poynton, 'Always Crashing the Same Car', Arena, No. 52, 1979; T. McKnight, op.cit., pp. 362-3. McKnight's summary of the percentage of manufacturing workforce by States indicates that in 1963-4 the S.A. proportion involved in vehicle manufacture was close to double the national average. In relation to the expansion of G.M.H. one report commented that, 'the company failed dismally to appreciate the long term implications of its plant locations. Influenced by political pressure from various State governments...G.M.H. scattered its plants across the continent as though playing Monopoly. It had manufacturing centres in Victoria and South Australia, with assembly centres as far apart as Brisbane and Perth. The physical cost of transporting raw materials, components and completed cars from State to State grew horrendous'. P. Davis, 'The Car Industry', Rydge's, Vol. 51, No. 4, April 1978. By 1983 G.M.H. operated only 3 plants (Victoria, South Australia and Queensland) and had reduced their national workforce from 26,000 (1969) to 15,300 (1983) and had announced plans to further reduce this total to 12,500. Australian Financial Review, 23.5.1983, p. 3 and 48. G.M.H. gave as one reason for its workforce cuts the changes in the production of components from in-house to a greater reliance on sub-contracted firms.

98 Mitsubishi Motors Australia Ltd., 'Lonsdale Engine Manufacturing Complex', and 'Tonsley Park Assembly and Stamping Plant', South Australia, n.d.

Chrysler had achieved the 95 per cent local component content requirement together with their highest recorded profit of $17 million, while in March of that year General Motors Holden with one third of the market and $30 million profit, recorded the two millionth Holden produced in Australia. In 1968-70 five car producers accounted for 86 per cent of the domestic market with G.M.H. and Chrysler together producing 50 per cent.[99] Yet, as Japanese imports began, a total of 56 car producers were contesting for the Australian market (450,000 per annum) with a product range of 190 different passenger vehicle models.[100] Import licencing controls had been removed in 1960 leaving tariff protection at an effective rate of 40+ per cent as the main form of government assistance. From 1965 federal government assistance to the industry through the Motor Vehicle Manufacturing Plan fixed requirements for local content to be phased in with the intention of securing the level of 95 per cent within two years. This car plan, which included the largest five producers, has undergone regular and substantial revisions to serve the domestic producers. In 1966 the staged introduction of the 95 per cent plan was extended for a further two years. After 1968 the local content requirement was reduced to 85 per cent for models produced in lower quantities. In 1971 this small volume system was again changed to prepare for a blanket 85 per cent company weighted average system in 1974.[101] This latter policy was designed to facilitate a greater level of intra-corporate sourcing, (i.e. imported components) rather than to encourage domestic production.

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99 Changes in the proportion of the new vehicle sales between 1961 and 1982 appear in Appendix VI.

100 P. Davis op.cit., p. 25.

101 'Policies Towards the Motor Vehicle and Component Industry', Committee for Economic Development of Australia, (W. Uhlenbruch), May 1977.

The Whitlam Labor Government publicly rejected the 1974 I.A.C. Report that advocated the abolition of the motor vehicle plans, greater import competition and the long-term reduction of duty on imported vehicles.[102] Instead, under pressure from vehicle manufacturers import restrictions (quota controls) were introduced in January 1975, effectively limiting fully assembled imported vehicles to about one-fifth of the Australian market (90,000 units per annum). As a result of this, and increases in duty on partially assembled vehicles, Nissan and Toyota became Plan participants in 1976.[103] In other words, events after 1965 indicate that the government aimed to protect the interests of those large Plan producers operation in Australia, while simultaneously allowing them greater latitude to globally integrate production.[104] To further this end, the federal government extended provisions to apply from 1982 to allow intra-corporation export credits in line with the 'World Car' concept. This scheme, involving less reliance on local content, would 'allow Plan producers to replace locally sourced components with duty free imported components equal to the value of their exports'.[105]

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102 Industries Assistance Commission, Report on Passenger Motor Vehicles, 10 July 1974, Government Printer, Canberra. In rejecting the report the Labor Government announced plans to establish a joint producer (Toyota, Nissan, Chrysler and Mitsubishi) 4-cylinder engine plant in S.A. This plan failed although Mitsubishi between 1977-9 invested $17.5 million in a fuel-efficient 4-cyliner plant for its Sigma range.

103 Industries Assistance Commission, Draft Report on Passenger Motor Vehicles - Import Restrictions Etc., July 1980, pp. 22-3.

104 Ibid., p. 23. As the S.A. government argued 'reducing (domestic) content does not address the fundamental problem of the industry's structure', 'S.A.: The Motor Vehicle Industry 1981', Department of Trade and Industry, Adelaide, 1981, p. 3.

105 Industries Assistance Commission, Draft Report on Passenger Motor Vehicles and Components (Including Export Facilities), August 1976, p.6. The draft report urged a flat rate of 5 per cent duty free from export credits until 1985, but the final government policy introduced a scaled rate from 5 per cent in 1982, 6.5 per cent in 1983, and 7.5 per cent in 1984 and beyond. Moreover, it was indicated by the government that no less favourable assistance for export facilities would apply after 1984.

The domestic manufactured motor vehicle, a product of post-war protectionism, is theoretically guaranteed an 80 per cent share of the domestic market in line with government policy. In the present crisis, this reserve quota has come under increasing pressure from imported Japanese products and multinational restructuring strategies. In 1981 over 25 per cent of vehicles sold in Australia were imported.[106] The Industries Assistance Commission, discussing the 'World Car' concept, recognised in 1981 that component content according to country of source was rapidly becoming an anachronistic quantification in the midst of integrated international production, transfer pricing and technological change in the labour process. In order to influence federal government policy toward the passenger motor vehicle and component manufacturers (both domestic and foreign), the I.A.C. from 1974 to 1982 delivered nine reports on this industry. Rather than advocating the continued protection of existing employment levels within Australia the reports proposed anti-protection measures in the context of major structural changes occurring in the industry. Essentially, the I.A.C. urged government policy to maintain but eventually remove quotas on imports, lower the component content requirements in domestically produced vehicles, and to introduce complementation schemes (export facilitation).[107] The I.A.C.'s

106 A.B.S., Imports of Assembled New Passenger Motor Cars, Australia, Canberra, 1982.

107 The I.A.C. recommended that the quota be raised from 94,000 units in 1981 to 150,000 units in 1984. (See discussion in L. Hatch, Comment by VBEF (SA) Research Officer, on IAC Draft Report on Passenger Motor Vehicles - Import Restrictions and Quota Allocation in 1981, August 1980; and C. Meikle, Comments on the IAC Passenger Vehicle Report', ADSTE, 22.8.1980). This report was premised on the proposal to extend the export facilitation scheme rates effectively reducing local content to 77.5 per cent. See, Australian Financial Review, 27.8.1980, p. 7 and 15; and ACTU Submission to the 'IAC in Response to the Draft Report...on Import Restrictions and Quota Allocations in 1981', Melbourne, August 1980. This submission included the Resolution of Vehicle Industry Unions, February 1980 which, among other items, advocated: industrial democracy, no entry to any new producer, company amalgamation, common use of production facilities, to promote Australian ownership, and incentives to investment. The submission rejected quota increases, urged imports be reduced to 10 per cent of the market, expressed no opinion on export facilities in the absence of information on pricing policies, and that assistance to employees affected by restructuring be available.

many reports demonstrate both the government's and the Commission's inability to intervene in the decision-making process of the major multinational vehicle manufacturers. In relation to the South Australian economic base the reduction in federal government local content requirements accompanied the trend in manufacturing to integrate overseas sourcing into domestic production resulting in the major displacement of labour. G.M.H.'s Woodville plant, for example, was decimated from a workforce level of 5,600 in 1963 to 1,500 in 1983 with a further reduction to only 600 in 1984. [108]

The Australian motor vehicle industry is characterised by a wide range of models relative to the domestic market. Competition in the industry has traditionally centred on product rather than price. Internationally, vehicle manufacturing is a highly concentrated industry, but Australia due to the nature of its protection policies encouraged an over-concentration of cartellised multinational corporations.[109] This has resulted in the absence of significant export markets, in low economies of scale, evident in the decline and withdrawal of Volkswagen in 1968 and British Leyland in 1974.[110] The production of vehicles was developed along decentralised lines with production establishments scattered throughout Australia.[111] In addition to

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108 Australian Financial Review, 23.5.1983, p.3. G.M. foreshadowed the probable closure of Woodville in 1985.

109 On concentration see I.A.C., Profitability and Capital Structure of the Australian Manufacturing Sector for 1980-81, A.G.P.S., Canberra, 1982. For a more critical discussion see H. McQueen, op.cit., pp. 17-30; and H. McQueen, 'What is Good for General Motors?', Journal of Australian Political Economy, No. 10, June 1981. More historical is F.G.Davidson and B.R. Stewardson, Economics and Australian Industry, Longman, Melbourne, 1974, Chapter 5. The Australian market represents but 1 per cent of total world demand yet most of the major vehicle producers have at some stage attempted to produce locally for the small market.

110 While Volkswagen lost $30 millions and Leyland $50 millions on their Australian manufacturing projects, these producers were subsequently replaced by the Japanese corporations Nissan and Toyota. Subsequently, Toyota and General Motors moved to integrate more closely (cartelise) their international operations, see. Economist, 7.5.1983, pp. 16-18; Australian Financial Review, 21.9.1982, p.5 and 24.5.1983, p.5; and Japan Times Weekly, 25.9.1982, p.8.

111 F. Daley noted that during the 1960s G.M.H. was producing at 10 separate plants in 5 States (Vic.3, SA 3, Q'ld 2, NSW 1, and WA 1). F. Daley, op.cit., p. 59.

the major five producers, approximately 150 specialist component producers exist predominantly in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia.[112] In terms of comparative productivity, the Australian industry was traditionally inefficient. The Japanese firm Toyo Kogyo during the 1970s produced 722,000 vehicles per annum with a labour force of 31,000 whereas G.M.H. produced but 140,000 with 21,000 workers. The ratio of vehicles produced to employees was 23:1 and 6.6:1 in Japan's favour.[113] Structural change and labour intensification has taken place to counteract this wide discrepancy in productivity. This restructuring has included: technological intensification of the labour process, plant closures, economies of scale and production rationalisation. 'World Car' manufacture/assembly within the market with interchangeability of component parts, trends towards vehicle 'downsizing', and the centralisation of design and tooling.[114]

In employment terms the motor vehicle industry in South Australia dropped by 18 per cent between 1975 and 1978 against a national decline of 7.1 per cent. Similarly reductions in local content requirements contributed to

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112 Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers, 'Stand on Post-1984 Assistance Arrangements to the Automobile Industry - Take Australia's Part', March 1981. See also, ACTU, 'Possible Co-operative Strategy by FAPM and Unions with Members in the Components Industry in Response to I.A.C. Draft Report on Post-1984 Assistance Arrangements', (B. Hartnett), May 1981.

113 P. Davis, op.cit., p. 138. More generally, for a free market view of comparative restructuring and productivity see T.G.Parry, 'The Employment Consequences of Adopting the Industries Assistance Commission Post-1984 Assistance Recommendations for the Australian Motor Vehicle Industry', Federal Chamber of Automotive Industries, Sydney, June 1981. On Toyo Kogyo's new automated car plant at Hofu, Japan see Australian, 27.10.1982, p. 9.

114 The 'world car' restructuring relative to Australia is discussed in I.A.C. Report on Passenger Motor Vehicles and Components - Export Facilitation, September 1979; 'Government Opts for the World Car', Focus on SA, No. 1, April 1980; D. Brown, M.P., 'The World Car Concept', Speech to the Federation of Automotive Products Manufacturers, 12.2.1980; VBEF (Victorian Branch), 'Talking Points - the World Car', February 1981; L. Townsend (Federal Secretary of VBEF, 'Current State of Australia's Car Industry', June 1980. Townsend noted that the union's membership would be further eroded but welcomed a number of restructuring strategies including export credits.

a decline of 11 per cent in South Australia's vehicle component industry almost three times the national figure over the same years.[115] Since 1978 the decline has been more marked. G.M.H. employed 7,300 in South Australia during 1963, in 1973 it employed 11,800, in 1979 10,300, in 1981 7,500 and in 1983 approximately 5,700 [116] Chrysler after a series of major sackings throughout the 1970s reduced its workforce from 7,700 in 1973, to 3,500 in 1978 and under Mitsubishi to only 2,500 in 1983.[117] Although neither car firm had maintained their previous workforce levels, the remaining workers were potentially in a more secure bargaining position - a prospect that was increasingly directing VBEF policy.[118]

VII. The Contemporary Situation in Manufacturing Industry

The concentration of capital within the manufacturing sector since World War II is evident in Tables 2.7 and 2.8.[119] These factory figures

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115 SA StateDevelopment Council, SA - A Strategy for the Future, No.1, November 1981, p. 19.

116 See Development, Department of Economic Development,Adelaide, various. Advertiser, 21.10.1982, p. 6; 17.10.1979, p. 48.

117 Development, op.cit.; Advertiser, 4.5.1978, pp. 1, 5 and 20.

118 H. McQueen, Gone Tomorrow, op.cit., Chapter 2; and G. Hill, 'Anatomy of an Industrial Struggle', Solidarity Motor Bulletin, No. 9, London, n.d. (1980?).

119 The use of official statistics provides only an indication of the criteria examined in the following section. Often, in addition to the limited nature of official statistics, they are found rarely to be consistent, subject to revision and inadequately differentiated. For various reasons many foreign corporations do not disclose levels of profit, capital stock or investment, especially at the State level. Moreover, empirical data on foreign ownership and control are overly general, and governments are sensitive to political pressure on this information, as illustrated by the Commonwealth Government's discontinuation of A.B.S. publications in this area during the mid-late 1970s. See B. Hindess, The Use of Official Statistics in Sociology, Macmillan, London, 1973; J. Irvine, I. Miles and J. Evans (eds), Demystifying Social Statistics, Pluto Press, London, 1979, especially section 3; and G. Crough and E.L. Wheelwright, 'Foreign Ownership and Control of Australian Industries and Resources', Data Paper No. 3, Transnational Corporations Research Project, April 1982.

provide an indication of the employment concentration, establishment size concentration, and productivity intensification. Over the period 1910 to 1982 the number of establishments with over 100 employees increased by five times while the number of employees engaged in these enterprises experienced a seven fold increase. This shift in capital concentration is apparent in addition to an increasing process of labour intensification and the tendency for the organic composition of capital to rise. The impact of monopoly capital in this process of capital concentration is illustrated in the 1981 series of statistics in relation to enterprises employing in excess of 500 persons. In this year, only 1.2 per cent of manufacturing firms (or just 26 from 2,131 firms) employed over 500 employees, yet these firms controlled a total of 32 per cent of the entire manufacturing workforce. The average workforce of these large establishments was 1,291 persons, while the other 98.8 per cent of firms had an average of only 33 employees each. Tables 2.7 and 2.8 illustrate some of the dramatic shifts towards larger and more concentrated enterprises.

TABLE 2.7: Manufacturing Establishments in South Australia with More than 100 Persons.

1910-82

Year Mean Figure	Number of Establishments	Number of Employees	Mean Workforce per Estab.	% of Total Manufacturing Workforce
1910-14	42			
1915-20	40			
1921-25	48	12,823	267	37.29
1926-30	46	15,576	338	40.30
1931-35	30	10,055	335	35.44
1936-40	53	19,504	368	45.29
1941-45	89	40,256	452	61.51
1946-50	109	38,573	353	52.81
1951-55	125	46,292	370	54.42
1956-60	130	50,928	391	53.88
1961-65	152	56,758	373	53.09
1966-68	169	66,050	391	55.08
Single Years				
1969	195	76,966	394	67.24
1975	223	79,303	356	67.57
1978	203	69,469	342	66.67
1979	199	70,459	354	66.28
1980	199	69,119	347	64.57
1981	201	66,794	332	63.76
1982	199	66,014	331	62.95
Foreign Controlled				
1973	167	77,207	462	63.6

Source: Statistical Register - S.A. - 1967-68, C.B.C.S., Part V(b), South Australian Year Book, 1975, 1977, 1979, and ABS Cat. No. 8204.4

In order to present a more precise picture of trends within the recent period, a further breakdown of the above aggregate figures is necessary. This has been performed for the 1969-81 period shown in Table 2.8.

TABLE 2.8: Manufacturing Establishments in South Australia with 100 Employees and over, 1969-81

	100-199 Employees				200-499 Employees				500+ Employees			
	No. Est.	No. Emp.	Mean W	% of T.M.	No. Est	No. Emp.	Mean W	% of T.M.	No. Est.	No. Emp.	Mean W	% of T.M.
1969	116	16,637	143	14.5	49	15,719	320	13.7	30	44,610	1,487	38.9
1975	124	16,910	136	14.4	69	20,382	295	17.3	30	42,011	1,400	35.8
1978	122	16,610	136	15.9	50	14,734	294	14.1	31	38,125	1,229	36.6
1979	121	17,215	142	16.3	46	13,119	285	12.5	32	40,125	1,253	38.2
1980	118	16,326	138	15.6	53	15,472	291	14.8	28	37,321	1,332	35.7
1981	116	15,914	137	15.4	59	17,314	293	16.8	26	33,566	1,291	32.6

Source: Statistical Register - 1967-68, C.B.C.S., Part V(b)
South Australian Year Book, 1975, 1977 and 1979, and ABS Cat. No. 8204.4.

The rapid decline in aggregate employment, the changes in employment proportions within enterprise size, together with increasing levels of investment (Table 2.10), indicates that a restructuring of capital within manufacturing is in progress.[120] The concentration of capital as reflected in employment figures (Table 2.8) increased rapidly through the Long Boom until 1975; thereafter reductions in employment and decreases in the number of establishment were marked. In other words, while labour tended to be concentrated into larger establishments, the giant corporations proceeded to shed labour in the present economic crisis. The number of employees (firms 500+) in manufacturing fell from 44,610 in 1969 to 33,566 in 1981 representing an average workforce decline per establishment of 196. Within this restructuring a significant rise in productivity levels occurred. When such official indicators as 'value added', 'turnover' and 'fixed capital expenditure' are considered it is apparent, even within the limitations of such statistical categories, that the concentration of monopoly capital is not 'breaking down'.[121] Rather, while some shedding of labour is taking place within monopoly capital, representing a periodic 'cleansing' process for such capital, the concentration of capital is strengthening as a productive relationship through a widespread rise in the organic composition of its form. This is indicated in Table 2.9.

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120 Cf. H. McQueen, Gone Tomorrow... , op.cit., passim, for an alternative argument on 'delabouring' in the manufacturing labour process. On this aspect with regard Britain see F. Blackaby, (ed.), De-Industrialisation, Heinemann, London, 1979; A. Glyn and J. Harrison, The British Economic Disaster, Pluto Press, London, 1980; and A. Singh, 'U.K. Industry and the World Economy: A Case of De-Industrialisation?', Cambridge Journal of Economics, Vol. 1, No. 2, June 1977.

121 See in contrast N. Poulantzas' argument in Classes and Contemporary Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975, especially Part 2.

TABLE 2.9: Manufacturing Establishments - Summary of Operations in South Australia, 1972-1982

Year	No. of Establishments	Total Employed	Turnover $M	Value Added $M	Fixed Capital Expenditure $M	Percentage of FCE to Value Added
1972-3	2,194	121,396	2,172.0	896.7	96.4	10.8
1973-4	2,984	128,170	2,662.3	1,107.7	112.2	10.1
1974-5	2,131	121,241	3,003.0	1,335.3	137.5	10.3
1975-6	2,287	116,105	3,460.6	1,485.7	140.5	9.5
1976-7	2,242	115,395	3,768.1	1,597.0	153.1	9.6
1977-8	2,170	110,026	3,966.9	1,672.2	171.9	10.3
1978-9	2,119	106,302	4,536.3	1,851.4	195.9	10.6
1978-80	2,143	107,043	5,415.3	2,233.0	188.9	8.5
1980-1	2,131	104,755	6,067.3	2,387.4	257.8	10.8
1981-2	2,219	102,507	6,617.0	2,614.1	282.6	10.8

Source: A.B.S. Cat. No. 8202.4.

The concentration of capital in manufacturing as represented through the investment of fixed capital expenditure, offers some indication of the rise in the organic composition of constant capital. That is, while employment has fallen by 20 per cent, the expenditure on fixed tangible assets has risen by 152 per cent in money terms from 1973-4 to 1981-2. In comparison with other States, South Australia appears to have undergone the second most rapid rate of increase in the capital:labour ratio of manufacturing capital during 1972-77. In relation to the national rate of increase over this period, the percentage rise of capital outlay in South Australia was in excess of double that of the Australian total over the mid-1970s. However, due to substantial investment increases in Queensland and Western Australia between 1978-81, South Australia was below the national average investment increase in manufacturing in the latter period. These trends are depicted in Table 2.10.

TABLE 2.10: Australia: Manufacturing Industry Percentage Increase by State in Fixed Capital Expenditure 1972-77 and 1978-81.

	1972-7 %	1978-81* %
Queensland	71.3	218.6
South Australia	59.6	55.1
Western Australia	41.8	250.9
Tasmania	41.6	-
New South Wales	17.3	64.9
Victoria	12.7	21.7
AUSTRALIA	24.6	74.7

Source: A.B.S. Cat. No. 8202.4.

*Due to statistical series the 1978-81 figures are calculated from the Dec.,March, and June quarters of 1977-78 against the September, December and March quarters of 1981-2. Over this period SA recorded the lowest level of fixed capital expenditure in manufacturing in the mainland States with only 7.9 per cent of total investment, compared with Vic. 28.4, NSW 35.7, Queensland 14.0 and WA 11.1.

A survey of capital expenditure in manufacturing conducted in 1972-3 reported that $40.97 million was invested through foreign controlled enterprises in South Australia, compared with a separate figure of $55.43 million invested by Australian controlled companies. However, this $40 million of overseas capital was invested by only 167 foreign controlled establishments, whereas the remaining $55 million came from a total of 2,747 Australian firms.[122] These figures present some indication of the extent to which monopoly capital under foreign control has dominated the South Australian economy. These figures reveal that in 1972-3 foreign controlled monopoly capital operated with a mean level of capital investment of $245,329 million per establishment and an average investment ratio of $1,032 for each employee. On the other hand, domestic capital was responsible for a mean level of capital investment of $20,178 for each firm and an average investment/employee ratio of $678. What is more, it is evident that some 40,000 workers were directly dependent for their livelihood on foreign controlled capital, while the remaining 81,000 workers of the then manufacturing sector appeared listed as employed by Australian controlled establishments. A substantial proportion of this latter group of employees were indirectly dependent on foreign capital through being employed in subordinate and component industrial sectors.

While these figures represent the official interpretation of economic activity for a single financial year, their significance is integrally related to the increase in fixed capital expenditure over

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122 'Foreign Ownership and Control in Manufacturing Industry 1972-3', A.B.S., Ref. No. 12.38, Canberra, 1976. To 1984 no further A.B.S. survey had been undertaken providing comparative data at the State level. On the general trends of foreign capital inflow into Australia see Appendix VII.

the 1972-81 period. A further indication of the nature of the expansion of monopoly capital can be gained from details concerning the collapse of domestic capital at the same time as overall productivity has markedly accelerated. To illustrate this point (see Table 2.11), throughout the 'seventies approximately 1,100 smaller domestic firms disappeared, while the number and size of middle capital domestic enterprises acquired by foreign capital was incremental.[123]

TABLE 2.11: Manufacturing Establishments, Employment and Value Added Trends 1968-9 to 1980-1.

Selection of Industry Class		1968-9	1972-3	1973-4	1977-8	1980-1
Basic Metal Products	No. of Establishments	35	59	44	40	36
	No. of Employees	9,182	9,889	10,294	9,177	9,465
	Value Added $m	58.4	93.5	164.8	148.1	246.4
Transport Equipment	No. of Establishments	149	177	132	121	114
	No. of Employees	25,923	26,726	26,801	20,525	16,441
	Value Added $m	151.9	155.0	249.7	257.3	426.6
Fabricated Metal Products Other Machinery and Equipment	No. of Establishments	974	834	631	646	640
	No. of Employees	33,935	31,293	30,746	25,009	25,357
	Value Added $m	161.7	211.7	306.4	379.5	524.6
Miscellaneous Manufacturing	No. of Establishments	208	260	149	172	172
	No. of Employees	4,259	5,906	5,777	5,730	5,905
	Value Added $m	19.9	40.9	58.1	91.1	122.4
TOTAL MANUFACTURING (includes food, textiles, wood, paper chemicals and mineral products)	No. of Establishments	3,224	2,194	2,984	2,170	2,131
	No. of Employees	118,319	121,241	128,170	110,026	104,755
	Value Added $m	639.8	896.7	1,107.7	1,672.2	2,387.4

Source: Manufacturing Establishments Details of Operations, various to 1980-1

123 See also Industries Assistance Commission, Annual Report, 1976-7 and 1977-8, Government Printer, Canberra: Advertiser, 27.10.1982, p. 5 in which A. Swinstead, Director of the Metal Industry Association (S.A.) claimed that 4,000 jobs of the 40,000 jobs lost in the metal industry in 1982 had been in South Australia.

It can be seen from the above that in all cases of industrial class description the number of establishments fell over the 1968-81 period, with a total manufacturing percentage enterprise decline of 33.9 per cent. Over the same period overall employment remained remarkably stable until 1973-4 and subsequently fell by a dramatic 18.3 per cent over the remaining seven years (1973-4 to 1980-1) shown. This is despite a marked increase in the value added by manufacturing, which rose in money terms by an overall 307 per cent between 1968-9 and 1981-2 (or at an average annual rate of increase of 11.5 per cent); and also included a total rise of 192 per cent over the 1973-4 to 1981-2 depression at an average annual rate of12.4 per cent over that period.

To conclude this section, much of the capital expenditure noted in Table 2.10 and the 1972-3 survey constituted foreign controlled investment, which has integrated the domestic economy into the world economy and produced a highly derivative manufacturing sector. Indeed, foreign capital was largely responsible for this particular type of economic expansion in the Long Boom. In South Australia the most significant industrial sector which helped to fuel the Long Boom has been the passenger motor vehicle industry. As Table 2.13 shows, this key foreign controlled sector at its peak supplied well over 20 per cent of all jobs in the entire manufacturing workforce. In addition, this industry produced more than 15 per cent of the total value added by manufacturing. More significantly, the Industries Assistance Commission has estimated that in the Australian economy the vehicle industry accounted for a further 40 per cent flow-on in production to other subsidiary and component enterprises.[124] In South Australia, where this industry (Table 2.12) is proportionately more important than elsewhere in Australia,

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124 South Australian Year Book 1977, No. 12, Adelaide 1977, p. 541.

the productive 'spin-off' generated by the giant vehicle corporations has been all the more significant.[125]

TABLE 2.12: Passenger Motor Vehicle Industry: Selected Characteristics, South Australia and Australia, 1973-74.

Item	Unit	SOUTH AUSTRALIA Passenger Motor Vehicle Industry	SOUTH AUSTRALIA % of Total Manufacturing Industries	AUSTRALIA Passenger Motor Vehicle Industry	AUSTRALIA % of Total Manufacturing Industries
			Per Cent		Per Cent
Number of Establishments at 30 June	Number	73	2.4	612	1.6
Average employment:					
Males	Number	19,215	19.5	73,603	7.6
Females	Number	2,478	8.4	16,806	4.6
Wages & Salaries	$'000	133,269	20.0	540,035	7.5
Turnover	$'000	412,416	15.5	2,154,705	6.9
Value Added	$'000	148,005	13.3	805,931	6.1
Fixed capital expenditure	$'000	14,171	12.6	67,651	5.6

Source: South Australian Year Book, 1977, p. 541.

TABLE 2.13: Distribution of S.A. Manufacturing Workforce 1963-4 to 1980-1.

Year	Motor Vehicle Manufacturing	Fabricated metals & white goods	Rest of Manufacturing	Motor Vehicle Manufacturing %	Fabricated metals & White goods %	Motor White Goods Total %	Rest of Manufacturing %
1963-4		65,727	45,086	-	-	59.3	41.6
1966-7		70,942	47,278	-	-	60.0	40.0
1968-9	25,923	33,935	58,461	21.9	28.6	50.5	49.4
1972-3	26,726	31,293	63,377	22.0	25.7	47.7	52.2
1974-5	26,801	30,764	63,676	22.1	25.3	47.4	52.5
1977-8	22,213	25,883	61,976	20.1	23.5	43.6	56.3
1978-9	20,385	26,042	60,013	19.1	24.4	43.5	56.4
1979-80	20,312	25,855	60,876	18.9	24.2	43.1	56.9
1980-1	18,085	25,357	61,313	17.3	24.2	41.5	58.5

Source: A.B.S. Cat. No. 8202.4.

125 Policies for Development of Manufacturing Industry (Green Paper), Australian Govt. Printing Service, Canberra, October 1975, Vol. I. Indeed, the S.A. government estimated that 70,000 people in the State were directly or indirectly dependent upon the motor vehicle industry, see, 'The Australian Motor Vehicle Industry', Presentation to the Hon.P.R. Lynch, M.P., March 1980, p. 4.

Thus, while the motor vehicle and white goods industries provided 60 per cent of manufacturing employment in 1966-7 this workforce of 70,942 had declined to 43,442 by 1980-1 or a mere 41.5 per cent of the entire manufacturing workforce.

VII. The Manufacturing Workforce: Recent Develpments

Like most advanced capitalist economies, South Australia experienced a proportional decline in its productive manual workforce, following the rapid growth in unproductive mental occupations (professional and white-collar employees).[126] The largest employer in this latter category became the State government together with Commonwealth government and local government employment in the State. In 1960 these three levels of the state apparatus employed 76,000 persons (or 27.2 per cent) from a total of 279,000 wage and salary earners in non-rural employment. By 1972 these figures had risen to 116,000 (or 30 per cent) from 400,200 employees, and in April 1980 146,700 persons were in government employment out of an employed workforce of 455,400 persons (representing 32.3 per cent).[127] Between 1960 and 1980 the ratio of public to private employees changed from one in every four to one in three wage-earners. The State government was responsible for much of this increase, experiencing a 103 per cent expansion in the above period compared to 71 per cent in the Commonwealth Public Service in South Australia.[128]

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126 These class divisions are discussed in J. Wanna and S. Reglar, 'Working Towards a Marxist Class Analysis of Australia', A.P.S.A. Conference Papers, Hobart, 1979.

127 This last figure is from A.B.S., Labour Force: South Australia, March and April 1980, p. 7, and includes a small proportion of employed proprietors due to changes in the statistical collection of data.

128 For a conservative critique of this state sector expansion, see K. Davis and I. McLean, 'Economic Policy', in A. Parkin and A. Patience (eds), The Dunstan Decade, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981.

The significant feature about the State government's employment record was that in 1960 women employees constituted less than one-third of the male total, whereas by 1981 female workers virtually equalled the number of male workers, with totals of 47,100 and 53,600 government civilian employees respectively.[129] While male employment increased by 65 per cent over these years, the proportion of female employees escalated by over 300 per cent mainly through the less discriminatory Dunstan Labor and Tonkin Liberal governments. Indeed, of the largest white-collar union in the public sector, the Public Service Association of S.A. with a membership of around 24,000, approximately 40 per cent were women unionists in 1980. Significantly, this union pioneered demands for certain social conditions of employment which previously had not been given priority by other male-dominated unions. These demands included: maternity leave/paternity leave, child care provisions, women's advisers to government and equal pay - a substantial part of these working conditions are not accepted in the private sector of the economy.

The dramatic climb in female participation rates in the workforce was not simply the result of government encouragement. Increasingly throughout the Long Boom women fought for greater access to the occupational spectrum, especially within the service, sales, clerical and professional groupings. As reflected in the figures from the mid-sixties onwards (Table 2.14), increased female participation rates are also the result of changed social and structural factors in capitalist society. Progressive educational attitudes and social values, such as the demand for the right to work for all adults, provided impetus to this movement. Nonetheless, while some gains were made, clearly such demands, like those of the other unemployed, expose the limitations of capitalism as a social system.

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129 South Australian Year Book, 1982, No. 17, Government Printer, Adelaide, p. 317.

Perhaps one of the main ways in which the economy influences the trade union movement is through changes in the composition of the workforce. Occupational changes, primarily dictated by the impact of overseas capital, determine the potential recruiting ground for trade-based general unions. As can be seen from the table below, the proportionately increasing sections of the workforce include the professional, technical and clerical groups as well as in the categories of service, sport and recreational workers. The major occupational groups in decline are the traditional manufacturing classifications of craftsmen, production workers and labourers.

TABLE 2.14: The South Australian Workforce by Occupation, 1961-1982

Group	(Percentage Proportion of Workforce) 1961 %	1971 %	1979 %	1982 %
Professional/technical	8.5	10.5	13.7	15.0
Administrative/executive and management	7.0	6.6	5.4	5.5
Clerical workers	12.2	14.5	16.8	16.4
Sales workers	8.0	8.4	8.8	9.2
Farmers/fishermen	12.2	9.0	9.1	8.7
Miners/quarrymen	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.3
Transport/communications workers	6.5	5.3	5.3	5.1
Craftsmen/production workers/ labourers	36.7	33.2	30.7	29.3
Service/sport/recreation	6.8	7.8	9.6	10.4
Armed services	0.7	0.7	-	-
Not adequately given	1.1	3.6	-	-
Male Workforce	288,339	325,492	351,800	350,900
Female Workforce	89,222	152,086	200,500	209,800
TOTAL	377,561	477,568	522,300	560,700

Source: South Australian Year Book, various.

The rapid decline in the proportion of the workforce engaged in manufacturing (Table 2.15), a predominantly private sector, has effectively reduced the recruitment base of the unions under review in this study.

The AMFSU and ADSTE with more diversified memberships and some inter-industry membership were affected by this contraction but not to the same degree as the VBEF, which suffered a 50 per cent loss of members as the vehicle industry entered the present crisis. The percentage of the workforce engaged in manufacturing throughout the Long Boom (the period 1949-1969 below) declined to below two-thirds of its earlier proportion. In addition, total private employment, an area in which traditionally the craft, mass and general trade unions have centred their organisational development, was reduced from a proportional peak of 83 per cent of total wage and salary employment in 1964 to only 66 per cent of that measure in 1979.

TABLE 2.15: South Australian Employment: Wage and Salary Earners, 1939-1979

	Total Civilian Wage and Salary Workforce	Private Employment	Government Employment	All those in Manufacturing Employment
	'000s			
	%	%	%	%
1939	140.7	74	26	29
1949	209.3	73	27	36
1959	269.5	72	28	36
1964	315.4	83	27	36
1969	383.0	73	27	35
1974	439.4	72	28	29
1975	437.8	70	30	26
1976	445.0	67	33	26
1977	444.3	66	34	25
1978	434.5	65	35	24
1979	429.7	66	34	24

Source: South Australian Year Book, various. After 1979 the surveys of Civilian employees included working proprietors and are not comparable.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide an analysis of the economic and political conditions within which the politics of union organisations have emerged. In this sense this chapter represents not merely a contextual background but an integral part of the analysis of this present study. Changes in the development of the dominant role of property substantially conditioned the nature of organised labour. The colonial settlement of South Australia and the particular intervention of the state apparatus produced a capitalist society within which the state became centrally involved in the regulation of labour. This occurred because of the constraints of economic development. The South Australian bourgeoisie overwhelmingly developed the sector of primary production, in particular the pastoral industry. State induced industrialisation, in which the state apparatus acted to lead economic development by promoting foreign capital investment in secondary industry, continued this highly vulnerable economic base over which political decisions became increasingly made overseas. Thus, while in the post-war period of development state intervention helped to produce a substantial manufacturing workforce, the nature of this employment was highly volatile. This factor was exposed in the degree of labour displacement that characterised the South Australian economy in the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s. To a large extent, the making of the South Australian working class was not only a protracted process, it was also one characterised by economic insecurity and periods of substantial interruption. This process had a marked effect on the development of the consciousness of organised labour.

CHAPTER III

LABOUR ORGANISATION AND LABOUR CONTROL: AN EXPLANATION OF UNION MODERATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

> Antipodean trade-unionists try to be practical, that is why they set themselves limited tasks and aspirations. They do not worry in the least about debating whether society is evolving towards collectivism or communism, nor try to influence the direction of social change ....
>
> (A. Métin, Socialism Without Doctrine, 1901)

In his critique of the Australian 'workers' paradise', Métin depicted South Australia as an agrarian backwater in which the labour movement was reformist, moderate, profoundly religious and motivated by the quest for respectable bourgeois lifestyles.[1] In this description Métin's account essentially differed from the orthodox whig view of the development of labour organisation which emphasised the struggle for political rights, the legalisation of collective unionism, and improved standards of living based on wage increments, better working conditions and social security. From this latter viewpoint, many Australasian States may be regarded as antipodean models of progressive enactment toward organised labour.[2] But, this perspective neglects the relationship between particular forms of collective labour and the specific nature of capitalist development.

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1 A. Métin, Socialism Without Doctrine, APCOL, Sydney, 1977 [1901], pp. 50-59. Métin noted that SA was among the last colonies to attain the 'eight bob a day' (p. 76).

2 See W.P. Reeves, State Experiments in Australia and New Zealand, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969 [1902], Vol. II, Chapter 1; T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969 [1918], 4 Vols.; M.A. Jones, The Australian Welfare State, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1980. For a recent hypothetical explanation tracing progressive social policy reform to divided bourgeois political forces see F. Castles, 'The Working Class and Welfare: Speculations on the Nature and Causes of Australasian Exceptionalism', (mimeo), University of Adelaide, May, 1984.

It fails to account for: the historical development of the regulation of labour - through the state apparatus, management and unionism; labourist ideology and the limitations of collective-sectional consciousness; and the nature of concessions arising from the production process and labour control conceded to effect the integration of organised elements of the working class. In short, it fails to explore the intended irony conveyed in Métin's aphoristic 'workers' paradise'.

The present chapter, accordingly, addresses the limitations on labour organisation and consciousness under specific social relations. It attempts to explain the extent to which the labour movement in South Australia was controlled through organisation, including the important role of the state apparatus and its ability to exercise a major role in the continuing control of labour. However, reasons for the historical predominance of the non-militant and reformist character of the SA labour movement are much wider than state accommodation strategies or labour's institutional forms of organisation. In fact, a central theme pursued below involves the question why in an apparently tight labour market relative to other industrialising nations did the labour movement display little industrial militancy; not simply militancy devoid of socialist consciousness but the absence of militancy per se. Why, furthermore, was it the case that the politicisation of labour was directed toward explicitly institutional political avenues which served further to control organised labour, and in effect complementing labour's 'iron leg' of arbitration with the 'iron leg' of Labor Party politics. It will be argued here that the explanation of this control and acquiescence lies not in the moderate policies pursued by the unions. Quite the reverse, the explanation lies in the specific social conditions of capital accumulation in South Australia.

The development of unionism in South Australia originated in the mid-nineteenth century with the establishment of a number of small, urban-based New Model craft societies, whose members possessed varying

degrees of experience of the industrialisation process in Britain.[3] Part of this experience included awareness of the emerging forms of organisation within the British labour movement. By the 1860's, in South Australia, exclusive organisations were formed among skilled craftsmen to protect sectional positions in the technical division of labour. Initially these 'closed' societies developed via unilateral regulation of collective bargaining to negotiate standard rates and conditions common throughout the local industry or occupation. Unskilled and semi-skilled workers formed 'open' occupational and general unions primarily during the 1870's and 1880's with the exception of the miners who had been organised since the 1840's.[4] By 1890 some sixty craft and labour

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3 K.F. Walker, 'Australia' in W. Galenson (ed.), Comparative Labor Movements, Prentice Hall, New York, 1952, p. 175. In some cases because of the nature of artisan production these societies were composed of petit bourgeois or semi-autonomous employee membership. Carpenters and joiners formed a society in 1845, followed by the bootmakers (1846), tailors (1846), master and journeymen bakers (1847) and a second journeymen tailors' cooperative society in 1850. With the economic expansion after the 1850's New Model craft unions emerged including: the engineers (1864), masons and bricklayers (1865) and a shipwrights society in 1872. Of interest here, the SA tailors' union held a markedly different view of unionism from that of their counterparts in eastern Australia. They are quoted by Pike as having worked to the principle of having 'no intention of imitating the conduct of their fellow workmen in Sydney in demanding an extravagant reward for their toil but would be content with a fair and reasonable price for their work'. D. Pike, Paradise of Dissent, (2nd edition) Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967, p. 348. This deference towards the relativity comparisons between the NSW and SA wage rates, has characterised the South Australian labour movement for the major part of its history.

4 Turner's argument that closed skilled unionism exercised a 'stifling effect' on unionism generally is problematic when applied to Australia. Certainly skilled unionism involving restricted entry to the trade developed early but so too had unskilled miners (cf. Turner's discussion of the weavers). Moreover, with Australia largely developed after the Chartist radicalism/national union phase of British unionism, the hiatus Turner noted in unskilled union growth (1830-90) is less evident. Indeed, in SA, for example, many unskilled unions emerged over this period including: miners (1848), shearers (1869), railway workers (1870), waterside workers (1872), general labourers (1872) and seamen (1874-7). In Australia the shortage of labour in any industry or occupation appears to have provided sufficient impetus for organisation rather than the openness or closedness of the organisational forms adopted. See: H.A. Turner, Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962.

unions were in existence, mostly affiliated to the United Trades and Labour Council (established 1884) formed to promote arbitration in preference to strikes, coordinate industrial and electoral policies, and to provide inter-union and inter-State liaison within the labour movement.[5]

The significance of nineteenth century unionism to the modern labour movement lies in the continuation of the forms of organisation and the political ideology that originated over that period. While Britain produced consolidated unionism among skilled artisans, miners and textile workers, in South Australia only two type of workers had established strong unionism in the nineteenth century: first, craftsmen organised around the urban servicing trades; and second, the less skilled workers in essential industries such as wool shearing, transport and construction. Unlike Britain, South Australia developed neither textile nor mining industries. Some women garment workers were eventually organised in 1890 under the auspices of the UTLC, while the earlier mining unionists were dissipated with the closure of the mines in the 1870's.[6] Thus, the forms of unionism in SA were divided between craft artisan societies and mass unionism. By 1890 the Great Strikes involving indirectly a trial of strength between craft and mass unions, constituted a 'turning point' for labour, not, that is, from industrial to political concerns, but in the sense of enhancing the recovery of influence of craft unionism within the labour movement itself.[7]

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5 See generally the collecting of essays in 'To Unite More Closely: a History of the United Trades and Labor Council of South Australia', UTLC (SA), Adelaide, 1984.

6 See J. Elton, 'The Organisation of Labour in the South Australian Clothing Trades, 1836-1920', B.A. Hons. Philosophy Paper, Flinders University, 1976. Cf also J. Moss, 'Sound of Trumphets: History of the Labour Movement of South Australia', (manuscript) 1984, Chapter 15.

7 J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance: the Development of Organised Labour in South Australia, Adelaide C.A.E., Adelaide, 1981.

Craft unions were essentially insular organisations promoting the objectives of conservative and reformist unionism and pursuing industrial tactics of cooperative economism.[8] Ideologically craft workers professed an individualistic-oriented sectionalism sustained by neo-classical productivity theories and early notions of human capital theory. For the greater part of the history of the SA labour movement, the State's economic dependence on primary production supported the position of a parochial aristocratic stratum of largely skilled labour.[9]

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8 Cooperative economism involves a process in which forms of organised labour assume at least partially the values and objectives of management. Within this consensual or bargained corporatist framework unions attempt to secure their organisation strength and control over job regulation while negotiating non-antagonistic demands over forms of remuneration and conditions. Examples of cooperative economistic demands include: bonus incentives, payment by results, productivity bargaining, claims for skill margins, safety concerns, or concessions over working practice. The perspective of economism centres on an apparent objectivity interpreted through an opportunistic consensus. As such economic constraints (or positivist notions of economic rationality) appear value-free with an implicit political neutrality. See V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done?, Oxford University Press, London, 1963; and Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968. For an Australian survey of cooperative economism see P.A. Riach and W.A. Howard, Productivity Agreements and Australian Wage Determination, John Wiley, Sydney, 1973. At a more formal political level C. Crouch refers to this process as 'neo-corporatist relations' or 'positive sum game(s)', see Trade Unions: the Logic of Collective Action, Fontana, Glasgow, 1982, Chapter 6.

9 The notion of an 'aristocracy of labour' (from Engels and Lenin) is contentious within a capitalist metropolis, but is far more contentious in relation to wage labour in colonial or peripheral economies. For discussion of the parameters of this concept see: E.J. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1964; E.J. Hobsbawn, 'Lenin and the Aristocracy of Labour', Marxism Today, Vol. 14, No. 7, July 1970; J. Foster, 'British Imperialism and Labour Aristocracy', in J. Skelley (ed.), The General Strike, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1976; H.F. Moorhouse, 'The Marxist Theory of the Labour Aristocracy', Social History, Vol. 13, No. 1, January 1978. More generally concerning working class respectability see: P. Bailey, '"Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?" Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-class Respectability', Journal of Social History, Vol. 12, Spring 1979; and J.R. Wegs, 'Working Class Respectability: The Viennese Experience', Journal of Social History, Vol. 15, Summer 1982. An attempt to trace an Australian aristocracy of labour is: H. McQueen, 'Victoria', in D.J. Murphy (ed.), Labor in Politics: the State Labor Parties in Australia, 1880-1920, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975; (and cf. J. Rickard,

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In contrast to the British aristocracy of labour, this craft-centred aristocracy was not, of course, reliant on empire profits but upon the nature of colonial expansion. As a consequence, the colonial labour aristocracy tended to survive beyond that of Britain. Two main reasons were important in this survival: first, colonial profits and large economies of scale remained proportionally of greater significance to the Australian States than to Britain in the early twentieth century; and second, the introduction of new technology and managerial control techniques was slower in Australia enabling craft traditions to be preserved and dilution resisted. Moreover, on this latter point, in S.A. the slower pace of labour intensification probably discouraged militancy over job regulation unlike Britain where degradation and deskilling was an important factor in the advent of militancy.

Other criteria were also important in maintaining the peripheral labour aristocracy. For instance, the incorporation of the labour aristocracy rested on the ascendancy of exclusive, conservative organisations of skilled workers and their predominant influence in the political expressions of the labour movement and especially in the comparatively early and successful Labor Party.[10] As well, craft conservatism was supplemented by a formidable petty bourgeois

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Class and Politics: New South Wales, Victoria and the Early Commonwealth, 1890-1910, Canberra 1976, Chapters 10 and 11). In Australia the peripheral aristocracy of labour has been partly sustained by continuous migration. New intakes of immigrants generally perform the arduous, unpleasant and low-paid jobs allowing indigeneous workers to adhere to the consciousness of a labour aristocracy. Cf. S. Castles and G. Kosack, Immigrant Workers and Class Structure in Western Europe, Oxford University press, Oxford, 1973.

10 J. Hinton, 'The Labour Aristocracy', New Left Review, No. 32, 1965. Cf. also H.A. Turner's argument regarding the formation of closed 'aristocratic' skilled unions serving to discourage more widespread mass-based unionism because of the exclusivity of the skilled organisations; Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962.

individualism among the self-employed or partially self-employed artisans. Labour conservatism was reinforced ideologically by the ethos of social temperance and respectability as well as by the predominantly deferential workforce in service, retail and clerical occupations. Nevertheless, the pervasiveness of bourgeois propriety among the working class in itself is inadequate to explain the general quiescence of labour, since the concern with respectability forms an integral part of labour's moderateness.

The discussion over the development of craft and mass unionism relates to the theoretical debate over whether an identifiable proletariat existed in Australia in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and whether the Australian labour movement, despite the engendered mythology, was ever radical in a political sense.[11] This debate often tends to become esoteric and generally centres on contrary assumptions rather than alternative evidence; the main disagreement over assumptions involving subjectivist in contrast to more objectivist criteria for the identification of a particular class.[12] Certainly, many of the craft-artisan societies identified more closely with the employer than with less skilled labour.[13] But this point merely

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11 This debate has not been rigorously pursued in class theoretical terms, but largely in terms of the consequences for subsequent political directions of whether or not a proletariat existed. For example, H. McQueen, A New Britannia, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970; R. Gollan, 'Has the Australian Labour Movement Ever Been Radical?', Arena, No. 21, 1970. McQueen summarised the main themes of this debate in 'Australo-Marximus', Politics, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1972; as did I. Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1979, pp. xxi-xxix and 1-6.

12 See R.W. Connell and T. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History; Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980; also J. Wanna and S. Reglar, 'Working Towards a Marxist Class Analysis of Australia', A.P.S.A. Conference Paper, Hobart, 1979.

13 I. Turner, op.cit. pp. 6-16, 59-67 and 182-200; R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967 [1960], Chapters 4 and 6; J. Hagan, The History of the ACTU, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981, pp. 3-7. Cf. Alfred Marshall's comment that unionism, and principally skilled unionism, 'fostered habits of sobriety and honesty, independence and self-respect'. A Marshall, Elements of Economics of Industry, Macmillan, London, 1892, p. 408.

underlines the argument that sectional divisions within the labour movement were perhaps a prime determinant in influencing class consciousness. Notwithstanding this, the division of labour in Australia was by no means unique in the promotion of labour reformism, and, to be sure, the division of labour in SA was that not dissimilar from other colonies/States. What is of concern in relation to SA, is that under economic conditions where labour enjoyed a number of strategic advantages, the politics of the labour movement were shaped into institutional parameters, such that by the end of the post-war long boom labour politics had, according to one source, either stagnated or regressed until Australian society was 'one of the most reactionary political communities in the capitalist world'.[14] Yet, the argument in this chapter does not claim a priori that the labour movement under the specific production relations in Australia was inherently radical or revolutionary. On the contrary, as wage labour experienced peripheral capitalist development it expressed many different and contradictory responses. The discussion below is concerned with the processes responsible for shaping the politics of the labour movement in SA, in which central importance is attached to the channelling of labour's problematical responses within narrow dimensions, able to be institutionally incorporated under the dominant political relations of the capitalist economy in question.[15]

To indicate the institutionalisation of conflict and the quiescence of organised labour, one method of approximation involves the dimensions of organised militancy as reflected in statistics on industrial action. This method poses a series of methodological difficulties not the least of which being that statistics record but a fraction of industrial

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14 R. Gollan, 'Has the Australian Labour Movement...' op.cit., p. 41.

15 J. Rickard, op.cit. provides a historical account of the structural institutionalisation of class politics.

conflict. Problems of interpretation aside, statistical data represents official sources which are convenient rather than methodologically coherent, and which neglect informal or less visible forms of industrial action.[16] But, more importantly still, union militancy is not an accurate indication of class consciousness (socialist or trade unionist), nor is the relative absence of militancy symptomatic of the lack of such consciousness. Militancy among organised labour does not necessarily signify the existence of political class consciousness nor cohesive organisation. Industrial action based on restricting or interrupting the labour process rarely constitutes revolutionary class consciousness in action; indeed, it may be more often spontaneous or non-antagonistic in intent. Strikes, for example, may represent worker opportunism rather than militancy per se, or simply register the measure of employer intransigence to worker demands. In other words, strike action is intrinsically neither reformist nor revolutionary.

Other indications of labour moderation can be extracted from the nature of the industrial demands advanced by the union movement in question. Here the importance lies in analysing the level and political character of its objectives in comparison to other regions and in relation to expressions of wider labour movement or class-based objectives. Such trade union activity extends towards more formal political demands through the political parties; an extension which itself depends greatly on the degree of accommodation of the union and political leadership. Moreover, in discussing the nature of union demands, it is not the case that wage issues necessarily represent the

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16 For instance, one problem with the Australian data collected by the ABS involves continuous strike activity over an on-going set of grievances (such as a series of single-day stoppages). This activity is recorded as separate strike disputes. Alternatively, strikes that involve stoppages of work of less than ten working days are ignored; thus, many small strikes or strikes of only a few hours duration are not recorded. See also M. Waters, Strikes in Australia, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982, Chapter 1.

epitome of narrow economism, and that wider issues are somehow more progressive. In trade union activity under late capitalism issues centred on wages, prices and profits remain the main axis of both sectional and class activity.[17] However, the economism within labour ideology and its relationship to the structure and development of the economic order limits, in turn, the further development and expression of class consciousness beyond narrowly defined wage concerns. Finally, labour moderation can be assessed in relation to the organisational flexibility and capacity to promote social change through the particular form of organisation developed and maintained in contemporary unionism.[18]

It is far from difficult to demonstrate that in relation to industrial disputation the SA union movement has been particularly quiescent and restrained. At most, South Australian unionism was defensive rather than defiant. Figures for industrial disputes, workers involved and the number of working days lost, provide a clear indication of the comparative moderation. Table 3:1 provides comparative data for the States of New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia from 1913 to 1983.

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17 See: A. Gorz, 'Trade Unionism On the Attack', International Socialist Journal, Vol. 1 (2), April 1964; E. Mandel, Late Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975; B. Rowthorn, 'Unions and the Economy', in R. Blackburn and A. Cockburn (eds.), The Incompatibles: Trade Union Militancy and the Consensus, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967; R. Blackburn, 'The Unequal Society' in ibid.; A. Glyn and B. Sutcliffe, British Capitalism, Workers and the Profits Squeeze, Penguin Harmondsworth 1972; R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: a Marxist Introduction, Macmillan, London, 1975; R. Hyman and I. Brough, Social Values and Industrial Relations, Blackwell, Oxford, 1975.

18 V.I. Lenin, What the 'Friends of the People' Are and How They Fight the Social Democrats, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1978, pp. 72-8 and 207-218; V.I. Lenin, What is to be Done?, Oxford University Press, London, 1963 [1902]. For a historical analysis in this vein see G. Stedman-Jones, 'Working Class Culture and Working Class Politics in London, 1870-1900, Journal of Social History, Vol. 7, 1974; and N.B. Nairn, 'Some Aspects of the Development of the Labour Movement in New South Wales 1870-1900', M.A. Thesis, University of Sydney, 1955.

TABLE 3:1

Industrial Disputes 1913-1983

	Number of Disputes			Workers Involved '000			Working Days Lost '000			SA Working Days Lost as a percentage of Australian WDL
	NSW	Q	SA	NSW	Q	SA	NSW	Q	SA	
1913	134	17	9	40.0	2.0	0.3	448.0	77.2	2.4	0.38
1916	336	64	21	123.4	20.3	1.6	1,174.0	170.9	7.9	0.48
1921	535	33	19	138.5	4.9	3.2	680.0	128.3	96.0	7.46
1926	256	29	17	96.6	2.4	2.7	1,111.2	30.1	22.8	1.74
1931	87	15	5	22.8	5.7	0.2	136.0	51.1	0.7	0.28
1936	188	12	1	52.3	1.2	0.1	432.5	14.7	0.5	0.10
1941	513	17	11	220.1	3.7	3.7	778.1	47.8	17.7	1.79
1946	771	22	18	229.5	23.4	10.2	719.6	613.7	29.0	1.48
1951	1,052	191	27	303.6	56.1	12.7	682.4	96.3	34.1	3.90
1956	878	269	21	226.3	115.4	18.5	611.3	238.8	74.7	6.66
1961	529	123	26	137.0	78.2	17.3	318.6	169.0	17.3	2.85
1966	835	171	42	210.0	68.7	8.8	400.1	80.7	20.9	2.85
1971	1,236	441	135	643.7	172.2	64.1	1,887.5	271.4	111.2	3.63
1976	955	319	118	941.9	317.7	130.4	1,456.6	426.0	151.8	3.99
1977	1,160	278	93	258.3	118.0	26.4	538.2	240.8	30.6	1.84
1978	1,240	231	119	503.8	195.8	50.0	970.8	360.3	79.1	3.71
1979	1,072	194	96	640.4	255.3	92.5	1,369.9	467.9	186.5	4.70
1980	1,243	253	94	383.1	136.2	24.2	1,208.6	618.7	59.4	1.79
1981	1,526	331	124	553.6	113.6	67.0	1,918.6	465.8	158.8	3.79
1982*	924	254	110	359.6	204.3	37.5	961.6	509.8	66.6	3.09
1983*	788	320	88	267.9	62.4	18.4	801.2	135.3	87.4	5.32

* Provisional figures

Source: Labour Report, No. 58, 1973; ABS Ref. 6.7 Canberra 1974; and ABS Cat. No. 6322.0.

Table 3.2 provides data for the period 1975 to 1983 for the whole of Australia and for each State, while the distribution of the labour force across the various States is provided also.

TABLE 3.2

Working Days Lost Due to Strikes, 1975-1983
(000's)

	NSW	VIC	QLD	SA	WA	TAS	AUST.(a)
1975	1,477.8	1,221.7	473.3	127.6	100.7	40.6	3,509.9
1976	1,456.5	1,420.0	426.0	151.8	252.1	62.6	3,799.2
1977	538.2	586.1	240.8	30.6	220.5	26.7	1,654.8
1978	970.8	468.1	360.3	79.1	197.9	35.4	2,130.8
1979	1,369.9	1,486.1	476.9	186.5	348.1	59.8	3,964.4
1980	1,208.6	1,115.4	618.7	59.4	191.0	91.5	3,320.2
1981	1,918.6	1,235.5	465.8	158.8	244.0	64.3	4,192.2
1982	961.6	368.0	509.8	66.6	162.4	61.5	2,158.0
1983	801.2	257.7	135.3	87.4	270.6	67.8	1,641.4
			percentages				
1975	42.1	34.8	13.5	3.6	2.9	1.2	
1976	38.3	37.4	11.2	4.0	6.4	1.6	
1977	32.5	35.4	14.6	1.8	13.3	1.6	
1978	44.6	22.0	16.9	3.7	9.3	1.7	
1979	34.5	37.5	11.8	4.7	8.8	1.5	
1980	36.4	33.6	18.6	1.8	6.0	2.8	
1981	45.8	29.5	11.1	3.8	5.8	1.5	
1982	44.6	17.1	23.6	3.1	7.5	2.9	
1983	48.8	15.7	8.2	5.3	16.5	4.1	
			Labour force Distribution by State - Percentage				
1975	35.3	27.3	14.4	9.4	8.5	2.8	
1984	34.7	26.4	15.8	8.7	9.3	2.6	

(a) Includes Northern Territory and A.C.T.

Sources: Labour Force, ABS, 6203.0 Feb. 1984.
Year Book, Australia, No. 67, 1983.

The third table reemphasises the extremely low level of union militancy in South Australia over the last decade using comparisons based on the number of working days lost per thousand employees.

TABLE 3.3

Industrial Disputes: States and Australia, Working days lost per Thousand employees, 1973 to 1983

	N.S.W.	VIC.	QLD.	S.A.	W.A.	TAS.	AUSTRALIA (a)
All causes-							
1973	622	590	509	296	313	1,089	552
1974	1,462	1,757	807	686	656	672	1,273
1975	831	910	718	277	253	305	717
1976	827	1,051	638	323	623	464	773
1977	308	433	359	65	532	197	336
1978	555	346	536	172	473	261	434
1979	744	1,090	680	395	832	439	787
1980	660	792	866	132	445	659	650
1981	1,028	865	624	320	552	456	800
1982	481	260	672	102	352	432	396
1983	288	163	178	114	581	471	249

(a) Includes Northern Territory and A.C.T.

Source: ABS, Cat. No. 6321.0.

Clearly, among the mainland States SA has the lowest level of observable industrial disputation, and in working days lost per thousand employees has the lowest rate for the whole of Australia. Between 1973 and 1983 SA recorded an average annual rate of working days lost per thousand employees of only 262 compared with the next lowest State of Tasmania with 495 and the national average of 633.4.

This non-militant character of the union movement has traditionally

marked SA industrial relations since colonial settlement.[19] For example, during the 1890's depression the Great Strikes were fought throughout Australia involving the maritime, mining and pastoral industries but spreading to other unions through the Trades and Labour Councils. SA unions participated in these to a far less degree than their eastern counterparts. Indeed, during the strikes the local UTLC performed the role of conciliator in consistently attempting to find compromise between employers and the striking unions.[20] The immediate result of the strikes was a drastic increase in the unionisation rate and the coverage of the UTLC.[21] Insofar as the union leadership were

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19 A selective, rudimentary literature noting this feature of SA labour history exists in: P.G. Peter, 'Militancy and Moderation: a Comparative Study of the Trade Union Movements in NSW and South Australia in the 1880's', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1959; J. Lonie, 'Conservatism and Class in South Australia During the Depression, 1929-1934', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1974; E.J. Curnow, 'Shall We Strike?', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1958; K.R. Bowes, 'The 1890 Maritime Strike in South Australia', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1957; R. Walker, 'The Maritime Strikes in South Australia 1887-1890', Labour History, No. 14, May 1968; T.J. Mitchell, 'J.W. Wainwright: the Industrialisation of South Australia, 1935-1940', Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol. 8, 1962; L.E. Kiek, 'The History of the South Australian Labour Unions', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1948. J. Moss, 'Sound of Trumpets...' op.cit., attempts a comprehensive coverage of SA labour history, but as an account of the left-wing of the labour movement it ideologically inflates the significance of episodes of union militancy and worker consciousness. Parts IV and V present largely an account of left-wing and Communist misinterpretations of the development of organised labour in SA.

20 The major martime strike at Port Adelaide was settled through negotiation between union leaders and employers. Heading the union response in South Australia was J.A. Macpherson, Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, and an ardent supporter of harmonious conciliation rather than direct industrial action. Both Macpherson and his predecessor, D.M. Charleston, were of the opinion that 'sensible' union behaviour could achieve the withering away of the strike. As one commentator has put it, 'before every strike they could be heard preaching the gospel of order and moderation, and urging the workmen to confer and conciliate with their employers'. P.G. Peter, op.cit., p. 73.

21 From 1884 the number of unionists, as represented by UTLC membership, increased from an estimated 1,800 to approximately 8,000. The number

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concerned, the strikes were acknowledged for assisting the expansion of unionism, despite the accedence to the employers' demands in SA and the more severe defeat of mass unionism in the eastern colonies. Of greater significance in the longer term, was the reinforcement given to the position of the union leadership relative to the membership. This occurred because of the apparent success of conciliation as a means of avoiding class conflict in opposition to the demonstrable lack of success of mass union solidarity. Indeed, prior to the strikes, union leadership was mainly concerned with recruitment and the proliferation of standard rates and conditions. Following the confrontations union leaders assumed instead a preoccupation with organisation continuity. In attempts to achieve dimensions of organisation effectiveness and survival, officials increasingly adopted bureaucratic methods of control involving routinised administration and the establishment of full-time office positions.[22] This trend was greatly encouraged first by the effects of compulsory arbitration and second through the UTLC-Labor Party relationship in which union moderation was translated into social democratic management.[23]

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of separate unions in existence doubled to over 60 by late 1890, while those affiliated with the UTLC increased three-fold with the major rise occurring in the year 1890 itself. Union density and organisational growth are conveyed in J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance ... op.cit., pp. 18-21.

22 Examples of bureaucratic development in SA are provided in J. Moss, op.cit., Chapters 8, 9, 13 and 19; A.G. Austin (ed.), The Webb's Australian Diary, 1898, Melbourne, 1965; J.I. Craig, 'The History of the South Australian Labor Party to 1917', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1940, pp. 31-44; P.G. Peter, op.cit., Chapter 2; L.E. Kiek, op.cit., Chapters 4 and 5.

23 The UTLC gained increasing prestige within the union movement because of its centralisation, its capacity for involvement in the wider political processes and because of its role in industrial relations conciliation. The UTLC in Adelaide concerned itself with the negotiations between union affiliates and employer groups. This concern was predicated upon the collective desire to monitor and control the negotiation procedures of industrial disputes in order that individual or localised disputes should not spread and implicate other affiliates. In performing this role the UTLC effectively began to limit the scope of bargaining and to distance the relationship

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A further example of labour accommodation during the mid-twentieth century involved the collaboration of union officials with employers and state administrators in the state promoted drive toward industrialisation. In the aftermath of the 1930's depression, the SA economy was virtually devoid of industrial disputes involving loss of working time. Key unions in the industrialisation process, such as the Vehicle Builders, the Australasian Society of Engineers (ASE) and the organisational predecessor to the AMFSU, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, were each co-signatories to 'no-strike' sweetheart agreements from 1918 onwards with Holden's, then General Motors and Chrysler (Mitsubishi).[24] The general lack of strikes proved to be a critical selling point in the state's package of inducements to attract the investment of inter-State and overseas firms.[25] In addition, one of

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between the rank-and-file and the representative officials. UTLC policies, generally reflecting a conservative common denominator, became a substitute for individual union policies, as well as providing a systems scapegoat for union officials confronted with membership pressure for more positive action. Discussion of the contemporary Labor Party's role in narrowing the ambit of labour politics is provided in B. Dickey, 'South Australia', in D.J. Murphy (ed.), Labor in Politics: the State Labor Parties in Australia 1880-1920, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975.

24 One of the members of the Holden family, Dame N. Buttfield, later recalled that under the management of J. and E.W. Holden (see Appendix VI) the firm was simply 'one big happy family'. Holdens were proud of the record that 'no strikes ever occurred in Holden's Motor Bodies'. One reason for this employee compliance, according to Buttfield, was managerial patriarchy. For instance, E.W. Holden 'every morning would walk around the plant ... he knew everybody and would ask "how's your wife" etc. And in this way built up trust'. Buttfield was aware of the agreements signed with the unions but was convinced that the unions were 'not unhappy' about this situation. N. Buttfield, Personal Interview, 4.6.1980. See also Chapter IV of the present study and Appendix VIII for details of industrial agreements.

25 See for example: 'The Survey of the Main factors Affecting the Choice of the Location of a Large Textile Industry in Australia', SA State Auditor General's Department (per E.W. Holden), 1940. This survey noted the low wage rates existing in Adelaide as well as the 'good record' on 'industrial peace'. It emphasised that in SA 'there is a far greater degree of co-operation and good feeling between employer and employee than in any other State', (p. 10).

the main advocates of industrialisation within the state apparatus, Auditor General J.W. Wainwright, actively sought to incorporate the leaders of the union movement into the process of economic development in order to offset possible confrontation.[26] The State Secretary of the ASE, A.B. Thompson, is recorded as indicating that Wainwright 'regularly called together leading Trade Unionists at the Trades Hall and discussed with them matters of industrial policy'.[27] Mitchell, generalising from the example of the corporatist discussions involved in the establishment of the British Tube Mills' factory at Dry Creek, has argued as follows:

> as was the practice, trade union leaders were taken into the government's confidence during the negotiations. In return for a "closed shop", [that is] the employment of only union members, the unions promised to keep the factory as free from strikes as possible, a strike only to be held if a majority of unionists working at the factory should demand it in a secret ballot.[28]

Historically, the exceedingly moderate nature of SA unionism is best understood as a series of ideological reflexes from organised labour to the structural limitations imposed by the economy. In the nineteenth century the forms of labour organisation existing in the essentially agrarian economy developed a parochial awareness based on regional interest, racism towards competing labour and a partial economism espoused through petty bourgeois individualism, economic protectionism and craft mutuality. In the period prior to the First World War Australian unionism generally absorbed an amalgam of utopian socialist, utilitarian, evangelical, liberal-democratic and single tax-social credit

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26 T.J. Mitchell, 'J.W. Wainwright: the Industrialisation of S.A., 1935-40', Australian Journal of Politics and History, Vol. 8, 1962. On the Keynesian influence on Wainwright see: M. Stutchbury, 'State Government Industrialisation Strategies in South Australia Under Playford and Dunstan', B. Ec. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1980.

27 T.J. Mitchell, 'Industrialisation in South Australia', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1957, p. 20.

28 T.J. Mitchell, 'J.W. Wainwright...' op.cit., p. 36.

ideologies. Particularly strong was Henry George's unorthodox social economic theory conveyed in Progress and Poverty and via his many public lectures throughout Australia. Over these years, as Fitzpatrick noted, the labour movement sought 'social justice' through political and economic reform in a continent that was supposedly the ultimate promised land.[29] And as Métin recorded, various notions of the 'workers' paradise' like the 'ten-bob-a-day socialists' were widely shared, especially among those influenced by the popular 'rationalist' socialism of Edward Bellamy. Indeed, Australia was for many in the labour movement a prospective model on which to establish an all-providing 'industrial army' guided by utilitarian criteria in which the individual pursuit of utility would lead a priori to the commonweal.[30]

However, coherency of doctrine was never a strong point among labour:

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29 See B. Fitzpatrick, A Short History of the Australian Labor Movement, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1940; and The Australian People, 1788-1945, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1946. Two commentators noted that:

> The forces of industrialisation and democracy which made possible the belief in progress also produced Australia, and there were many mid-nineteenth century colonists who felt that Australia was the promised land, in which history's purpose would be revealed. The belief in progress, "improvement", and the belief in Australia as a "new country" which could avoid the evils of Europe were firmly established in the colonial mind.

T. Irving and B. Berzins, 'History and the New Left: Beyond Radicalism', in R. Gordon (ed.), The Australian New Left, Heineman, Melbourne, 1970, p. 67.

30 Cf. E. Bellamy, Looking Backward, 2000-1887, Modern Library, New York, 1951; and R. Gollan, 'The Australian Impact', in S.E. Bowman (ed.), Edward Bellamy Abroad, Twayne, New York, 1962. Australian labour ideology maintained little class consistency. While unions accepted that 'labour produces all', many unionists interpreted this to mean that as production rose their share should rise proportionately. Few disputed the 'fairness' of the relative shares accruing to capital and labour from production. With the introduction of arbitration-determined subsistence wage levels (living wage - basic wage), there was a tendency to view the distribution between wages and profit as an 'iron law' of economics. Unions accordingly turned to explore the politics of relativities and bargaining over skill margins by way of compensation.

and in fact doctrine was rarely able to dislodge the persuasiveness of the empiricist pragmatism in labour practice. Thus, constitutionalism had a more general and penetrating adherence than collectivist ideology ever achieved. Constitutional attitudes emanated directly from the practice of trade unionism and from the traditions of democratic struggle in both Britain and Australia.[31] In turn, these attitudes formed a central core of parliamentary laborism expressed in the truncated policy objectives of the Labor Party. The nature of this reformism has been well documented in the available literature and it is not intended to canvass those arguments here.[32] For the present work, the Labor Party is significant not in terms of its own path of reformist parliamentarism, but in terms of its qualifying effect on the politics of the labour movement.

Critique of the Labor Party often attacks the Party's role in bourgeois politics from the basis of being a non-socialist party with a contemporary leadership of middle class-professional representatives. Debate on the decline of working class politics has addressed the demise of the traditional working class character (and perhaps radicalism) of the Party, and the degree to which once radical origins have been sacrificed in a Party that had from the outset acted as a liberal capitalist party. Such critique is not of central importance to the present work. Here the concern is with the nature of the Party's incorporation of labour ideology and practice into the state apparatus and

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31 R. Gollan, 'The Ideology of the Labour Movement', in E.L. Wheelwright and K. Buckley (eds.), Essays in the Political Economy of Australian Capitalism, Vol. 1, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1975.

32 Australian Literature includes: V.G. Childe, How Labour Governs, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1964 [1923]; R. Gollan, Revolutionaries and Reformists, ANU Press, Canberra, 1975; R. Catley and B. McFarlane, From Tweedledum to Tweedledee, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1974; G. Duncan (ed.), Critical Essays in Australian Politics, Edward Arnold, Melbourne, 1978; A.C. Theophanous, Australian Democracy in Crisis, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1980. Cf. also the accommodationist view by K. Cole, 'Unions and the Labor Party' in K. Cole (ed.) Power, Conflict and Control in Australian Trade Unions, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982.

in turn toward the regulation of labour activity. Throughout much of the twentieth century the Labor Party's policy platform enshrined the principles of economic protection, autarkic nationalism (initially based on white racial homogeneity), public sector expansion, state coordination of the finance sector, some welfare provisions and the state regulation of industrial relations including compulsory arbitration and legislation covering working conditions and injury compensation.[33] While left wing dissidents in the Labor Party espoused various socialist/collectivist doctrines, the centre and right wing factions, which were mainly dominant in the parliamentary wing, were much more inclined toward populist and individualist policy orientations.

The reformist character of the Party, particularly during and after the post-war long boom, increasingly accepted the premise that capitalist society in Australia could only be changed at the margins, and that the major electoral 'good' the Party was able to offer was the compliance of organised labour. As such positive attitudes toward private property, transnational corporations, Australia's integration into and dependence on world capitalism, anti-communism, the inevitability of social inequality and meritocracy were increasingly accepted within Laborist opinion. Conversely, nationalisation, the socialist control of industry, public sector expansion, state control over finance and investment, and commitments to use fiscal expenditure to stimulate employment were, with the more commanding sections of the Party, considered inexpedient and impractical. With Labor in office both federally and in a number of key

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33 See: G. Maddox, 'The Australian Labor Party', in G. Starr, K. Richmond and G. Maddox, Political Parties in Australia, Heinemann, Richmond, 1978; N. Makin, A Progressive Democracy, Daily Herald, Adelaide, 1918; D.W. Rawson, Labor In Vain?, Longmans, Melbourne, 1966; A. Calwell, Labor's Role in Modern Society, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1963; F.L. Crisp, The Australian Federal Labour Party, 1901-51, Longmans, London, 1955 Chapters 13 and 14; B. McKinlay, The ALP: a Short History, Drummond, Richmond, 1981. On recent SA Labor policies see A. Parkin and A. Patience (eds.), The Dunstan Decade, Longman-Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981, passim but especially Chapter 15.

States during the 1970's and 1980's (noticeably: NSW, SA, Tas., WA and later Victoria), these governments, as nas been argued, aspired to institute little other than an alternative style of management of capitalist society.[34] Certainly problems exist in this laborist thesis with its emphasis on technocratic management,[35] but the main advantage this critique holds is that it points to an assessment of Labor Party politics and labour ideology in terms of the capitalist state's role in

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34 That the ALP was preoccupied with winning office has been well documented, see: R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1967 [1960], pp. 193-213; Of interest to subsequent chapters of the present work are the arguments put forward by R. Catley and B. McFarlane, op.cit. Chapters 3 and 8. These authors argued that ALP governments in the seventies attempted to stabilise capitalism by selling 'package deals' to the union movement. Part of the agreement involved wage restraint or 'holding the arbitration line' on wage movements (i.e., preventing private collective bargaining). As Catley and McFarlane pointed out

> these package deals [were] aimed at changing the distribution of income within the share of labour, rather than between wage and non-wage income shares ... Hence a package deal - better social services and the uplifting of the very poor [was] offered in return for across-the-board wage restraint in all other sectors, (p. 32-33).

The O.E.C.D. believed that such policies could achieve short-term success if advanced by social democratic parties. Subsequently, in Australian Capitalism in Boom and Depression, APCOL, Chippendale, 1981, these authors located their argument on the historical accumulation of capital in Australia, but with Labor in Opposition at the time concluded the latter book by describing various possible future 'options' for Labor.

In Australia the formal relationship between the Labor Party and the union movement is similar in many respects to their British counterparts. Formally the trade unions retain a degree of nominal control over the Party. This is the case through the superior voting strength at ALP Conventions, both State and federal, and superior numerical strength on ALP executive bodies. But, as with Britain, when Labor governments achieve office in practice the formal trade union ties serve little purpose as cabinet determines policy. In the 1970's, as in Britain under Wilson and Callaghan, the success of wage restraint strategies was not notable due to unionist rejection of the 'deal'. Cf. also the work of L. Panitch on the British Labour Party and industrial relations in Social Democracy and Industrial Militancy, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976; and S. Aaronovitch, The Road From Thatcherism, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1981.

35 M. Wirth, 'Towards a Critique of the Theory of State Monopoly Capitalism', Economy and Society, Vol. 6, No. 3, August 1977.

controlling labour under the specific circumstances of advanced capitalism. It also clearly highlights the role that the Labor Party has assumed in capitalist two party systems, namely: that as the party of the labour movement it alone is in a unique position to manage and discipline organised labour without attracting undue confrontation.

The argument thus far can be summarised as follows: historically the labour movement in SA has been remarkably compliant. Traditionally, over the previous century and to recent years, organised labour has displayed an unwillingness to resort to industrial action and under the influence of conservative craft unionism actively sought conciliation instead. Yet this compliance was not extracted by elaborate means of corporatism: such corporatism is premised on the existence of a militant or potentially disruptive and organised workforce. This was not the case in South Australia. Certainly incorporation did take place, mainly through the apparatus of the state, but, the labour force was itself compliant for other reasons. As such, incorporation strategies were not designed to quell a conscious militant working class, but to contain labour activity within a certain sphere regulated by the judicial process and intended to satisfy the requirements of induced industrial development. In other words, labour relations became the politics of containment of a moderate trade union movement under the prevailing conditions of the development of the SA economy.

The explanation of this situation needs to be addressed before moving to consider a detailed analysis of the particular union organisations which form the basis of this study. In the remainder of this chapter a range of hypotheses and reasons are suggested which together provide some indication as to why this situation should exist.

The Peripheral Economy

As discussed in the previous chapter, the nature of the SA economy

provided the major structural constraint on the activity of trade unionism. The relatively late industrialisation process together with the physically isolated position of the State, meant that the economy of SA was peripheral to the main development of capitalism in Australia until the Great Depression. During the nineteenth century the preoccupation of the colonial bourgeoisie, less orchestrated by the spectacular growth 'booms' of the eastern colonies, focussed on basic economic survival. This tended to make the local liberal bourgeoisie both defensive and relatively cohesive: a cohesion that remained until the late 1970's. The labour movement in this peripheral economy was, thus, provided with little industrial base or economic security upon which to build an aggressive union organisation, and, indeed, the major breakthroughs of the nineteenth century for which Australia is reputed (high wage rates and the eight hour day) were not initiated in South Australia but in the more militant eastern colonies.[36]

The establishment of substantial economic protection in the years following federation was supported by both domestic capital and organised labour. Over this period dispute arbitration (setting commodity labour prices) and tariff protection (setting commodity goods prices) were interconnected in what has since become regarded as a 'historical compromise' between labour and capital.[37] As a national factor affecting labour moderation, tariff protection is difficult to apply to specific cases in that it applied throughout Australia and was also

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36 See, P.G. Peter, op.cit.; T.A. Coghlan, Labour and Industry in Australia, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969, Vol. 1.

37 H.B. Higgins, A New Province for Law and Order, Dawsons, London, 1968; E. Shann, An Economic History of Australia, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1930, Chapters 21-3; J. Rickard, op.cit., Chapter 7; N.G. Butlin, A. Barnard and J.J. Pincus, Government and Capitalism, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1982. Chapters 3 and 4. As McQueen notes protection for labour also involved the 'White Australia' policy, see H. McQueen, 'Laborism and Socialism', in R. Gordon (ed.), The Australian New Left, Heinemann, Melbourne, 1970.

responsible for stimulating greater degrees of unionisation. However, it is contended that tariff protection was a contributing factor to labour moderation to the extent that the degree of economic protection was significant. Thus, Victoria around the turn of the century and South Australia after 1917 were heavily dependent in the unionised sectors of their economies on tariff protected industries.[38] These industries included in particular: motor vehicles, agricultural implements, iron and steel, footwear and wood products. The argument here is not that unions in the protected industries imbued strong notions of the 'national interest' through industrial expansion, but that many unions developed a protection mentality which allowed for wage improvements after improvements 'in trade', but otherwise considered economic protection a finely balanced adjustment determining their tenure of employment. 'New Protection', the policy of protection for both producers (employers and employees) and domestic consumers, translated its principles and effects through the tribunals of wage fixing in theory away from market determined levels to monitored 'living wage' awards.[39] As a result it has not been uncommon in Australia for unions and employers jointly to support increased protection for domestic manufacturers. A recent case in point was the AMFSU's campaign dating from 1976 advocating tariff solutions to counter the proportional decline of manufacturing jobs in

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38 See P. Macarthy, 'The Harvester Judgement: an Historical Assessment', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, 1968.

39 There is some dispute over the determination and consequences of the 'living wage' and later 'basic wage'. See: P. Macarthy, ibid.; and P. Macarthy, 'Wages in Australia, 1891-1914', Australian Economic History Review, Vol. 10, No. 1, March 1970; J. Rickard, op.cit., Chapter 7; B. Fitzpatrick, 'The Basic Wage: What is its Basis?', Left Book Club, Melbourne, 1941; W.A. Baker, 'The Commonwealth Basic Wage', Metal Trades Federation, Sydney, 1953; J. Hutson, Six Wage Concepts, AEU, Surry Hills, 1971; G. Sorrell, 'Basic Wage - Basic Myth', Arena, No. 14, 1967.

the workforce.[40]

Security of employment in the highly vulnerable peripheral economy exercised a major constraint over the processes of labour combination. Uncertainty in the labour market tended to undermine combinatory defences as individual workers resorted to 'freedom of contract' conditions in the hope of employment. The impact of the depression (1928-35) on the SA economy underlined this lack of security. In that crisis the unemployment rate was officially the worst in Australia with a peak of 35.4 per cent of the workforce unemployed in the July-September quarter of 1932. Unofficially the figure may well have approached 50 per cent unemployed if non-unionised sectors, part-time workers, women and itinerant workers were included in the statistics.[41] This level of unemployment was not only severe by Australian standards; indeed, as a measure of comparison it was approximately double the national rate of unemployment in Britain.

The relatively late drive toward industrialisation produced an industrial base between 1917 and the 1960's that was regionally dispersed. Heavy industry, such as the iron and steel works, lead smelting operations and now closed shipbuilding yards at Whyalla all owned

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40 In particular AMWSU, Australia Up-Rooted, Sydney, 1976; more generally 'Metal Unions Seminar on the Future of Australian Manufacturing', MTF, Sydney, 1977. On the AMFSU's second tender protection scheme see Australian Financial Review, 24.8.1982, p. 6. Cf. also the joint General Motors and VBEF policy on economic protection announced through Australian Financial Review, 27.8.1981, p. 22; and Advertiser, 27.8.1981, p. 17, and 1.9.1981, p. 5.

41 See discussion of the unemployment level in R. Broomhill, Unemployed Workers: a Social History of the Great Depression in Adelaide, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1978; also R. Broomhill and J. Wanna, 'Unemployment Then and Now: the Great Depression and the Present', in J. Wanna, op.cit., Chapter 7; cf. the more apologist position maintained by two critical reviews of Broomhill, see D. Potts, 'Unemployed Workers in Adelaide: Assessing the Impact of the 1930's Depression', Historical Studies, Vol. 19, No. 74, April 1980, and G.F.R. Spenceley, 'Some Comments on the Social History of the Great Depression in Adelaide', Journal of Australian Studies, No. 8, June 1981.

by BHP were each located around the Spencer Gulf some 200 to 350 kilometres by road north of Adelaide. Other developments of economic importance were also dispersed including: the far north and mid-north oil and natural gas industry, the mid-north copper and uranium mining, the South East region timber industry and the wine and food preservation industry of the Riverland and fertile vales beyond the Adelaide area. Hence, centres of heavy industry and other significant regional industries have been located away from the main population centre in South Australia. Hence, the working class within the peripheral SA economy was physically divided. Moreover, within the Adelaide metropolitan area, industry location was dispersed in three isolated districts. The oldest established western district of Adelaide from Port Adelaide toward Woodville and Dry Creek, was based on metal and miscellaneous manufacturing; to the north of Adelaide (some 25 kilometres) the Elizabeth-Salisbury industrial estate was centred on the giant GMH plant; while south of Adelaide from Edwardstown to Lonsdale (some 7 to 26 kilometres from Adelaide) was centred on vehicle components, construction and diverse manufacturing as well as the two Chrysler (Mitsubishi) plants. As a direct result of the relatively late and diffusely spread industrialisation, the labour movement in South Australia had little experience of industrialised labour relations, and certainly had not emerged with established organisational techniques to counter management at the point of production. With no heavy industry, little mining and a small servicing manufacturing sector, the SA economy - from rural itinerants to urban craft artisans - produced a division of labour that was rarely radical and often difficult to unionise. Moreover, when industrialisation commenced, it concurrently introduced through the large enterprises corporate industrial relations strategies to a labour movement that was still in the process of finding its feet in industry unionisation.

Linked together with the peripheral enclave position of the State was the historical character of its social composition. Unlike other Australian settlements SA was established as an antipodean haven for religious dissidents. While theologically unorthodox and anti-establishment the dissidents attracted were in their social values and productive behaviour exemplary capitalist agents. As workers they proved to be loyal, thrifty, conscientious and hard-working; as self-employed they were accumulative, individualistic, constitutionalists and motivated by conventional esteem. In other words, the largely non-conformist religious emigrants attracted to SA helped produce a resident population that was most conformist under capitalist social relations. Historically the dominance of the non-conformist religions is apparent from Table 3:4. For much of the State's history, non-conformist sects together formed the largest denomination and from the mid-nineteenth century to World War I constituted a majority of the population in their own right. The percentage of non-conformist

TABLE 3:4

Major Religious Denominations, South Australia 1866-1966

Religious Group	1866	1871	1911	1933	1947	1966
Church of England	30.16	27.39	29.44	28.32	29.12	26.21
Catholic	14.49	15.44	13.18	11.95	12.54	20.21
Non-Conformist*	48.98	50.79	52.40	39.05	41.74	38.28
Other	1.08	1.42	1.03	4.05	4.26	4.16
No Religion/Not Stated	5.29	4.96	3.95	16.63	12.34	11.14

* Non Conformist includes: Various Methodist sects, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Congregational, Baptist, Unitarian and Salvation Army and other protestant denominations.

Source: SA Statistical Register, 1871, 1911, 1951, 1971.

denominations in SA was approximately 20 per cent higher than the national average.[42]

Among the non-conformist denominations Methodists by far formed the major group followed by Presbyterians, Lutherans and Baptists.[43] More importantly, Methodism was entrenched within the working class and was significantly represented in the labour movement and in the composition of the State's union leadership. The contribution made by Methodism as a social philosophy toward working class integration through the preaching of temporal compliance and constitutional change in contrast to radical revolt has been debate elsewhere at length.[44] The general significance

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42 For example, in 1911 the national distribution of the major religious denominations was: Church of England 38.4 per cent, Catholic 20.7 per cent, and Non-Conformist 30.9 per cent. (Year Book: Australia, CBCS, Canberra, 1914).

43 For instance, in 1911 South Australia had almost the same number of Methodists alone (100,402) as Anglicans (113,781); SA Statistical Register, 1911.

44 Most notably by social historians in relation to Britain where Methodism has been interpreted as a particular working class (and employer) version of the protestant ethic thesis. Debate ranged between the reformist character of Methodist teaching (see R.F. Wearmouth, Methodism and the Struggle of the Working Classes, 1850-1900, Backus, Leicester, 1954) as distinct from the role of Methodism in reducing class consciousness and obviating revolution (for example: R. Moore, Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics, Cambridge University press, London, 1974; E. Halévy, A History of the English People in 1815, Fisher Unwin, London, 1924; B. Semmel, The Methodist Revolution, Heinemann, London, 1974; in relation to North Carolina USA, L. Pope, Millhands and Preachers, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1942). E.P. Thompson's thesis that Methodism served as a form of 'psychic exploitation' preaching disciplined self-restraint towards which workers turned out of despair, has sparked much controversy not least of which because of its dialetical argument that Methodism helped organise while it disorganised the English working class, (see The Making of the English Working Class, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, Chapter 11 and Postscript). While modifications have been elaborated to Thompson's thesis (by inter alia Moore and Semmel) a substantial empirical critique from a reformist viewpoint is N. Scotland, Methodism and the Revolt of the Field, Alan Sutton, Gloucester, 1981. The Methodist impact in SA is introduced by K.Y. Connolly, 'A preliminary Survey of Methodism: Its Growth, Influence and Culture in SA', B.A. Hons. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1976. J. Moss, op.cit., Chapter 5, has ascribed little importance overall to the effects of Methodism on the SA labour movement. He noted

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of the non-conformist faiths in SA has been their contribution to the dimensions of social class subordination to a degree greater than elsewhere in Australia.[45] Non-conformism in the context of the State's late industrialisation provided a temperate ideological character opposed to overt displays of conflict.[46] Essentially, Methodism predisposed the labour movement to accept and participate in the 'proper channels' of the state regulated arbitration process.

Furthermore, migration to SA was conditioned by Wakefieldian schemes for colonisation based on the replication of the English class structure and the controlled distribution of private property.[47] Unlike NSW and Victoria, South Australia attracted few Irish Catholics; a point that has been cited as a contributing factor to the militancy of labour in the eastern States.[48] The migrants attracted to South Australia, were in the main self-standing 'freeborn Englishmen', especially the

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almost in passing the progressive and reactionary elements of the religion. Essentially, Moss regarded the impact of non-conformity in terms of a moderating influence on alcohol consumption, failing to devote adequate attention to its influence in restraining worker consciousness and promoting constitutionalism. This was despite the fact that many of the moderate union leaders and politicians discussed by Moss were non-conformist. Connolly's account acknowledged more explicitly the conservative social character of Methodism (see Chapter 4).

45 See L.E. Kiek, 'The History of the South Australian Labour Unions', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1948; also J. Lonie, op.cit.

46 The religious and social composition of the State was important for instance, despite some official Methodist (and Labor Party leadership, e.g. J. Verran) advocacy of conscription, in the relatively strong opposition to military conscription in the referenda of 1916 and 1917. In fact while Germans, Catholics and the rural sector were anti-conscriptionist, the Methodist leadership supported conscription out of loyalty to traditional authority especially the British Crown. However, Connolly noted that Methodist support for conscription was at the leadership (connexional) level rather than at the individual and lay level. On the conscription issue see J.M. Main (ed.), Conscription, Cassell, North Melbourne, 1970, Chapter 2.

47 See D. Pike, op.cit. for an account of the early selection of acquiescent labour.

48 P.G. Peter, op.cit., pp. 119-120.

non-conformists, who were searching for their own land and a new social environment untainted by aristocratic privilege. They travelled to Australia in order to enhance their political and economic freedom; to have

> 'a vote in the laws they make,
> a home in the land I till'.[49]

With improved economic prospects being a prime motivating factor behind emigration the desire to succeed with incremental improvement but without social or industrial disruption acted as a hegemonic ideology. Of the two major types of emigrants that ventured to Australia, South Australia with a keen religious emphasis on protestant propriety, attracted essentially those that were of a sober and non-rebellious character. The first type (in part nomadic from Victoria and NSW to New Zealand) were more attracted to the high wages, gold findings and property booms, and included itinerant and opportunist migrants. In Australia they constituted an assortment of petty bourgeois, proletariat and lumpen proletariat class places. The other type was comprised of more residential settlers, with some labour aristocratic consciousness, who were interested in sedate suburban home-ownership, long-term living standards, and secure employment.

In the post-war period with a state-assisted programme on settler migration the high proportion of occupier home ownership throughout the workforce was maintained. The Australian States generally have a relatively high proportion of home ownership with SA marginally above the national average. In 1966 SA recorded a level of occupier home ownership of 71.9 per cent of all households compared with the national average of 70.8 per cent. By 1981 these levels had fallen marginally to 69.3 per cent and 68.1 per cent respectively.[50] In part the reason for

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49 B. Fitzpatrick, The Australian People ... op.cit., p. 6.

50 ABS, 'Summary Characteristics of Persons and Dwellings', Cat. Nos. 2443.0 and 2435.0-2442.0.

Australia's high level of ownership of residential property can be traced to state inducement schemes and the attitudes of the migrant population. In SA state inducement centred on the provision of inexpensive housing by the SA Housing Trust and later the regulation of prices through the Land Commission.[51] Certainly local politicians saw the creation of a type of urban 'yeoman' working class, where each was owner of a quarter acre allotment, as a sure guarantee of social stability. More pertinently, for workers with twenty five or thirty year mortgage contracts the costs of lengthy strikes or periods of unemployment threatened the tenure of their property. Furthermore, the existence of separate housing set on large-size land sections and individually owned, contributed to the increased privatisation of working class communities; a process that was exacerbated by the introduction of television, video and commercial sport and which subsequently diffused traditional community and class solidarity.[52]

The Consequences of the Uneven Enterprise Size in South Australia

Apart from the regional and disparate nature of industrial location a further significant factor for union organisation was the relative absence

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51 See H. Stretton, Ideas For Australian Cities, Orphan Books, Adelaide, 1970.

52 Cf. K. Rowley, 'The Political Economy of Australia Since the War', in J. Playford and D. Kirsner, op.cit., pp. 265-324. Rowley is concerned to document the limitations on working class radicalism and at one stage depicts the Australian working class in terms of consciousness as demonstrating 'unthinking particularism' more akin to Marx's peasantry rather than proletariat (pp. 292-4). In addition to privatised housing, workers at the same establishment often live far apart. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find distances between residential locations of between 50 to 100 kilometres within a particular group of employees. Workers in SA generally drive to work, hence do not usually have the opportunity to converse with other workers until worktime. In many of the larger establishments the trend toward employee privatisation is promoted by: separate in-plant sections, various shift arrangements, segmental car parks, canteens and changerooms and diverse plant exit routes (i.e., no central factory gates convenient for protest meetings or the distribution of propaganda).

of middle-sized enterprises. As already noted, the SA economy has been dominated by a small number of large multinational corporations, with plants employing thousands but with few other medium sized firms exceeding the numerous firms employing 100 employees or less. This has resulted in union membership becoming a condition of employment in the large worksites where closed shop provisions have tended to produce involuntary union organisation, whereas unionisation in the many small enterprises has been far more tendentious. The lack of medium-sized establishments has impaired union organisation in producing unions (like the Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation) that cover almost exclusively large multinational enterprises and others (like the Amalgamated Metal Foundry and Shipwrights' Union) that hold a proportion of members in the larger worksites but the major part of their membership in small establishments. With such enterprise divisions the former unions have taken unionisation for granted directing little attention to rank-and-file mobilisation, while the latter have generally found themselves engaged in continuous recruitment and the servicing of numerous worksite locations. The particular uneven composition of establishments in SA has provided relatively few middle-sized locally owned establishments in which spontaneous and independent shop floor unionism could develop, that in turn would strengthen union organisation. In the smaller enterprises there is some evidence of greater employer loyalty due, perhaps, to closer interaction at work, SA's regional isolation, religious predispositions and the general embryonic character of the State's economic development.[53] When independent shop floor activism

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53 The issue of employer loyalty is offered here more as a hypothesis than substantiated attitude. (But, cf. J. Moss, op.cit. Chapter 8). While the extent of employer loyalty among small and medium sized capitalist enterprises is yet to be adequately documented, over the 35 hour week campaign in SA employer propaganda carried more impact in these enterprises. As will be discussed in the following chapter, a historically close relationship existed between the VBEF and

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has been able to develop in the multinational enterprises, these corporations (together with the union officialdom) have produced strategies for containing such initiatives.

Corporate Labour Control

Over recent years a body of literature has emerged which analyses the penetration of the multinational corporation (MNC) into domestic economies. Following diverse sources such as Lenin or Tugendhat some discussion has adopted the perspective of the transnational challenge based on contending sources of large capital in search of global empires.[54] Overseas investment is regarded as on the one hand developmental but concurrently designed to incorporate peripheral regions into the political and supra-market economic power of the multinationals. A second stream of research has focussed on the labour process within MNC's and on the managerial organising practices at the global or plant level.[55] A third area of research has examined trade

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Holdens-GMH. Buttfield claimed that this was due to the workers loyalty to their benign employer: General Motors, however, increasingly recruited Southern European migrants due in part to their (perceived) greater subservience and lack of union traditions.

54 V. Lenin, Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism, International Publishers, New York, 1939; C. Tugendhat, The Multinationals, Random House, New York, 1972; K. Levitt, Silent Surrender, Macmillan, Toronto, 1972; C.P. Kindleberger (ed.) The International Corporation, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, 1970; two recent Australian studies of this genre are: G. Crough and E.L. Wheelwright, Australia: A Client State, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982; and L. Fox, Multinationals Take Over Australia, APCOL, Sydney, 1981.

55 See: G. Maxcy, The Multinational Motor Industry, Croom Helm, London, 1981; A. Rugman, Inside the Multinationals, Croom Helm, London, 1981; R. Barnett and R. Muller, Global Reach, Simons and Schuster, New York, 1974; F. Frobel, J. Heinrichs and O. Kreye, The New International Division of Labour, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1980; T. Nichols and H. Beynon, Living With Capitalism, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1977; A. Friedman, Industry and Labour: Class Struggle at Work and Monopoly Capitalism, Macmillan, London, 1977; and A. Friedman, 'Responsible Autonomy versus Direct Control over the Labour Process', Capital and Class, No. 1, Spring 1977; H. Friedman and S. Meredeen, The Dynamics of Industrial Conflict, Croom Helm, London, 1980.

union responses to the advent of these vertically and horizontally integrated units of production.[56] This third concern has emphasised union strategies to counter the disproportionate national and international economic power commanded by the MNC's including the problems of collective bargaining with internationally based corporations or foreign subsidiaries. While other research has pointed to the organisational problems for local and nationally centred unionism confronted with management control strategies which involve international sourcing, psycho-sociological manipulation, corporatist subordination, rapid automation, de-labouring and labour intensification.

With the exception of a few notable cases, the labour relations policies of MNC's have provided certain distinct 'advantages' to existing (and in many cases quiescent) union organisations. Because MNC's tend to operate on larger economies of scale they have extended the cooperative labour process; locating many processes of production at the single site or under the same employer and accordingly facilitating

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56 R. Flanagan and A. Weber (eds.) Bargaining Without Boundaries, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1974; H. Gunter (ed.) Transnational Industrial Relations, Macmillan, London, 1972; D. Kujawa (ed.) American Labor and the Multinational Corporation, Praeger, New York, 1973; C. Levinson, International Trade Unionism, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1972; A. Martinelli, 'Multinational Corporations, National Economic Policies, and Labor Unions', in G. Littlejohn et al. (eds.), Power and the State, Croom Helm, London, 1978; D. Kruijt and M. Vellinga, Labor Relations and Multinational Corporations, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1979; J. Gennard, The Multinationals: Industrial Relations and the Trade Union Response, Institute of Personnel Management, London, 1976; G.B. Bomers, Multinational Corporations and Industrial Relations, Van Gorcum, Assen, 1976; T. Etty and K.P. Tudyka, 'Wereldkoncernraden: Vakbonden en hun Kapitaalgerichte Strategie Tegen Multinationale Ondernemingen', in K.P. Tudyka (ed.), Multinational Corporations and Labor Unions, Sun, Nijmegen, 1973; B.C. Roberts, 'Multinational Collective Bargaining: a European Prospect', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. XI, No. 1, March 1973; B. Edwards, Multinational Companies and the Trade Unions, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1977; A. Szakats, Trade Unions and Multinational Enterprises, Occasional Paper No. 27, Industrial Relations Centre, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, 1980; E.L. Wheelwright, 'Multinational Corporations' and the Trade Unions', in E.L. Wheelwright, Radical Political Economy, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1974.

greater potentiality for collective labour. In South Australia the major multinationals have typically encouraged 'responsible' trade union organisation. The management of these enterprises have systematically extended recognition and bargaining rights only to established union structures and have refused to recognise or negotiate with continuous or ad hoc rank-and-file bodies.[57] Moreover, because of the MNC's greater propensity to pay due to productivity and their concern to stifle overt conflict, they have usually offered their employees better wages and conditions than comparative non-multinational companies. In their negotiations with unions, the degree of capital intensity together with the established means of production, reinvestment levels, state subsidies and protection and the accumulated labour force skills developed, has meant that MNC's in Australian States have rarely been as mobile as they have often maintained in their bargaining ploys. On the contrary, Australian protectionist incentives for domestic production have retained multinational units of production or their subsidiaries, and not generally produced the process of 'runaway shop' regional de-industrialisation that has characterised areas of Britain and much of the USA's eastern and southern manufacturing regions.[58] Australia,

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57 For example General Motors and Chrysler both refused recognition to shop floor union bodies. Indeed, General Motors during the 1970's established management run safety committees and shop steward committees to undermine existing union bodies. Lonie records the 'rumours' in the early 1970's that GM would withdraw its operations from SA (principally by closing down the Elizabeth plant: a threat that was conveyed to workers at Elizabeth); J. Lonie, 'The Dunstan Government', Arena, No. 25, 1971. The threat to remove GM operations from SA was made on the grounds of management's abhorrence of effective union organisation. See also 'The Story of a Historical Struggle', AEU, Adelaide, n.d. On multinational bargaining in Australia, see: R.L. Rowan and H.R. Northrup, 'Multinational Bargaining in Metals and Electrical Industries: Approaches and Prospects', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 17, No. 1, March 1975.

58 F. Blackaby (ed.), De-industrialisation, Heinemann, London, 1979; A. Singh, 'UK Industry and the World Economy: a Case of De-Industrialisation', Cambridge Journal of Economics, Vol. 1, No. 2,

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conversely, has experienced significant inter-State corporate rationalisation in the present crisis involving plant closures and centralisation of production.[59]

Much of the apparent 'advantages' to unionism are correlative and subordinate to the size of enterprise. For instance, large multinational plants appear more likely to provide adequate facilities for the prosecution of union affairs where the number of employees (and their grievances/problems) exceeds that with which management can efficiently dispense. In such cases the recognised union structure operates in essence as an in-plant dual management institution charged specifically with the responsibility for the maintenance of the employees' welfare. In other words, the type of unionism encouraged by the multinationals' size and operation in South Australia tended to be that which participated in its own subordination. Thus, the practice adopted by multinationals in the vehicle industry was premised on the separation of the union leadership from the shop floor membership. Negotiations over payments and conditions since 1971 were conducted at a national level (usually in Melbourne) with individual corporations.[60] These negotiations involved senior management and the union's federal officers

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1977; N. Harris, 'Deindustrialisation', International Socialism, Series 2, No. 7, Winter 1980; A. Glyn and J. Harrison, The British Economic Disaster, Pluto Press, London, 1980; H. McQueen, Gone Tomorrow, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1982.

59 See J. Wanna, 'Regional Development and Economic Restructuring in South Australia', Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, (forthcoming), November 1984.

60 Cf. G. Maxcy, op.cit., Chapter 10. Cf. also R. Lumley, 'Workplace Level in Industrial Relations', Working Paper Series No. 47, National Institute of Labour Studies, Flinders University, September 1982; and G. Phelan, 'Shop-floor Organisation: Some Experiences from the Vehicle Industry', (mimeo) Macquarie University, 1981. In recent British pay bargaining Brown has noted the trend in manufacturing away from multi-employer/industry-wide bargaining to single employer bargaining on a corporate or establishment basis; W.A. Brown, 'The Structure of Pay Bargaining in Britain', in F.T. Blackaby (ed.), The Future of Pay Bargaining, Heinemann, London, 1980.

with representative senior officials from the State level unions. Usually the contents of the 'log of claims' presented by the unions arose during the lifespan of the previous award period through union organisers serving as coordinators of rank-and-file proposals. Specific organisers' reports were collated at a national and State level before being drafted by federal officials as a final consolidated version of the union's claims presented to management. However, while the composition of the contents emanated from the shop floor, the important process of bargaining was entirely pursued by national officials. This has allowed the multinational corporations to establish long term working relationships with the respective union leaderships. Further, it has consigned the crucial substantive task of front-line bargaining to national officials who inherit significant arbitrary but technically non-legitimate decision-making power through various mechanisms, including: the agenda setting capacity over the log of claims, the phrasing, inclusion or exclusion of items, over the ascription of claim priorities, the demarcation of negotiable and non-negotiable items, the manoeuvrings and nuances of face-to-face bargaining, the nature of arbitrary counter proposals or trade-off agreements, and the definition of 'acceptable' terms.

This type of national or industry bargaining establishes definite conditions for managerial control over the shop floor. Given the relative lack of shop floor union organisation throughout Australia, management invoke award agreements as reason for refusing to negotiate with plant level union representatives. This point is particularly relevant when organisers present claims and grievances to management from their regular servicing. Management retain discretionary power to determine either to consider the proposal in view of the implications for the immediate labour relations, or to circumvent the issue by referring it back to the union, castigating it as an attempt to vary the conditions

of the award contrary to agreement. The latter course designates such issues as potential submissions for the subsequent national negotiations rather than for immediate settlement. But in the interim, due to management intransigence, the union leadership are placed in the position of having to maintain 'good industrial relations' at the plant level, subject not to management per se, but to the conditions of 'the agreement' to which the union remains party. They are also placed in the position of having to screen rank-and-file issues; promoting some which may have simmered for periods without being drawn to management's attention, while relegating others due perhaps to time constraints, the 'chances' of positive outcome or with which they fell less comfortable.[61] Conversely, where management concedes to bargain at the plant/section level, they incorporate a degree of flexibility into industrial agreements which may otherwise lead to intransigence and become a catalyst for conflict. In South Australia this dual tier bargaining with multinational corporations has tended to procedurally reduce negotiable dimensions of conflict, or, as in the case with both the venicle manufacturers agreements and the metal industry private agreement of 1982, has tended to concentrate forms of disruption into the bargaining process as an integral part of the re-negotiation of the agreement. Moreover, this trend is not simply confined to MNC's. For example, employers in the non-multinational metal and vehicle component

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61 For instance, during one particular day visit to the GMH Elizabeth plan a VBEF organiser was confronted with in excess of ten issues-grievances from the rank-and-file. Each of these issues were potentially issues for management determination. However, the organiser eventually conveyed only two specific issues to the personnel management. The first involved an individual injury case over hearing impairment; the second a claim for sunglasses for outside workers loading new vehicles onto rail transport. Other issues were 'filtered out', often subjectively, as constituting non-negotiable demands. Importantly, the organiser performed this screening function prior to management. Management, however, expected the organiser to report back to them following each visit to the plant.

industries also negotiate collectively through arbitrated or private awards with unions.

Three aspects of MNC industrial relations practices are important in the present context. First, management counter pressure was directed toward shop floor activism. This involved mass and selective retrenchments, the introduction of elaborate and union endorsed disciplinary procedures for worker behaviour, company sponsored 'counter log of claims' aimed at the restructuring of work practices, the dismissal of wildcat strikers and the narrowing of the bargaining agenda, the calculated deployment of sub-contract work (ranging from component production and services to plant alteration in preparation for automation processes), and pressures on State governments to ensure industrial harmony.[62] Second, as a consequence of enterprise size, the continuous professional nature of MNC industrial relation practices provided a constant process of conflict mediation: a process more or less sensitive to labour relations depending on management goals and philosophy, work intensity, profit levels, product market and worker attitudes.[63]

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62 On the VBEF's acceptance of Chrysler disciplinary procedure see VBEF, Executive Minutes, 7.3.1977, pp. 1-3. In 1978 General Motors confronted the union log of claims with a counter log of claims designed to erode the impetus to discuss union claims. This counter log of claims proposed:

> '(1) Award life of 3 years.
> (2) Introduce clause "to replace labour involved in wild cat industrial action"
> (3) Employees terminating shall have wages due paid by cheque on the pay day after termination.
> (4) Change of meal break at short notice without incurring overtime payments'.

VBEF, Executive Minutes, 3.5.1978, pp. 4-5. AMFSU and VBEF shop stewards attested on various occasions (e.g. ibid., 9.6.1980) to the use of outside contractors for the instalment of automated equipment.

63 A cogent example of the different multinational corporation approaches to professionalism or institutional accommodation in industrial relations occurred with the managerial takeover of

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Professional industrial relation officers and in some cases separate managerial departments, monitor daily industrial relations developments, establishing codes of practice intended to serve as safety valve routines for accumulated grievances. Such operations conducted by a special strata of management have tended to encourage similar developments of professionalism within union bureaucracies. Industrial relations on the shop floor has emerged in large enterprises as a 'professional' responsibility with professional staff from management communicating with counterpart professional union officials enjoying specific responsibility for the conduct of labour relations under certain employers. In other words, labour relations has assumed a measure of credentialism serving to exclude 'unrecognised' rank-and-file participation. Although some unions have resisted this development (noticeably the AMFSU), the general response typical of both junior and senior ranking officials has been the adoption of an air of self-importance and feelings of honour when regarded as one of a select group of 'key' mediators. By excluding the rank-and-file from management negotiations union officials have nurtured an element of distance between themselves and the membership in order to reinforce their positional importance and bargaining influence. Such professionalisation on both management and union sides has produced an industrial relations environment in which the shop floor wage labour is continuously monitored by qualified servicing and assessment, thus enabling management to engage in more efficient and predictable corporate planning and the union hierarchy to initiate suitable future activities.

Third, the strategies of incorporation engaged by MNC management have

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Chrysler's operations by Mitsubishi between 1978 and 1980. See: Advertiser, 5.5.1978, p. 1 and 5; and J. Hurst, 'Harmony on the Assembly Line', National Times, 1.8.1982. Evaluations of some aspects of Japanese corporate management appear in S. Creigh and M. Wooden, 'Japanese Industrial Relations: the Lessons for Australia', National Institute of Labour Studies, Working Paper Series, No. 49, February 1983.

become increasingly sophisticated and pervasive. Initially, the measure of incorporation in the large plants of Holden's prior to the takeover by General Motors involved simple proprietal familiarity along with the annual event of the work's picnic. More recently, corporate identity especially in Japanese MNCs has superceded the earlier firm-type patronage. During the 1970's, usually with union leadership approval, MNC's introduced employer deducted 'check-off' systems of union dues payment. Although union administration and finances were greatly eased by such provisions, management benefitted from a self-conceded instrument with which to manipulate union behaviour. In particular, as management was confronted with minor strikes or a series of on-going disputes, it was able to threaten the curtailment of union deductions for the duration of the conflict for their entire union workforce unless the union itself acted to restrain the particular workers. This tactic has been used to considerable effect against VBEF members.[64]

As the employment levels of the large corporations declined in the present crisis, some MNC's such as General Motors experimented with incorporation strategies designed to integrate the remaining workforce into the corporate structure. Traditionally firms have not been opposed to the promotion of shop stewards as a method of labour integration; a practice which has continued often to the detriment of union organisation. However, in the wake of its US experience, General Motors introduced two related plans aimed at greater worker involvement. The first under the GMH Ten year Business Plan was a manpower planning

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64 For example this was Chrysler's response during the mass mobilisation during July 1977 (VBEF, Executive Minutes, 18.7.1977, pp. 1 and 2). See also 'Industrial Agreement between Chrysler Australia Limited and VBEF', 14.8.1979, Clause 15. Chrysler also refused to negotiate over union log of claims until all work bans and limitations were removed by VBEF members (VBEF, Executive Minutes, 16.8.1978, p. 3). Moreover, Chrysler had offered a superannuation scheme in 1976 conditional upon the lifting of existing overtime limitations (G. Hill, 'Anatomy of an Industrial Struggle', Solidarity Motor Bulletins, No. 9, London, 1979).

strategy. This plan covering top management to semi-skilled hourly labour was designed to assess employees' performance and promotion potential in line with a management-designed ratings scheme. The aims of the programme were to lift productivity, 'assist employee development', promote better communications between management and workers, and 'to aid the management of people in the company'.[65] Under the programme employees were encouraged to participate in determining their corporate potential with a view to job redeployment and possibly career promotion and supervisory training. In the event the plan was greeted with some derision and scepticism by the shop floor. From experience, workers held ingrained negative views on the company's existing top-heavy management without the promotion of further intermediary levels, and not surprisingly few workers were discovered to possess managerial qualities in the managerial-oriented appraisal.[66] As a corrollary to this manpower planning, the GM management embarked on a 'Quality of Work Life' programme aimed at enriching the job situation to the extent that productivity was improved. The 'Quality of Work Life' programme (1975 - 1984) involved two dimensions of corporate psycho-sociological manipulation. The first focussed on the internal integration of management involving both organisation changes to 'raise the mood of local management' and the promotion of 'corporate team' attitudes based on human resources management.[67] (see Chart 3:1). The second, directed to wage employees, was designed to improve efficiency, quality

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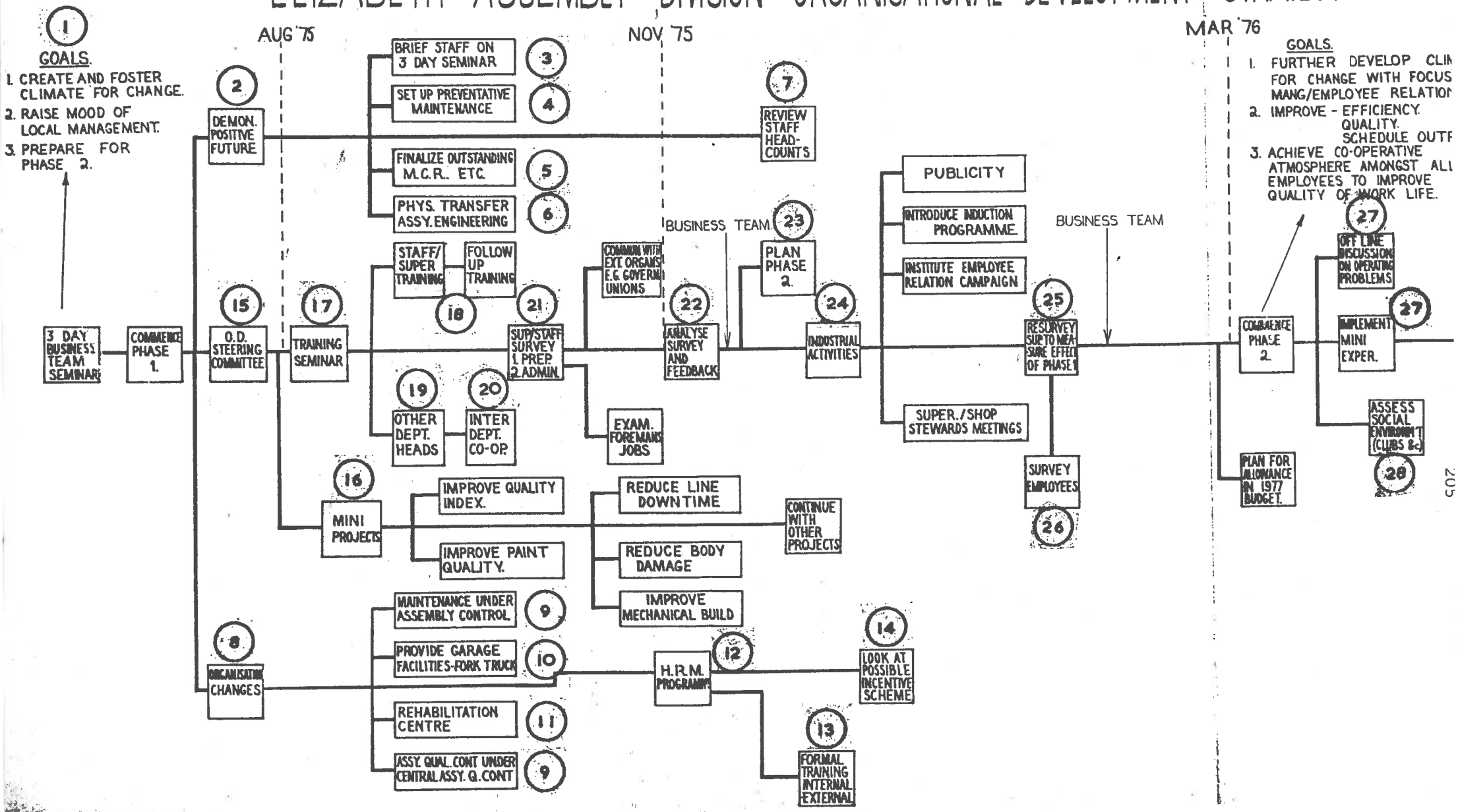
65 A.S. Lea, 'Some Aspects of Manpower Planning at GMH', Work and People, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1979, p. 16. Cf. H. Friedman and S. Meredeen, op.cit., Chapters 1 and 2.

66. Personal Interview with GMH shop stewards, Labour Studies, Adelaide C.A.E., 9.6.1980. Few workers were discovered not surprisingly to possess managerial qualities in the manpower appraisal.

67 G.M.H., Organizational Development, Assembly Division Elizabeth, (O.E. Rickard, W. Boundy, D. Phillips and R. Miller) Sections 2 and 3 ('diagnosis' and 'strategy'). For a consensus-oriented discussion of General Motors' US 'Quality of Work Life' scheme, see, R.H. Guest, 'Quality of Work Life: Learning from Tarrytown', Harvard Business Review, Vol. 57, July-August 1979, pp. 76-87.

CHART 3.1

ELIZABETH ASSEMBLY DIVISION ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY



and schedule output, and to produce a 'cooperative atmosphere amongst all employees to improve quality of work life'.[68] To achieve this, an attitudinal survey of the wage employees was conducted together with the introduction of an employee relations campaign, company-run shop steward meetings and attention to operational problems on the job. A subsequent development of the Quality of Work Life programme was GM management's establishment of a rehabilitation section (light work duties) where injured workers were detailed prior to the recommencement of normal duties. Management intended the rehabilitation scheme to reduce the costs of worker compensation/employee insurance and large lump sum payments, augment production and maintain regular employment and work contact for injured workers.

As part of the process of the institutionalisation of relations at the workplace, for instance, General Motors installed worksite safety committees consisting of management and employee representatives. These bi-partite committees were established despite management's refusal to recognise the right of plant level union bodies to bargain collectively or discuss safety with management. The employees elected to the committees were unionists and usually experienced shop stewards or activists. Management continued to refuse to recognise these representatives as union representatives, but instead considered their role solely in terms of safety representatives from the workforce. These committees monitored the plant level work environment and naturally discussed union policy over safety and working conditions. Hence, the

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68 Ibid. Section 3 point 26. The Quality of Work Life programme in the United States involved 'worker weekends away with management' for shop committee unionists, (J. Donnon, 'Report to State Council re: World Auto Council Meeting, USA' AMFSU, State Council Minutes, 19.8.1981. According to a GMH senior management source productivity within the GMH staff effectively meant 'give the foreman a lecturing and twist the line up', (i.e., speed up the assembly line).

committees emerged in practice as de facto bi-lateral plant committees subject to management concession. To the extent that these safety bodies performed the role of conveying effective information and feedback and involved workers in corporate strategies, they readily served management's interests. But, to the extent that they provided a springboard for union policy implementation they enjoyed a clearly circumscribed and ambivalent legitimacy. In other words, safety committees were an attempt by management to integrate the shop steward body not in the capacity of legitimate shop stewards but as 'other regarding' employees.

In order to reinforce workplace strategies of incorporation management have in some cases addressed the social and material dimensions of employee incorporation. The most relevant example of this trend involved the changed managerial philosophy of Mitsubishi following the takeover of the two Chrysler car plants in 1979. As a result of mismanagement, the Chrysler workforce over the decade prior to the takeover was popularly renowned for its poor work efficiency, low product quality performance, spontaneous disruption and on occasions riotous militancy. By 1979, with many of the conscious militants dismissed,[69] Mitsubishi commenced an enterprise-based corporatism drawn from zaibatsu/keiretsu practices in Japan but tailored to Australian circumstances.[70] Initially Mitsubishi management issued undertakings

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69 Union officials claimed that Chrysler's systematic dismissal of 'agitators' as well as the overall reduction of the workforce from 7,700 to 3,000 between 1973 and 1980, was an element of the takeover agreement with Mitsubishi. This allowed Mitsubishi's public and industrial relations image to commence untarnished. This union claim was also suggested by the local press, Advertiser, 5.5.1978, pp. 1, 5 and 11.

70 See: Advertiser, 1.5.1980, p. 1, 5, 13; Australian, 1.5.1980, p. 1 and 9; Advertiser, 7.5.1982, p. 3. Mitsubishi's takeover introduced substantial automation in the labour process (Age, 9.8.1980), p. 3; Advertiser, 2.10.1980, pp. 2 and 12) reducing manhours per car from 60 to 22 in five years (Advertiser, 7.5.1982, p. 3 and 14.10.1982, p. 4).

of job security for the existing workforce, invoking images of the paternal, if commonly misconceived, 'lifetime' employment provisions of Japanese industry.[71] Following this, as section after section was in some part automated, management introduced substantial (but competitive) material inducements to employees including: pension provisions, prizes for the most productive sections such as a free monthly car lottery, cash payments for labour-saving ideas, occasional dinners and entertainment /drinking evenings at local bars.[72]

State Regulation of Labour

Historically many of the structural constraints under which trade unions have developed and currently operate were in existence before the emergence of the corporate labour strategies of multinational enterprises. Indeed, the Australian States and New Zealand have traditionally displayed an exceptional level of state regulation designed to institutionalise industrial conflict. Throughout Australia the continuation of compulsory arbitration in industrial relations, based on ideas and experimental methods from Britain but developed and extended, is directly related to Australia's position as a subordinate capitalist economy producing raw materials for major imperialist powers. Put differently, Australia's long-term experience with state arbitration may be analysed in terms of the specific nature of commodity production establishing definite parameters for the nature of labour control methods. Thus, for example, when arbitration was introduced around

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71 A recent account of such Japanese labour control is R. Steven, Classes in Contemporary Japan, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1983, Chapter 1 and passim.

72 Along the walls surrounding the vehicle assembly section at Mitsubishi's Tonsley Park car plant were painted a series of thermometer charts and clock diagrams with scales relating to the weekly production performance of the various departments. These productivity scales provided a continuous merit and demerit score indicating the competitive ranking of the departments. A new car every month was enclosed along the main thoroughfare. Each month the

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the turn of the century, the economic importance of key exports products called for efficient production and prompt transportation. Furthermore, the capital-labour ratio of many export industries was high implying that labour discipline was essential to maintain profits. Protracted industrial disputes were intolerable. To engage in lengthy disputes, as employers and unions had from 1890 to 1894, was a severe handicap to export producers in the volatile overseas market. Hence, compulsory arbitration was introduced as an effective means of outlawing strikes and settling disputes in court while production continued. It was also a means of regulating the distribution of income both between classes and within the working class itself, and of issuing legitimacy to forms of unionism that abided by the system.

With a nascent local bourgeoisie unable to articulate coherent and collective policies as a class, and holding insufficient political power, due in part to universal male suffrage together with (by the 1890's) the election of Labor Party parliamentarians, the state apparatus consolidated the provision of compulsory arbitration despite some initial employer resistance and union disapproval. As a forum where class faction policies were contested, the state in Australia was sufficiently powerful relative to major local employers and landed interests to regulate capital-labour relations to offset both the effects of periodic shortages of labour and industrial disruption.[73] Thus, as emphasised

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car was won by some shopfloor worker (via secret lot) from among the workers of the most productive sections. On the early introduction of the Mitsubishi corporate plan (involving a further 30-40 per cent reduction in labour from the 1978 level) see: 'Report to AMWSU State Council by B. Mowbray - "Kai-Zen" Chrysler Style', AMFSU, State Council Minutes, 5.12.1978. A survey of Mitsubishi's incentives to workers in included in J. Hurst, 'Harmony on the Assembly Line', National Times, 1.8.1982, pp. 38-39.

73 Moreover, while capital from both British and local sources was sufficient for domestic expansion, labour shortages in particular sectors of the economy served to retard the extended reproduction of capitalism and gave rise to higher wage rates in expanding sectors of

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in the previous chapter, while the state instrumentally subsidised private capital, by relieving the local bourgeoisie and foreign investors of the financial responsibility of providing productive infrastructure, it also sought to harmonise the interests of capital and labour. From a class standpoint the state acted to diffuse social antagonisms which arose within the capitalist production process. This involved the role of state intervention to counteract the tendency of rising money and real wages, (or the price of labour power) forced by relative labour power shortages at critical periods. At the same time, the state had to contend with the contradiction of seeking to restrain domestic wage levels while attempting to forge a greater dependency of available labour power on the various factions of capital.

Initially, labour regulation commenced in South Australia with the introduction of a series of Masters and Servants Acts (1837, 1847, 1863, 1878, 1935-6) which sought to codify and augment employment contracts.[74] Following British legislation recognising trade unions in 1871, South Australia followed suit giving union organisations legality under legislation enacted in 1876. At the forefront of liberal and

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the economy. Thus, arbitration was an attempt to counteract the employers' complaint of high labour mobility between firms or industries depending on which provided the highest available wage rates. The state acting as collective capitalist assumed the role of wage determination both across industrial and occupational classifications.

74 These Masters and Servants Acts codified the 'freedom of contract' employment relations between individual employers and individual employees. On the early impact of the acts in South Australia, see J. Cashen, 'The Masters and Servants Act of South Australia 1847-1851', History Research Seminar, Flinders University, October 1978; and J. Cashen, 'Masters and Servants in South Australia, 1837-1860', Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia, No. 10, 1982. Cashen noted that a Masters and Servants Act was the third act passed by the colonial government in 1936 within two weeks of the colony's proclamation. See also J. Moss, 'South Australia's Colonial Labour Movement', Journal of the Historical Society of South Australia, No. 6, 1979. The Masters and Servants Acts were not formally repealed until 1972 in the 'Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1972', South Australian Acts of Parliament, No. 125, November 1972, p. 99.

cooptive state intervention, South Australia was the third capitalist society and the first British colony to issue such formal recognition and legal protection to trade unions.[75] Owing to problems between the state's concern for labour discipline and of the legal status of trade unions, the government found it necessary to reestablish the rights and prerogatives of employers over wage labour, which had come into contention, with the subsequent enactment of the Conspiracy and Protection Act of 1878.[76]

The liberal-democratic Kingston ministry (1893-99) introduced two significant measures designed to regulate the anarchic mechanisms involved in the causes and settlement of industrial disputes. The Factories Act (1894) laid down minimum wage levels and 'anti-sweating' conditions of employment at the workplace as well as regulated the use of female and youth labour.[77] On four subsequent occasions this act was strengthened (1900, 1904, 1906 and 1907) before the introduction of the more substantial Industrial Code of 1920. The second act, The Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1894, was, if not entirely original,

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75 'The Trade Union Act, 1876' South Australian Acts of Parliament, No. 41, October 1876. The UK and France (for an interrupted period) legalised trade unions prior to South Australia. Under the South Australian provision unions received civil status before the law as the legitimate representatives of employees; protected for the purposes of 'imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business', insofar as they were officially audited by 'some fit and proper person', (p. 4). However, while unions could no longer be liable to criminal prosecution for acting 'in restraint of trade' the sacredness of agreements between employers and employees was not affected.

76 'The Conspiracy and Protection of Property Act 1878', South Australian Acts of Parliament, No. 109, November 1878. Specifically, it forbade wage 'servants' from 'wilfully and maliciously' breaking contracts of service in the event of endangering human life or 'valuable property', or preventing public services from operating.

77 J. Elton, op.cit..

of a more radical nature in content.[78] This arbitration act provided legal mechanisms for the settlement of disputes through state arbitration. The aim of the act was to avoid class war in the light of the Great Strikes of the 1890's, and to avoid the tendency for the lengthy protraction of industrial disruption caused by strike action.[79] The act permitted trade unions voluntarily to seek registration to qualify for arbitration, but once registered and involved in disputation the union was compelled to submit to arbitration where the arbitrators' decision was theoretically final and binding. Trade union registrations in SA increased with the enactment of the Wise amendments in the New South Wales Arbitration Act of 1901 and with the arrival of federal compulsory arbitration in 1904.

Union policy welcomed state arbitration principally on three grounds.[80] First, unions believed that arbitration would herald a new

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78 Especially more radical in terms of state intervention than the NSW attempt at voluntary conciliation in 1892. See W.P. Reeves, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 69-181.

79 Influenced by the success of local ad hoc conciliation boards which emerged irregularly after the conciliation of the Bootmakers' strike of 1885, the Kingston ministry's ambitions for industrial peace reached a high degree of fruition largely by accident. Under Kingston's act, trade unions were offered conciliation before an equal employer/employee representative board with a deciding president appointed by the Industrial Registrar. In return unions had to register their organisations, their rules and constitutions with the Registrar (who possessed the discretionary power to scrutinise and reject perceived infringements of the spirit of the law). Once registered, a union locked in disputation had to accept the decision of the duly constituted board whether or not the outcome was favourable. Penalties for breaches of the award decisions were high, with fines up to £1,000 on organisations and £10 on individuals for noncompliance. While employers refused to submit their prerogatives to conciliation and arbitration, not surprisingly of the fifty trade unions in existence no single union registered for compulsory arbitration.

80 With the rise of the Labor Party and the introduction of federal compulsory arbitration, the trade union leadership accepted the process of arbitration as an institutional means of gaining union recognition and avoiding the costs of strike action. Some historian commentators have misleadingly traced the arrival of both the Labor Party and the arbitration system to the consolidation and reorganisation of the labour movement after the Great Strikes of 1890. (Cf. J. Harris, The Bitter Fight, University of Queensland

(continued over page)

era in impartial productivity bargaining where accurate profit returns and productivity gains would be translated into higher wages. Nonetheless, while employers were not required to justify profit levels, organised labour was continually faced with the prospect of making a case for improvements in wages and working conditions. Second, by avoiding lengthy strike action unions hoped to achieve their objectives without the threat of their organisations being weakened in the course of lockouts or irreconcilable strikes. For craft unions, moreover, with substantial benefit funds fewer strikes implied that the unions' financial resources would be depleted less easily allowing funds to be expended on insurance for unemployment and sickness. Third, the procedure of arbitration issued full recognition to trade unions as the legitimate and sole representatives of labour. In fact, despite subsequent union disillusionment with compulsory arbitration, state regulation resulted in the unprecedented growth of unionisation both in job territory coverage and aggregate membership. As one labour historian has argued, whether successful or not in terms of their broader aims,

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Press, St. Lucia, 1970; W.P. Reeves, op.cit., Vol. 2, pp. 85-107). As D.J. Murphy points out (Labor in Politics, D.J. Murphy (ed.), University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1975, pp. 3-10) this view has widespread appeal, in spite of overlooking the chronological sequence of events and inter colonial differences. Both the Labor Party and arbitration processes pre-date the outbreak of the 1890 strikes (R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1960, Chapter 8). There remains much contention among labour historians as to the origins, courses and effects of arbitration and the entry of labour representatives into the parliamentary party system. (See: N.B. Nairn, op.cit., especially Part III; and B. Nairn, Civilising Capitalism, ANU Press, Canberra, 1973; J. Rickard, op.cit.,; B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire .... op.cit.). It appears the case, nevertheless, that the initial intentions of the labour movement in promoting dispute arbitration in a 'just society' were sustainedly usurped. See S. MacIntyre, 'Equity in Australian History', in P.N. Troy (ed.), A Just Society?, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981. The initial confidence of unions in the processes of arbitration was systematically eroded as arbitration emerged as a process of labour control.

'the acts were designed to encourage the formation of trade unions'.[81] More precisely, the acts encouraged those trade unions that owed their recognition to state regulation. Finally, in sanctioning unionism the state effectively guaranteed a large income base for unions (a point not lost on union officials) in restricting arbitration to union members.

The arbitration system in South Australia was specifically designed to facilitate the settlement of industrial disputes. Together with the strong belief within the labour movement over the insecurity of economic development, the State's history of minimal industrial action bears witness to the sustained subordination of labour to such regulation. While other Australian States employed arbitration, few attained the effectiveness of South Australia. The Industrial Code of 1920 introduced a degree of comprehensive labour regulation which was not evident in the eastern States. Three adjudicating bodies were established under the Industrial Code to make awards and arbitrate disputes (the Industrial Court), to review industrial and occupational wage appeals (the Industrial Boards of which 60 operated in 1966), and to set minimum wage rates and skill demarcation (the Board of Industry).[82] Amendments in 1966 introduced conciliation committees to settle disputes when parties held some basis for agreement, and an Industrial Commission was also added to effect new awards and adjudicate on matters relating to non-award employees. The Industrial Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1972, under which the State presently operates, introduced further changes. The Supreme Court of SA was given power only

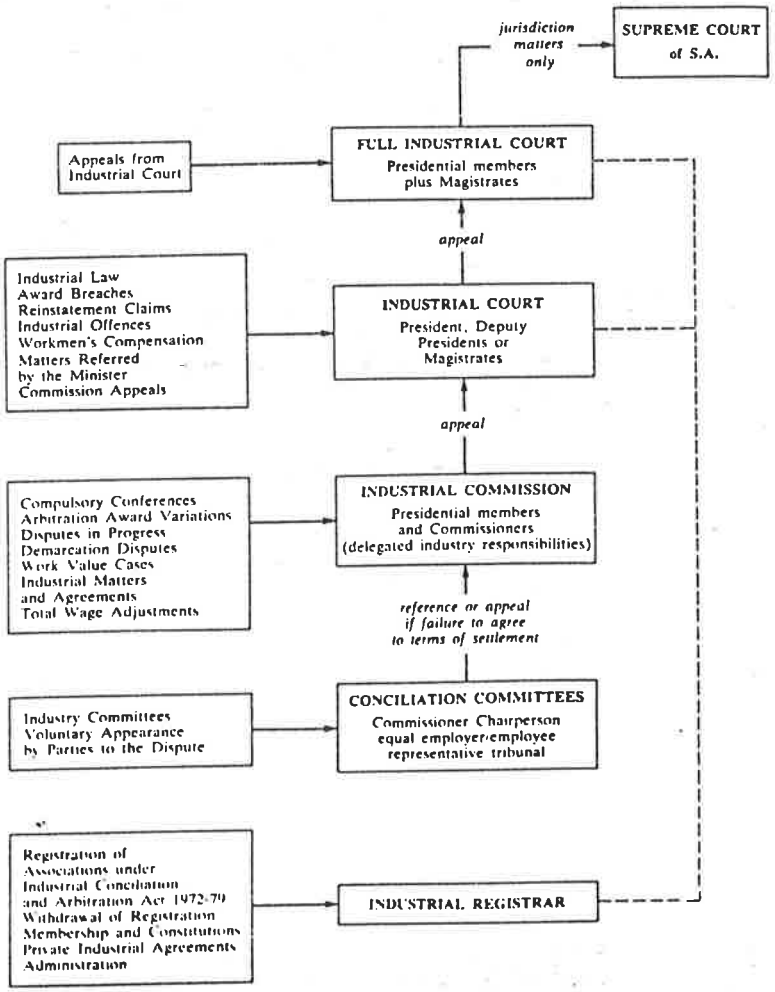
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81 B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, 1834-1939, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1969, p. 233.

82 This form of industrial regulation was not without detractors. In the depression, for example, the Chamber of Manufacturers demanded that arbitration be abolished, while the Country Party Leader, A.G. Cameron, described it as one of the 'greatest curses this country has ever had', (R.G. Cameron, M.P., S.A.P.D. 18/6/1930; cited in J. Lonie, op.cit., p. 138). Despite such criticism the overall record of South Australia's industrial disputes demonstrates the fundamental effectiveness of the state regulation of union militancy.

over jurisdictional matters referred to it by the full Industrial Court and no longer for private civil charges of an industrial nature. The powers of the Industrial Commission were extended to include the proclamation of industry-wide changes to award contents. The Commission, thus, retained legal authority to make and hear cases, to alter existing awards, settle demarcation disputes, conciliate and/or arbitrate on any dispute between employers and trade unions, and to ratify private Industrial Agreements which were negotiated outside the Commission itself but whose parties sought legal recognition. The Industrial Court, on the other hand was empowered to decide on matters relating to the application and interpretation of industrial law, and on matters of employee dismissals, worker compensation, breaches of awards or legislation, and on appeal from disputants. Conciliation Committees, providing for voluntary settlement between parties to an industrial dispute, were retained under the act. The structure and responsibilities of the arbitration process in South Australia are shown below in Chart 3:2

CHART 3.2 ARBITRATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA: THE INDUSTRIAL COURT AND COMMISSION



For the trade union movement, the adherence to arbitration procedures has been ensured through positive discrimination relating to union organisations registered with the Industrial Registrar. Unions not registering or faced with deregistration (for example after non-compliance with procedures or rulings), experience a series of consequences likely to be detrimental to their organisational operations. In the case of the air pilots in 1959 who resorted to collective bargaining when confronted with arbitrational intransigence and penalties, this union incurred the constraints of special regulatory legislation enacted by the federal government. In most cases, trade unions which remain outside the arbitration system face the following restrictions to their operations: (i) the lack of an award covering the union's members; (ii) the inability to seek industrial adjudication when faced with a lock-out by the employers; (iii) the prevention of the unregistered union covering employees in new industries or job categories due to the fact that courts would grant coverage to an already registered union; (iv) the practice of membership-poaching against which the unregistered union has no legal case and hence no recourse save that of its own industrial muscle; and (v) the lack of automatic flow-on benefits from court rulings on wages, hours or conditions.

From the viewpoint of the capitalist state, the paradigm of conciliatory industrial relations was not invariably in accordance with the machinery of state regulation. Throughout its history, arbitration has often encouraged industrial disputes and on occasions overrode more conciliatory practices of collective bargaining with the substantive guidelines of the state interfering or being inconsistent with dispute settlement. The achievement of the state's objective was nevertheless dependent rather than on the direct involvement of the state as class arbiter, than on the promotion and, indeed, coercion of negotiation. This is an important point. Arbitration succeeded in fulfilling the

intentions of the state not inherently because it 'arbitrated' industrial disputes, but essentially because it institutionalised regular collective bargaining in the presence of state appointed mediators. The state, then, succeeded in establishing an industrial relations framework conducive to frequent and regular bargaining in which mediators would where possible award the negotiated compromise. Yet, to the extent that state industrial relations objectives were advanced it was not due to reasons of perceptive corporatist planning through parliamentary legislation. Rather, it was due to the fluctuating bargaining position in the business cycle and structural economic limitations imposed on the labour movement under the conditions of Australia's economic development. In particular, the effects of economic recession and unemployment, which have charactertised much of Australia's (and especially South Australia's) economic development this century, restored a measure of congruence with the state's policies to harmonise capital-labour relations for their mutual interest.

To establish labour control the state served to legitimise forms of union organisation that it perceived as responsible. Legal recognition, governmental monitoring of trade union activity and the examination of union rules and constitutions, together with the establishment of procedural regulations ensured that the state apparatus was placed in a position to scrutinise and shape the organisational momentum of the labour movement.[83] To this end the state encouraged the channelling

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83 Thus, the arbitration system, for some, is said to support the continued existence of a large number of relatively weak and small union organisations. Indeed, some such unions under arbitration exist purely on paper, as in cases where a number of 'paper' unions each with separate awards are organised by one official or by one union office. Here arbitration is seen to strengthen the position of both major combatants, thus allowing small weak unions to remain effective. One labour historian on the early history of South Australian trade unionism estimated that arbitration facilitated the existence of about 10 per cent of union organisations, (L.E. Kiek,

(continued over page)

of union rank-and-file grievances through the official leadership structure of the recognised unions. State control over workplace union activity was more readily enhanced, provided that the handling, codification and in many cases the disciplining of grass-roots militancy could be absorbed within union organisations.[84] Accordingly, under the processes of arbitration, workplace union representatives were not officially recognised to negotiate on behalf of their members; only union officials were entitled to advocate the union's case. In this way the state sought to avoid the emergence of disaggregated bargaining which contributed toward strengthening shop floor organisation, shop steward authority and autonomous rank-and-file collective bargaining. Yet, the endorsement of union officialdom established few principles upon which 'business type' union leaderships could flourish. Instead, rather than autocratic union 'boss' leaderships, union hierarchies developed bureaucratic tendencies involving union officials following routine practices and codified procedures. Indeed, arbitration processes

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'The History of the South Australian Labour Unions', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1948, p. 48). Certainly arbitration required in practice that unions represent all occupational areas and cover all types of employee grievances. Moreover, where another body or a potential organised group could demonstrate that they could perform such functions better or more appropriately, then the arbitration court tended to support their legal registration. With hindsight it can be argued that the Court welcomed union fragmentation upon the demarcation lines of trade, skill or the productivity of specific employees. One such example of this is the case of the Blacksmiths' split from the Australasian Society of Engineers in 1923 where Mr. President Brown of the Industrial Court decided, despite the opposition of the ASE's Secretary J.W. Sharley, that the seventy or so blacksmiths were entitled to separate representation, (see South Australian Industrial Commission files, 'Statutory Declaration', J.W. Sharley before Mr. President Brown, 7th March 1923. Brown's decision appears 'Industrial Court Proceedings', 1923, No. 3). The main point here is not that small unions would not otherwise have arisen, but that their emergence and continuation as separate entities would have been very difficult had it not been for the influence of the arbitration system.

84 For instance A. Carmody, 'Industrialisation in South Australia', M.A. Thesis, University of Adelaide, 1975, Chapter 4, provides a useful discussion of the way in which the VBEF union hierarchy was encouraged and used to discipline its own membership.

stimulated union management orientated toward legal and accounting skills, which in recent years has assumed a greater degree of professionalisation.

According to one labour historian, the system of state arbitration constituted an expedient modus vivendi or a series of temporary compromises in the class conflict between capital and labour.[85] One of the contradictory aspects of arbitration has been that the development of such a framework of compromise elevated the institutional position of organised labour. Nevertheless, while the union movement usually benefitted numerically (membership clientele) and in terms of hierarchic strength (legitimate officialdom), its potentiality for militancy also became restricted. This is not to claim that union militancy in SA does not exist, but that the form that this militancy takes is circumscribed both by the union organisation as well as by forms of control external to it. Indeed, throughout the life of arbitration, industrial disputes have mostly been confined within the institutionalised parameters of the system. As a system of regulation, arbitration has represented an economistic cul-de-sac from which the labour movement has rarely strayed.

Trade unions in response to state compulsory arbitration principally adopted two particular forms of economism or opportunistic wage struggle. The economism of local trade unions predominantly involved either awaiting the federal and State arbitration decisions 'passing-on' wage alterations won in other States essentially to maintain intra-national relativities and a form of 'common rule' differential maintenance. Or, secondly, the economism took the form of token stoppages followed by lengthy legal proceedings in order to initiate a bargaining forum for award variation improvements. From this second tactic, with a nominal 'dispute' acting as a necessary precondition enabling unions to qualify

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85 B. Fitzpatrick, The British Empire in Australia, 1834-1939, p. 196.

to appear before an arbitration tribunal, short stoppages often involving as little as an early finish for the day have structurally become the norm. In other words, to comply with a system of dispute settlement, union organisations have become conditioned to initiate minor disputes on a frequent basis. That South Australia has maintained a relatively low level of disputes, despite this structural incentive to multiply disputes, is a clear reflection of the moderate character of SA unionism.

To summarise this section, the reasons behind the development of the extensive network of state compulsory arbitration are as follows. The state apparatus, in articulating the interests of foreign investors and local capitalists, was concerned over high levels of industrial disruption. In the context of Australia's economic pattern of growth which fluctuated from boom to depression, the state was constrained to cushion the level of conflict between capital and labour. To achieve this objective, the state throughout much of its history has actively intervened to integrate the organisation of labour to the expansion of peripheral capital accumulation. By institutionalising industrial conflict, state regulation of labour attempted to weld and monitor the cash-nexus dependency of labour on capital.[86] In effect, state interventionism became centrally involved in long-term procedures to establish some reconciliation of the structural class interests throughout the historical phases of capitalist production. The endurance of arbitration provides evidence of the state's direct role as a centralised agent of conflict moderation. However, state regulation of industrial relations was no smooth pluralist road of conflict intermediation. The state's role of collective capitalist, which was often a point of contention with specific factions of capital, was contingent upon the ways in which political class domination over the

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86 See R. Connell and T. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, Chapter 4.

state served to increase certain favourable conditions of capital accumulation. Hence, while the processes of arbitration represent an attempt to subsume industrial class conflict, such mechanisms became more or less comprehensive in relation to the levels of economic activity. In periods of economic boom or sectoral growth, for example, the union movement and employer associations collectively sought to undermine the arbitrational constraints. In recessionary or stagnant economic phases arbitration was generally placed under greater structural strain as the propensity of employers to adopt a more repressive stance became enhanced.[87]

But, historically arbitration has continued. The extent to which periodic breakdowns of the system of arbitration have occurred without totally undermining the mechanisms of state intervention, relates to the sustained incorporation of the organised labor leadership into the contest for government office. The endurance of state-sponsored mechanisms of labour suppression has been in large part due to the participation of labor representatives in the legislative arm of the state apparatus. That arbitration has not been superceded or abolished from labour's perspective centres on the positive role the system displays for established interests within the movement. Thus, the role of the state apparatus in labour regulation required the supporting role of the Labor Party and sections of the union movement (such as the State UTLC's) in the administration of the state and in maintaining the legitimacy of the arbitration process. The early integration of the Labor Party into the state apparatus stimulated the vertical integration

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87 Thus, for example, central guidelines for regular wage determination became unmanageable as with the federal indexation of national wage rates between 1975-81. This structural strain tends to reduce the process of arbitration to incomes policy machinery. D. Plowman, Wage Indexation: a Study of Australian Wage Issues, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981.

of organised labour into the prevailing social order.[88] The system of arbitration functioned as a major pillar of that cooptive integration.

Labour Organisation as Labour Control

Labour participated in its own subordination through the forms of organisation and consciousness it maintained. As mentioned at the outset of the present chapter, the pervasive tradition of craft unionism remained dominant in SA largely because of the lateness of the State's industrialisation programme. More open mass based unions, with the exception of the conservative Australian Workers' Union, were never a real strength in the SA labour movement. Further, as the coverage of craft unions was extended through the progressive erosion of obstructions to membership recruitment, the craft sections generally maintained their authority within those unions. This has typically been the case with the present AMFSU.

Craft dominance reinforced the tendency of sectionalism between union organisations. Despite the existence of the Trades and Labour Council (sectional even in name) which served as a forum of sectionalism, local unions rarely communicated with each other at the offical level. Union officials jealously guarded details of the union's voting or membership figures, and were highly secretive over the nature of the union's affairs. Many leaders operated on the principle that their duty within the union movement was to extend their union's influence and provide other unions with as little information about their own organisation as

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88 Cf. J. Lonie's argument that the arbitration system had effectively siphoned-off the dynamics of the labour movement towards the state apparatus. J. Lonie, 'From Liberal to Liberal: the Emergence of the Liberal Party and Australian Capitalism, 1900-45', in G. Duncan (ed.), Critical Essays in Australian Politics, Edward Arnold, Melbourne, 1978.

possible.[89] Apparently, information concerning their union was regarded as potentially damaging either to the union or its leaders. With Hobbesian views of human social activity, union leaders often appeared to distrust 'fraternal' unions more than employers or Liberal Governments.[90] The preservation of sectional identity and status until recent years provided a consuming interest within the dominant echelons of the union movement. As a result much organisational momentum was expended on maintaining traditional divisive identities. This sectional rivalry, rather than constituting dimensions of 'false consciousness', was an essential component of the emergence and character of union organisation. Necessarily it produced bodies which expressed disjunctive class viewpoints rather than solidarity, worker fragmentation rather than unification. Indeed, like most developing political movements, the consolidationary period of their establishment and institutionalisation was inherently a struggle for identity; thusfar the transition from a sectional identity consciousness to broader forms of class mobilisation remains to be undertaken.

To compound the contingent sectionalism of trade unionism, companies for the most part negotiated separately with individual unions. For example, in the many vehicle industry private agreements prior to the late seventies management conducted separate consecutive negotiations with the relevant unions aimed at a strategy of divide and rule.

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89 For example, the Australasian Society of Engineers is renowned for its almost Masonic secretive nature. The ASE's quarterly membership meetings involved entirely verbal communication. Financial affairs were verbally delivered unsupported by written documentation.

90 An example of this involved the Electrical Trades Union and the AMFSU. In August 1980 the AMFSU and the State Secretary of the ETU were involved in liaison with the Liberal State Minister of Industrial Affairs over a strike at Schrader Scovill. The ETU Secretary who needed to be familiarised with the situation of the strike and the negotiations, acknowledged to the Minister that 'anyway the Metalworkers don't talk to us'. Personal Interview, B. Mowbray, 3.9.1980.

Furthermore, where embryonic plant-level organisation developed on a joint union basis to re-direct the emphasis of labour sectionalism from union-centred concerns toward employer and establishment centred concerns, the shop stewards and members involved not only found that support and cooperation from union officials was rarely forthcoming, but also that in some more conservative unions the officials actively discouraged their members from taking part. This was for those unions a continuation of past practice.

While union bureaucracy as such was not necessarily a cause of moderation, unions by their relatively strong overhead officialdom contributed indirectly to labour control. With little workplace organisation occurring spontaneously and without management or union officials' inducement, shop steward organisation remained limited. Where shop stewards existed, as in the railway workshops and vehicle plants from around World War I, these stewards were primarily revenue collectors with some liaison functions.[91] With no tradition of shop steward mobilisation and no rank-and-file or lay official alternative centre of power distinct from that of the officials, formal and informal internal decision-making power was concentrated in the leadership. Consequently, only one channel for membership expression existed, namely through the hierarchic structure of the union. The agenda of issues taken up by the officials while reflecting some of the interests of the membership was not necesarily in line with the specific interests represented by intermediate organisational strata. Significantly, in the absence of cohesive lay officials at the workplace providing peer group support, union activists sustained the centralising tendencies of unionism through reference to the full-time leadership. Given the degree of centralised decision-making, officials have retained sufficient internal autonomy to

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91 Chapters V and VI below explore this development.

restrict their activities to address only those issues that would affect significant proportions of the membership. Under circumstances where officals have considered the bulk of the membership to be apathetic in relation to specific issues of concern sponsored by union activists, the officals have more or less overtly engineered the suppression of the activist minority.[92]

Finally, organisational forms have tended to impede labour mobilisation. Basing union composition on the British experience, South Australia imported forms of labour organisation which often produced arbitrary and artificial divisions within labour under Australian conditions. The organisations themselves, which in the main were modern variants of New Model unionism, displayed some measure of both financial and democratic accountability, but as combinations of organised labour

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92 A cogent example here concerned the executive of the VBEF over shop floor activism associated with the GMH log of claims campaign in mid 1978. Shop floor feeling was intense due to prevarication from both the company and union officialdom. The VBEF minutes record that

> Shop stewards called a meeting [9.8.1978] of their members to deal with matters arising out of the Log of Claims, and that L. Bowling, C. Sweeney and B. Noone had led a march of members into the Administration Bloc at [GMH] Elizabeth - this action led to the dismissal of L. Bowling and Sweeney - and B. Noone receiving a final warning on Thursday morning.

(VBEF, Executive Minutes, 16.8.1978, p. 2). Later approximately 150 were dismissed for striking (contrary to the union-company agreement), although the company subsequently reinstated all but 21 of the strikers. The VBEF Executive declared the shop steward meeting was unauthorised and that the actions of the shop stewards were 'irresponsible and contradictory' to the resolution of the claims campaign. Further the Executive resolved that 'the Union cannot, and will not, morally and financially support such actions' (VBEF, Executive Minutes, 16.8.1978, p. 3). At a general meeting the following day the union officials accepted the company's reasons for the suspensions. After some heated interchanges between shop stewards and activists and the officialdom, the President expelled the militants from the meeting (the minutes record the abuse, VBEF, General Minutes, 17.8.1978, p. 2). In September and October 1978 the union officialdom consistently refused to grant financial assistance to the sacked workers (VBEF, General Minutes, 13.9.1978, p. 2 and 11.10.1978, pp. 2-3), on the grounds that the stewards may have 'been engaged in illegal activities'.

were difficult to mobilise. For instance, formal union policy, which the union as a whole may be assumed to consider important, was largely promoted by activist adherents to the organisation. Moreover, formal policy was formed external to the point of production, either by activists outside working hours at union locations or by full-time officials, and little attempt was made to integrate participatory workplace forms of decision-making. Monthly branch meetings or general meetings of members consisting of evening venues were inherited from Britain, where traditionally workers resided close to their place of employment and probably to the site of union facilities. In SA especially as industrialisation proceeded, workers at the same plant not infrequently resided considerable distances from each other. Many SA workers commute from home to work a distance of between 10 and 50 kilometres. Union offices where meetings usually take place may be neither close to the place of work or residential address of members. In fact, many union offices are located in the vicinity of the Adelaide central business district where almost no industry or worker housing is found. This dissipation of the membership not only contributes to the inconvenience of attending union meetings, but also undermines cohesive class attitudes and the solidarity of working class communities. The issue here implies not that union offices should alternatively be removed to suburban locations, but that the formal structure of unions including their government has tended <u>not</u> to establish itself at the place of work. As a consequence, with awards largely taken for granted by many workers and the proliferation of leisure activities since the 1960's, the present sociological isolation of 'the union' has promoted the view among some sections of the workforce that unionism is an unnecessary appendage and that union dues represent <u>de facto</u> tax on income.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that while South Australia has an industrial base its labour movement is atypically quiescent. The premise of this chapter is not that militancy in union activity per se leads towards socialism, but that levels of militancy relate (but in a problematical manner) to the overt manifestations of class conflict. The relative absence of militancy in SA is not evidence that class conflict is absent or incidental, but that organised and readily apparent expressions of industrial conflict have been effectively suppressed or routinised within management-labour relations. Yet while the hallmark of industrial relations in SA has traditionally been industrial peace, no single factor is sufficient in itself to explain that phenomena. In South Australia's case a myriad of factors have together produced an atypical level of union quiescence. Important to this present work is that under the social relations of production in SA the determined creation of labour moderation by management, state control and also in some part by unionism itself, have systematically contained the labour movement. In that regard, labour regulation mechanisms have principally achieved their purpose. With this in mind, the internal politics of SA unions have to be analysed in relation to the structure of this pervasive moderation. That unions were incapable of leading or were unprepared to effect militant worker resistance to these strategies of control is symptomatic of the limited political objectives characterising the mainstream of SA unionism.

CHAPTER IV

UNION DEVELOPMENT: A POLITICAL HISTORY AND SOCIOLOGY OF THREE UNION ORGANISATIONS

In Australia union histories have emerged from two principal sources, experienced union officials and academic labour historians.[1] The former consist often of narrative memoirs, while the latter of research sifted from union records presented chronologically. Despite some limitations, these sources have certainly facilitated the establishment of an institutional tradition in labour history, predominantly characterised by a radical, class-based approach dating from the late nineteenth century. From this perspective, labour historiography not only accounted for episodes in the development of the labour movement, but also contributed a critical evaluation of the actions of participants. The history of labour organisation provided not only the material for research, it also served as the object of criticism. This chapter is written with this tradition in mind.

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1 For examples of these histories, see of the former: W.J. Hargreaves, History of the Federated Moulders' (Metals) Union of Australia, 1858-1958, FMMU Worker Print, Sydney, n.d. (1959?); F. Nolan, You Pass This Way Only Once: Reflections of a Trade Union Leader, Colonial Press, Stafford, Queensland, 1974; T. Nelson, The Hungry Mile, Waterside Worker's Federation, Sydney, 1957; E. Ross, A History of the Miners' Federation of Australia, Australian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, Sydney, 1970; F. Waters, Postal Unions and Politics: A History of the Postal Workers' Union of Australia, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1978. Of the latter academic sources, see: J. Hagan, Printers and Politics: A History of the Australian Printing Unions, 1850-1950, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1966; R. Gollan, The Coalminers of New South Wales, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1963; J. Merritt, 'A History of the Federated Ironworkers' Association of Australia, 1909-1952', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, 1967; B. Fitzpatrick and R.J. Cahill, Seamen's Union of Australia 1872-1972: A History, SUA, Sydney, 1981.

Australian labour historiography tended to focus on major developments: the crises, the radical eras, labour's turning points, socialist and political party politics, or the influential unions. With few notable exceptions, labour history has concentrated on articulating working class politics independent from the politics of other classes in society. While aware of antagonism between owners and non-owners of productive means, between those that hire and sell labour power, nevertheless, studies of working class practice commonly give the impression that these practices exist autonomously, in isolation from the actions of other classes. To illustrate this point, employers feature as adversaries in the bargaining process: their political development and their economic practice provide little but a backdrop for many labour historians. The concept of classes conceived and expressed through their opposition needs more explicit emphasis.[2]

One of the arguments of this thesis is that the politics of organised labour are but partial when analysed solely in their own terms. Indeed, the development of the economy, the organisation of the labour process, the politics of employers and state regulation assume a much more central role in determining labour politics than is generally acknowledged. In other words, apart from a general political economy no union history is really possible. The two preceding chapters provide some account of both the political economy of South Australia as well as reasons for the docility of organised labour.

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2 For further discussion, S. MacIntyre, 'The Making of the Australian Working Class: An Historiographical Survey', Historical Studies, Vol. 18, No. 71, October 1978; and J. Merritt, 'Labour History', in G. Osborne and W.F. Mandle (eds.), New History: Studying Australia Today, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1982.

Against that context, the present chapter introduces a more specific political development of the union organisations in this study. This introduction is necessary to later examine the processes of organisational government and the formation of union policy. Themes explored in this chapter are: the origin, structure and composition of union organisation, membership trends, full-time and worksite leadership, management relations, and various aspects associated with the operation of the organisation (affiliations, literature, education, finance).

I. ADSTE

The union was formed as a result of the amalgamation of three highly skilled technical associations between 1945 and 1947.[3] These bodies were conscious of the organisational vacuum that existed for technical and professional employees in a period of sustained technological change in the labour process. The oldest union, the Association of Architects, Engineers and Surveyors of Australia, a predominantly public sector union, originated in Queensland in July 1915 and was registered under State legislation in July 1917 as AAESA. Concentrated in Brisbane and Ipswich, the union did not qualify for federal registration under the Commonwealth Arbitration Act until October 1944. Its industrial occupational coverage extended to draughtsmen in 1943. This association

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3 ADSTE is roughly equivalent to the British Draughtsmen and Allied Technicians' Association (previously the Association of Engineering and Shipbuilding Draughtsmen), which following amalgamation with the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers became the Technical and Supervisory Staffs' Section (TASS) of the AUEW. This link provides some direction for the Australian ADSTE members in the private sector who tend to be more favourably inclined towards the engineering tradesmen's union, the AMFSU. On the British union development in this respect see: B.C. Roberts, et al., Reluctant Militants: A Study of Industrial Technicians, Heinemann, London, 1972, pp. 56-118. Some historical details and structural characteristics relating to ADSTE's Victorian branch are included in E. Davis, 'Participation in Six Australian Trade Unions', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1981.

merged with a Sydney-based union of wartime government technicians, the Commonwealth Temporary Technical Officers' Association in 1945. The third association, the Australian Association of Draughtsmen, consisted of draughtsmen and designers in private industry formed in Sydney during June 1942 and Melbourne in December 1942. AAD established inter-State branches during wartime industrial expansion sufficient to gain federal registration by October the following year. In September 1947 after little more than five years in existence, almost three of which had featured amalgamation discussions, the AAD completed amalgamation with the former body. The new AAESDA represented 3,937 members in branch divisions in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Australian Capital Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia. The union continued to support the principle of amalgamation and subsequently negotiated with the Postal Telecommunications Technicians' Association (1969) and with the Australian Public Service Artisan's Association (1982).[4] In the 1980s, Federal Conference decisions have authorised prosecution of the amalgamation policy by providing for discussions with four non-competitive dual unions: AMFSU, ETU, MOA and POA.[5] In 1982, as a result of concern that the association's name did not adequately reflect its composition and was overtly specific allowing coverage opportunities for other unions, AAEDSA changed its name to that of ADSTE.[6]

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4 The union's general principles were outlined in its monthly journal, Blueprint, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 1977, pp. 3-4. See also, 'Working Together', ADSTE-APSAA, 1983. Progress in the merger with APSAA was reported in ADSTE, Branch Council Minutes, 26.4.1983, p. 1.

5 Blueprint, Vol. 4, No. 3, June 1980, pp. 1 and 7. The 1983 Federal Conference urged greater cooperation with the AMFSU and ETU 'in order to determine whether consideration of amalgamation is a possibility in the longer term'.

6 See AAESDA Federal Executive Report, 3.9.1980, Ref. R3/78:C144. The 1982 name change represented the third attempt within the union to update its name.

The South Australian branch of AAESDA was the fourth State division to be established.[7] Following the amalgamation of AAESDA with the AAD, the South Australian division eventually surpassed the membership of the Queensland division during the early sixties, making it the third largest State division comprising between 13 and 16 per cent of the total membership for most of the post-war era. The two Adelaide associations which gradually amalgamated between 1947 and 1948 were both established in 1944. The South Australian branch of AAESDA which numbered 150 in 1946 covered State government as well as Adelaide-based Commonwealth technicians and engineers.[8] Subsequently, this body formed the basis of the public sector wing of ADSTE.

The Adelaide branch of the Australian Association of Draughtsmen was established under the auspices of the NSW leadership through a recruitment meeting of draughtsmen and wartime trainees in November 1944. Prior to this, according to recorded recollections, the ex-honorary Secretary of the NSW branch, Mr. P. Lowe, had interrupted 'his journey to Perth and met eight or so potential members in the Grosvenor Hotel, North Terrace'.[9] The date of this meeting is in some doubt but was between March and October

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7 This follows the Queensland division (1915), NSW (1942) and the Victorian division (1942). Simultaneously with the establishment of the SA division, the CTTOA (NSW) initiated the formation of an ACT public service technicians branch in Canberra. This subsequently became the ACT division of AAESDA following the merger of the CTTOA and AAESDA in 1945. All divisions of AAESDA became State 'branches' in 1977 after a major overhaul of the union's rules.

8 Blueprint, Jubilee Edition, July 1967, p. 34.

9 Ibid., p. 34. The SA branch records no longer survive from this period. The branch has relied upon oral history from foundation members in tracing its origins.

1944.[10] One personal account of the early history of the draughtsmen's association recorded that the attendance at this inaugural meeting was 'very good' with nine founding members named.[11] This account recalled that 'during early 1946 the Association of Architects, Engineers, Surveyors and Draughtsmen of Australia began to build up support and following in S.A. - they were beginning to attract away some of the AAD members'.[12]

Formal amalgamation marked by a somewhat reluctant acceptance began in July 1947.[13] The completion of the amalgamation caused 'much heartburn and dissention' as sectional status and organisational identification proved difficult to erode.[14] Moreover, the South Australian association did not engage in a preliminary process of 'living together' prior to the merger. Further, the South Australian branch of AAD was registered under State industrial jurisdiction, while AAESDA was under the aegis of the Commonwealth court. Mistrust rather than cooperation characterised the amalgamation with each union retaining its own funds and separate bank accounts. This mistrust comprised not so much of personality problems or petty jealousies, but of a wider and national problem involving the

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10 The Blueprint edition (ibid.) claims that the meeting took place in October, although one of the founding members who attended the meeting recorded that two meetings were held, one early in 1944 the second in October 1944. This member's undated application form (No. 28 in SA) was probably from November 1944 (as the applicant was 22 years of age and whose date of birth was 17.11.1922). See: L.S. Heitmann, 'Resume of Early Foundation and History of AAD, AAESDA, and ADSTE in SA from 1944', personal recollections held by the union, deposited 1982.

11 Heitmann (ibid., p. 2), named W.R. Sandeman, H. Whisson, W. Fielder, G. Foley, R. Wilson, R. Scarborough and M. Murphy, H.J. Allison and himself. Heitmann had verified this account with the other surviving member Sandeman.

12 Ibid., p. 3.

13 Reasons for the lack of acceptance of the amalgamation may date from the period of the latter war years when the two associations were contending technical unions. Indeed, the AAD was one of the bodies to oppose the federal registration of AAESDA in 1943. Blueprint, July 1967, p. 47.

14 L.J. Heitmann, op.cit., p. 3.

respective positions of different membership groups in the labour process. Many of the draughtsmen were conscripted trainees or dilutee technicians having undertaken condensed government sponsored courses under compulsory wartime civilian employment regulations. These were often engaged in temporary employment or if not were fearful that their employment security was conditional on wartime mobilisation. Others in the amalgamation, such as fully apprenticed, professionally oriented occupations (particularly architects and engineers with salaried staff positions), resisted the encroachment of less qualified employees into their association. These sectional identifications were further exacerbated by the private and public sector cleavage that became more acute following amalgamation.

The position of the post-war AAESDA members in the production process, involving in Giddens' terms a relatively high 'marketable technical knowledge' based on highly skilled training and design conceptualisation, encouraged the development of a professional status within the association.[15] One aspect of this professionalisation was the association's concern for high standards of work, enhanced productivity and efficiency, as well as for introducing and remaining conversant with the latest technological innovations.[16] As with many craft societies, the

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15 A. Giddens, The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies, Hutchinson, London, 1973. p. 186.

16 Larson argues that the characteristics of professionalism centre on the monopolisation of competence among specially skilled or service oriented labour power. In this sense the main instrument of professional advancement or access to professional occupations within the production process is related to 'the capacity to claim esoteric and identifiable skills...to create and control a cognitive and technical basis'. Engineers, while retaining a relatively indirect relationship to commodity production, are productive labour. But, as salaried experts exchange 'their labour power and the skills inherent in their persons. The products of their activity, however, remain within the purchasing organisation, where they are used directly by employers or by clients of the organisation'. M.S. Larson, The Rise of Professionalism, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1977, pp. 180 and 215. Cf. also, K. Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, pp. 1052-58.

association tended to identify its own interests with the employers' interests. Indeed, in the first twenty years of its post-war history, the association behaved in the manner of a professional officers club supplying technical and employment-related information.[17] Managerial aspirations were prevalent among the association's ranks such that an early union journal could present an article entitled 'So You Want to be an Executive?', for members 'who hope to be among the successful executives of tomorrow'.[18] But the more general orientation of the association remained the development of a careerist and professional ethos emphasising the refinement of skills and individual responsibilities in adapting to technological change and new techniques. The union's perceptions of its own role in national prosperity were reflected in Design, the official organ of the association, which specialised in scientific and technical articles. The inaugural issue expressed a commitment to provide members with professional knowledge and experience in a high-class journal for the purposes of enhancing the 'nation's material progress'.[19]

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17 G.C. Meikle, SA State Secretary of ADSTE, Personal Interview, 20.12.1982. Cf. the attitude of professional engineers in R.W. Connell and T. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 355-6.

18 Australian Draughtsman, (AAD), Vol. 2, No. 1, December 1944, p. 8. Promotion to management is still a major issue for the association's membership. An example of this was the Chrysler dispute of September-October 1980, in which AAESDA members (engineers, technicians and foremen) protested over the promotion of a tradesman supervisor to manager of industrial engineering. AAESDA members held after-work meetings and served the company with a policy document stressing that promotion to management involve those with the relevant departmental skills and qualifications (i.e. AAESDA members). See AAESDA Committee, CAL Lonsdale, 'Statement Regarding Policy on Training, Development and Promotion of AAESDA Award Covered Members', 2.10.1980. The dispute was reported by the private industry organiser, Branch Council, 23.9.1980.

19 Design, (AAD), Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1947, p. ii. A more accurate reflection of the union's perceptions of its professional role is found in the contents of this inaugural issue. The first issue contained: a Foreword by the president, articles on production of concrete for large scale dams, great engineers (Bessemer and Marconi), applied brightness control, radar, proximity fuses, adjustable stroke crank mechanisms, and diverse industry innovations and experiments.

Professionalism also influenced the association's political development in relation to its industrial activities. Association members believed strongly that an iron law of relativities inevitably would remain between their salaries and trade rates of pay. As a consequence, they regarded the strike weapon with abhorrence, and even refused to take such action when their demands for a State award were frustrated for eighteen years and not obtained until April 1963. The union did not initiate strike activity either on a federal or State basis until 1970. In that year industrial stoppages took place in the public sector over a 9 per cent wage increase and later in the private sector over the flow on of this increase to private industrial agreements. According to the State secretary of ADSTE,

> all strike activity that occurred in the early seventies was directly associated with a national campaign. The SA branch never recommended this action for purely local issues. This, however, changed by the mid-seventies when several stoppages on local issues occurred. A notable example was a 48 hour stoppage of Chrysler members due to the suspension of an ADSTE foreman for sacking a VBEF worker. In the late seventies, ADSTE members at Schrader-Scovill joined other employees on a protracted stoppage which occurred at the company. This is the only instance in SA of members receiving official strike-pay, because of the length of the stoppage.[20]

As professional salaried employees AAESDA members refrained from affiliation with the mainly blue-collar Australian Council of Trade Unions, instead devoting their confederate energies to participating from 1945 onwards in the establishment of a professional federation of technical and white-collar associations. A plebiscite of the association's members in the early fifties on the issue of affiliation to the ACTU resulted in a substantial rejection of the proposal. But, when the Australian Council

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20 G.C. Meikle, Personal Correspondence, 21.6.1983.

of Salaried and Professional Associations was formed in October 1956, AAESDA was a foundation affiliate.[21] Similarly, after the formation of the Council of Australian Government Employees Organisations (formed in 1921 and since merged with the ACTU in 1981) the association became an affiliate in 1970 after a number of previous unsuccessful applications due to having a component of its membership in private industry. In spite of its moderate professional orientation, AAESDA became one of the most 'extreme of the industrial militancy spectrum' of ACSPA in that it 'deliberately used the strike as a bargaining sanction'.[22] Increasingly, the union adopted more militant dimensions of industrial action in response to deteriorating economic conditions, the growth of limited forms of collective agreements across the trades and unskilled sectors, and the readily apparent threat to their security of employment through technological intensification of the labour process.[23]

ADSTE has traditionally operated as a dichotomous organisation. From its inception the association combined private sector draughtsmen and

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21 ACSPA merged with the ACTU in 1979. Disillusioned with the lack of progress over the peak council merger discussions in the 1970's, ADSTE separately affiliated with the ACTU in 1977 and disaffiliated itself from ACSPA. This decision was taken at the AAESDA Federal Conference 1977. See Minutes of 1977 Federal Conference, Items 34-38, pp. 41-44.

22 R.M. Martin, 'Class Identification and Trade Union Behaviour: The Case of the Australian White-Collar Unions', in J.E. Isaac and G.W. Ford, (eds), Australian Labour Relations Readings, 2nd ed., Sun Books, Melbourne, 1971, p. 260. Cf. E. Davis, 'Trade Union Democracy', in K. Cole, (ed)Power, Conflict and Control in Australian Trade Unions, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982, pp. 253-254. However, one of the main reasons for this increased militancy, which neither Martin nor Davis refer to, was that as the membership proportion of technical members more directly involved in the production process increased after the late 1960s, industrial action became potentially more effective and hence more viable. Previously when the union had been composed of private industry draughtsmen and public sector employees their effect on immediate production was incidental.

23 Cf. B. Thomas and D. Deaton, Labour Shortage and Economic Analysis, Blackwell, Oxford, 1977, Chapter 5, especially on capital substitution relative to draughtsmanship and the introduction of computer-aided design.

design engineers with mainly Commonwealth public sector technicians.[24] On most industrial issues the union has continued to operate as separate intra-organisations. In this regard complete amalgamation has failed to eventuate with the merger offering a confederation of convenience. Since amalgamation, the membership in private industry provided through the post-war economic boom the most substantial proportion of the association's membership. A national survey in 1967 for instance found 5,416 members in the public sector against 7,322 in private industry.[25] In 1974 the union's membership was evenly split between the two sectors, with an estimated 12,000 private sector members, 9,500 in Commonwealth and 2,500 in State government employment.[26] With the economic crisis and the retrenchment of private industry technicians, public sector membership has constituted a marginal majority on a national basis.

ADSTE's private industry coverage extended to occupations in architecture, chemical engineering, mechanical and electrical engineering, inspectors, technical employees, surveying and all manner of draughting, design and tracing work, and a broad coverage of foremen and supervisory positions. The major industries within which it operated were the metal, vehicle and aircraft industries, but with some remaining membership located in the manufacturing, space-tracking, oil and chemical industries. Within

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24 Commonwealth and State public sector members are found in the higher union density services such as communications and public utilities.

25 Blueprint, July 1967, p. 51. Of the 5,416 public sector members, 4,444 were in the Commonwealth public service or instrumentalities, and 972 in State sectors or municipalities. Draughtsmen constituted the bulk of the private sector membership.

26 Blueprint, July/August, 1974, p. 12.

this industrial coverage the union was vertically open between fixed parameters: the manual trades grades at the one level and middle management at the other. Some coverage overlap existed in the vehicle industry where the VBEF also enjoyed eligibility for its members that through on-the-job experience and technical training were promoted or transferred into technical grades or foremen positions.[27] Indeed, ADSTE in the private sector was not challenged by other rival unions; on the contrary, scope existed for wider expansion with potential in the non-unionised sector of lower and middle management, in similar vein to the U.K. Association of Scientific Technical and Managerial Staffs.[28] ADSTE's coverage has traditionally meant that the association was virtually an exclusively male union.[29]

In membership size ADSTE was among the top 40 unions in Australia, larger than unions such as the Carpenters and Joiners, the Miners' Federation, Plumbers and Gasfitters and Waterside Workers'Union. Its membership growth after 1947 was substantial. For instance, in the five years prior to 1964 the national membership increased by an average annual rate of 13.7 per cent, and over the ten years 1967-77 membership went from 12,926 to 22,117 an increase of 71.1 per cent in total.[30] As Table 4.1 shows, the federal association reached a peak of almost 24,300 in 1975

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27 For example, in the technical and supervisory grades (Mitsubishi) between leading hand tradesman and general foreman (in production-maintenance, construction and tooling and production engineering), both ADSTE and the VBEF excercised coverage rights. See 'Supervisory and Technical Chart Mitsubishi', in Appendix VIII.

28 See State Secretary, G.C. Meikle's address in the Proceedings of the International Conference on Industrial Democracy, C.C.H., Adelaide, 1978, pp. 237-49.For the union's attitudes see, Blueprint, Vol. 2, No. 6, July 1978, p. 1.

29 Female members consisted of only 1.6 per cent of the total State branch membership of ADSTE in 1981 (47 out of 2,926); G.C. Meikle's report to ADSTE Executive Meeting, 10.11.1981.

30 Blueprint, April 1967, p. 10; March/April 1974, p. 6; and (new series) Vol. 1, No. 11, December 1977, p. 5.

TABLE 4.1: ADSTE Membership, 1942-1983

Year	South Australia	Total Federal	SA as percentage of Total Federal
1942		200 (AAD)	
1944		1,174 (AAESDA)	
1945	212	800 (AAD)	26.5
1947	280	3,937	7.1
1955	460	4,782	9.6
1957	450	5,879	7.6
1959	578	6,525	8.8
1961	747	7,627	9.7
1963	1,263	9,572	13.1
1965	1,569	11,977	13.1
1967	1,797	12,926	13.9
1969	2,286	14,913	15.3
1971	2,884	19,675	14.7
1973	3,331	22,479	14.8
1975	3,640	24,296	15.0
1977	3,250	22,117	14.6
1978	3,057	20,807	14.6
1979	2,928	20,424	14.3
1980	2,902	20,049	14.4
1981	2,926	20,469	14.3
1982 June	2,916	20,796	14.0
1982 November	2,935	21,503	13.6
1983 April	2,851 (2,753 May)	21,335	13.3

Source: Blueprint, various

From 1975 figures are for June.

after which its membership declined by approximately one-sixth to 1980. The SA division also continued to increase membership until 1975 due to the high level of consumer durable demand particularly in the vehicle and white goods industries, which largely counteracted the effects of the national and international recession in South Australia. Between 1975 and 1980 the South Australian branch lost over one-fifth of its membership, making its decline proportionally greater and more rapid. By late 1982 due to expansion in the States of NSW, Victoria as well as in the Northern Territory, the association's membership had increased slightly, although the proportion in SA had dropped to 13.6 per cent the same as in 1966. Figures for early 1983 indicated that membership levels were once more in decline, and this was again more marked in South Australia. Table 4.2 provides a breakdown of changes in the State level composition of the association's membership. Provisional membership for May 1983 had fallen to 2,753.

TABLE 4.2: ADSTE State Membership Composition 1971-1983

State	1971	1975	1981	1983
Victoria	31.6	33.5	33.2	33.9
NSW	31.6	29.3	27.5	27.9
SA	14.7	15.0	14.3	13.3
Queensland	7.7	6.7	8.5	5.3
ACT	6.7	7.9	8.2	9.5
WA	3.0	3.1	3.5	3.4
Tasmania	3.5	3.0	2.6	3.1
Northern Territory	1.2	1.5	2.2	3.2

Source: 1971 Blueprint, July/August 1974, p. 12.
1975 Blueprint, May/June 1975, p. 1.
1981 Blueprint, June 1981, p. 2.
1983 Blueprint, April, 1983, p. 2.

One official and two appointed officers constituted the full-time officialdom of the SA branch of ADSTE. The position of secretary has been a full-time office since 1961. The practice of election has operated only from as recently as 1974. Prior to that the union was administered through a full-time appointed office manager. At the time of the rule change establishing the position as an elected one for a five year term, the office manager, G.C. Meikle, contested the office unopposed. In 1979 this same official was returned unopposed, and in compliance with amendments to the Commonwealth Arbitration Act, a four year term was introduced.[31] Hence, no election in the SA branch for the position of secretary had ever been conducted.

ADSTE rules provided for secret postal ballots of the entire membership should elections be necessary for any official position. The office of divisional president was an honorary position as were those of the two vice-presidents, treasurer, assistant secretary and the delegates to Federal Conference. The two remaining full-time appointed positions of branch industrial officer (or organiser) were established respectively in December 1970 and May 1974. These organisers enjoyed no executive functions and operated in effect as the paid employees of the organisation. The Branch Council retained the power to appoint or dismiss branch industrial officers making their tenure dependent upon performance rather than fixed terms of employment. In addition to these union office-holders the union employed a small secretarial staff consisting of two full-time office assistants and one part-time assistant.

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31 ADSTE, Constitution and Rules, 10.7.1981, Rule 49, p. 13. See also passim with respect to provisions for officials and officers referred to below.

The officialdom of ADSTE at the State level, therefore, remained primarily honorary with but the Secretary possessing both executive powers together with full-time office. This provided the Secretary with a relatively instrumental role with a more immediate latitude of decision-making power. The structure of the union hierarchy appeared as follows.

TABLE 4.3: ADSTE Branch Structure and Office-Holding Rights (SA): Effective 1979

Position	Capacity	Tenure (yrs.)	Executive Member	Branch Council Member
Secretary	Full-time	4	+	+
President	Honorary	1	+	+
Vice-Presidents (2)	Honorary	1	+	+
Assistant Secretary	Honorary	1	+	+
Treasurer	Honorary	1	+	+
Federal Conference Delegates (2)	Honorary	1	+	+
Branch Industrial Officers/ Organisers (2)	Full-time	-	-	-

(Where Branch secretaries and assistant secretaries were not themselves members of ADSTE they were denied Executive and Council membership, although this was not relevant to the respective officers of the SA branch. After 1982 Branch industrial officers were entitled to become members of ADSTE, and thus to nominate for election to the Executive or Council.)

In other words, ADSTE maintained a diffuse structure of formal power sharing. Prior to a rule change in 1982 non-member appointed officers or organisers were excluded from the administrative and policy formulating bodies of the union. This was both a strength and a weakness within the organisation: it allowed greater rank-and-file participation of a non-entrenched nature in the management of the union but it reduced the effectiveness of the Executive in being dependent upon voluntary officers

sacrificing their leisure time to administer union affairs. However, the diffuse nature was not without its countervailing elements. The Branch Council, for instance, often had recourse to delegate its own constitutional powers of decision-making to the Executive regarding either action over specific issues or where it sought leadership recommendations.[32] While accountable to the Council, the existing Executive represented a consolidated group of experienced unionists who managed to establish a certain convivial atmosphere of trust together with a concern to expedite union business. At no stage was it evident that the Branch Council seriously questioned the legitimacy of the 'progressive' Executive, although in comparison with the consciousness of the membership, the overt political inclinations of some of the Executive members was a source of consternation for 'apolitical' quiet lifers.[33] Mallet's point concerning the propensity of the new working class technicians to participate in industrial decision-making had credibility in relation to the union's diffuse structureof formal power, although a concurrent alternative class consciousness was not evident.[34]

To underscore the predominant influence of the Executive, the union operated without an effective strata of work site lay officials. Branch Councillors elected on the basis of one representative for between eight

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32 The monthly Branch Council meetings, generally of 1½-2 hours, were relatively well attended. In comparison, Executive Committee meetings frequently in excess of three hours, discussed a more protracted decision-making agenda and debated issues in greater depth. The average attendance at Branch Council was 19.9 from July 1980 to June 1983.

33 While Chapter VI below continues this discussion, three examples serve to illustrate this aspect: first, recognition of the ALP as the party of labour was continuously a controversial issue; second, opposition remained at the branch level to the affiliation with the UTLC (this emerged in discussions over UTLC levy, Branch Council 24.4.1981); and, third, some disquiet was expressed when the leadership advocated close cooperation with politically motivated shopfloor unions (for example, over the issue of contributions to the AMWSU Clyde Industries dispute which was regarded by Councillors as an 'improper use' of the union's funds, Branch Council, 26.6.1981).

34 S. Mallet, The New Working Class, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1975.

and 19 shopfloor union members and two representatives for worksites with 20 or more, acted more as an enlarged executive (similar to the AMFSU) rather than as de facto shop stewards. The union recognised these and other key members as 'job contact' representatives, primarily for the purposes of communication. By 1983 ADSTE had established 60 so-called 'job contact' representatives, half each in the private and public sectors. Many of these contact people declined to operate as traditional shop stewards in the sense of representing and articulating the on-the-job interests of the membership. These 'job contacts' perceived their role as relating to information dissemination rather than active participation in some form of workplace bargaining.[35] Moreover, apart from the regularly attending Councillors, few 'job contact' representatives had the opportunity to assemble in aggregate. For these reasons the role of 'job contact' representative tended to be an anomic one inside the organisation, with no real recognition, no collective association and little scope for workplace leadership development.* On the other hand, activist 'job contacts' interested in the union organisation outside working hours were commonly long-serving Councillors, with the most capable and enthusiastic tending toward the Executive committee. Executive influence was further enhanced in that with the exception of the Annual General Meeting ADSTE held no meetings of its entire rank-and-file membership. These Annual General Meetings were the union's highest constitutional body at the State level but were largely a matter of Executive prepared reports and speeches. In absolute terms, attendance was low (with around 100+) although the SA branch Annual General Meeting

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35 G.C. Meikle, Personal Interview, 18.4.1980. Organisational functions characterised the official attitude toward 'job contacts'/divisional Councillors, for instance: AAESDA Divisional Councillor's Education Programme, (Federal Executive), Melbourne, 1970, sections 7 and 19.

* There were some exceptions to this general pattern. For example 'job contact' committees existed in the vehicle industry (Mitsubishi - Tonsley, and GMH - Elizabeth) and in ETSA (public sector).

was traditionally better attended than those of most other branches. The AGM was subordinate to the national organisation's supreme decision-making body the annual Federal Conference, to which the SA branch was entitled usually to two delegates. Since 1983 the SA State Secretary acted as one of these delegates (covering the private industry sector).

Factional or political groupings were not evident in the SA branch although at the federal level the union displayed some antagonism to the predominance of engineers vis-a-vis draughtsmen in the Federal Executive.[36] But by 1983 this antagonism had been largely resolved through widening the representation at this level. Moreover, some rivalry existed between NSW and Victoria over degrees of influence in the organisation, and over the fact that the Federal Office was located in Melbourne (Victoria) and that the present and previous two Federal Secretaries were similarly of Victorian origin. During the 1980s this regionalism assisted in the promotion of inter-branch factions accompanying the rise of Arthur Greig to the Federal Secretaryship and Ms Donna Valentine to the position of Secretary of the ACT branch. This polarised conflict intensified in an electoral contest between these two for the post of Assistant Federal Secretary in 1981. Valentine, after an election campaign marked by acrimony, narrowly lost in a turnout of 45.69 per cent by 4,366 votes to 5,145.[37]

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36 See Chapter VI for further discussion of the absence of factionalism in the SA division of ADSTE. Cf. also the political development recorded by G. Wootton, 'Parties in Union Government: The AESD', Political Studies, Vol. 9, No. 2, June 1961, pp. 141-156. The development of factions and embryonic parties recorded by Wootton in the British draughtsmen's association was not reflected in its Australian counterpart. Indeed, the dissimilarity between the organisational politics of the UK and Australian draughtsmen was most noteworthy. In the Australian case contending political parties had not infiltrated the union (excepting some rightwing Catholic NCC influences in some State branches). Federally intra-union political divisions, rather than expressing embryonic party influences, had been effectively curtailed and had not yet developed the prerequisite embryonic factions.

37 ADSTE, Branch Council Minutes, 28.4. 1981, p. 1.

Despite the lack of an obvious political orientation to this conflict political undercurrents existed related to a rift between the more progressive branches and the conservative ones, as well as a split between the established order (mainly 'progressives') and what could be regarded as the organisation's dissidents.[38] Certainly the progressive Establishment were more oriented toward centre-left wing Labor Party and ACTU politics and closer working relations with left private sector unions such as the AMFSU.[39]

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38 Cf. Editorial Blueprint, Vol. 4, No. 2, p.2. Valentine after a sustained attack on the Federal Office resigned at the ACT 1983 Annual General Meeting. Meikle noted that this inter-branch rift 'almost became formalised or structured into our organisation'. But illustrating the nascent character of this factionalism he added that at the August, 1982 Federal Executive meeting

> the ACT delegate came to Melbourne the evening before the meeting. He put in a claim for overnight expenses. When queried on this by A. Greig, he said that he had come over early to "caucus" (i.e. with other dissident branches). He was told that Federal Executive did not pay caucus expenses and I understand that he eventually received reimbursement from his own branch.

G.C. Meikle, Personal Correspondence, 21.6.1983. ADSTE's national-level Future Planning Committee established in 1979 increasingly became a forum not merely for the 'progressive' future directions of union policy but also instrumentally for the defence of the 'progressive' establishment itself, (see Blueprint, Vol. 6, No. 6, December 1982, p.5). For similar developments in the Administrative and Clerical Officers' Association, see B. Juddery, White Collar Power: A History of the ACOA, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney,1980, pp. 221-300.

39 Corroborated by G.C. Meikle, Personal Interview, 20.12.1982. (See also Pattern of Deceit: The NCC and the Labor Movement, Committee to Defend the Victorian ALP, Melbourne, 1981; and D. Freney, The CIA's Australian Connection, Freney, Sydney, 1977, Part 3). Meikle referred to the Western Australian branch of ADSTE in relation to NCC influence. The State Secretary of this branch was nominated for a US government funded Australian Trade Union Program Harvard Foundation Scholarship in 1979 and approached ADSTE for some financial support for expenses. These 'scholarships' are awarded to 'laborist' union leaders nominated by the US Departments of State and Labor and Australian Trustees (including Labor politicians, and right-wing union leaders such as B.J. Unsworth, NSW Labour Council, and J.S.Thompson, NSW State Secretary of VBEF). See AAESDA, Correspondence Between H.G. Smith (WA Branch President) and Federal Executive (Ref. 144/79), 6.6.1979; and Correspondence Between C.M. Hickman (Harvard Foundation) and J.C. Beedham (WA State Secretary), 22.5.1979. Cf. also'Australian Trade Union Program at Harvard Foundation', Royal Exchange, Sydney, N.S.W. n.d.

Formally ADSTE is not affiliated to any political party and retains a strong tradition of being a non-party political organisation. Rule 72 of the association expressedly prevented the union from affiliating with a political party 'unless or until a Plebiscite of all the members...of the Branch...has been taken and a majority of members voting in such Plebiscite favours such affiliation or financial support'.[40] This issue has proved a contentious one, with the SA Executive being generally in favour of some greater liaison with the Labor Party. Affiliation with other industrial bodies was equally contentious: the union is affiliated to the MTF, the ACTU and to the UTLC, and was also affiliated to CAGEO with respect to its public sector coverage. The union's affiliation with the ACTU/UTLC arose through the union's dissatisfaction with ACSPA (which eventually merged with the ACTU in 1979) and because ADSTE felt a greater 'community of interest' with ACTU affiliates and policies than with white-collar unionism. Yet, as an expression of the union's remaining professional ethos, sections of the membership actively opposed this change of affiliation toward the peak council of the manual trade unions.[41]

In its union literature, ADSTE produced one federal journal, Blueprint, published bi-monthly from February to December. The journal dated from May 1960 although the union had published a federal bulletin on a monthly basis from 1948 to 1959.[42] Since January 1977 the journal has appeared in

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40 ADSTE, Constitution and Rules, p.18. At the 1973 Federal Conference, as is discussed in Chapter VI, ADSTE decided to initiate debate over the limitations of this rule in order to support more effectively political parties consonant with the union's policies. See ADSTE, News Bulletin, (SA), June 1983, p. 2, for details of this proposed rule change.

41 See AAESDA, Minutes of 1976 Federal Conference, pp. 64-67. The union was also affiliated to the Industrial Relations Society and the United Nations Association. In early 1983 the SA Branch Council decided to support the affiliation of ADSTE to the IMF, (Branch Council Minutes, 22.2.1982, p.1).

42 The union had previously published a number of official journals, mainly via the NSW branch, including Australian Draughtsman and Design.

newspaper format in place of the glossy booklet type. This publication was devoted to industrial news, comment and campaign reporting, and was printed in sufficient numbers to cover the entire membership (approximately 22,000 in 1983), posted to their place of residence. The South Australian branch supplemented this federal publication with a bi-monthly (previously monthly to 1981) News Bulletin as well as 'Industrial Data Sheets', which originated from the Federal Office (average one per week) and from the SA Office (average one per month). The State branch also purchased and distributed occasional pamphlets, and subscribed to other more regular publications but these were usually in limited quantities available for Branch Councillors, 'job contacts' and interested members.[43]

The premises of the SA branch consisted of an adapted and renovated residential property located outside the central city area in the industrial inner city area of Mile End. The value of the property in 1982 was around $70,000. The house included an individual office for each of the full-time officers, and for the office staff, a kitchen, print room and a moderately sized extension hall which could seat approximately 40 persons and was used for Council meetings. The union did not provide motor vehicles for its full-time officers, but instead reimbursed the respective persons on a distance travelled basis. Similarly, the honorary officials were reimbursed per attendance for their travel costs. The SA branch's other fixed assets in addition to the property, were the spartan

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43 Generally such occasional literature was advertised in the SA monthly News Bulletin. For example, a brochure entitled 'Taxation - Who Pays?' from the Labour Resource Centre was purchased (100 copies) and announced in the News Bulletin, April 1981, p. 2. A survey of ADSTE members in 1980 found that union literature constituted members' major source of information regarding union affairs (see Blueprint, Vol. 5, No. 1, February 1981, p. 6).

office furniture and equipment worth around $3,500. The union held investments in the form of shares in Adelaide Festival City Broadcasters (along with other unions and the ALP) valued in 1982 at around $10,000.[44]

In 1982 the total branch income for the financial year was $235,060, the bulk of this $233,779) was from membership contributions. The SA branch had ended the 1980 financial year with a credit balance of $6,093, but in 1981 were according to the Secretary 'up the creek' with a deficit of $8,686, thus reducing the union's branch assets from $42,593 in 1980 to $33,907. In 1982 the branch was again in deficit by $4,934 reducing its net assets to $28,973. The main reasons for these deficits were increases in capitation and affiliation fees, communications and insurance costs, and salary package provisions for officials and other union employees especially a large lump-sum payment to a retiring organiser. These items rose by a greater percentage than increases in the branch's total annual income.[45] On a national basis ADSTE's accumulated assets in 1978 were of the order of $500,000.

Membership contributions in comparison with other unions appeared high, but less so when related to the income of ADSTE's membership and the moderate size of the union. The union has regularly increased its contribution rates and since 1978 has indexed its fees, fixing its annual rate of contributions according a proportion of average weekly earnings. This proportion was set at 20 per cent in 1978 but in 1981 was increased to 25 per cent, in 1983 to 30 per cent and is scheduled to rise to 35 per

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44 ADSTE, Annual Financial Report, SA Branch, 1982.

45 ADSTE, Annual Financial Report, SA Branch, 1983.

cent of average weekly earnings by 1986. By 1983, as is shown toward the end of this chapter in Table 4.11, ADSTE fees were $99.00 per annum having increased by 80 per cent since 1979. While these contribution increases were not directly imposed as a result of the SA branch's financial difficulties, they nevertheless helped to reduce the size of the deficit. As a further measure, Branch Council authorised a levy on SA members to offset the liquidity problem.

II. VBEF

The Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation of Australia originated in the craft-occupational unionism of the late nineteenth century. The union's South Australian branch was established in Adelaide between 1883 and 1888.[46] This society consisted of around 100 wood and leatherworking coachbuilders. Supporting honorary officials, this body was discontinued in October 1896 due to diminished membership. The present VBEF records date from October 1907 when the Coachmakers' Society was officially re-

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46 The SA branch followed the NSW coachmakers who organised in Bathurst in 1863. The discrepancy in the dates for SA are due to the fact that the union existed surreptitiously in its early days due in part to government legislation (prior to the Trade Union Act 1876) but mainly to employer resistance to labour organisation. The State Secretary of the union, A.E. Pittman gave evidence to the Tariff Board Inquiry in 1934, which suggested that the union was established in SA in 1833 but this is certainly incorrect and is probably a misprint (for 1883 perhaps) as the colony of SA was itself not established in 1833, (see Transcript of Minutes, 18.7.1934). D. Foreman, Assistant Secretary, claimed (VBEF, Annual Report, 1972, p.13) that the union in SA was celebrating its centenary in 1972. Foreman provided no evidence to support his contention that the union began in 1872. No other documentation supported this claim although it is possible that some workplace collectives existed prior to the legalisation of trade unions. Yet, other unions tolerated their 'illegal' status before 1876. In any event the union formed in the 1880s folded in the wake of the 1890s Great Strikes for want of membership, which suggests that unionism in the coachbuilding trade prior to the introduction of the motor vehicle was less than tenable. The union's own records trace the date back to December 1888 when the first President, W.S. Bickford, was appointed.

formed with 76 members.[47] The union, known as the Amalgamated Coach Rolling Stock Makers and Wheelwrights' Society of S.A., covered all grades of workers in the road and rail coachbuilding industry. After 1914, the union adopted the abbreviated title of the Australian Coachmakers Employees' Federation. It gained federal registration in 1917 and was registered in South Australia under the Industrial Court in November, 1918. During these early decades the union remained numerically small, not reaching a total of 500 members until June 1919, but following the expansion of the vehicle assembly industry the union's membership growth was rapid, increasing its size eight-fold in only seven years.[48] From 1920 the Coachmakers operated in confederation with the Saddlery and Leatherworkers Trades Employees' Association. But, reflecting its incremental industrial composition, the union adopted the full title of The Australian Coach, Motor Car, Tram Car, Wagon Builders, Wheelwrights, Rolling Stock and Aircraft Makers Employees' Federation. In November, 1938 the union adopted its present name.

Perhaps reflecting the tensions of distrust, or the tenuous origins of the organisation and the need for cohesion, the Coachmakers' Society introduced an oral pledge in 1910. On the insistence of the newly appointed Secretary, A.E. Pittman, the following oath was administered to members:

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47 See First Annual Report of the Coachmakers, 1908. This report notes that elected Labor Party representatives addressed the initial union meeting on the importance of unionism. See Appendix VIII.

48 A.E. Pittman, State Secretary from 1909-1934, represented a classic example of the paternalistic union official who closely identified the union organisation with himself and built close relationships with the employers. Later, claims were made during union elections that he was a shareholder in Holden's company. These were denied by Pittman who led the union autocratically throughout its turbulent formative years. As an example of this paternalistic philosophy, Pittman reported to the Tariff Board that 'about the year 1915, the firm of Messrs. Holden & Frost...began to get interested in the motor body building industry. I supplied them with the first coach and motor body building tradesmen. From there on they gradually expanded', op.cit., 18.7.1934.

> I pledge myself by my faith and my honour and my hopes of credit and respect to the Society to which I have sought admission and that I will never disclose or be the means of making known any of the Society's business transacted in this room and that I will to the best of my ability observe the laws that now exist and hereafter to be made for the government of this Society.[49]

The Society's initial concerns were conservative and tied to the business cycle fluctuations in the industry. Protection of the emerging vehicle industry was a major issue of union policy. The union, for instance, sent a deputation to Melbourne to lobby the Minister of Customs supporting the embargo of motor vehicle bodies in early 1918.[50] But union protectionism toward the labour market was not only of an industrial nature. In 1911 the union at a branch meeting of carriage trimmers endorsed the policy that female workers were to be opposed 'absolutely' on the grounds that the employment of women would be 'detrimental' to the interests of male workers.[51] The year previously, in May 1910, the union conscious of the local labour market, had directed the Clarion newspaper in Britain to warn English coachbuilders that 'there is no room in Australia for Coachmakers'.[52]

Following federation and the arrival of the motor vehicle body building industry, the objects of the ACEF centred on the prosperity of the industry, on industrial expansion through continuous production in vehicle building, and on its own organisational preservation. The four part objectives of the union were:

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49 Coachmakers Society (VBEF) General Minutes, 18.3.1910.

50 Ibid., 6.3.1918.

51 Ibid., 11.1.1911.

52 Ibid., 13.5.1910.

a) To maintain, preserve, and advance the trade interest and rights of employees engaged in the trade, business or calling, as set out in the Constitution.

b) To establish Branches and Sub-Branches throughout the Commonwealth.

c) To prevent strikes, and lock-outs between the members of the Federation and their employers, and to promote industrial peace by all amicable means.

d) To establish a fund for the purpose of carrying on the work or business of the Federation.[53]

To facilitate unionisation the Coachmakers' union signed a series of 'no - strike' agreements with one of the major motor vehicle producers, the Adelaide firm of Holdens. These sweetheart agreements, generally of three years duration prior to 1936, involved the union organisation policing the terms of the agreement in exchange for union recognition and closed shop facilities. The first agreement signed on February 21st, 1918, was to enable the firm of Holden and Frost 'to quote prices and carry out contracts during which there would be no industrial unrest or trouble'.[54] Further agreements initially with the Holden family but continuing under General Motors were undertaken in 1925, 1928, 1930, 1933, and 1936 with the latter

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53 'Report of the Proceedings of the Fourth Federal Conference', Brisbane 17-21 November, 1919, p. 3.

54 Coachmakers' Society,(confidential document),'History of Company - Union Agreements at Woodville', n.d., p. 1 (the document is included in full in Appendix VIII). In the 1918 agreement the union undertook to 'do all that is possible to prevent any industrial unrest or dislocation of work' (p. 3). By 1936 this undertaking had been entrenched and become more specific. Clause 12 read: 'The Unions [Coachmakers, AEU and ASE] parties hereto agree that in the event of any dispute arising at the Company's said plant their members shall not cease work or leave their work until authorised so to do by the Executive Committee of their Union; and no Executive Committee shall give such authority unless and until the matter in dispute, and the question of ceasing or leaving work, have (sic) been submitted by that Executive Committee to a separate secret ballot of the members of its Union employed in the departments of the Company's plant directly affected by such dispute', (p.5).

agreement remaining current to the present day.[55] After 1925 the agreements included both the AEU and the ASE for the purposes of supplying skilled labour for the die and tooling departments.[56] These unions revoked the extended and continuing 1936 agreement in 1948 and 1949 respectively.[57] The VBEF at the federal level entered into a similar agreement with Chrysler Australia/Mitsubishi in August 1979. On this occasion the commitment of the union leaders was undertaken without the skilled unions and with a good deal of opposition from among the union's Chrysler workers especially in South Australia.[58]

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55 The agreements provided for continuous production and with union policed limitations on industrial disputation. In return, the union(s) were conceded the right of closed shop, preference of employment to financial members, the rights to supply the firm's labour requirements, and prior to the 1928 agreement, the employer's commitment to retain day work (no shift work) and to abide by the union's policy opposing piece work. In the 1979 Chrysler agreement an extensive disputes procedure was specified and a clause that an absolute majority of union members were required to vote for a cessation of work whether or not they exercised their right of voting. Chrysler agreed to deduct dues by the check-off method provided that no 'strike, stoppage of work, ban or limitation of work is in force by any members of the union', 'Industrial Agreement between Chrysler Australia and VBEF', 14.8.1979, p. 6., (see Appendix VIII).

56 In 1928 the Coachmakers attempted to oust the AEU from Holden's by challenging the Engineers right to supply skilled labour. By 1933 the Coachmakers' Union had accepted management strategies to deskill labour and move towards company unionism by the abolition of the indentured apprentice system. As its membership declined throughout this period the coachmakers saw industrial-company unionism (by attempting to eliminate the skilled unions) as a major objective. See T. Sheridan,'The Amalgamated Engineering Union - The Great Depression in Australia', Labour History, No. 17, June 1970, p. 63. On the union's post-war industry union policy see, VBEF, Reports and Balance Sheet, September 1945, p.15. Details of de-skilling and dilution schemes in vehicle mass production in Australia are found in P. Poynton, 'The Development of the Assembly Line in Australia', Arena, No. 58, 1981.

57 The VBEF continued the 1936 agreement by not notifying the company of any intention to terminate the agreement. While noticing that the 1936 agreement might be considered to have lapsed, the union noted in its résumé of the agreements that 'in any case, the 1933 Agreement which was only between the Coachmakers and the Company would in all probability survive', (p. 3).

58 C.K. Lane, Personal Interview, 2.9.1980. In light of the mass sackings among Chrysler workers (some suggest to provide Mitsubishi with a base minimum workforce and an unblemished industrial relations record) there was little feeling of cooperation towards either management or the union officials. But neither was there mass antagonism in the light of the severe redundancies and the union's sometime participation in those retrenchments. Chapters V and VI discuss this point.

Initially, before the joint transnational vehicle industry negotiations of the 1970s, these agreements were negotiated at the State level. On one occasion when the Federal Officers of the union entered into an agreement with employers through the arbitration commission, the South Australian State President, F.C. Dingle, vacated the chair during a branch meeting to propose a no-confidence motion in the Federal Officers.[59] As a result a special meeting was held on June 30th, 1922 to boycott the arbitration system, but, these attempts proved fruitless and the agreement formed the basis of the new log of claims effective from December 1922.[60]

In the same year two country branches of the union were established at Peterborough and Quorn to organise railway carriage and rolling stock builders.[61] By the late twenties sub-branches had been added at Port Augusta, Naracoorte, and Port Lincoln.

While membership increased ten-fold during the 1920s, the union's major problem involved the intensification of the labour process and the increasing managerial forms of control. During 1923 and 1924 Holden's management on a number of occasions attempted to introduce the piece rate system in an effort to raise productivity. In 1924 Holden's introduced the time clock in the face of union opposition.[62] Under this pressure, the union turned to the Gunn Labor Government seeking legislation providing for an eight hour day including a one hour lunch pause, and a five day week.[63] Predictably, perhaps, the union's

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59 VBEF, General Minutes, 7.6.1922.

60 Ibid., 14.12.1922.

61 Coachmakers' Society (VBEF), General Minutes, 4.10.1928. (This point was confirmed by a previous Peterborough Branch Secretary H.C. Jones, Personal Interview, 13.8.1980).

62 Ibid., 2.7.1924.

63 Ibid., 18.6.1924.

request was unsuccessful. After 1929 the union's opposition to the piece rate system was undermined by unemployment, management strategies and the arbitration commission. The union's minutes record the proceedings of a meeting between E.W. Holden and around 80-90 members on December 16th, 1929 at which Holden outlined his payment by results system. The report noted that:

> This system, Mr. Holden contended would give the worker a bigger return something like 30% for his labour without having to work any harder. This would be brought about as a result of the time study system and improved methods of management.[64]

The union remained unconvinced.

In July of that year the first levy was imposed on employed members to assist the support of unemployed members.[65] In this context, and with the judgement of the 44 hours case before the arbitration court having insisted that the 44 hour week was conditional upon the introduction of piece rate payment, the union capitulated. The Assistant Secretary, A. Finlay, met with employers 'for the purpose of considering a workable system of Piecework or Payment by results which would be acceptable to both Parties, this would give the Federation the opportunity to secure the 44 Hours as intimated by the Court'.[66] Following this union defeat, Holden's began dismissing the union's financial members while retaining the unfinancial ones.[67]

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64 Ibid., 16.12.1929, p. 2.

65 In September 1929 of the 4,300 financial members, 2,600 were employed and 1,700 unemployed but remaining financial in the hope that the union would be able to secure some employment and/or provide an exceptional benefit.

66 VBEF, General Minutes, 6.2.1930.

67 These reports were received by the union as employment levels increased. See, ibid., 21.5.1936.

Throughout the two decades following the Great Depression regulations on the use of female labour concerned the union. Women were prevented from working night shift and from doing established 'male work', in effect restricting them to so-called 'new work not done by males'.[68] During the war the union pressured the Federal Labor Government to ensure that employers paid females 90 per cent of the male basic wage in order that women should not become a source of competitive cheap labour at the expense of male workers.[69]

With the award of the 40 hour week in 1947 the VBEF's major concerns centred on the question of relativities between trades rates and process worker rates, the problem of the vast labour turnover in the industry, and the development of effective mobilisation networks as the industry and union membership expanded in the post-war economic boom. In many instances, the assembly line production of motor vehicles has been associated with high labour turnover.[70] This was particularly the case with the South Australian industry, which relied upon recent migrant workers (mainly British) to constitute the bulk of its workforce. In two years, 1951 and 1952, when the union's membership was approximately 8,000, a total of 8,095 members were removed from the union's books while 5,803 new members were admitted.[71] This exceptionally high turnover of labour (and members) overshadowed the union's post-war development making it difficult to mobilise sustained rank-and-file trade union consciousness.

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68 Ibid., 9.6.1943; and Reports and Balance Sheet, September 1943.

69 Cf. the ACTU policy on equal pay in 'Australian Trade Union Policy on Equal Pay and Equal Status, 1941', ACTU, Sydney, 1941.

70 H. Beynon, Working for Ford, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973; H.A. Turner et al., discount the 'green labour hypothesis' as an indication of strike-propensity, although in the 1970s in Australia this factor added to the wildcat activity of industrial action. Moreover, 'green labour' of the VBEF proportions remained difficult to organise continually. (H.A. Turner et al., Labour Relations in the Motor Industry, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1967, see Chapter VI.

71 VBEF, Annual Report and Balance Sheets, September 1951-52.

The VBEF's industrial coverage extended to all workers involved in the vehicle industry. This coverage included skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers, as well as clerks, leading hands, inspectors and supervisors. Predominantly the union's membership was in private industry but members were also present in the public sector (railways, buses and trams and aircraft). In South Australia the majority of the VBEF's members were employed by the two established transnational corporations, General Motors-Holden and Mitsubishi (previously Chrysler). These corporations each retained separate consent awards controlling their respective work-forces.

The VBEF regarded itself as an industry union, although it did not enjoy a monopoly over the vehicle industry (the VBEF accounted for some 94 per cent). Nevertheless, the union technically possessed entire industrial coverage of the industry. Other unions existed in vehicle associated occupations (e.g., ASE, AMFSU, ETU, or ADSTE) because they provided specialised skilled workers and because they continued to cover those subsequently trained. The VBEF was predominantly male in composition, but had sizeable numbers of female members particularly in the upholstery and interior fabrication areas. The ratio of male to female members was lower in SA than elsewhere. In 1982 only 7 per cent of the SA membership were female, compared to 15 per cent federally.[72]

On a national level the VBEF with a membership in 1979 of approximately 49,000 qualified among the top 20 unions in Australia. The union's membership strength was directly correlated to the production needs of the big three car

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72 C.K. Lane, Personal Correspondence, 29.8.1983.

manufacturers. Historically the union's rate of growth was most rapid in the 1920s, and during the periods 1947-50 and 1969-74. Equally the union had experienced periods of dramatic decline especially during the Depression 1929-34 but also in 1960-61, and after 1975. The South Australian branch reached its peak membership size in September 1974 although the federal organisation continued to increase until 1976. At that time the union was the third largest union in the State but the decline in membership after 1974 was of the magnitude of 52 per cent by 1983.[73] With the closure of GMH's NSW operations at Pagewood in 1980 the union nationally suffered a further contraction. This severe decline was not the result of changes in the rate of unionisation, but was expressedly due to major restructuring and labour displacement in the production process. The South Australian branch organising two of the major producer corporations at four locations continued to remain the second largest State branch within the federation. Given the proposed transnational plans for the vehicle industry involving SA as a centre for engine block production and body assembly for certain models, this proportion is likely to decline further with the workforce contraction at GMH Woodville and Mitsubishi but to stabilise around a State union membership of 6,000.[74]

Six representatives elected by the entire membership constituted the full-time officials of the union. These were the State secretary, assistant secretary and four organisers, each elected for for-year terms. Unlike either the AMFSU or ADSTE, all these full-time officials were included in

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73 VBEF membership dropped from 14,262 to 6,892 from 1974 to 1983. See also Advertiser, 14.8.1975, p. 3.

74 VBEF estimate, 1983. The Federal Secretary L.C. Townsend, expected to lose one quarter (10,000) of the union's national membership (42,000) over the period 1979-84 (Advertiser, 27.1.1979, p.5). In the event the union lost 10,000 members between 1979 and 1983, of which 3,000 were lost in SA.

TABLE 4.4: VBEF Membership, 1885-1983.

	SOUTH AUSTRALIA				
Year	Book Numbers	Financial Members	No. of members Affiliated to ALP	Total Federal membership	SA as % of total Federal
1885	108				
1888	40				
1907	76	40			
1910	180				
1915	250		200		
1920	980	750	360	3,039	32.2
1925	2,758	2,758	625		
1928	6,268	4,300	1,010		
1931	2,835		101		
1935	6,816				
1944	7,281	4,971			
1950	10,554	5,614			
1955	9,027	6,200			
1960	8,519	7,247			
1965	9,310				
1970	12,144	12,111		36,800	33.0
1974	14,262	*----------*		43,485	32.7
1975		10,627		50,000	21.3
1977		9,849			
1979		9,503		41,867	22.7
1980		8,176	9,400	35,159	23.3
1981		8,234	9,000	37,244	22.1
1982		8,352	9,000	36,822	22.7
1983		6,892	9,800	31,465	21.9

*After 1974 the check-off system of deduction of subscriptions by employers was introduced. Significant differences between book membership and financial membership figures were removed.

the membership of the VBEF State Executive Committee. The remainder of the State Executive comprised of other elected honorary office holders such as: the president, vice-president, doorkeeper, Federal Council delegates, three trustees and two rank-and-file committee representatives (this list is exhaustive but in practice full-time officials additionally acted in certain of the above capacities). Each of these honorary positions carried with it a two year term, but as will be discussed later, the allocation of the instrumental positions was determined by the cohesive union 'machine' of full-time officials and lay official supporters. This served to enhance the dominant position of the leadership group relative to the shop stewards or rank-and-file. Put simply, whereas the other two unions both required a majority of rank-and-file delegates at the executive committee level (and did not automatically enable all organisers or in the case of ADSTE any organiser to participate in the executive), the VBEF placed every full-time official in the Executive with a term of office equal to twice the honorary term. The VBEF did not necessarily require a majority of non-full-time official representatives to constitute the Executive, and indeed such majorities while technically possible did not exist during the period of investigation.

The quality of the VBEF officials reflected the union's long traditions of closed shop agreements. In large part, the union in adopting these agreements corresponded to the hypothesis that the weaker the union organisation and its position relative to management, the greater the tendency to promote closed shop unionism. However, the imperative toward closed shop compulsory unionism was not solely due to intrinsic union weaknesses, but centred on the nature of large-scale cooperative production involving the objective socialisation of collective labour.[75] In the

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75 Cf. K. Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, (Resultate), Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, esp. pp. 985-1049.

recruitment of union officials these factors together produced in the case of the VBEF a succession of less than competent leaders. Indeed, the officialdom of the VBEF proved a clear case of the inversion of Michels' generalisation concerning the incompetence of the masses and the competence of leadership. Hence the fact that VBEF officials displayed markedly less ability than either of the other unions was not essentially due to personal factors, but was structurally predetermined by the nature of organisation and leadership recruitment patterns.[76]

The development of a lay officialdom was nascent. Given some measure of official recognition by both the VBEF leadership bloc and management, shop stewards were granted extremely limited legitimacy by either. The majority of these stewards, some three-quarters, were located in the four main SA plants of GMH and Mitsubishi. In 1978, for example, of the 131 stewards in SA, 99 were engaged in one of these main car plants. By 1982 this had fallen to 122 stewards, 64 of which were in the major plants.[77] The degree of collectivity sustained by the producer economies of scale and the cooperative division of labour, provided some assistance to the development of workplace shop steward committees. But VBEF shop committees failed to realise much of this potential, especially in comparison with the development of similar shop committees of other unions in the industry.[78]

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76 See Chapter VI below. The low regard with which the membership viewed the officials is reflected in the survey discussed in Chapter V.

77 Average steward constituencies fell from a ratio of approximately 1:70 to 1:50 over this period. In the large car plants large constituencies were not uncommon. For instance, in 1981 at the assembly division of the GMH Elizabeth car plant, 350 members were serviced by only 5 shop stewards. Steward Report to VBEF General Meeting, 11.8.1981.

78 J. Scott (AEU), 'The Story of a Historic Struggle', Appendix I in J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance, op.cit., pp. 155-59. Cf. W. Brown, R. Ebsworth and M. Terry, 'Factors Shaping Shop Steward Organisation in Britain', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 16, No. 2, July 1978, for an account arguing a closer correlation between large enterprise size and shop steward development.

The major reasons for this failure involved the centralised nature of company bargaining, and the retardation of shop committees by VBEF officials and management. This dissipated workplace union organisation and circumscribed the influence of shop committees during the period of full employment up to 1974. In the subsequent severe economic depression in the vehicle industry, the VBEF officialdom belatedly granted some measure of recognition to the committees as a means of defending the union at the grass roots level. By this time, however, the formative momentum of the committees and their scope for bargaining was severely eroded.

The VBEF traditionally provided its stewards with a commission ($10 per 25 members contributions) on the amount of dues the steward forwarded to head office. In 1983 the union still retained its commission irrespective of the fact that the union received the bulk of its financial contributions via the check-off system. For those stewards relieved of the duty of dues collection, the official union recognition of their position was largely devoted to their capacity as liaison agents and contacts for the full-time organisers. Stewards at the larger plants resisted but were frustrated by this circumscribed role, and regularly initiated policies and demands exceeding this formal recognition.[79] Yet, in the development of an effective shop steward movement, workplace activists had to contend not only with management suppression, national level wage negotiations and arbitrational regulations, but also with the determined hostility of their union Executive. In the period of investigation, little evidence suggested that this attitude of the 'machine'officials was undergoing change.

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79 For example, the protest organised and conceived by activist shop stewards which took place in Adelaide and Canberra during September, 1981 against the proposals reducing protection for the industry from the I.A.C.

On the contrary, shop steward influence within the more formal structures of the union was apparently enhanced less by access to bargaining processes than the incompetence of the union leadership.*

Opposition to the dominant official 'machine' existed at the State branch level of the VBEF. As will be discussed in the following three chapters, this opposition consisted at various times of dissident shop stewards and activist rank-and-file members, although such opposition was predominantly extra-electoral. In addition to anti-leadership factions within the State branch, the VBEF also displayed inter-State factionalism. Such polarisation involved State branch rivalry and identification with the large vehicle transnationals. Prior to the closure of the GMH Pagewood plant in NSW, the Secretary J.S. Thompson (also member of the NSW Legislative Council) provided a focus for antagonism towards the dominant federal leadership and was more closely identified with the interests of Ford. Rivalry existed between the NSW branch and the Federal and Victorian branches under the stewardship of L.C. Townsend, Federal Secretary, which tended to identify with General Motors and Mitsubishi (Chrysler). In South Australia, the Thompson group held links with one organiser, C.K. Lane, while the remaining officials enjoyed close relations with Mitsubishi (Chrysler) management.[80]

In its political party affiliations, the VBEF was one of the mainstays behind the SA Labor Party, having been affiliated since the ALP's early days. Affiliation with the UTLC sustained this identification. The Adelaide

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80 The State Secretary in 1981, D.J. Foreman, referred to the inter-State rivalry as a 'personality clash' but added that there 'have been attempts for Joe [Thompson] to get some support in SA, but it has gone wanting'. D.J. Foreman, Personal Interview, 28.5.1981. Lane had indicated that 'Thompson sends me all his (literature-propaganda) stuff here and I distribute it'. C.K. Lane, Personal Interview, 5.9.1980.

* During the latter half of 1984 the shop steward influence was enhanced by the resignation of two 'machine' organisers, and by the shop steward progressives gaining control of the Executive.

branch had participated in the UTLC of SA within four years of the Council's inauguration in 1884, and had similarly affiliated with the ACTU in 1928, the year after its formation in 1927. Within ALP politics the union was generally 'centre' to 'right of centre', yet supported the left wing Executive over the period of the middle to late seventies. In the 1980s the union officials orientated the VBEF towards the 'centre-right' in opposition to the emerging disenchanted left wing unions and in line with the Parliamentary Labor Party and Party's administrative machine 'consensus' alliance. However, distinct ALP factional identification was not apparent within the internal politics of the union. Despite appropriate rhetoric and the sizeable donations to the Party (principally for the purpose of purchasing parliamentary seats), little political party activity was evident. Certainly, union members were on no occasion urged to participate or attend Labor Party activities, and the leadership regularly adopted a low profile on ALP matters except on the occasions when the current union Secretary was engaged in the process of assuming parliamentary office via the Party.[81] Other political party influences within the union were incidental at the formal level. Of the communist and socialist party groups, only the occasional CPA activist was present during the early 1980s and this representation was restricted to one shop steward deputy and a couple of sympathetic members. The remaining left parties were not actively represented, although some groups played significant roles in the major disputes with the car producers throughout the mid-1970s.[82] Most of the activist shop stewards, sincerely committed to trade

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81 D.J. Foreman, Personal Interview, 28.5.1981, (see Chapter VI). ALP affairs were rarely discussed at the union's general meetings.

82 See G. Hill, 'Anatomy of an Industrial Struggle', Solidarity Motor Bulletins, London, 1979. This factor was confirmed by C.K. Lane, Personal Interview, 2.9.1980.

union principles, displayed no affinities towards particular political parties. These pragmatic stewards occupied the role of nascent union leaders and populists in Batstone et al.'s codification,[83] and were generally management and union official 'sponsored' rather than 'independent' in Willman's terms.[84]

The Australian Vehicle Builder, a federal quarterly newspaper of around 12 to 8 pages, was first produced in November 1980 under the editorship of the Federal Secretary.[85] Previously the South Australian branch had published an official branch Roneoed journal of local information and gossip.[86] This SA journal the 'Vehicle Builder', originally appeared monthly but was reduced to a quarterly basis in 1980. To supplement this literature both State and federal officers issued regular workshop bulletins. The Federation Newsletter produced by the Federal Office was issued on average twice weekly containing reports, wages and conditions and items of union interest. These were distributed to worksites and shop stewards by the respective organisers. The State branch frequently prepared a Vehicle News (single foolscap handout) with similar material applying to the State or to specific groups of workers. Members attending the Annual General Meeting (approximately 60) were entitled to a copy of the 'Annual Report: Reports and Financial Statements of the SA Branch.'[87] Organisers distributed foreign language newspapers such as the Greek New

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83 E. Batstone, J. Boraston and S. Frenkel, Shop Stewards in Action, Blackwell, Oxford, 1977.

84 P. Willman, 'Leadership and Trade Union Principles', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 11, No. 4, September/October, 1980.

85 Australian Vehicle Builder, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 1.

86 The contents of the average Vehicle Builder (SA) included: statements by officials, industrial news, plant reports, safety and compensation matters, car sales figures, stand down and retrenchment policies and Labor Party propaganda.

87 These reports contained: secretarial and presidential messages, financial statements, lists of officers, the annual report, auditors report, an education report and a list of deceased (previous) members.

Course (Nea Πορεια) and more recently the Italian New Peace (Nuova Paese). The union also distributed copies of the ACTU Newsletter to worksites as well as the ALP monthly newspaper the Herald.[88]

In the summer of 1980-81 the VBEF transferred its Adelaide headquarters from Trades Hall, where it was one of the major tenants, to its own property bought for a price of $332,042 in the main central business district of Adelaide. This property consisted of a large open-plan office space and reception area, behind which was a series of separate offices for the full-time officials. The building possessed a large committee room, printing room, canteen, research office/library and included a sizeable rear covered garage area that the union intended to refurbish in order to hold their general meetings and other gatherings.[89] The union provided each full-time official with a motor vehicle bought at cost from the vehicle producers (estimated value in 1982 $72,411 less depreciation), in addition to office equipment valued at $41,419.[90]

For the financial year ended September 1981 the SA branch of the VBEF recorded a deficit equal to 12 per cent of its total revenue for the year.

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88 On occasions VBEF organisers are overburdened with these publications. Regularly some organisers departed from the union office appearing more like street corner newspaper vendors than union officials.

89 In the interim, VBEF general monthly meetings continued to be held in a hired room at Trades Hall. This room accommodated 70-80 persons, but in practice less than 50 unionists regularly attended of the total union membership of approximately 7,000 members, and this included executive officers and shop stewards sympathetic to the leadership. The VBEF was the sole union in this study to hold general membership meetings on a regular basis, but this practice had become an ineffectual formal ceremony subordinate to the Executive Committee.

90 VBEF, Reports and Financial Statements, September 1982, p. 11.

The deficit of $53,521 during 1980-81, arose mainly from a drop in the membership contributions from $432,753 to $416,760, as well as major increases in rent charges (Trades Hall), travel costs, affiliation fees and some minimal increase in salaries. By 1982 due mainly to an increase of $125,000 in membership contributions to $542,645 (see Table 4.11) the union announced its first annual surplus since 1979. The union's financial position is shown below.

TABLE 4.5: VBEF SA Branch Consolidated Balance Sheet and General Fund Statement, 1979-82

	1979	1980	1981	1982
	$	$	$	$
Total Income	437,593	439,078	441,982	560,849
Total Expenditure	406,966	459,588	495,503	497,799
Accumulated Assets	531,619	561,492	531,421	610,249
Yearly Income/ Expenditure Balance	30,627	- 20,510 (Dr.)	- 53,521 (Dr.)	63,050

The assets of the union were more secure than its volatile financial position. In addition to its office property, shares were held in a working class hotel (valued at $34,344 in 1982), in Adelaide Festival City Broadcasters ($27,778). In 1982 over $68,000 was held either in loan investments or in Commonwealth Bank Term Deposits, and in excess of $173,000 was retained as current assets or cash on hand. This brought total assets including property to $610,249.

III. AMFSU

The oldest established union of this study, the predecessors of the AMFSU date back to a group of 27 immigrant engineers who founded the Sydney branch in 1852 aboard the immigrant vessel Francis Walker. A Victorian branch was established in 1859, followed by South Australia in June 1864. In the Australian branches, as Buckley and Sheridan record, the Anglo-Saxon connection remained strong in terms of the union's organisational structure and craft composition.[91] Indeed, the Australian branches of the ASE and later AEU maintained a subordinate relationship with the British society for over one hundred years.[92] The nineteenth century engineers were the proponents of 'new model' unionism 'seeking strength through the accumulation of funds, the avoidance of strikes when possible, and efficient organisation. They aimed to achieve their

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91 K.D. Buckley, The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia, 1852-1920, Australian National University, Canberra, 1970; and T. Sheridan, Mindful Militants: The Amalgamated Engineering Union in Australia, 1920-1972, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975.

92 See T. Sheridan, ibid., Chapters 2 and 10 on the 'transplantation' of British craft unionism to Australia. This qualifies the generalised claim made by K. von Beyme, Challenge to Power: Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Capitalist Countries, Sage, London, 1980, p. 33, that craft traditions were less significant in English-speaking ex-colonies. The subordinate relationship of the Australian section of the AEU meant that union rules from the UK applied to Australia, membership contributions were transferred to London, but the Australian section enjoyed the rights of benefits, voting and specific funding from the British union. This aspect of subordination was significant for two reasons: first, because it provided one rationale for the existence of a rival engineering union, the Australasian Society of Engineers, and second, because whereas the Australian engineers could conceivably have extended their skilled coverage to include wider metal associated trades, (e.g., boilermakers, moulders) they were prevented from doing so by the rules and conventions of the British AEU.
In terms of size, the Australian section (including New Zealand) accounted for half the 5,000 overseas membership of the AEU in 1890, and by 1920 the union held 32,000 members overseas of which 16,000 were in Australia. See J.B. Jefferys, The Story of the Engineers, 1800-1945, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1945, pp. 171 and 215. An Australiasian Council was established in 1887 to provide some degree of regional policy making.

industrial objectives by arbitration and parliamentary lobbying'.[93] Added to this was the commitment to temper the leadership of an authoritative central executive with the democratic expressions of the rank-and-file.[94] A traditional 'pace-setter' union in wages and conditions the metalworkers adopted a 'scientific' approach to industrial action, relating remuneration to productivity criteria rather than simply numerical strength in the business cycle.

In its present form the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights' Union is the result of a series of major union amalgamations. Like the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, many of these unions originated as colonial craft societies, antipodean branches of British trade-based organisations. The Australian Amalgamated Society of Engineers became the Australian section of the British Amalgamated Engineering Union following the British union's change of name in July 1920. This name change was the result of the amalgamation in Britain of a number of smaller engineering societies with the ASE such as: steam makers, various brass and copper craft societies, toolmakers and smiths' societies.[95] However, despite a narrow vote in 1922 in favour of autonomy for the Australian AEU, which was annulled due to financial difficulties and an appeal against apprentice participation in the ballot, the Australian section did not secure autonomy until 1968.[96] At this stage independence was necessary because from early

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93 R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics: A Study of Eastern Australia, 1850-1910, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1960, p. 73. See also, J.B. Jefferys, op.cit., pp. 160-61. Hutson recorded that the British engineers were prepared to refer disputes to voluntary arbitration as early as 1851, but faced employer resistance. J. Hutson, Penal Colony to Penal Powers, AEU, Sydney, 1966, p. 25.

94 T. Sheridan, op.cit., Chapter 2; and J.B. Jefferys, op.cit., pp. 72-74, 91-92, and 169-171.

95 J.B. Jefferys, op.cit., provides further details, pp. 191-94.

96 Cf. AEU (Australian Section): 50 Years Commonwealth Council, 1917-1967, AEU, Sydney, 1967, pp. 7 and 23. T. Sheridan, op.cit., Chapter 10, locates this move in the context of the subsequent amalgamations.

1966 the union had commenced amalgamation discussions with the Sheetmetal Workers', Boilermakers and Blacksmiths' (itself a product of amalgamation in 1966) and the Moulders' Unions. Negotiations with the former two societies during the early seventies produced the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union in January 1972, despite union objections to the registration of the name delaying official recognition until April 1973.[97]

The process of amalgamation entered into by the engineers has been attributed to the 'growing atmosphere of enthusiasm and zest for change and growth' in the AEU.[98] Alternatively, for the collective unions involved it has been seen as a means of gaining greater industrial strength rather than a mechanism for survival.[99] Yet, the engineers had traditionally advocated amalgmation among metal unions for reasons of class solidarity as well as labour market control. Historically many initiatives towards amalgamation had commenced in periods of low economic growth and even in depressed economic conditions, although the financial disincentive of sharing benefit provisions often frustrated such moves.[100] Viewed in this light, the final amalgamation of the AEU, SMWIU and the BBS was one of defensive organisational integration rather than premeditated offence. It is not coincidental that the first major spate of amalgamations to take place among the metal-engineering unions since their formation, was conducted

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97 See: State Council Minutes, 23.2.1973, p.2; 24.2.1973, p.1; and AMU, Monthly Journal, May 1973, p.1.

98 T. Sheridan, op.cit., p. 303.

99 E. Davis, 'Decision-making in the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union: A Study of the Victorian Branch', M.Ec. Thesis, Monash University, 1978, Chapter 3.

100 T. Sheridan, 'The Amalgamated Engineering Union', in The Great Depression in Australia, Labour History, No. 17, June 1970, Chapter 5, pp. 65-6. Also T. Sheridan, op.cit., Chapter 2 and pp. 148-49.concerning the AEU's role in the formation of the Metal Trades Federation.

amidst the economic depression following the post-war long boom. Moreover, by the 1970s the proportion of union members enjoying benefit provisions was minimal (see note 106 below) and these benefits were protected in the merger procedures. The further amalgamation of the AMWU with the debilitated Federated Shipwrights' and Ship Constructors' Association in December 1976 merely serves to reinforce this point. Moreover, as the economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s continued, the metalworkers commenced merger discussions with two other related unions. Talks with the Federated Engine Drivers' and Firemen's Association began in 1978 leading to a de facto merger and living together arrangements.[101] Amalgamation with the Federated Moulders' (Metals) Union, after much procrastination and some State level opposition, was completed during the period 1980-83, resulting in February 1983, in a further name change to the Amalgamated Metals, Foundry and Shipwrights' Union.[102]

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101 AMFSU, State Council Minutes, 20.2.1978; 30.8.1978; and AMWSU, Monthly Journal, March 1979, pp. 7-8. The AMWSU and FEDFA held a Joint Amalgamation State Council on 30.8.1978 at Trades Hall, Adelaide, the result of which aimed at a State-wide plebiscite in mid-1981 on the final merger. At the same time FEDFA agreed to share the AMWSU's new premises and to establish a conducive working relationship. The amalgamation talks involved the necessity of designing enabling rules and ensuring a suitable voting return. The proposed name of the amalgamated organisation at this stage was the Metal Workers, Engine Drivers and Shipwrights' Union (MWEDSU). See AMWSU and FEDFA, 'Joint National Leaflet', No. 4 August 1979; and the 'Amalgamation Report', AMWSU, Metal Worker, (Supplement), Sydney, May 1981. The FEDFA merger was deferred during 1981-82.

102 On the attempts to foster dissention see the Advertiser, 17.7.1982,p.13 (re opposition by the Moulders' Federal Executive to employer interference in the ballot) and Advertiser, 21.7.1982, p.10, and 10.9.1982, p. 21. In the history of the Moulders' Union, traced by W.J. Hargreaves, op.cit., the author, an ex-Federal Secretary, is concerned to document the craft and benefit origins of the union as well as its desire for metal union amalgamation. According to Hargreaves, the union began in Victoria in 1858, later in NSW 1858-60/1872 and in SA during 1882 (although the minutes of the UTLC record the Ironmoulders' Union dating from 1886). In 1899 the moulders in NSW, Victoria and Queensland federated,while SA joined in 1904. This federation adopted its full title, the Federated Moulders' (Metals) Union of Australasia in 1913, (Hargreaves, pp. 20, 37 and 51).

The metalworkers' union retained an extensive coverage both across industries and occupations, and was centred mainly in the private sector but with some public sector recruitment. As a traditional craft union recruiting on a more general basis in the contemporary period and with some visions of future industrial unionism, the metalworkers displayed a coverage structure which was both vertically and horizontally integrated.[103] The membership included those whose occupation regardless of skill involved working on or with metals, and in view of the 1983 amalgamation with the Moulders' union in the basic production of metal (except steel). As well as covering all types of workers in the engineering and metal industry, the union represented specific groups of workers in the following areas: oil, whitegoods, plastics, building and construction, pulp and paper, transport, aluminium and steel, air conditioning and electrical, agricultural implements, chemical and mining, food, education, vehicle and auto component, repair and retail establishments, and power generation. Nevertheless, even in the metal industry the union did not enjoy monopoly coverage.[104] Rival and complementary trade-based or unskilled unions

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103 Roberts reported that the British AEU claimed to be an industrial union in the post-war period. See B.C. Roberts, Trade Union Government and Administration in Great Britain, Bell, London, 1956, p. 497. The SA State Secretary of the metalworkers expressed the view that industrial unionism had to 'serve the overall cause of the working class' and that short of that, distinct interests of workers had to be preserved. Moreover, government-employer sponsored industrial unionism was a euphemistic ploy designed to create tame-cat enterprise unions he believed. M. Tumbers, Address to AMWSU Public Forum, 29.5.1982. Union policy officially supported industry union rationalisation of union structures in Australia and in its own case aimed to achieve a single metal industry union. See AMWSU National Conference December 1982, Metal Worker, (Supplement), August, 1982, p.3.

104 Throughout the twentieth century the AEU was the largest union within the metal industry covering an approximate proportion fluctuating between one-third and one-quarter of all metal unionists. The overall union density of the metal industry including all metal associated unions during the twentieth century was relatively high with between 50-60 per cent of the metal workforce unionised. See T. Sheridan, op.cit., (1975), p. 13.

existed within the industry such as: the Australasian Society of Engineers, with virtual dual coverage rights, the predominantly unskilled Federated Ironworkers' Association, and operating within the metal industry unions like the Electrical Trades Union or the unskilled Federated Storeman and Packers' Union.[105]

Engineering was traditionally a closed trade with respect to skill (machine turning and fitting processes), and was usually reliant upon apprenticeship training. During the twentieth century craft exclusiveness was undermined to some extent by skilled labour dilution but mainly by the systematic structural and technological deskilling of the labour process, and specialisation and control changes in the organisation of labour. In Australia the 'dilutee' trades status, while never of the same magnitude as in Britain due to the derivative, small scale nature of domestic production, was introduced during World War II. As such the AEU more than doubled its membership during the war, with the proportion of semi-skilled entrants rising threefold from the level extant in the Great Depression.[106] Yet as Sheridan has noted, craftsmen continued to hold a predominant position in both the metal industry and the AEU. This was largely because of the essential nature of the metal tradesmen, the expansion of new trade skills (motor and electrical mechanics), and the overriding concern of the union to absorb and control new production processes. Thus, for instance, between 1933 and 1966 the traditional skilled occupations measured but a slight

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105 The AMFSU's main rival the Australasian Society of Engineers was formed in SA in 1904 following the forming of the NSW branch in 1890.

106 T. Sheridan, 'Partial Anatomy of a Union: A Sample of AEU Recruiting', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 14, No. 3, September 1972, p.242-61. On the dilution of engineering skills in Britain see B. Pribicevic, The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, Blackwell, Oxford, 1959; and J. Hinton, The First Shop Stewards' Movement, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1973.

decline in proportion to the total metal workforce (from 19.1 to 17.5 per cent), while the proportion of other new skills such as welders, motor mechanics and electrical mechanics increased (from 22.1 to 30.4 per cent).[107] These skilled trades were supplemented by expansion among semi-skilled machinist and process worker occupations. Nonetheless, the AEU continued to represent craft interests maintaining a majority of skilled members to the end of its separate existence.[108] The subsequent addition of other metalworker unions did not significantly change this position.[109]

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107 T. Sheridan, Mindful Militants, op.cit., p.9. Importantly these categories serve merely as static snapshots of occupational divisions which belie the significance of technological and organisational developments in the production process, particularly in the fragmentation in the technical division of labour.

108 Ibid., p. 18. There is no reason to imagine that the unions with which the AEU subsequently amalgamated would have significantly reduced the skilled proportion with the exception of the Sheet Metal Workers' Union. Changes in the requirements of the labour process reflected in recruitment and retrenchment patterns have influenced the composition of the AMFSU rather than amalgamation.
Historically the SA branch of the AEU was with the NSW branch one of the branches with a relatively high proportion of benefit members. All benefit members were skilled trades workers. The decline in the proportion of benefit members, not equivalent to the changes in the skilled composition, is shown below.

AEU Benefit Members 1914-1967 and AMWSU-AMFSU 1979-1983

	SA	NSW	Total AEU
1914-21	81.7	83.2	76.4
1934-39	62.1	74.2	53.6
1962-67	23.7	25.6	19.5
Funeral Benefits only			Total AMWSU/ AMFSU
1979	5.1	6.5	4.4
1983	2.7	4.2	2.7

Source: T. Sheridan, op.cit., (1970), p. 15, and AMWSU, Quarterly Report, July-September 1979; July-September 1983. In 1983 the AMFSU provided only funeral benefits (as did VBEF) for those contributing to the benefit prior to amalgamation. The only remaining cash benefit members were entitled to receive was the union's strike pay which consisted of $20 per week (or one-twelfth of basic wage) after 10 days on strike.

109 Certainly in the questionnaire of metalworker members 92 per cent described themselves as skilled workers. See Appendix II(a), Q.50. Davis estimated in 1977 that tradesmen constituted roughly 60 per cent of the total membership, with 40 per cent non-tradesmen. See E. Davis, 'Decision-Making in the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 4, December 1977.

As a result of the predominance of craft interests and despite technological developments, principles of labour aristocracy have continued to permeate AMFSU policy.[110] Hence, in addition to its record of aggressive industrial militancy the union continued to maintain a bargained corporatist and at times reconciliatory relationship with employers in which an awareness of employers' interests was nurtured.[111] This feature is best conveyed in Sheridan's historical account of the national union in which the union was presented as attempting to regulate both skilled and semi-skilled labour within the labour market as a prelude to effective bargaining. The explanation rests on the union's own perception of expanding work opportunities in which the union (unlike the engineers in Britain) was able to share through the re-evaluation of job regulation. Accordingly, the union strategy involved cooperating

> wholeheartedly with employers in campaigning for increased protection for domestic producers. The pressure for higher tariffs seldom slackened until the sixties and, like employers, the union was never much concerned about arguments that protection entailed higher costs to consumers. Similarly the AEU combined with employers and other unions in urging preference for domestic tenders for government contracts no matter what the price difference of overseas tenders.[112]

AMFSU members fall predominantly under the Metal Industry Award, (1971), which applied to the States of NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and

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110 Cf. E. Hobsbawm, Labouring Men, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1968; for a critique of the descriptive rather than explanatory power of the term 'labour aristocracy' see H.F. Moorhouse, 'The Marxist Theory of the Labour Aristocracy', Social History, Vol. 3, No. 1, January 1978.

111 Cf. T. Sheridan, Mindful Militants, op.cit., p. 56.

112 Ibid.,p. 52. As will be discussed in Chapter VIII the later AMWU's strategy incorporated in Australia Up-Rooted was located upon similar assumptions. In 1982 the AMWSU again suggested a plan to divert government tenders to local industry by allowing a second round tendering system for local manufacturers (see Australian Financial Review, 24.8.1982, p. 6).

Tasmania.[113] The award represented a consent agreement lodged by the major parties with the Commonwealth Industrial Registrar. Since 1971 this award has been continuously varied particularly in relation to wage rates, condition clauses, private consent alterations and employer exemptions. For example, between October 1971 and October 1978 over 100 separately referenced amendments were recorded by the Commonwealth Registrar. The award covered specification of industrial sectors and parties, classification of job divisions, apprenticeship, working conditions, union rights, dispute procedures, exemptions and a range of miscellaneous provisions. Initially, thirteen unions were parties to the agreement but in 1983, due to the organisational amalgamations of the AMFSU, nine separate unions remained. The award standardised conditions of employment for the metal manufacturing industry much of which was characterised by diverse small and medium scale worksites. This agreement retained advantages for both union and employer groups: the award established common minimum provisions for unionists while it served to reduce competition (over the total price of labour) and discourage non-award marginal capital enterprises from expanding or continuing. The metal trade and industry awards served as pivotal awards under Australian arbitration practices in providing a traditional indication of wage margins and conditions with wider relativity implications for many other awards and sectors of the workforce.

As a consequence of amalgamation the AMFSU has for over a decade remained Australia's largest trade union. The membership of the SA branch

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113 This award dates from 1921 but for most of its duration represented an arbitrated Metal Trades Award. Since 1971 the award has been a private agreement. A survey of AMWSU members in 1980 found that 54.2 per cent of members worked under the Metal Industry Award in Australia. The proportion of AMWSU members in South Australia under the award was higher, 63.9 per cent. AMWSU, National Wages Survey, June 1980, p. 4.

of the AMWSU prior to amalgamation with the Moulders' Union was 13,996 (June 1982), or 8.1 per cent of the national total 173,512. South Australia was the fifth largest State membership following Western Australia (15,802), Queensland (25,348), Victoria (51,008) and with over one-third of the aggregate membership, NSW (62,522). By July 1983 the membership total including the Moulders' had fallen to 165,426 (SA 12,719, WA 16,839, Qld 25,526, Vic. 46,426, NSW 59,516, Tas. 4,400). The union maintained a high proportion of its membership under closed shop conditions (70 per cent), but discouraged the associated check-off method of dues collection, continuing to require the majority of the membership (some 75 per cent) to forward contributions to the State offices.[114] Predominantly male in composition, the AMFSU on a national basis included only a small proportion of females (6.2 per cent in 1979, 4.2 per cent in 1983) for the most part engaged in unskilled and semi-skilled classifications.[115]

Like the British AUEW, the Australian AMFSU made participation in union government dependent on the residentially based branch structure. According to the union's shop steward manual, branch meetings allow members to 'propose and determine Union policy by freely expressing their views and making democratic decisions on any subject except religion'.[116] Fourteen

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114 P. Huntley, Inside Australia's Top 100 Trade Unions, Ian Huntley, Middle Cove, N.S.W, 1980, pp. 142-3.

115 AMWSU, Quarterly Report, July-September 1979. This report recorded 9,842 female financial members, of which 620 were in SA (5.0 per cent of SA membership) well below the national average. By 1983 this had fallen to 6,898 of which 561 were in SA (4.4 per cent of SA membership) slightly above the national average. AMFSU, Quarterly Report, July-September 1983.

116 AMWSU, Shop Steward's Manual, Sydney 1979, p.15. The union's rules stipulated that branches, subject to the rules and the 'control and direction of the general governing bodies of the union', had the power and responsibility to discuss all aspects of the union's activities. This involved: informing members of decisions and policies, participating in decision-making, electing officials, voting on union proposals and generally maintaining discipline and continuity in the union organisation. AMWSU, Rules, Sydney, 1979, pp. 77-79.

branches existed in SA during the 1970s and 1980s, allocated into seven State zones for the purposes of comprising the seven branch delegates to the union's committee of management, State Council.[117] Five large individual branches each representing a separate zone and with between 1,000 and 3,000 members constituted two-thirds of the State's membership. The remaining nine branches arranged between two zones varied from 924 members at Whyalla to only 39 at Peterborough in 1983.[118] These branches and zones were arranged thus.

TABLE 4.6: AMFSU Branch and Zone Selections 1975-1983

Zone	Branch	MEMBERSHIP 1975 Oct.	1979 July	1983 July
Zone 1	Peterborough) Port Augusta) Port Lincoln) Port Pirie) Whyalla)	2,424	1,889	1,943
Zone 2	Para Districts	2,712	2,148	2,133
Zone 3	Western Districts	2,468	1,819	1,739
Zone 4	Adelaide	2,276	1,440	1,191
Zone 5	North East	1,967	1,557	1,640
Zone 6	Southern	2,132	1,468	1,508
Zone 7	Christies Beach) Mannum) Millicent) Mount Gambier)	1,380	1,183	1,465

Source: Quarterly Reports, 1975, 1979 and 1983.

117 Nationally the number of separate branches has tended to decline over recent years. In 1975 the AMWU consisted of 109 branches, while in 1982 the AMWSU held 105. AMWSU Monthly Journals, 1975-82.

118 AMFSU, Quarterly Report, July-September, 1983. See 'SA Branches in Zones as at April 1980', Appendix VIII.

TABLE 4.7: AMFSU MEMBERSHIP, 1972-1983

Year	South Australian Membership	Total Federal Membership	SA as Percentage of Total Federal
1972 Dec	14,484	168,022	8.6
1973 Dec	15,477	171,229	9.0
1974 June	16,177	175,857	9.2
1975 June	15,820	176,584	9.0
1976 June	13,785	162,906	8.5
1977 June	12,933	155,090	8.3
1978 June	12,936	159,820	8.1
1979 June	12,284	159,182	7.7
1980 June	12,980	161,855	8.0
1981 June	13,357	169,446	7.9
1982 June	13,996	173,512	8.1
1983 July	12,719	165,426	7.7

(N.B.: 1972-6 AMWU, 1976-82 AMWSU, 1983 AMFSU)

Source: 1972-82 AMWU/AMWSU Monthly Journal
1983 AMFSU Quarterly Report

In 1982 the union was represented throughout Australia by a total of 93 officials, approximately 25 officers and over 100 full-time secretarial assistants.[119] Of the officials eight consisted of the National Office (president, secretary, two assistant secretaries and four national organisers). The remaining 85 officials were State office holders distributed accordingly: NSW 31, Vic. 19, Qld 13, WA 9, SA 8, Tas. 4, NT 1.[120] The eight officials in the SA branch were assisted by two officers, one specifically employed to conduct worker compensation matters, the other as education officer. The branch in addition employed eight office assistants; three responsible for processing membership business (dues, address changes, computer records, queries, etc.), the other five divided into the following duties: officer management, one assistant each to the State secretary, the president, the education officer, and finally one responsible for the telephone, photocopying and printing services.

State officials comprised the secretary, president, assistant secretary and five organisers each of which were elected for four year terms but with unsynchronised elections. The former three executive positions

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119 The historical pattern of expansion in the full-time positions of the union is illustrated below.

Full-Time Officials and Officers AEU-AMFSU

	Total Officials (elected)	Total Officers (appointed)
1939	17	1
1960	24	2
1972	63	9
1975	89	14
1982	93	24

120 The AMFSU in 1982 possessed a ratio of full-time officials to members of 1:1,848 federally and 1:1,749 in SA (the federal ratios were 1:1,853 in 1973/4 and 1:1,721 in 1979). See R.M. Martin, Trade Unions in Australia, Penguin, Ringwood, 1975, pp. 59-62; second edition, 1980, pp. 68-71. For comparative data: K. von Beyme, op.cit., pp. 103-6. The AMFSU SA branch ratio of 1:1,749 was marginally higher than the comparative ratios for the State branches of the VBEF (1:1,392) and ADSTE (1:972).

were elected by full postal ballot of the entire State financial membership. Organisers, on the other hand, were elected according to the union's principle of 'autonomous regulation' via branch meeting voting or by means of a member requested postal return, but not a full postal ballot. The union rules also provided for divisional organiser elections (based on an electorate of their servicing responsibility), but in practice in SA only the Whyalla organiser (Div. 1, iron and steel industry) was elected by membership in that area/division. The other four organisers were elected throughout the State excepting the Whyalla region. The remaining executive position, that of vice president was a four year honorary post filled by a rank-and-file metropolitan branch member.[121] State Conference, the sovereign policy and appointment body at the State level met biennially and was composed of the three senior officials plus five delegates from each of the State's seven zones. Decisions of this Conference required ratification from subsequent branch meetings but this procedure was merely a process of formality. State Conference decisions, and policy directives were subordinate both to the overriding authority of National Conference and National Council. Between State Conferences two bodies were charged with the formulation and implementation of policy: the State Council and the State Administrative Committee.[122] In general the State Council met monthly with the Administrative Committee meeting one week before and one week after the Council. These executive bodies comprised the following delegates:

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121 AMWSU, Rules, Nos. 28 and 29.

122 State Council was authorised to perform executive functions subject to union policy, but in the case of the Administrative Committee this represented an informal but influential transference of immediate policy-making responsibility.

TABLE 4.8: AMFSU State Council and Administrative Committee Composition

State Council (Monthly)	Secretary, President, Ass. Secretary, Vice President, State Organisers (4) Rank-and-file Delegates (8)
Administrative Committee (fortnightly)	Secretary, President, Ass. Secretary, Rank-and-file Delegates (3 one of which must include the Vice President) (other officials may attend as observers)

The shop steward officialdom in the AMFSU was well developed with a network of over 600 shop stewards throughout the worksites in SA. These stewards were generally active in branch meetings and providing they were employed in sufficiently large establishments were commonly engaged in union shop committees. During the period under investigation, the stewards also met frequently on a regional basis in the form of monthly area shop steward councils. These area councils covered metropolitan districts (e.g. western districts, Adelaide, north-east district) and collected shop stewards from various industries and employer establishments. Area councils were held in work time (afternoons) and were funded in some cases by employers under award agreements but predominantly by the union itself. In SA these councils were successful and impressive but this was not matched in other States where in Victoria and NSW these shop steward councils virtually collapsed. In 1982 the area councils were suspended as part of an overall restructuring programme within the union, but stewards were granted quarterly aggregate meetings where shop stewards from various employers/industries could collectively discuss issues confronting them.[123] In place of the area councils, the AMFSU's federal officials intended to promote industry committees composed of stewards involved in similar

123 AMWSU National Council, 'Union Organisation - Some Proposals', Discussion Paper, 1980.

industry sectors. These section committees had previously existed but had generally declined in significance despite or perhaps because of the involvement of the relevant State official responsible for that industry. The revised industry section committees met quarterly, in work time under the discretionary surveillance of full-time officials. By way of contrast, area councils, as will be discussed at a later stage, had provided shop stewards with an institutional position for mobilisation across industries which permitted more scope for moving beyond economistic concerns and the specifics of certain industries or employers. The main problems with area councils from the SA experience were that their energies were rarely directed or coordinated, and that they received little assistance or interest from the union leadership.

It is ironic that only four years after Davis' study into the then AMWU Victorian branch,[124] which concluded that decision-making in the union was essentially through democratic participation, the union itself should initiate a major campaign to reinvigorate some of its democratic traditions. Senior national officials exasperated by apathy and the craft-inherited union structures, launched a comprehensive mobilisation strategy accompanied by some embryonic structural reorganisation to stimulate rank-and-file consensual involvement in union activity. This campaign was waged principally for two reasons. First, in the context of a rightwing 'Reform Group' push which achieved success in ousting initially one and then a second national official, the broad left officials proceeded to mobilise support on the grounds that the right's success was in part due to both membership apathy and a general laxity within the left's organisation.[125] Second, the leadership had tended to become complacent and

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124 See E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the Australian AMWU', Industrial Relations, Vol. 16, No. 2, May 1977.

125 See Bulletin, 15.6.1982, pp. 41-2.

in the midst of economic restructuring the membership were making militant demands which had been ignored, implying that the membership had to be stimulated into mobilising itself. This reorganisational campaign took place in conjunction with the preparation to negotiate with the metal industry employers for a $50 weekly increase in exchange for compliance with a 12 month agreement requiring abstention from strike action.[126]

From the union's own admission and from extensive empirical observation, democratic participation in union government was far less apparent than Davis' study would indicate. Indeed, as Chapter VII argues, the concept of democratic participation in unionism is itself essentially problematical. However, as will be further discussed subsequently, it is the contention of this thesis that the union's basic vanguardist nature constituted a major element of the union's industrial strength but which in turn produced contradictory tensions among the membership. In contrast to other accounts,[127] the metal workers' union in SA consisted of a highly centralised, secretive and executive dominated organisation.[128] This conclusion was underlined by one of the union's State Councillors who maintained that,

> there is a way of deciding things in our union. There is a small group who caucus and make all the decisions - then they let them out throughout the meeting - not too obviously but ensuring that their choices are accepted. (Four State officials/officers were included in this small group: Wyman, Tumbers, O'Neill and Gnatenko).[129]

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126 The metal unions accepted $25 immediately, plus a $14 increase from 1.6.1982 and a 38 hour week from 15.3.1982. See C. Mulvey, 'Wage Policy and Wage Determination in 1982', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 25, No. 1, March 1983.

127 Cf. E. Davis, op.cit.; and T. Sheridan, 'Democracy Among the Aristocrats: Participation of Members in the Affairs of the AEU (Australian Section) 1900-72', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 1979.

128 This point is substantiated in depth in Chapters VI and VII.

129 Personal Interview, AMWSU State Councillor, 26.9.1980.

Furthermore, as a result of this centralism and of the union's traditional structure, the AMFSU placed great emphasis not on the mass democratic involvement of the members on a continual and undiscriminatory basis, but on the legitimation of decisions and the decision-making process. This was no more clearly demonstrated than in the union's policy-making procedures following National and State Conferences. Technically the AMFSU adopted the relatively democratic procedure of ratifying all National and State Conference decisions by the aggregate membership usually at branch meetings. Nevertheless, this democratic check involving unremitting 'machine gun' ratification had become farcical. Conference decisions some of which were 2,000 words in length were ratified without discussion in a matter of a few seconds, with the handful of branch members being asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with a particular decision. The aggregate membership involved in such ratification exercises was also significant Thus, for example, of the union's 160,000 members only 600 ratified the 1980 National Conference decisions. Further, of the Conference agenda 95 per cent of the motions decided upon were submitted by national or State officials and only 5 per cent by the rank-and-file through the branch network.[130] This confirms the point, that, while the above assessment of the union's undemocratic nature was derived essentially from the SA branch, little evidence to the contrary emanated either from the union's National Office or from branches in other States.

The AMFSU maintained political affiliation to the ALP and within South Australia was one of the major left unions in the Party and in the UTLC. During the middle and late seventies the AMWSU had operated politically within the dominant left 'machine' bloc that dominated the Party conferences

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130 Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael, 'Address to SA State Council', 4.12.1980.

and organisation as well as the UTLC. But, with the ascendancy of a centre-right alliance consisting of ALP organisational staffers, the Parliamentary Caucus (especially under the Party leadership of Corcoran and Bannon), together with the moderate-right unions in the UTLC, the AMFSU and other left unions were excluded from the Party's organisational 'machine'.[131] This exclusion was not sufficient to prevent the left faction within the Party occasionally defeating the moderate 'machine' as in the case of the pre-selection Convention for parliamentary candidates in 1981.[132] The left faction without real strength inside the PLP or Party's full-time staff was reduced to supporting either various left wingers or unsupported hopefuls for parliamentary office in a bid to capture more influence. Yet the potential strength of the AMFSU in the ALP was for the most part not fully realised due to the fact that a significant proportion of the officials and officers were either indifferent to the ALP or were aligned with contending parties of the left and were thus debarred from partaking in ALP affairs.[133] After the formation of an 'ALP Left Caucus' group of officials/officers and shop stewards in the AMFSU from 1980, the union's potential authority was more seriously addressed with the ALP included in the union's overall strategy for greater political

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131 The instrumental and personal links between R.J. Gregory (UTLC State Secretary - elected to the SA House of Assembly in a by-election in 1982), and J. Wright, MP, (a senior minister under the Dunstan administration and Deputy Leader of the PLP - and also the PLP's machine 'numbers' operative in Parliament) proved of importance in aligning the moderate and right factions in both the Parliamentary Party and the union movement.

132 See Advertiser, 8.12.1980, p.11 ; cf. Advertiser, 2.3.1981, p. 7 on the left's 'clean sweep' of the UTLC.

133 Communist officials existed in the AEU from the 1940s onwards and along with ALP officials comprised the 'left' factions of the union during the 'Groupers' challenge of the 1950s and 1960s. Sheridan argued that despite the ideological commitment of the leadership (both Communist and left ALP), the AEU maintained a pragmatic responsive leadership that retained its position via results. T. Sheridan, Mindful Militants, op.cit.

intervention.[134]

In terms of affiliation to collective organisations of the union movement, the AMFSU was affiliated to both the UTLC and the ACTU, with the metalworkers having been among the initial seventeen unions to join the UTLC in its first year of operation in 1884. Within its own industry, the predecessors of the metalworkers union were instrumental in the establishment of the Metal Trades Federation, a loosely structured federation of metal industry and associated unions which began in 1943. Initially serving as a consultative body, the MTF became a coordinating body for major industrial campaigns. Following the Metal Industry Award 1971, the MTF served to conduct national negotiations and provide a combined forum from which to direct joint union campaigns. The MTF due to internal political and philosophical differences rarely functioned effectively in unifying the federated unions, although with the termination of national wage indexation in 1981, the MTF conducted negotiations with the employers (MTIA) for a consent agreement over wage restoration with a sustained sense of unanimity.[135] Finally, at the international level, the union maintained a close working relationship with both the World Federation of Trade Unions and the Confederation of Free Trade Unions, and was affiliated with the International Metal Workers' Federation.[136]

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134 For example, a cabalistic meeting of selectively chosen metalworker stewards and officials of the ALP group together with R.J. Gregory and Party staff for the purpose of candidate selection was held prior to the special ALP pre-selection Convention. This Convention was called to pre-select candidates to contest the 1982 State election for the Labor Party. The AMFSU meeting on 1.12.1980 was held shortly before this Convention to determine those candidates that would enjoy left support principally against the ALP machine. This union meeting, at which Gregory, an ex-AMWU organiser, was most vocal in opposition to the union's position, was conducted in an atmosphere of pronounced acrimony.

135 Cf. C. Mulvey, 'Wage Policy and Wage Determination in 1982', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol.25, No.1, March 1983, on the extension of this union agreement through the ACTU to the general voluntary six-month wage freeze of November 1982.

136 On the International Trade Secretariats see: R.L.Rowan, H.R.Northrup, and R.A. O'Brien, Multinational Union Organisations in the Manufacturing Industries, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1980, especially Chapter II. The SA branch of the AMFSU was, in addition, affiliated with a number of international political bodies such as the Australian Vietnamese Society and the Australian Peace Committee (Soviet backed).

In the field of publications and union literature the AMFSU was second to none in Australia. According to the union's own calculations the union devoted per annum approximately seven per cent of its entire financial resources to union literature, and this figure underestimated the actual level because the associated costs of postage were not included.[137] Throughout the period of expansionary amalgamation (1972 to 1983), the union experimented with various methods of communicating its message to both the membership and the wider public. The union's glossy Monthly Journal, a 32 page booklet, included detailed and multilingual information on the union's activities and finances as well as articles of political, industrial and general interest. This journal was suspended in June 1980 and replaced with a similar sized quarterly journal which was itself terminated in June 1983. The Amalgamated News, a monthly newspaper of eight pages, dealing with industrial items, was replaced with a slightly larger colour newspaper the Metal Worker from June 1980.[138] Reasons for these changes stemmed from the union's intention of reducing expenditure on the Monthly Journal in order to devote more of the publication budget toward the occasional publications which had wider and more sustained impact. Such occasional publications included the variously impressive booklets of between 20 and 60 pages outlining programmes (by no means consistent ones) of increased intervention by organised labour in the social, economic and political existence of Australia. These booklets included: Australia Up-Rooted (1977), Australia Ripped-Off (1979), 35 Hours: More Jobs More

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137 See AMWSU, Metalworker, Vol. 1, No. 6, November 1980, Supplement, p.2. The union produced a video entitled, 'The Union Dollar', which differentiated the various major items of expenditure of the union's budget. Cf. D. Gallie, In Search of the New Working Class, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978, especially pp. 249-250, on the output of British and French union literature.

138 See AMWSU, Monthly Journal, May 1980, p. 3. See also Table 4.10 below.

Leisure (1980), and Australia on the Rack (1982).[139] Prior to this the union had undertaken the publication of more theoretical and historical productions from its research officer.[140] In addition to these occasional consciousness-raising publications the union published copies of the metal industry award, national and State newsletters, and industrial safety brochures.

One of the major activities distinguishing the AMFSU from other unions was its commitment to union education. Over four per cent of the union's national expenditure was devoted directly to education although this excluded the salary of education officers and equipment. Unlike the commitment given by the VBEF officialdom in nominally supporting government-controlled TUTA education for its 'responsible' stewards, AMFSU education involved the establishment of its own extensive education programme in addition to TUTA, WEA and CAE courses. In 1981 for instance, the union conducted 23 courses (schools of 2-3 days duration eighteen of which were separate courses) to which over 700 members were invited. The number attending union-sponsored training (466) was seven times that attending TUTA courses from the AMFSU. These courses were aimed at the union's shop steward body and included regular basic training courses for recently elected stewards, providing instruction on membership representation, steward duties, low-level discussions with management and compensation-welfare servicing.[141]

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139 For discussion of these pamphlets see: T. Wilshire and B. Debus, 'Australia Up-Rooted: A Discussion', Journal of Australian Political Economy, No. 1, October 1977; Institute of Public Affairs Review, Vol. 33, No. 2, April/June 1979, pp. 21-28; G. Crough and E.L. Wheelwright, Australia: A Client State, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982, pp.209-210.

140 J. Hutson, Penal Colony to Penal Powers, AEU, Sydney, 1966, J. Hutson, Six Wage Concepts, AEU, Sydney, 1971; and J. Hutson, Inflation the Silent Robber, AMWU, Sydney, 1974.

141 See Chapter V below on educational training for stewards. The annual 'Education Officers' Report' provides substantial discussion of the themes and political content of the union's educational programme.The union traditionally participated in TUTA courses more than other unions. In 1977, for example, 157 AMWSU members attended TUTA courses while only four attended from the ASE, three from the FIA and 44 from the VBEF. AMWSU, State Council Minutes, State Conference Report,27-28.2.1978,p.11.

Essentially the AMFSU's preoccupation with union training was established upon the premise that raising consciousness via union education would increase the effectiveness of both the organisation and its industrial strength. This point was amplified by the SA branch Education Officer T. Gnatenko,

> our Union prides itself on being democratic. If this term is to mean anything, then our members have not only the right to participate in decisions, but the right to the information necessary for correct decision-making. Our education programme should never be perceived as a service which the AMWSU provides, but as an integral part of the dynamics of our Union.[142]

To this end the course programme conducted by Gnatenko was comprehensively informative, and with a coherent (historical materialist) theoretical orientation as well as a sound empirical basis. Students were introduced to the political economy of industry sectors (vehicle industry, railways, metal industry, heavy engineering, white goods), theories of union organisation and bureaucratic theory, management ideology and training, plus political analysis of government policies and current affairs. Over the previous years the SA branch had developed an extensive range of educational aides centring on audio-visual equipment, while nationally the AMFSU had produced its own informative video films on such topics as: union finances, unemployment, health and safety.

Of considerable importance to the functioning of the union was the union's Adelaide premises. During 1979 the union transferred its SA head-quarters from an overcrowded office in Halifax Street to the much more spacious premises in Sturt Street. These latter facilities provided the union with a large conference/seminar room with seating for 45-60 people.

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142 T. Gnatenko, 'AMWSU Education Officers' Report', (SA) 1981, p. 10.

Each official and officer had a separate office adjoining the main open-space general office area. The union building contained canteen facilities, photocopying and printing rooms, computer terminal and telex facilities, a substantial library and a large hall. The property was owned by the union and was valued at around $300,000 in 1982 prices.[143] In addition to this property the union also owned the motor vehicle fleet used by its officials, which in SA consisted of 10 vehicles. Nationally, transport equipment in 1982 was valued at approximately $750,000.

Financially, the AMFSU appeared the richest union under examination in this study. Certainly the union commanded by far the greatest number of financial assets, six times the other two unions. In 1982 the total assets of the AMWSU were $13,437,797 while net assets reduced that figure to $10,615,843.[144] National income and expenditure figures for the recent period are shown below.

TABLE 4.9: Metal Workers' Union National Council General Fund 1979-82

(Total Federal Figures)

	1979 $	1980 $	1981 $	1982 $
Total Income	8,936,673	9,621,469	10,030,941	12,243,722
Total Expenditure	7,852,992	8,999,444	9,011,404	11,411,146
Accumulated Assets (Net)	7,603,063	8,297,409	9,508,314	10,615,843

AMFSU contributions were calculated on the basis of 0.8 per cent of the basic Metal Industry Award rates of pay. The union as a consequence of its

143 The union also retained a regional office in Whyalla.

144 AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, October/December 1982, p.16; and AMWSU, Metalworker, Vol. 3, No. 11, December, 1982, p.15.

craft benefit traditions, mergers with other unions and its own vertical coverage, retained eleven different (nineteen in total) rates of contribution in 1983. The main rate of contribution was for males and females with pay equal to or greater than the prescribed award rate for trades people. In 1983 this rate was $24.50 per quarter ($98 per annum) compared with the rate for those earning less than the award adult rate $20.60 per annum, and the rate for juniors or apprentices of $41.20 per annum.[145] The union also levied its membership for a political contribution of $1.60 per annum from which members can be exempted.[146] The policy regarding the level at which contributions should be set was designed to satisfy the organisational requirements given that union contributions were often perceived by members and potential recruits as a supplementary form of taxation.[147] The recommended rate adopted by the ACTU (one per cent of basic gross wages) was regarded as optimal by the AMFSU, but being in a situation of competition for members with rival and complementary unions, the union had compromised towards a rate of 0.8 per cent.[148] Both the ASE and the FIA operated with lower contribution rates, as

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145 AMFSU, Quarterly Report, July/September 1983, p. 6.

146 This political contribution consisted of a separate National Council Political Fund from which affiliation fees (ALP), delegation costs, donations, election campaign expenses, printing and propaganda expenditure were paid.

147 See the response to the issue of union contributions from both members (Appendix II(a), Q.56) and shop stewards (Appendix IV(a), Q. 108, 109, 110). Of the three unions, the AMFSU were less likely to object to their present contribution rates with approximately three-quarters being satisfied with the existing rate.

148 This has been a consistent National Council decision that metalworker union contributions are fixed relative to rates levied by contending or associated unions. See AMWSU National Conference Decisions, 1982, Metal Worker (Supplement), August 1982, p. 10. In 1979 the dues of the ASE were $35.00 compared to those of the AMWSU of $66.00. See also Table 4.11 below.

did the VBEF in the vehicle industry sector.[149] In justifying an increase in union contributions in 1981 the union argued that:

> AMWSU officials do not seek high salaries as is done in some other unions, but they do seek to have resources at hand with which they can do the work effectively as expected of them by the members.[150]

Conclusion

The main issues which confronted each union in this study, the AMFSU, VBEF and ADSTE, concerned union initiatives to achieve more effective organisational formations in the context of the severe restructuring depression in the economy. For the existing leadership this translated into problems involving the inducement of membership involvement and support for policy options that the officialdom were prepared or constrained to pursue. Specifically, the AMFSU throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s was assailed by problems of organisational restructuring in the face of challenges to the political leadership of the union. This internal 'democratisation' was supplemented with defensive measures to preserve the political character of the union. The AMFSU also continued to pursue its amalgamation policy along political lines of merger as well as negotiate national industrial agreements providing industrial accord for wage maintenance and the shorter working week. ADSTE was similarly engaged in positive moves toward wider amalgamation with other unions (and possibly

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149 The AMFSU was, unlike some of its rivals and both the other two unions in this study, in intense competition for members in the non-unionised sector especially in smaller worksites. In this respect the union's dues tended not to increase as rapidly as many of the officials and activists demanded, owing to the necessity of unionising the small workshop sector. The contradiction involved here meant that although the VBEF had most of its members under closed shop provisions, it failed to produce higher contributions because union memberswere in many cases involuntarily recruits who simply viewed union membership as a condition of employment.

150 AMWSU, Metal Worker, (Supplement), Vol. 1, No. 6, November 1980, p. 1.

with the AMFSU in the longer term). Conversely, it was involved in resisting encroachments upon its occupational coverage by 'canabalistic' industrial unions such as the ATEA. However, one of the major issues faced by ADSTE involved its emerging closer working relations with manual unions through the erosion of its professional status and the growth of technical membership.With the rapid computerisation of draughting the union was confronted with labour displacement of its existing membership through technological change and the opportunities of vertical recruitment from among junior management. Finally, more than the above unions, the VBEF was hit by industrial restructuring and decline. Membership decline had reduced the union to only half its previous size mainly due to industrial automation and design delabouring in the vehicle industry as well as plant closure. The union's strategies to combat this trend were not enhanced by the general poverty of leadership and their incorporation with the transnational producers.

TABLE 4.10: Distribution of Union Literature

	Federal Journal	Federal Newsletters	State Journal	State Newsletters	Other
ADSTE	bi-monthly	weekly	bi-monthly	monthly	occasional pamphlets
AMFSU	monthly*	occasional frequent	-	occasional irregular	major research pamphlets Award provisions
VBEF	quarterly (now irregular)	twice weekly	quarterly**	weekly	ALP Herald ACTU Newsletter

* The AMFSU's glossy Monthly Journal was issued quarterly from 1980 but was discontinued in 1983. The 20 page Metal Worker replaced this journal.

** The VBEF State level Vehicle News was discontinued in 1983 and not replaced.

All VBEF literature was distributed by organisers to the worksite. ADSTE's federal and State journals were posted to members, while the newsletters and other pamphlets were distributed to 'job contacts'. The AMFSU's federal journal was posted to members but other literature was distributed by organisers (although newsletters were often posted to shop stewards).

TABLE 4.11: Union Contributions 1965-1982

	ADSTE	$AUST. AMFSU	VBEF
1965			
1967	15.00		
1971			9.00
1974	25.00		24.00
1975	34.00	30.80	28.00
1978	51.00	60.00	48.00
1979	55.00	66.00	52.00
1980			60.00
1981	72.00	78.00	66.00
1982	90.00	83.60	83.20
1983	99.00	98.00	83.20

CHAPTER V

THE POLITICS OF UNION ORGANISATION: WORKPLACE LAY OFFICIALS AND MEMBERSHIP

Collective labour organisation at the place of work is both a source of union influence in the bargaining process and a source shaping the decision-making agenda of union government. But, collective organisational development is prone to internal contradictions involving dimensions of structure and mobilisation, as well as fragmentation and dissolution. Management, the state apparatus and the union hierarchy each have specific vested interests in modifying collective workplace activity in order to effect a greater degree of control at the point of production. Both this chapter and the following examine the internal politics of union organisation. In this particular chapter emphasis is directed towards the characteristics of the shop steward representatives and union membership, and the interrelation between these respective positions. Of interest to this study is not the precise social class placement of stewards and members, but the structure and orientations associated with their organisational activity. In other words, the analysis based on empirical material will examine the nature of collective labour activity arising from workplace organisation. Particular attention will be given to factors which have influenced the development of workplace unionism, and the extent to which such development has served to facilitate and limit a range of issues promoted by the union leadership.

I. The Lay Officialdom: Shop Stewards as Organisational Mediators

The union shop steward, according to the Webbs, originated as a drinks steward responsible for dispensing jugs of porter at union meetings:

> Their duty was, to use the words of the cotton-spinners, 'at every meeting to fetch all the liquor into the committee room, and serve it regularly round'.[1]

Their role was both traditional, in some cases dating back to the eighteenth century, and functional in the sense of performing organisational requirements, promoting attendance and providing perhaps a more congenial atmosphere at union meetings. With the development of the capitalist mode of production union stewards became the 'non-commissioned officers' of many sections of the trade union movement.[2] According to a British definition provided by Goodman and Whittingham, shop stewards were 'representatives appointed from the members of the unions employed in the establishment to act on their behalf'.[3] More generally, as McCarthy has argued, the term referred to union lay representatives at the worksite whose role involved raising grievances and making claims on behalf of the members,[4] with the steward's role reflecting both representative and delegate expressions.[5]

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1 S. and B. Webb, Industrial Democracy (2nd edition), Longmans, London, 1920, p. 5.

2 S. and B. Webb, A History of Trade Unionism (2nd edition), Longmans, London, 1920. Cf. J.F.B. Goodman and T.G. Whittingham, Shop Stewards, Pan, London, 1973, Chapter 2.

3 J.F.B. Goodman and T.G. Whittingham, ibid., p. 1.

4 W.E.J. McCarthy, The Role of Shop Stewards in British Industrial Relations, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Resarch Paper No. 1, H.M.S.O., 1966, p. 4.

5 E. Batstone, I. Boraston and S. Frenkel, Shop Stewards in Action, Blackwell, Oxford, 1977, Chapter 2.

The stereotype image of the shop steward as the industrial agitator has been systematically rejected in the academic literature.[6] Research into the role and behaviour of shop stewards has increased noticeably in recent years. The substantive content of this research has been directed to three areas in particular: (i) the procedures and institutional patterns by which shop stewards regulate industrial relations processes and formulate or defuse issues; (ii) the role of stewards in wage bargaining and their influence on worksite variations in earnings; and (iii) the characteristics of stewards as lay officials with reference to the specific workplace or wider political environment. Essentially this research is premised on the assumption of a large measure of steward independence within the union and from which stewards adopt a principal role in negotiations with management.[7] In other words, the shop stewards under examination are more or less political organisers involved in collective bargaining, grievance handling or the development of consciousness.

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6 Cf. W.E.J. McCarthy op.cit., passim; E. Batstone et al., op.cit., Chapter 1; H.A. Turner, G. Clack and G. Roberts, Labour Relations in the Motor Industry, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1967, Chapters 7 and 9; E.L. Wigham, Trade Unions, (2nd edition), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1969, pp. 44-5. Wigham believed that 'Most shop stewards are responsible men doing a thankless job, but some continue from time to time to cause embarassment to union leaders by their militancy or their political activities, particularly when the offices are filled by Communists', p. 45. In Britain the Donovan Commission in a much cited metaphor, concluded that the shop steward rather than being an 'irritant' was more accurately performing the role of 'lubricant' in workplace industrial relations. Report of the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, 1965-1968, (Lord Donovan), H.M.S.O., London, 1968, p. 29. For an Australian discussion see, N.F. Dufty, 'Shop Stewards: a West Australian Study' in K. Cole, (ed), Power, Conflict and Control in Australian Trade Unions, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982.

7 J. Hinton, The First Shop Stewards' Movement, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1973; B. Pribicevic, The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, Blackwell, Oxford, 1959; on the British 1926 General Strike, see, J. Hinton and R. Hyman, Trade Unions and Revolution, Pluto Press, London, 1975. A recent study of role orientation and stress which emphasises the informal characteristics of the steward's role is N. Nicholson, 'The Role of the Shop Steward: An Empirical Case Study, Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring, 1976.

This research is only partially applicable to the shop steward's position within Australian industrial relations. Certainly British-centred research has some comparative relevance, especially studies like that of Batstone et al. on internal steward organisation and behaviour. Yet, while Australian industrial relations scholars generally have been slow to recognise the different context within which Australian stewards operate,[8] the point remains that these stewards are not largely autonomous lay officials engaged in plant level collective bargaining or informal workplace negotiations.[9] Principally the role of shop steward in Australian industry, it is argued from the present study, is one of organisational mediation. Hince, in an earlier article on shop floor unionism in Australia, touched on this aspect in describing the role of the steward as the shop floor

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8 For example, N.F. Dufty, 'A Typology of Shop Stewards', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 12, No. 4, 1981. Dufty's study of both iron ore industry stewards in the Pilbara region of Western Australia (relatively independent lay officials) and other stewards from Perth failed to acknowledge the structural limitations on the steward's role in Australia. Indeed, Dufty asserts that the stewards role under compulsory arbitration 'is possibly as important as that of his British counter-part' (p.66). Dufty in both the above work and 'The Shop Steward in Western Australia', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 22, No. 4, 1980, is concerned with comparative attitudinal 'discrepancies' in order to construct a taxonomy of steward types. Moreover, the Pilbara stewards with worksite collective bargaining mechanisms more closely approximate British stewards but are atypical in the Australian context. Essentially Dufty has attempted to import fashionable overseas categories with the intention of classifying Australian data. Studies with more sensitivity to the conditions in Australia include: V.G. Taylor, 'Researching Australian Shop Stewards: Some Pointers from a Comparative Study', (mimeo), University of Newcastle, N.S.W., 1979; and examining shop steward committee developments between the wars, M. Rimmer and P. Sutcliffe, 'Slaves to Our own Apathy: The Growth and Decline of the Shop Steward Committee Movement in Australia', (mimeo), University of Sydney, N.S.W., n.d., (1978?). Clegg in his comparative theory of trade unionism stressed that Australian shop stewards 'still have nothing like the recognition and scope for bargaining common in British private industry'. H.A. Clegg, Trade Unionism Under Collective Bargaining, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, p. 66.

9 Despite his discussion of arbitration in terms of widening union responsibilities to include 'the industrial peace of the country', Foenander displayed little awareness of the specific constraints that arbitration placed on steward operations. On the other hand, Foenander pointed to the tendency of increasing union centralism and control over the lay officialdom. O. de R. Foenander, Shop Stewards and Shop Committees, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1965.

'watchdog', 'rarely permitted to go beyond the stage of discussion with the foreman'.[10] Australian shop stewards, Hince affirmed (and this is worth quoting at length in contrast to British experience) are

> rarely part of the official union organizational structure, and they are rarely delegated more than a limited role in the activities of the organization. The major function allotted to the steward is the collection of union subscriptions and the enrolment of new members. The steward will also be expected to watch for breaches of the award or agreement and to listen to, and perhaps process or assist in processing, grievances of individual members. With regard to clearly identifiable breaches of the award there are no unions to my knowledge which have officially delegated power to the shop steward to initiate remedial action. The steward is expected to notify the branch and action or advice will come from this source.[11]

In short, the Australian shop steward cannot be considered as an antipodean copy of the British shop steward, but as one occupying in general a far more limited role.[12] The nature of that role is the subject of the present chapter.

In the three unions of this study formal provision for workplace representatives within union rules varied markedly, but none acknowledged a

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10 K.W. Hince, 'Unions on the Shop Floor', in J.E. Isaac and G.W. Ford, (eds), Australian Labour Relations: Readings, (2nd edition), Sun, Melbourne, 1971, p. 193.

11 Ibid., p. 194. In other words the Australian steward activity conforms to the model presented by B. Partridge, ('The Activities of Shop Stewards', Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 8, No. 4, Winter 1977-78), with respect to work group and other steward committees but essentially performs merely the spokesman role with management.

12 The universality and supposed influence of the archetypical British shop steward was often exaggerated, see E.O. Evans, 'Cheap at Twice the Price? Shop Stewards and Workshop Relations in Engineering', in M. Warner, (ed.), The Sociology of the Workplace, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1973. Australian stewards fall partway within the distinction between full shop stewards as functioning representatives and mere 'collecting stewards' who are simply relay agents, see. W.E.J. McCarthy, op.cit., p. 4.

negotiating role for stewards. ADSTE rules provided for 'area representatives' in the composition of Branch Council, but included no formal recognition of on-the-job union representation.[13] Technically ADSTE operated with no formal shop stewards and the more professionally oriented area representatives certainly resented any association with the label. Area representatives received no legitimate workplace status from either management or the union but continued their de facto steward activities through informal practice, the encouragement from officials, and through the operation of organisational imperatives (i.e. postal communication, reporting, membership problems). The 'area representative' essentially performed the role of an honorary executive officer rather than that of the shop steward in orthodox usage. As such, these workplace representatives were neither autonomous shop stewards nor 'collecting stewards' in the sense of maintaining financial membership. Rather the ADSTE representatives were more accurately nascent mediator stewards in that they performed the role of liaison between levels of the union organisation and participated in the union's committee of management. In addition, ADSTE retained a small number of non-elected 'job contact' persons who performed limited shop steward duties at the workplace, but held no representative position in either the formal union structure or on behalf of the membership. For the purposes of this study 'job contact' stewards and area representatives are considered as shop stewards with the above caveats in mind.

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13 ADSTE, Rules and Constitution, Nos. 45 and 49. Area representatives, elected annually by secret postal ballot of their particular constituency, became automatically members of ADSTE's Branch Council (the monthly management body).

Both the VBEF (State Rules) and the AMFSU had formal provision for shop stewards in all worksites.[14] Under usual circumstances stewards were elected but both unions provided for the appointment of stewards by the respective union executive. The VBEF defined their steward as 'the medium of communication between the members in his shop and the Federation'.[15] Without formal definition of the steward's position, the AMFSU provided more technical detail on the particular powers, duties and responsibilities of the steward, deputy steward and steward bodies. Reflecting their craft origins this union directed its stewards to

> ...see that all employees starting are duly qualified trade unionists and that all persons are receiving the approved rates and complying with the practice of the shop and district and for these purposes to examine membership contribution card, Union receipts or other form of acknowledgement of payment of Union contributions and to report to any State officer or branch secretary any case in which the position is not satisfactory and cannot be adjusted within the shop. [In addition, stewards are] to interview foremen or any other persons representing the management on any questions arising within the shop or department. Any question involving a principle or change of practice shall be reported to a State official... .[16]

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14 The VBEF provided for regular elections of stewards after 1966 (Rule 17A, Rules of the SA Branch, p.72), but the union had held stewards since 1909-10 particularly at the Islington Yards (SA Railways), Richards and Holdens. The AMFSU also included provision for deputy shop stewards (Rule 27:6, AMWSU, Rules, pp. 65-6).

15 Rule 17A, op.cit., p. 72. In an official document provided for shop stewards in 1979 shop stewards were presented as the

> vital link in the Union's organisation...The shop steward presents the problems of his members firstly to the supervisor, and we would hope that each Shop Steward forms a working relationship with Supervision, and that 95% of all problems should be resolved on the shop floor in this manner. The Shop Steward is a vital link between the shop floor and the Executive... .

Paper on Shop Stewards, General Meeting and Federal Council, VBEF, 1979.

16 AMWSU, Rules, pp. 66 and 67. Cf. J.F.B. Goodman and T.G. Whittingham, op.cit., Chapter 3.

While VBEF stewards were officially regarded both as mediators and recruitment agents attempting to safeguard 'closed shop' provisions, AMFSU stewards were acknowledged as industrial activists, or union cadres responsible for defending the degree of labour's control over production and initiating industrial tactics at the workplace. In the AMFSU's concept of steward organisation, the role these lay officials performed was not seen as being 'extra-union' or 'anti-union' in intent. Nor were stewards officially or informally regarded as caballing infiltrators motivated by the aim of undermining the control of the bureaucratic machine. The VBEF officialdom at both the federal and State level were far more closely associated with this latter view.[17] Accordingly, for this unskilled union, shop stewards were at best 'extra-union' agents charged with the tasks of routine administrative assistance to the officials. Certainly some VBEF officials were of the view that the body of stewards were potentially 'anti-union' agitators. This was in spite of and because of the fact that VBEF stewards

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17 Particularly with the resignation of State Secretary D.J. Foreman and the appointment of J.D. Bennett this view of the shop stewards as cabalistic infiltrators was more pronounced. Meeting after meeting broke into uproar with numerous challenges to the President's rulings and with relatively minor issues being magnified out of all proportion. The officials' frustration was publicly expressed in such statements as 'The Executive will decide this - not the members here', (President G. Vassallo, General Meeting, 11.8.1981) and 'shop stewards are there to serve us [the Executive] - they do as we say', (Assistant Secretary, P. Meehan, General Meeting, 11.11.1981). The Executive's view of the stewards as 'anti-union' is captured in VBEF, State Executive Minutes 1.6.1977, p.4; 6.7.1977, p.2; 3.8.1977, p.2. On the lack of official support for shop steward committee activities, 7.6.1978, p.2.; and Executive censorship of steward committee publications, 1.11.1978, p.3 and 6.12.1978, p.2. Shop stewards resigned en bloc following the General Motors Elizabeth occupation, 6.9.1978, p. 1 and 2; while the Executive diffused shop steward initiatives as in the special meeting of G.M.H. shop stewards with union officials, State Executive Minutes, 17.8.1976, pp. 1-5.
The State Secretary of ADSTE, with much experience in the vehicle industry, claimed on the issue of the VBEF leadership's view of stewards and the resources they devote to their education, that 'all they [the stewards] have to do to get on is not ask any questions and put up their hands at the right time - that's their steward training', Personal Interview, G.C. Meikle, 23.6.1981.

were not oficially permitted by the leadership to orchestrate industrial campaigns. On the rare occasions when these stewards were able to initiate industrial campaigns, as for example over the I.A.C. proposals for the vehicle industry in 1982, this was both an informal tolerance on the leadership's behalf and was closely monitored by the full-time officials.

This difference in the official conceptualisation of the role of the steward between these two larger manual unions was more marked in relation to the recognition of shop steward committees. The VBEF officials, reflecting the lack of recognition given by the major vehicle corporations, formally failed to recognise such committees, but issued the extant steward committees with de facto recognition.[18] Within the union organisation itself steward committees enjoyed only tenuous legitimacy. On a number of occasions the officialdom had sought to undermine the existence of, overrule or simply ignore decisions made by these bodies. In contrast, the AMFSU Rules formally provided for minimum quarterly (later half-yearly) shop steward committees initially on a district basis and later on the basis of industry. These meetings were held during working hours (afternoons) with stewards receiving basic payment from the employer or compensatory remuneration from the union's National Council. Insofar as the AMFSU leadership was concerned,

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18 The VBEF(S.A.) in 1981-2 had 3 shop committees (at G.M.H. Elizabeth, G.M.H. Woodville and Mitsubishi Tonsley Park), which met for 2 hours per month in the employers time. Minutes of these shop committees were forwarded to the Executive. The origins of the G.M.H. Elizabeth committee date from the 1950s and 1960s when stewards took a late lunch once a month to collect union dues. From this a joint shop stewards committee emerged but in subsequent negotiations with the company the VBEF sought separate paid time for shop steward meetings. As a result the VBEF committees met monthly while other unions held weekly 3/4 hour meetings. The VBEF still retained in 1983 its commission paid to stewards in proportion to the amount of dues collected, irrespective of the fact that the union received the bulk of its contributions via check-off systems. This was a recognition on the stewards and leadership's behalf of the limited nature of steward activity and of the fact that should the commission be abolished the union could lose a number of experienced stewards.

shop steward committees were encouraged to be

> for the purpose of discussing industrial campaigns, workshop problems and any other matters submitted by Shop Stewards for consideration...resolutions adopted shall be in the form of recommendations to the State Council... .[19]

As will be discussed below, on the one hand the AMFSU leadership's attitude to shop steward activities was constructive and legitimating, but on the other hand it bore many of the characteristics of repressive tolerance.

Before turning to a more detailedexamination of the structural role, characteristics and orientations of stewards in each of the three unions, it is necessary to discuss the development of their shop steward organisation. Primarily this involved the rise of a particularly constrained workplace lay representation in the two larger and more established unions.

Unlike ADSTE, both the VBEF and the AMFSU retain lengthy histories of shop steward involvement in union organisation. Stewards in the coach builders' union (VBEF) operated from 1909-10 at the Islington railyards and by the end of the First World War existed in the motor body industry.[20] Stewards were utilised for the expressed purpose of maintaining regular contributions from members and for signing on new ones. In the depressed conditions of 1929 the union permitted the establishment of shop committees to provide an avenue for collective activity, but these were restricted 'to deal with purely shop matters of a domestic nature outside the award'.[21]

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19 AMWSU, Rules, p. 67, (emphasis mine).

20 ACEF (VBEF) General Minutes, 19.9.1919.

21 See report on Shop Committees in ACEF (VBEF), Secretary's Report, 17.10.1929, p. 4.

Little scope existed for these defensive bodies as the vehicle industry was severely affected by the depression Due to management practice of hiring and firing labour on a short-term often hourly basis in response to economic conditions, labour turnover was extremely high and often involved non-union preference.[22] During the Second World War, in line with ACTU policy, wartime shop committees were established to increase production and eliminate waste and inefficiency.[23] With the secondment of G.M.H.'s Woodville plant to the federal government on a cost-plus basis, the government provided VBEF members with increased wages, more overtime (up to a 60 hour week) and improved working conditions (e.g. toilet facilities and a large canteen serving hot meals).[24] The role of stewards developed little until the 1960s after the inability of trade union leaders in the vehicle industry to effectively organise around the issue of wage demands, especially the 1964 £3 campaign.[25] VBEF stewards, despite the fact that they represented by far the largest union in the industry, joined an already existing shop steward committee at G.M.H. Elizabeth in 1968. This combined leadership activity was conducted in contempt of the leadership of the VBEF and was ultimately dissolved in 1974.[26] The union leadership's appreciation of the shop steward was limited and with stewards denied access to plant level bargaining, their duties remained restricted to low level problems. The emergence of shop stewards is shown in Table 5.1.

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22 C.R. Broomhill, Unemployed Workers: A Social History of the Great Depression in Adelaide, University of Queensland Press, St. Lucia, 1978. On the non-union preference see ACEF(VBEF), General Minutes, 21.5.1936.

23 VBEF, Balance Sheet and Reports, 30 September 1942, p. 13.

24 S. Marsden, A History of Woodville, City of Woodville, Adelaide, 1977, pp. 214-5.

25 See AEU, 'Story of a Historic Struggle', in J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance: The Development of Organised Labour in South Australia, Adelaide CAE, Adelaide, 1981, Appendix II, p. 155.

26 Cf. M. Rimmer and P. Sutcliffe, 'Slaves to Our Own Apathy...', op.cit. pp. 35-38, on the similar decline of N.S.W. shop committees.

TABLE 5.1: VBEF Shop Stewards and Workplace Representation

Number of Shop Stewards	1917	1954	1963	1968	1972	1978	1982
General Motors-Holden	2	19	30	46	60	57	29
Mitsubishi-Chrysler Ltd/ Richards & Sons	1	16	13	24	31	42	35
SA Railways	3			6	5	5	4
OVERALL TOTAL*	21				113	131	122

* Total includes stewards at smaller workshops.

VBEF shop stewards developed some effective workplace organisation during the 1970s and early 1980s but the collective strength was undermined by increased unemployment, mass retrenchments, the lack of formal recognition from management or the union hierarchy, general intransigence on the part of officials, rival political factionalism and the failure to maintain any significant inter-union cooperation.[27] An illustrative case in point concerned the move by Chrysler to retrench 850 workers as from 22 July 1977 as part of a longer term strategy to reduce its labour force in preparation

27 In terms of the lack of recognition of shop stewards by union officials and management, indicating a collaborationist interest in the limitation of the steward's role, see Industrial Agreement between Chrysler Australia Ltd and Vehicle Builders Employees' Federation, 14.8.1979, pp. 5-6. This agreement (see Ch.IV and App. VIII), provided that the company deduct union subscriptions from weekly wages and that stewards were 'forbidden from collecting Union subscriptions at any time during working hours' (p.5). As well the agreement specified that shop stewards 'confine their Union activities during working hours to the rights specified above...[in the agreement, i.e. to handle complaints in line with the agreed grievance procedure in the Chrysler Award 1978] or in the Chrysler Australia Ltd (Vehicle Industry) Award 1978' (p.5). The Chrysler Award 1978 permitted stewards simply to 'interview the company representative on matters affecting employees whom he represents'. Chrysler agreed to recognise shop steward committees 'provided that the constitution of such committee is agreed to by the company' (p. 55 Clause 36(a) and (b)). Grievance procedure for complaints was specified in Clause 37 and involved initially the steward, foreman and supervisor, and at later stages the personnel officer and personnel superintendent. Failing the satisfactory resolution within the company hierarchy the grievance at the fifth stage could be referred to the union's full-time official, senior company officers and possibly to an arbitrational Board of Reference.

for Mitsubishi's takeover.[28] A mass meeting on 12 July 1977, called to discuss the retrenchment decision, the prospect of a 4-day week and work bans erupted in rioting and violence. The apparent cause of the violence stemmed from the officials' refusal to accept rank-and-file amendment to reject all retrenchments, continue the 5-day week and to impose bans on the new Gallant model and on the movement of stockpile vehicles.[29] The officials with some steward support arbitrarily overturned the mass vote

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28 See VBEF, State Executive Minutes, 6.7.1977, p. 4 and 5; and Special State Executive Meeting, 18.7.1977, pp. 1-2. Shop stewards who with union officials attended a series of meetings with the company in work time lost pay through attending and eventually received reimbursement from the union's contingency fund.

29 VBEF, Special State Executive Meeting, 18.7.1977, p.1; G. Hill, Anatomy of an Industrial Struggle, Solidarity Motor Bulletins, No. 9, 1979; Advertiser, 13.7.1977, p.1. The official union version of the cause of the rioting involved extra-union disruptive elements preventing general discussion. The minutes record that: 'During the debate people put speakers in danger by throwing nuts, bolts and other missiles at the stage - as a result, one member was hit and had to receive medical treatment. [The President, Bob Walker, a 'machine' stalwart put the rank-and-file amendment which was carried - this then became the motion and was carried.] At this stage, the power to the microphone was switched off by someone, and a member convinced the meeting that Bob Walker had turned the power off - and this was the cause of the violence which occurred, resulting in a number of officials and shop stewards being injured through punches and kicks' (p.1). By contrast, Hill's account stressed the officials' refusal to accept rank-and-file involvement in the decision-making process.

> When the officials delayed putting the motion several dozen workers tried, and nearly succeeded in over-turning the flat-top trailer that was being used as a stage. A Rank-and-File steward put the motion which was overwhelmingly supported. It was agreed to form an action committee there at the meeting. But the chairman, Walker, either intentionally or having lost his nerve, mumbled something incomprehensible and then tried to leave. Immediately fifty or more noisy workers surrounded him and forced him back. If Walker didn't officially close the meeting the previous vote would be declared unofficial and the VBEF could wreck the struggle as they had the year before. I walked over to the flat-top, grabbed Walker by his throat and tie, and lifted him onto the platform. To loud cheers he was escorted back to the microphone, two workers clutching each arm, about a dozen pushing from behind, and me dragging him by the tie. Unfortunately the VBEF had cut the mikes. On our advice Walker officially closed the meeting (p.10)

Subsequently the union charged 11 rank-and-file members with assault but the charges were later dismissed in court.

of the meeting claiming that insufficient grounds remained for negotiation with the company. Accordingly, the Executive proceeded to remove the work bans in order, they believed, to preserve the employment of the remaining labour force. In the aftermath of the internecine dispute the union 'machine' adopted a series of defensive measures including: a policy of support for disciplinary action against 'dangerous and irresponsible' elements in the membership, a proposal to redraft State union rules to prohibit membership dissent, and the compilation of a 'hit-list' with names of rank-and-file activists which the union leadership proposed that the company dismiss.[30] This incident portrayed some of the real constraints that faced effective workplace organisation in the VBEF. The 1977 case was not an isolated incident but part of a long-term dislocation between the leadership 'machine' and the 'anti-machine' group consisting of disaffected stewards and rank-and-filers.

The development of the shop steward movement in the AMFSU was initiated by the craft unions composing the amalgamated body.[31] By the 1960s shop steward organisation provided the backbone of skilled union organisation. The AEU leadership, despite operating for a period under a lone right-wing official, maintained some correspondence with the issues of the shop floor.[32] The union, scattered across a large number of workshops, regarded the steward as a workplace 'organiser' active continuously on-the-job.[33] This steward role remained one of mediation, but in which

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30 G. Hill, op.cit., p.11; VBEF, General Minutes, 13.7.1977, p.2; Advertiser, 5.5.1978, p. 1 and 5.

31 On a national level shop floor organisation has been documented for the AEU/AMWSU. T. Sheridan, Mindful Militants, Cambridge University Press, London, 1975. On the Victorian branch, see E. Davis, 'Decision-Making in the AmalgamatedMetal Workers and Shipwrights' Union', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1977.

32 Cf. H. Beynon, Working for Ford, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, for a discussion of similar constraints on shop floor representatives.

33 AMWSU, 'The Role of the Shop Steward', Surry Hills, June 1980, p.1. On the role of metal worker shop stewards as a means of democratic involvement see R. Fuller and L. Zoppa, 'Union Democracy: PSA and AMWSU', Labour Studies, Adelaide CAE, May 1980.

stewards were responsible for transmitting membership demands to the officials, for mobilising concern over issues and for initiating action at the workplace.[34] This extended role became especially important under conditions of full employment, and where union members were employed under industrial agreements and later consent awards (e.g. Metal Industry Award) with scope existing for worksite variations in earnings. Bargaining on over-award payments was conducted primarily by the full-time official, but such bargaining permitted stewards greater latitude to exercise collective bargaining influence either directly with management or indirectly through the officials. Such over-award campaigns, often mobilised by the shop floor, were conducted essentially on the most vulnerable employers with rudimentary forms of mutual insurance through inter-plant support and donations. In this sense, AMFSU shop stewards (indirectly) operated closer to the British pattern of steward collective bargaining, than either of the other two unions in the present study.

The AMFSU nationally retained approximately 6,000-7,000 shop stewards, of which around 600-650 were in South Australia. The turnover of stewards was exceptionally high with an official estimate gauging steward turnover to be of the vicinity of 35 per cent per annum.[35] This confronted the union with the consuming task of educating fresh recruits in the role of the shop steward. This became especially important when stewards were

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34 AMWSU,'Shop Steward Manual', p.4. To this end the role of the metal worker steward, as outlined by the manual, was fourfold: (i) workshop union organiser, (ii) the leader of the union at the point of struggle, (iii) contact with the 'employing class', and (iv) dues collection and enrolling new members.

35 J.L. Scott, AMWSU State Secretary (1969-81), AMWSU Shop Steward School, 3.6.1980. Cf. G. Winch, 'Shop Steward Tenure and Workplace Organisation' Industrial Relations Journal, Vol. 11, No. 4, Sept/Oct. 1980. Winch points out that a steward turnover in excess of 20 per cent should give cause for concern and that as a 'minimum useful tenure the period of five years' was reasonable. This would eliminate 55 per cent of the AMFSU stewards.

responsible, as they were under the Metal Industry Award, for grievance handling and marginal wage bargaining with the employer.[36] For example, the high turnover of stewards restricted the experience available in shop floor conflicts with regard to the maintenance of over-award payments, and specific consent conditions.[37] Thus, by 1980-81 after six or seven years in which metal workers had experienced an erosion in real wages,[38] wage negotiations for 'catch up' provisions were negotiated mainly on a national level. These metal industry wage negotiations precluded steward bargaining for over-award increases in lieu of the national consent agreement. This restriction, much to the Arbitration Court's approval, was effective.[39]

As the union cadre at the point of production, shop stewards enjoyed some official recognition and legitimation of their activities.[40] In response to the union's wide range of industrial coverage, dispersion of worksites

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36 Metal Industry Award, 1971, AMWSU publication, 1979, Clause 30, p. 81.

37 In N.S.W. for example, between 1973 and 1980 the percentage over-award payment related to the standard award wage fluctuated from a high 29.2 per cent in 1974 to a figure consistently between 23.4 and 24.0 per cent. (AMWSU, National Wages Survey, June 1980, p. 6). Shop steward experience is effective in over-award payment to particular job classifications.

38 The erosion of real wages after 1974 was a long-term trend, although between 1978-80 base tradesmen wages increased by around 8 per cent, (AMWSU, National Wages Survey, June 1980, p.7), and following the 1981 Metal Industry Award Agreement metalworkers earnings were 22 per cent higher than C.P.I. rises over the period 1974-1981 (AMWSU, Australia, On the Rack, 1982, p.3). However, the union recently adopted a wider approach to real wage changes including interest rate changes, direct and indirect taxation and the social wage. In 1979 the AMWSU noted that 'workers working in engineering, metals and vehicles have lost an average of at least $17.50 a week each in real wages since September 1974', (AMWSU, Australia Ripped Off, 1979, p.21).

39 See Advertiser, 19.12.1981, p.3; see also Australian Financial Review, 17.5.1982, p.7; 14.9.1982, p.5; B. Evans, National Director of the Metal Trades Industry Association, commended the union for the '"scrupulous" honouring of the no further claims agreement', AFR, 12.6.1982, p.28; and by late 1982 working days lost in the metal industry had dropped to one-quarter of the previous level, AFR, 6.12.1982, p.7.

40 T. Sheridan, op.cit., pp. 40-2 and 279-81.

and the nature of the geographic-based branch structure, the steward served as the fundamental mediator (together with the organiser) between workplace unionism and formal union government including the leadership.[41] This was historically essential given that the unions comprising the AMFSU had based their industrial strength traditionally upon craft union tactics under the competitive stage of capitalism. For the purposes of maintaining this role and issuing responsibility for mobilisation to the workshop level, the union decided throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s to expend a substantial amount of the union's resources training shop stewards.[42] This training was undertaken primarily through the union's own steward school sessions (one to three day courses) supplemented by trade union education provided by TUTA, WEA and the Department of Labour Studies at Adelaide CAE. Union courses were arranged throughout the year and aimed at different levels of steward experience. Occasional steward conferences were also held to discuss policy, organisational matters and the nature of steward education. For the most part union schools devoted some attention to procedural development (i.e. how to become an effective steward, how to negotiate, conduct meetings and organise industrial action), but invariably significant proportions of the courses were intended for the purposes of the political development of the steward participants. In other words, stewards participated in discussions involving political economy, contemporary political analysis, theories of organisation, ideological development and consciousness raising. Specialists from inside and outside the union were regularly invited to address these schools. In addition, the course content involved situation role playing and strategy development, and was

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41 Cf. W.E.J. McCarthy, 'The Role of Shop Stewards in British Industrial Relations...', op.cit., sections E and F. In the Australian metal industry approximately 75 per cent of workers were located in establishments with under 100 employees; (T. Gnatenko, AMWSU Organisational Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980).

42 In 1981 education provisions represented over 4 per cent of the union's budget and in addition the union employed 6 full-time educational officers further to an extensive staff of researchers.

supplemented with an array of audio-visual material. Moreover, the convenor of the South Australian steward schools was T. Gnatenko, an ex-G.M.H. steward dismissed for union activities and a staunch activist, who contributed an enormous amount of energy and enthusiasm to the courses.[43]

In 1981 a total of 466 shop stewards were participants in various union-run courses.[44] Many such shop stewards attended TUTA training courses in addition. Indeed, it was not uncommon to discover stewards with between 10-20 training days completed in the previous twelve months, and this may have been a consistent average for a number of years. Those stewards with provision under their respective awards for an amount of shop steward education to be absorbed by the employer, received their basic wage rate for the training period. This existed in the vehicle industry. In contrast, stewards having attended the courses without such award provisions, and from observation an estimate of these would regularly contribute between 30-50 per cent of those attending, received similar basic rate remuneration from the union. This illustrated most pertinently the strong commitment that the union placed on steward education. In response to this, it could perhaps be construed, that the union was deliberately conducting a programme intent on investing the union's current resources toward the consolidation of an effective and continuous shop steward organisation possessing greater potential for mobilisation. Put simply, the union was attempting to recognise the importance of the mediating role of stewards in the organisational

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43 See 'Elizabeth Engineer' (AEU/AMWU/AMWSU/AMFSU) 1967-74 for details of Gnatenko's organisational and political development. See also, G. Phelan, 'Shop-Floor Organisation: Some Experiences from the Vehicle Industry', (mimeo) Macquarie University, N.S.W., 1981.

44 Many of these stewards attended more than one school. In the four years 1978-81 inclusive over 1,600 shop stewards attended union training courses.

interest. Against this it is evident that the mobilisation effectiveness of shop floor organisation declined in the economic recession of the late 1970s and 1980s as measured by such criteria as wage maintenance, input into national wage negotiations, the thirty-five hour week campaign, over-award payments, strategies to offset redundancies, and the resistance to managerial control and technological innovation. In other words, while greater union resources were devoted to union education and consciousness raising, the erosion of union power was unabated. It would appear that as an economistic defence strategy, the development of shop steward consciousness was unsuccessful. In terms of other criteria such as the promotion of a steward collectivity and embryonic organisational strategies, the training may have had greater success. Presumably the real test of the union's policy will arise when the union rank-and-file inherit a position from which to adopt an offensive strategy. If this development has achieved its basic objectives then the initiation and effectiveness of shop-floor mobilisation should be more expeditious.

In immediate terms, up to 1983, the main consequence of the shop steward training programme was the reinforcement given to a broad steward alliance which operated to resist right-wing infiltration. This steward alliance distanced itself on occasions from the left wing parties (CPA and SPA) in support of moderate left-Labor policies.[45] During the national level campaign by the right-wing 'Reform Group', this AMWSU steward group with the support of the full-time officials established an ad hoc union defence committee to support CPA and ALP union officials facing election. The major tasks that confronted these stewards were the imperatives of

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45 One example here in South Australia was the stewards' endorsement in 1981 of one of their own lay officials (T. Roberts) against an incumbent official (L.G. Lean with SPA connections) for the election of Assistant Secretary.

countering right-wing campaign propaganda and the mobilisation of financial and voting strength for the left-centre cause. In short, the education of stewards, intended to further the external interests of the organisation, was applied internally to the defence of the existing bureaucratic order.[46]

In South Australia shop steward committees served to enhance the political position of stewards within the union organisation. Established during the mid-1960s shop steward committees reached the height of their industrial activity from 1967 to 1977, and proved to be a major source of future union officials and officers.[47] These committees flourished in connection with the workplace opposition to the Federal and State penal provisions under the respective arbitration court powers. In addition to this political struggle, and due mainly to full employment and rank-and-file dissatisfaction with union officials conducting negotiation claims, was the breakdown of traditional arbitration methods of determining awards.[48] Under these circumstances shop committees, both single union and combined steward bodies, seized some initiative in developing 'logs of claims' and participating in and ratifying award negotiations. Ultimately a number of industry and employer groups, most notably the metal industry employers and the vehicle manufacturers, preferred to negotiate directly with federal union leaders above these bodies in relation to nationally determined private consent agreements. Shop steward committees experimented with

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46 See Tribune, 14.7.1982, pp.8-9; and Bulletin, 15.6.1982, pp.41-2. The following chapter discusses this issue in more detail.

47 For example from the G.M.H. shop committees the following officials/officers were recruited: B. Pointer, B. Mowbray, T.Gnatenko and J.Donnon from B.H.P., D.Elkins, from the Islington Workshops' Committee,J.Lodge, and from the S.E. region,T. Roberts.

48 T. Gnatenko, 'Address Delivered to the Newcastle Workers' Conference, 29.4.1976', AMWU, 1976; and T. Gnatenko, 'Industrial Activities 1967-1977', AMWSU, April, 1977.

various guerilla-type industrial actions.[49] In some cases shop committees were organised sufficiently to publish workshop newsletters, at one plant for eighteen years on an irregular basis.[50] Subsequently, as shop committees became entrenched within the union structure, demands for wider union coordination and recognition were made. The AEU at the Commonwealth Conference 1969 established Industry Section Committees, which attempted to build organisational links between worksite committees, State industry activists and inter-State industry sections. These section committees although established in the late 1960s were revived and promoted to greater significance in the union's organisational restructuring which occurred after October 1980. These six-monthly Industry Section Committees were intended to replace the experimental area shop steward councils (1976-81), which throughout Australia were generally unsuccessful but in South Australia were 'the most progresive part of the union movement'.[51]

II. The Shop Steward Sample

In order to more fully explore the structural and attitudinal characteristics of shop stewards in South Australia a sample survey was conducted in 1980 (see Introduction). Of the 64 shop stewards responding to the survey 68.8 per cent lived in the two lower socio-economic

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49 See G. Phelan, op.cit.; cf. W.J. Lambden, 'The Ford Strike 1973: A Critical Analysis of the Industrial Relations Processes Used by the Vehicle Building Employees' Federation', MBA Research Report, University of Melbourne, 1974; C.Lever-Tracy, 'A New Australian Working Class: The Case of Ford Broadmeadows', Arena, No. 62, 1983. See also 'The Story of a Historical Struggle', op.cit., pp. 155-6.

50 The autonomously financed 'Elizabeth Engineer' (1967-83) was produced by theShop Stewards' Committee of the AEU, (AMWU, AMWSU, then AMFSU) and later (1979+) by the Combined Shop Stewards' Committee of the AMWSU and FEDFA.

51 T. Gnatenko, AMWSU Organisational Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980. These area councils were regional shop steward monthly meetings comprising of between 12-15 elected stewards. The objective of these councils was to enhance workplace organisation and intra-union coordination in defending the living standards of union members. See. T. Gnatenko, 'Paper presented to O.E.S.Conference', Griffith University, Queensland, 16-19 July 1981; E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the AMWSU', M.Ec. Thesis, Monash University, 1977, pp. 134-8.

residential areas, and only 2.2 per cent in the highest.[52] All shop stewards were male, which from empirical observation proved more a comment on the unions' recruitment patterns than a distortion on the part of the survey.[53] In the sample 29 stewards were members of the AMFSU, 11 of the ADSTE and 24 of the VBEF. Over one-third of all the stewards were British born while half were born in Australia. The VBEF was the only union to report a sizeable proportion of shop stewards not of Anglo-Australian origin with one-third of its stewards being born in continental Europe, mainly from Italy, Eastern Europe and Greece. Below 20 per cent were 30 years of age or under, although within the AMFSU the proportion was significantly higher with 31 per cent younger. Only 14.5 per cent of stewards were aged between 31 to 40 but more than two-thirds were over 40, with 33.9 per cent aged 41 to 50 and 32.3 per cent aged 51 years and over.

Of particular importance were the high proportions of younger (30 years and under) and older (51 years +) in the AMFSU, in contrast with the pattern in the other two unions. In both the VBEF and ADSTE a sizeable proportion of stewards appeared in the 41 to 50 years age bracket, with 47.8 and 45.5 per cent respectively of that age.[54] When these results were compared with other indicators of shop steward experience this contrast was further highlighted. The following two tables compare the current shop stewards' length of experience as union members in contrast to the time served as shop steward.

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52 The socio-economic residential zoning is from C.A. Forster and R.J. Stimson, (eds), Urban South Australia: Selected Readings, CASSR, Monograph No.1, Flinders University, SA, 1977, pp.75 and 88. See Appendix VIII. Figures in the text do not include those that omitted the question.

53 During the two years of empirical observation with these unions I encountered only two female shop stewards, one each in the VBEF and AMFSU. The VBEF steward refused to undertake the questionnaire and later resigned from the union due to her personal relationship with the previous State Secretary of the union. This ex-Secretary was then an Australian Labor Senator.

54 In the AMFSU only 17.8 per cent were aged 41 to 50 years. See Appendix IV(a) for complete results of the shop steward survey.

TABLE 5.2: Length of Total Union Membership of Shop Stewards

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
5 years and under	3	10.4	3	27.3	1	4.1
6-10 years	4	13.8	1	9.1	5	20.8
11-15 years	6	20.7	4	36.4	7	29.2
16-20 years	5	17.2	2	18.2	4	16.7
21-25 years	1	3.4	-	-	4	16.7
26 years and above	10	34.5	1	9.1	3	12.5
	29	100	11	100	24	100

N.B. The figures in the above and following tables are subject to rounding.

Of interest here is the relative inexperience of ADSTE stewards, the wide range of different degrees of experience in the AMFSU (but with one-third with over 26 years membership), and the more uniform composition of VBEF stewards with 6 years experience or more. Moreover, the majority of stewards had no previous experience as deputy shop steward.[55]

55 Only a sizeable proportion of AMFSU stewards (41.4 per cent) had deputy steward experience, (Q.11), although one-quarter of VBEF stewards had also served as deputy steward.

TABLE 5.3: Length of Time Served in the Capacity of Shop Steward

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	N	%	%
2 years and under	10	34.5	4	36.4	5	21.7	30.2
3-5 years	6	20.7	1	9.1	8	34.8	23.8
6-10 years	10	34.5	2	18.2	7	30.4	30.2
11-15 years	-	-	3	27.3	1	4.4	6.3
16-20 years	-	-	-	-	2	8.7	3.2
21-25 years	1	3.4	-	-	-	-	1.6
26 years +	2	6.9	1	1.9	-	-	4.8
	29	100	11	100	23	100	100

The rapid turnover of shop stewards and the virtual absence of experienced office holders from 11 to 15 years onwards was marked. Indeed, in the AMFSU and ADSTE well over one-third of their stewards possessed less than 25 months experience in the position. Commenting on this aspect of the union's organisation the then State Secretary of the AMWSU confided to a union steward school in June 1980 that he recognised only one from the twenty-three stewards attending the course. Union training courses were essential, the Secretary argued, simply for teaching the basics of shop steward responsibilities and techniques.[56]

56 J.L, Scott, AMWSU State Secretary, Shop Steward School, 3.6.1980. Obversely, the proportion of experienced stewards - those with beyond 5 years tenure (AMFSU 44.8, ADSTE 54.6, and VBEF 43.5 per cent respectively) appeared higher than in similar British steward case studies. See G. Winch, op.cit., especially pp. 50-3; and in relation to workplace size W. Brown, R. Ebsworth and M. Terry, 'Factors Shaping Shop Steward Organisation in Britain', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 16, No. 2, July 1978, especially pp. 141-2.

The situation in the metalworkers' union supported the conclusion that over half the union's shop stewards possessed experience of 5 years or less, while only one in ten had experience beyond 10 years.[57] ADSTE was little different with a high incidence of new shop stewards with 2 years or less service, but the draughtsmen's union retained one quarter of its stewards in the 11 to 15 year experience bracket. The VBEF, marginally more stabilised than the AMFSU in that relatively fewer of its stewards had occupied the role for 2 years or less, was still characterised by a relative lack of experienced stewards. Between 3 to 5 years service appeared as the most common length of time served, but, nonetheless, the union still displayed a predominance of stewards with under 10 years experience. The VBEF on the survey results possessed no steward with in excess of 20 years service.

Further structural disparities emerged in relation to the size of the establishment at which the shop steward was employed, the number of other fellow stewards at the same place of work, and the number of employees represented by the individual steward. Table 5.4 provides details of the comparative degree of union/labour force composition. Clearly, as a traditional skilled trades organisation, the AMFSU covered a diverse range of membership levels per establishment. The union operated in very few large workplaces (500 employees or over) entirely composed of its own members, although AMFSU members were employed in large workplaces in a complementary or specialised role to other major unions.[58] ADSTE, with a comparatively

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57 Cf. W. Brown et al., ibid.

58 Cf. E.O. Evans, 'Cheap at Twice the Price?...', op.cit., pp. 84-88; J.F.B. Goodman and T.G. Whittingham, op.cit., Chapter 5.

small but highly skilled membership, appeared in a similar position, except that the bulk of its stewards (77 per cent) were employed in establishments with in excess of 2000 employees. These stewards were employed in few work-places where large numbers of ADSTE members and few other stewards were to be found. In direct contrast, the VBEF was concentrated in a small number of establishments with relatively large workforce levels predominantly unionised by that union. The union's stewards were to be found mainly (72 per cent) in establishments with over 500 employees. Most VBEF stewards (58 per cent) worked in establishments where at least 1000 other unionists of the same union were employed. In other words, VBEF stewards were mass representatives at large scale enterprises within an industry where the union was the largest union; this should have enhanced organisational development but little evidence sustaining this was apparent. To explain this lack of shop floor organisational development other countervailing factors needs to be considered, principally, the economic cycles and previously high labour turnover faced by the industry together with the lack of management recognition toward shop floor union organisation and its cozy relationship with union officials.

The contrasts in membership composition per establishment size were underlined by the comparative number of union members represented by each steward and by the number of workplace shop stewards of the same union.[59]

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59 While Evans, op.cit, found that steward constituencies ranged between 28 and 44 members (p.88) W.E.J. McCarthy reported that the 'average steward has about 50 constituents', 'The Role of Shop Stewards in British Industrial Regulations...', op.cit., p.38. This implies that the average VBEF constituency of 104.4 members was exceptionally large. During the period of investigation VBEF stewards were attempting to increase the numbers of stewards at the larger car plants (e.g. Elizabeth assembly section).

TABLE 5.4: Shop Steward Estimates of the Number of Employees and their Own Union Members at Their Place of Work*

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF	
	Total Employees at work %	Own Union Members at work %	Total Employees at work %	Own Union Members at work %	Total Employees at work %	Own Union Members at work %
Under 50	16.0	41.7	-	20.0	-	4.2
51-100	20.0	12.5	-	10.0	4.5	16.6
101-200	8.0	20.8	11.1	30.0	-	4.2
201-500	8.0	20.8	11.1	40.0	22.7	16.6
501-1000	24.0	4.2	-	-	4.5	-
1001-2000	16.0	-	-	-	22.7	16.6
2001-4000	4.0	-	44.4	-	27.3	29.2
4001 and over	4.0	-	33.3	-	18.2	12.5
	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Respondents giving 'Don't Know' (N.6) have been omitted.

TABLE 5.5: Shop Steward Constituences: Numbers of Union Members Represented by the Shop Steward

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 5	2	6.9	1	9.1	-	-	3	4.7
5-10	3	10.3	2	18.2	-	-	5	7.8
11-20	5	17.2	2	18.2	1	4.2	8	12.5
21-40	10	34.5	3	27.3	3	12.5	16	25.0
41-60	5	17.2	-	-	5	20.8	10	15.8
61-100	2	6.9	1	9.1	6	25.0	9	14.1
101-200	2	6.9	-	-	6	25.0	8	12.5
200 and over	-	-	2	18.2	3	12.5	5	7.8
Average	38.4		56.1		104.4		66.2	

TABLE 5.6: Number of Other Shop Stewards of the Same Union at the Workplace

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1-2	9	31.0	2	18.2	3	12.5	14	21.9
3-5	6	20.7	3	27.3	5	20.8	14	21.9
6-10	4	13.8	3	27.3	2	8.3	9	14.1
11-15	1	3.4	1	9.1	-	-	2	3.1
16-25	5	17.2	-	-	7	29.2	12	18.8
26 and over	3	10.3	-	-	6	25.0	9	14.1
Omitted	1	3.4	2	18.2	1	4.2	4	6.3
Total	29	100	11	100	24	100	64	100

While most enjoyed the role of shop steward (78 per cent were favourable) orientations to the nature of steward duties varied a good deal.[60] Respondents strongly identified with the view that they were essentially elected to carry out and support the wishes of the membership over and above wider considerations or principles. Using Poole's four-fold typology of stewards' individual attitudes to their primary duties, the following results were registered.[61]

TABLE 5.7: Shop Steward's Orientations to Primary Duties
(Percentages)

	AMFSU N25	ADSTE N11	VBEF N21	TOTAL N57
Constituency Representative (P=27.6)*	60.0	81.8	57.1	63.2
Trade Union Representative (P=12.7)	20.0	-	9.5	12.3
Negotiator/ Protector (P=35.4)	12.0	-	4.8	7.0
Conciliator (P=22.6)	8.0	18.2	28.6	17.5

* Poole's Sheffield data results for shop stewards.

60 Over 90 per cent of stewards stated that they voluntarily joined the union rather than were coerced (Q.97), although a majority felt that the union forced people to join at times (Q.99) and over 80 per cent believed that workers should not be allowed to be non-unionists (Q.101). While one-third of the stewards needed encouragement to take the position (Q.15), almost eight out of every 10 claimed that the steward's role was not boring (Q.17). Most encouragement originated from fellow workers, other stewards and to a lesser extent union officials (Q.21).

61 M. Poole, 'Towards a Sociology of Shop Stewards', Sociological Review, Vol. 22, No. 1, February 1974, p. 62. The Adelaide results are derived from Q.111. The following classifications were used: 'constituency representative' - support members; 'trade union representative' - support union policies; 'negotiator/protector' - working conditions; and 'conciliator' - stopping disputes and maintaining production.

The preponderance of the first view, that stewards played a representational role with respect to the electorate, suggested a popularist orientation to the steward's role. In other words, the majority of stewards recognised their role in instrumental terms as organisational linkages rather than as trade union advocates or negotiators, and this was subsequently reaffirmed in questions relating to industrial action. As Poole also found, many of the respondents described their role passively and this was reflected more generally throughout the survey with comments to the effect that stewards were the 'voice of the members'.[62] Indeed, among stewards the propensity to respect and listen to their members was exceptionally high.[63] The degree of variation between the Adelaide results and Poole's data on Sheffield shop stewards relates primarily to the different duties shop stewards perform in Britain compared to Australia.[64] Significant variations occurred in the percentage of stewards with the constituency representative view (Poole 27.6 per cent and Adelaide 63.2 per cent of the total sample) and the negotiator-protector orientation (Poole 35.4 per cent and Adelaide 7 per cent). These differences reflected the fact that in the Adelaide sample shop stewards, under processes of arbitration, were not generally responsible for collective bargaining. Hence, the Adelaide stewards demonstrated less tendency to view their duties as concerned with the negotiation of wages and conditions but a greater tendency to see themselves mainly as the elected representatives

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62 See Appendix IV(b) Trade Union Shop Steward Survey: Respondent Comments.

63 Important here are the results of questions 127-135 in Appendix IV(a).

64 Cf. E.O. Evans, op.cit., p.97; J.F.B. Goodman and T.G. Whittingham, op.cit., pp. 108-9; see also the developments in British steward organisation in M. Terry, 'The Emergence of a Lay Elite? Some Recent Changes in Shop Steward Organisation', Discussion Paper No. 14, Industrial Relations Research Unit, University of Warwick, November, 1978.

of the membership, with a substantial minority of the view that their duties implied an industrial umpire-conciliator role. In essence, the Adelaide steward sample, precluded to a large degree from workplace bargaining, defined their role internal to the union organisation, as the articulators of rank-and-file concerns and as linkage agents between members and other levels of the union (officials, office administration, branch or general meetings). This constrained their role to one of organisational mediation.

Although not a widespread problem for the stewards, three quarters had contact with anti-union workers at the workplace.[65] Nearly half found anti-union workers troublesome (41.5 per cent of those applicable). Indicating their assessment of their members' attitudes to the union, only 6.3 per cent of those sampled suggested that members were anti-union, but that the degree of positive support varied considerably.

TABLE 5.8: Stewards' Assessment of Members Attitude to the Union

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Strongly pro-union	5	17.2	1	9.1	5	20.8	11	17.2
Pro-union	18	62.1	4	36.4	9	37.5	31	48.4
Neutral	5	17.2	6	54.5	7	29.2	18	28.1
Anti-union	1	3.4			3	12.5	4	6.3
	29	100	11	100	24	100	64	100

From Table 5.8, AMFSU stewards recorded the highest degree of membership commitment to the union organisation (79.3 per cent pro-union), followed by

65 Appendix IV(b), Q.87-90 inclusive.

the VBEF (with 58.3 per cent pro-union). On the other hand, a majority of ADSTE stewards reported that their particular members held neutral attitudes toward the union. In other responses, stewards generally did not consider that their members entertained inflated expectations nor were motivated purely by money.[66] Few stewards (one in four) admired their members, but a majority (56 per cent) held them in respect. Around one-third of stewards positively felt that should the circumstances arise it was worth sacrificing their own employment in the representation of their members. Not surprisingly, therefore, sizeable majorities of the stewards found it worthwhile listening to their members (70 per cent) acknowledging that they were concerned with their members both at work and outside working hours (65 per cent), although a small minority (7 per cent) were eager to be rid of their constituents. The overall steward conceptualisation of members corresponded to an awareness of fragmented consciousness among the rank-and-file organisation from which membership involvement was not particularly based on strong attitudes toward the union per se. This suggested, a point that was later raised in the membership survey, that the membership's relationship with the more institutionalised levels of the union was contingent upon specific and instrumental criteria. For the most part, the membership were not actively involved with various formal union structures but abdicated their responsibility to the steward or other activists. In this sense members often regarded the steward as their individual proxy delegate to the activities of the wider union. Some stewards appeared agreeable to this arrangement as it seemingly heightened their decision-making facilities and status but many were not prepared

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66 (Q.135) Significantly stewards demonstrated less propensity to perceive money as the prime motivation of the members proportionate to the skill composition of the union.

to fulfil this designated position. To most stewards, the membership's attitude to the union appeared simply problem oriented; problems that were marked by immediate and instrumental values.[67]

Despite some variation in the conceptualisation of the steward's role, shop stewards displayed less equivocation concerning the broader question of union power. Only 1.5 per cent of the respondents considered that unions had too much power, and of those that recorded an opinion 73.7 per cent were convinced unions had insufficient power. Among metal worker and vehicle builder stewards respectively 85.7 and 72.7 per cent believed that unions should have greater power while no metal worker and only one vehicle industry steward were of the contrary view. ADSTE stewards, displaying more moderation from their position in the division of labour, were far more cautious over the question of union power, with 45.5 per cent agreeing that unions did not have enough power but a sizeable 54.5 per cent registering unsure.[68]

Most stewards did not consider the enhancement of the union's operations as the most important objective of the trade union movement. Almost 62 per cent felt that everyday on-the-job issues were of greatest importance to workplace unionism, in comparison with 23.6 per cent who

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67 Cf. E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the AMWSU', M.Ec. Thesis, Chapter 5. Davis found that 'the survey of the union members in four metal workshops [Victoria] revealed an "instrumental" attitude towards the union, laced with some tolerance for non-industrial activists. The impression generated was that a slim majority of union members accepted the pursuit of non-industrial goals, and recognised some justification for it, but this did not dislodge wages and conditions from pride of place in the hierarchy of their interests', (p.93). In the membership survey conducted in this present study 62.9 per cent of members considered immediate instrumental issues as the most important, and this was more marked in the AMFSU. See Appendix II(a), Q.62.

68 Appendix IV(a), Q.171. A number of questions related to this theme of union power (e.g. Q.74, 115, 125 and 138).

considered the effective operation of the union was paramount and only 14.5 per cent who stressed that wider long-term aims of trade unionism were essential. The only significant variation in these results came from the AMFSU where 30 per cent of the stewards were primarily concerned with the objective of enhancing the way in which the union operated. This greater stress on effective union organisation from AMFSU stewards corresponded with the similarly greater concern those stewards demonstrated in their orientation towards their primary duties (Table 5.7) in terms of commitment to trade union principles.[69] Such emphasis related to the nature of their own organisational form which centred on skilled workers separated throughout many workplaces of different size.

The majority of shop stewards in the Adelaide survey gravitated towards an instrumental position relative to the everyday concerns of their particular members. Given that these shop stewards did not operate in the same capacity as British stewards in plant level collective bargaining, and that most union dues were deducted by employer-run 'check-off' systems, then the avenues open to the shop steward's role at the workplace were structurally limited. Adelaide stewards were involved in the infrequent and low level processing of grievances and minor disputes. For example, while 48.4 per cent of the total steward sample had on some occasion negotiated with management in an industrial dispute, only one-fifth had done so more than 'once or twice'. Marked differences between the unions on this questions can be seen in Table 5.9.

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69 To conclude the survey stewards were asked to rank objectives in order of importance, 61.8 per cent indicated that on-the-job instrumental issues were most important, 23.6 per cent operational concerns, and 14.6 per cent that long-term strategic union/working class interests were more crucial.

TABLE 5.9: Negotiation with Management in an Industrial Dispute (percentage)

	AMFSU	ADSTE	VBEF	TOTAL
Never negotiated	34.5	90.9	54.2	51.6
Had negotiated	65.5	9.1	45.8	48.4
1-2 times	37.9	9.1	20.8	26.6
3-10 times	20.7	-	12.5	14.0
11 times or more	6.9	-	12.5	7.8
	100	100	100	100

These results were supported by the results of two other questions aimed to assess both the importance of steward leadership in dispute situations and the management levels with which stewards normally negotiated.[70]

TABLE 5.10: Steward Leadership: Preferred Consultation Group with Reference to Worksite Problems (Percentage)

	AMFSU	ADSTE	VBEF	TOTAL
Rank-and-File	31.0	-	29.2	25.0
Steward Peer Group	48.3	27.3	16.7	32.8
Union Officials	17.2	36.4	50.0	32.8
Management	3.4	36.4	4.2	9.4
	100	100	100	100

70 Q.61 and 62. These results were similar to those achieved by Dufty in his 1979 survey of Western Australian shop stewards (Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1980). Dufty found that 49 per cent of stewards reported that they negotiated with management. However, he noted that, 'when it comes to making claims for better wages and conditions directly on the employer, less than a quarter (24 per cent) report that they should do this. The majority (86 per cent) agreed that claims for better wages and conditions should go through the union executive...[but] nearly half the stewards (46 per cent) thought that they should have more authority to negotiate with management' (pp. 385-6).

Significantly, no ADSTE stewards preferred to refer workplace problems to their rank-and-file, but over one-third each preferred to consult either the full-time union officials or management officers. Within the two larger manual unions a major difference was apparent over the reference group with which stewards preferred to consult in workplace negotiations. Approximately one-third of these stewards in both unions gave preference to the rank-and-file in discussing such matters. But, of the VBEF stewards half preferred vertical consultation through referring problems to the union officials, while far fewer AMFSU stewards preferred this course. Instead, half of the AMWSU sample preferred to consult horizontally within the workplace organisation by reference to their peer group level. In this sense, AMFSU stewards displayed a more self-reliant mediating role than their counterparts.

The pattern which emerged from the stewards role in negotiations at the place of work, was that stewards generally were not centrally involved in the negotiations over wages and conditions, that only a minor proportion had negotiated on a regular basis, and that with the exception of most AMFSU and some VBEF stewards the remaining stewards transferred issues from the workplace to official positions of authority. As such, the 'Australian steward' from this survey appeared divided between those that retained a lateral conception of their role, maintaining rank-and-file and shop floor peer bodies as their reference groups; and those that perceived their role as intermediary agents transmitting issues as a mouthpiece for the collective.[71]

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71 That neither the reference group nor mouthpiece steward role is necessarily a progressive or leading one see H. Beynon, Working for Ford, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1973, Chapters 8 and 9. Beynon argued that stewards were susceptible to bureaucratisation becoming isolated from the membership. The most effective stewards were those with a strong relationship with the rank-and-file; 'he has to have the respect of his members and be sure of the support that they will give him' (p.214ff). Certainly the stewards who adopted a Burkean representative role at Ford's not only became less effective in mobilisation terms but served to control rather than lead the membership.

This latter group mainly served to convey issues from the grass roots level to levels of higher authority in either the union or management structure. In terms of access to management, stewards generally referred only to lower and middle levels of management as indicated below.

TABLE 5.11: Level of Management to which Steward Normally has Access (Percentage)

	AMFSU	ADSTE	VBEF	TOTAL
Senior Management	24.1	9.1	12.5	17.2
Middle Management (Industrial and Personnel Officers)	48.3	54.6	58.4	53.1
Lower Management (Supervisors, Foremen)	27.6	36.4	29.2	29.7
	100	100	100	100

The majority of stewards were not central participants in the formal levels of union organisation, although for 'hard core' activists or militants this participation (often in their own time) represented a major part of their activist role.[72] Steward participation in the routinised decision-making bodies of the union was essentially by default, being an expression of frustration experienced through the lack of shop steward autonomy within the workplace. In other words, with their workplace activities truncated (particularly the bargaining agenda to which they had access), stewards responded by becoming apathetic or disillusioned but with a minority becoming absorbed in the formal politics of the union. The strong demand by both AMFSU and VBEF stewards for basic steward rights,

72 Chapter VII continues this in more detail.

both from within their union and in the face of managerial prerogatives, supported this view. As such, these activities internal to the union, represented a more formalised direction of substitutive action where stewards were denied access to the primary (economistic) levels of collective bargaining and control over the exchange of their labour power. Stewards continuously complained that their impact in 'the system' was marginal and that their role was predominantly negative (minimising disputes, dissent or communication problems). Many were conscious that stewards were generally used as the lay arm of the executive employed at the discretion of the officialdom.

Informal and more spontaneous directions of shop steward action could elevate the steward's role to one of demagogic proportions.[73] This occurred to the extent that disillusionment and frustration within the constraints of steward action was coupled with militant activity at the workplace. Because stewards were integrally involved with job regulation and collective sanctioning at the point of production de facto leadership by the stewards over 'unofficial' industrial action was often condensed into a challenge to both management and the existing union hierarchy. Moreover, with shop stewards developing potential 'cadre' political techniques and being largely deprived of involvement in negotiations, the spontaneous workplace militancy that took place throughout the sixties and early seventies tended to be explosive and protracted. The accumulation of grass-root grievances under

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73 For example, the Gnatenko case, (G. Phelan, op.cit., pp.14-28). Gnatenko an AMWU steward was sacked by G.M.H. on 20.11.1974 for leading shop stewards who collectively called a mass meeting to discuss bans on Gemini parts. (Advertiser, 21.11.1974, p. 1; 22.11.1974, p.3). For the shop floor view of the Gnatenko case see 'Elizabeth Engineer', G.M.H. Shop Steward Committee, May 1975, pp. 1-2, August 1975, p. 6, December 1975, pp. 4-5, October 1976, p.3.

this system exacerbated the challenge to the union officialdom. As a point of mobilisation and instrumental in such spontaneous or unofficial action, shop stewards even devised alternative 'logs of claims'. These alternative strategies were formulated through interaction with the members, and involved issues that were not adequately processed through the formal channels of the union.[74]

Given the highly centralised character of each union, stewards demonstrated marked disparities in their relationships with the full-time union officials. Only one quarter of the stewards were able to indicate the number of officials possessed by their union, although almost half named at least three-quarters of them. More importantly, half of all stewards had on at least one occasion mixed socially with their official(s), and one-third of the overall sample had done so on 5 separate occasions. This confirmed an observation that long-serving shop stewards, particularly the activist ones, enjoyed both a working and personal relationship with their respective official(s). Indeed, this represented a significant area of influence on the steward's behalf. Because, dependent upon the full-time officials and organisers within the legitimate dispute procedures, stewards were reliant on the timely and propitious intervention of the official. This has meant in practice that the stewards with strong contacts among the officialdom were more likely to receive prompt official action and a greater level of routine 'servicing' by the union organiser. From the steward's viewpoint, the perception remained that their position vis a vis workplace union activity was advanced through familiar working and personal relationships with full-time officials.

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74 Cf. T. Lane and K. Roberts, Strike at Pilkingtons, Fontana, Glasgow, 1971, especially Part II. The emergence of 'log of claims' from the shop floor is evident in the 'Elizabeth Engineer', various. See also, VBEF, State Executive Minutes, 17.8.1976, p.3 on steward attempts to gain control over the content and negotiation of the union's claims.

Expanding on this relationship, stewards were strongly of the opinion that their organisers 'usually stood up to management' at the workplace, with only 7.8 per cent expressing the contrary view. Overwhelmingly, stewards felt that a union organiser enhanced their position in a dispute (82.8 per cent) and knew more industrial relations 'tricks of the trade' in arguing and bargaining (59.4 per cent).[75] Six of every ten stewards had contact on-the-job with their organiser on a weekly or more frequent basis, and virtually all stewards (93.7 per cent) preferred more or the same level of organiser servicing as they presently enjoyed. Of those that provided a response, 14.5 per cent considered that stewards had a great deal of influence in large corporations, 20.3 per cent said that officials had. Stewards also considered that officials exercised marginally more influence in effectively representing union members about to face redundancy. Half of the stewards (56.5 per cent) were sufficiently optimistic to assert that stewards could effectively represent members to be retrenched, whereas 70.9 per cent believed that officials could.[76] These figures drawn from the midst of a severe economic depression portrayed a high degree of voluntaristic faith. Shop stewards believed explicitly in both their own capacities and those of their officials to withstand retrenchments. Moreover, while the pattern of state intervention in industrial relations has not legalised security of employment, this faith rested on both the prevailing assumptions of a previous period of militancy during the full employment years of the post-war Long Boom, and the existence of a positive orientation to their role within the union's collectivity.

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75 Both these factors were strongest in the VBEF and were less marked in the AMFSU. See Q. 63 and 66.

76 Of interest here is the fact that this 1980 survey was conducted during the most serious post-war economic recession. Some redundancies in the manufacturing sector had occurred by 1980 but the survey was undertaken on the threshold of a greatly increased scale of mass labour displacement. This was discussed in Chapter II. At the time of writing (1983-1984) the severity of the economic restructuring and mass sackings was intensified.

One related hypothesis to be examined here involved the degree to which shop steward training and role experience affected the procedural handling of disputes or levels of industrial action. In other words, under circumstances where the shop stewards were at best partially removed from worksite or industry-based negotiations, what correlations could be observed between the levels of union training/experience and the generation of industrial disputation? Of particular interest was the relationship of the stewards' role to the processes of industrial relations; whether union education and length of service tended to produce stewards who exercised either an agitational or restraining influence over the rank-and-file. As well stewards' attitudes relating to the size of their workplace were assessed to provide some measure of the degree to which the scale of labour collectivity influenced stewards' perceptions of their roles and their patterns of strike behaviour.

Generally stewards disagreed with the statement that 'stewards caused strikes mostly'.[77] The overwhelming majority (92.2 per cent) had at some stage of their working lives engaged in strike action, and approximately 80 per cent had also struck in addition to nationally directed campaigns. This implied that stewards participated in industrial action which emanated from the worksite, the regional union office or the national union office and involving employees of particular employers or site departments, industry and occupational divisions, or the entire union. As organisational mediators they appeared aware that stewards were not prime causal factors

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77 Of the total steward sample 57.8 per cent believed that stewards did not cause strikes, 39.1 per cent believed that they sometimes did and only 3.1 per cent agreed that stewards were the cause of strikes. AMFSU shop stewards were most emphatic in disagreeing that stewards caused strikes. In contrast, stewards were more ambivalent concerning the issue of whether stewards assisted in preventing strikes. VBEF stewards were more aware that they acted to prevent strikes than either of the other two unions. See Q. 112 and 113.

individually responsible for industrial disputation, and that as stewards they were more involved in the control and transmission of industrial action than in its initiation.[78] Of those with at least 5 years service as steward (46.1 per cent see Table 5.3) or having attended at least 2 steward training courses (62.5 per cent union sponsored) this response was held much stronger.[79] Table 5.12 contrasts the results for experienced stewards and the less experienced (novice) stewards, as well as for stewards operating at worksites with over or under 500 employees.

A number of points emerge from Table 5.12. There is a clear correlation between the length of steward experience and strike activity especially regarding strike action and local or workplace strikes (i,e., when not a national strike). While novice stewards had never called a strike and only one had negotiated with management, roughly half the experienced stewards had on occasions negotiated with management and called strikes themselves. Experienced stewards were less ambivalent than the novice stewards regarding the steward's role with more considering that stewards did not cause strikes and a clear majority holding that stewards served to prevent strikes. However, the position relating to enterprise size was more complex. A slight correlation existed between the size of workplace and a history of strike activity, but this was not particularly marked due to the inclusion of many AMFSU stewards from workplaces with under 500 employees who had engaged in various strike activities.

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78 See R. Hyman, Strikes, Fontana, Glasgow, 2nd edition, 1977, pp.45-47 and 113-139.

79 Of the sample 82.8 per cent (53) stewards qualified accordingly as 'experienced', while 17.2 per cent (11) were novices.

TABLE 5.12: Composition of Stewards by Experience and Enterprise Size

(All Stewards)

		Percentage		Distribution	
		Experienced Steward	Novice Steward	Workplace Under 500	Over 500
Taken strike action	Yes	78.1	14.1	39.3	52.5
	No	4.7	3.1	3.3	4.9
Struck when not a National strike	Yes	70.3	9.4	31.7	50.0
	No	12.5	7.8	10.0	8.3
Ever Negotiated with management	Yes	46.9	1.6	22.1	27.1
	No	35.9	15.6	18.6	32.2
Ever called a strike	Yes	39.3	-	18.3	21.7
	No	45.9	14.8	21.7	38.3
Do stewards cause strikes	Y/S	34.4	7.8	16.4	23.0
	No	50.0	7.8	23.0	37.7
Do stewards prevent strikes	Y/S	69.3	9.7	34.5	43.6
	No	12.9	8.1	7.3	14.6
Ever engaged in 'unofficial' strike	Yes	33.9	4.8	14.8	26.2
	No	48.4	12.9	24.6	34.4

Y/S = Yes and sometimes responses. (Questions: 75,77,78,80,112, 113 and 94).

Measures of the level of workplace collective autonomy relative to the union officialdom were difficult to ascertain. One measure of steward/membership autonomy involved the recourse to 'unofficial' action. Two-thirds of the stewards declared that control over industrial affairs at the workplace rested with organised labour on-the-job. Among those that considered such control rested elsewhere, 28.1 per cent believed management held control and only an insignificant 3.1 per cent considered union officials to hold this control.[80] To illustrate the degree of membership spontaneity, around 40 per cent of all stewards, but a majority of AMFSU stewards, noted that their members had taken 'unofficial' action (without union approval) in the past. Yet in only a small minority of cases (12.5 per cent but more frequently in the VBEF) had union members taken industrial strike action without consulting the steward(s). This point was underlined by the fact that only 9.4 per cent of the stewards (which were all VBEF stewards) reported that their members had previously taken a dispute to management either without the steward or against the steward's judgement. With the exception of a handful of VBEF stewards, all other stewards reported a continuous history of consistent involvement in workplace industrial activity among the membership. Finally, on the issue of loyalty towards the wider union organisation in place of popularism or individualism , stewards were generally divided with a high 43.8 per cent prepared to support recommendations of industrial action from the union office in spite of personal reservations or disagreements with those recommendations. In contrast, 39.1 per cent of the stewards were not prepared to endorse such recommendations and a further 17.2 per cent remained unsure.

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80 Whether this is a valid representation of the situation at the workplace is for the present purposes less relevant than the fact that two-thirds of the shop steward sample believed that they held control.

Only in ADSTE did a majority of stewards refuse to endorse official union recommendations in preference to their personal convictions.

III. The Membership Survey

In the survey of union membership conducted during early-mid 1980, 70.1 per cent of respondents resided in the two lowest socio-economic residential areas. Males comprised 92.1 per cent of those members surveyed, with females comprising the remaining 7.9 per cent. One-third of the members were from the AMFSU (51 persons), around two-fifths were from the VBEF (64 persons), and one-quarter approximately were members of ADSTE (36 persons). A greater proportion of members than shop stewards were British born (46.4 per cent of members, 37.5 per cent of shop stewards), but fewer members were Australian born (39.7 to 48.4 per cent respectively). Further, members not of Anglo-Australian origin accounted for 14 per cent of the sample and were evenly spread between the three unions. One-quarter of the members (26.5 per cent) were 30 years of age or under, one-fifth (18.5 per cent) were aged between 31 to 40 years, and over half were older than 40 years (with 27.8 per cent aged 41 to 50 years and 24.4 per cent over 50 years of age). The most significant variation between the unions in age structure was found in the AMFSU, which registered a high proportion of young members (31.4 per cent 30 years and under), very few members in the 31 to 40 year age bracket (only 7.8 per cent), and a significant concentration of members aged between 41 and 50 years (37.3 per cent). Both ADSTE and the VBEF recorded proportionally consistent age breakdowns with little variation between the respective groups. This suggested that in both the latter cases employees once employed in the industry tended to remain in that industry and also in the union, or employers recruited

employees from all age sections of the workforce.[81] The metal industry and the AMFSU, in contrast, attracted sizeable numbers of younger workers, but had proportionally fewer members in the middle age groups suggesting that the young did not remain long in that industry. This indicated that a large part of the AMFSU's membership were young, unskilled males and females who were unlikely to work in that industry for a lengthy period of time.

Table 5.13 showing the relative lengths of union membership supported the previous conclusion. The AMFSU was found to have over one-third of its membership with 5 years membership and under, and over half with 10 years and under. The VBEF was similarly found to have a high proportion of members with little length of service, but in conjunction with the previously noted age structure this may indicate the patterns of retrenchment following the earlier hiring of middle-aged workers on the grounds that such labour may be more experienced and that turnover could be reduced allowing greater labour stability within the highly monotonous labour process involved in vehicle assembly.[82] Only ADSTE with its rigid and exclusive entrance criteria for membership based on specialised technical qualification demonstrated a more consistent (in contrast to the 'mass' blue-collar unions) pattern of age distribution throughout its membership.

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81 This is markedly different from the 1960s and the early 1970s when the vehicle industry was characterised by a high turnover of labour.

82 H. Beynon, op.cit., Chapters 1 and 2; B. Coriot, 'The Restructuring of the Assembly Line', Capital and Class, No. 11, Summer 1980. Cf. C.R. Walker and R.H. Guest, The Man on the Assembly Line, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1952.

TABLE 5.13: Length of Union Membership of Members

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
5 years and under	18*(8)	35.3	6*(2)	16.7	20*(17)	31.3
6-10 years	11(10)	21.6	11(3)	30.6	16(13)	25.0
11-15 years	2(3)	3.9	11(9)	30.6	17(16)	26.6
16-20 years	2(1)	3.9	4(6)	11.1	7(7)	10.9
21-25 years	7(4)	13.7	1(1)	2.8	2(4)	3.1
26 years and above	11(25)	21.6	3(14)	8.4	2(6)	3.1
TOTAL	51	100	36	100	64	100

* Denotes members who have worked for that length of time in the industry.

Levels of skill varied considerably between the unions. Overall 61.6 per cent were reported engaged in skilled work, 24.5 per cent in semi-skilled work and 11.9 per cent in unskilled work. Skilled workers comprised the entire ADSTE membership, were predominant in the AMFSU, and relatively scarce in the VBEF, as Table 5.14 illustrates.

TABLE 5.14: Membership Level of Skill
(Percentage)

	AMFSU	ADSTE	VBEF	TOTAL
Skilled	92.2	100.0	15.6	61.6
Semi-skilled	2.0	-	56.3	24.5
Unskilled	3.9	-	25.0	11.9
Omitted	2.0	-	3.1	2.0

Furthermore, skill criteria were similarly sensitive for the membership, as for the shop stewards, to the question of whether or not the respondent considered that he or she had joined the union voluntarily. Two-thirds of both metal worker and ADSTE members believed that they wanted to join the union, whilethe rest felt coerced. By comparison, in the VBEF with a membership of 81.3 per cent semi-skilled or unskilled, 56.3 per cent of the sample indicated they felt coerced into joining the union. Only one-third of these vehicle builders were confident that they desired to join the union, reflecting both a lack of collective motivation or commitment on behalf of less skilled workers and a response to the closed shop agreements under which the vast majority of VBEF members worked.

Members in contrast to the shop stewards (see page 331) were collectively less certain over the question of whether unions had too much or not enough power. Of those that answered this question, 30.3 per cent considered unions had too much power, 33.1 per cent were not sure, and 36.6 per cent felt that unions had not enough power. Not unexpectedly, metal workers were more inclined to the view that unions did not possess enough power, while ADSTE members, many verging on junior management or supervisory grades at their work, were substantially of the view that unions held too much power. These unionist attitudes can be compared with national opinion poll findings of which the closest contemporary poll was 1979. In the wider opinion poll 78 per cent (against 18 per cent) thought unions too powerful and only 4 per cent were unsure.[83] Table 5.15 indicates the membership results.

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83 For a more comparative historical series and the source of the 1979 figure see D. Aitken, National Times, 17-23 February 1980, p. 32.

TABLE 5.15: Attitude to Unions Power Percentage Findings

	AMFSU	ADSTE	VBEF	TOTAL	National Opinion Poll, 1979
Too much	18.8	50.0	27.9	30.3	78.0
Not sure	37.5	30.6	31.1	33.1	4.0
Not enough	43.8	19.4	41.0	36.6	18.0

Two-thirds of all members identified everyday on-the-job issues as the main objective of unionism. Less than one in twelve members identified organisational criteria as the main collective objective, suggesting either a degree of complacency or apathy in organisational matters. This response was more understandable in light of the previous attitudes to union power, which indicated that while members were about evenly split on the question of union power generally, a substantial majority identified the union's major role as involving workplace issues such as wages, conditions and grievances. In this regard, members were reasonably satisfied that the union was representative of the members' wishes; the level of such satisfaction was highest in the AMFSU (60.8 per cent), followed by ADSTE (47.2 per cent) and finally the VBEF (43.8 per cent).[84] When asked to list duties that the union should perform for members (Table 5.16) almost all member respondents replied with economistic and instrumental values.[85] Indeed, those broadly listing wage, conditions and grievances as the only duties unions should perform constituted 77.6 per cent of the responding

84 Appendix II(a), Q.48. Cf. E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the AMWSU', M.Ec. Thesis, op.cit., pp. 87-94; and E.A. Chaples, 'A Survey of Members of the Amalgamated Metal Workers' Union in the Sydney Metropolitan Area', 1976 Field Studies Class, Department of Government, University of Sydney, 1977.

85 Appendix II(a), Q. 60 and 62.

TABLE 5.16: Interest Group Preferred by Members (main preference)

	AMFSU		ADSTE		VBEF		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Everyday on-the-job issues	35	68.6	24	66.7	36	56.3	95	62.9
Operation of the union	7	13.7	3	8.4	2	3.1	12	7.9
Long-term interests of the union movement	7	13.7	9	25.0	19	29.7	35	23.2
Omitted	2	3.9	-	-	7	10.9	9	6.0
	51	100	36	100	64	100	151	100

sample. Moreover, consistent with their general attitudinal approach to unionism, half of the total membership had on no occasion contributed to a voluntary political levy arranged through the union. This low propensity to donate was clearly influenced by the union of origin. Of those that contributed regularly or sometimes, the members were three times more likely to be members of the AMFSU than either of the other two unions. Indeed while over 40 per cent of metal workers donated regularly, over 60 per cent of both the VBEF and ADSTE never made donations.

Although only one in five members were able to roughly estimate the number of officials in their union, (and only 8 per cent were entirely correct), around half the membership (45.7 per cent) were able to name at least three-quarters. Almost universally, members could name their shop steward representative and the 4.6 per cent of members unable to provide this information, were likely to be unrepresented by a steward

at their place of work.[86] Half the members sampled had mixed socially with their steward representative, and this tendency was strongest in the AMFSU and ADSTE with 64.8 and 61.1 per cent respectively having socialised on at least one occasion.

Roughly 60 per cent of members worked at sites with 10 stewards or fewer, but of those able to provide an estimate over eight out of ten were in this category. Table 5.17 provides the adjusted frequency in percentage terms of shop steward concentration from membership responses. VBEF members were the only significant group to work at sites with an excess of twenty shop stewards.

TABLE 5.17: Steward Concentration at the Workplace: Member Responses (percentage)

	AMFSU	ADSTE*	VBEF	TOTAL
5 and under stewards	40.8	60.0	35.6	42.1
6-10 stewards	24.5	13.3	10.2	15.7
11-20 stewards	6.1		6.8	5.0
21-40 stewards	4.1		8.5	5.7
41-60 stewards			1.7	1.4
Don't know	24.5	26.7	37.3	30.0

* 2 ADSTE responses were omitted due to the fact that the replies indicated the total of multi-union stewards at their workplace - a figure which exceeded the total number of ADSTE's stewards.

86 While the member's own steward was generally known to the respondents, only 92 (64.9 per cent) respondents could estimate the number of stewards operating within their worksite (Q. 15, 16 and 17). Seven members were unable to name their shop steward, of which five were from ADSTE. This suggests that these technicians worked in workplace situations where no steward existed or where the union operated with a 'job contract' liaison member not generally recognised as a shop steward.

Membership appreciation of the shop steward reflected organisational and instrumental criteria. Half the members considered their steward a 'voice of the members', an 'elected union delegate' and a 'person worth listening to', yet one-third considered the steward a personal friend.[87] On the other hand, only one in ten considered the steward as a 'voice of the officials' or 'industry umpire', but both these reactions were more emphasised in the VBEF membership. Although 89.4 per cent of members preferred either more or the same level of contact with their steward, well over half the membership already enjoyed regular (weekly or more frequent) contact at the time of survey. Of the two blue-collar unions (AMFSU and VBEF) 67 per cent enjoyed such contact, with only 13 per cent admitting to contact on the basis of at least six monthly intervals.[88] ADSTE proved the major exception to this pattern as Table 5.18 shows. These technicians in the main tended to have little contact with their steward on a regular basis and approximately half these members enjoyed contact less frequently than twice a year.

TABLE 5.18: Membership Contact with Steward

(Percentage)

	AMFSU	ADSTE	VBEF	TOTAL
Weekly	72.5	22.2	62.5	56.3
Monthly	11.8	11.1	12.5	11.9
3 Monthly		11.1	9.4	6.6
6 Monthly	5.9	2.8	3.1	4.0
Yearly or less	7.8	44.4	9.4	17.2
Omitted	2.0	8.3	3.1	4.0

87 See Appendix II(a), Q. 52, 33 and 35.

88 Q. 33. This was in marked contrast to the level of contact with the full-time organiser where 66.3 per cent of the membership enjoyed either no contact with the organiser or on 6-12 monthly intervals (Q.34).

The contrast in patterns of contact with the steward was reflected through the prime sources of union information received by members. There was a marked tendency for members of the AMFSU and VBEF to receive their knowledge of the union and its activities from shop stewards rather than other sources.[89] In contrast, members of ADSTE predominantly received their information via union newspapers/newsletters and from other diverse sources. Table 5.19 illustrates this contrast. The AMFSU responses compare with Davis' 1976 findings taken from 139 Victorian AMWSU members.[90] In the AMFSU Adelaide 1980 figures, over 50 per cent of members identified the steward as the principal source of information concerning the union. Davis found that in aggregate 36 per cent of AMWSU members identified the steward in this capacity, but that marked differences existed between four various work sites according to qualitative criteria of union organisation. However, Davis' findings did not allow for union officials or other workers constituting the principal source of union information, nor for members to indicate that their information arose from several principal sources. This latter point is more significant, in light of the findings in this present study, in that members with some degree of union commitment were found to be avid gatherers of information

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89 Q.53. Shop stewards were the main source of union information for 52.9 per cent of AMFSU members and 40.6 per cent of VBEF members. Generally members responded that stewards either unilaterally disseminated information (told them things or disseminated information) suggesting a leadership role or acted as intermediary communicators (Q.51). This identification with the steward was reflected in Q.39 where AMFSU, and to a lesser extent VBEF, members indicated that the aspects most preferred about their union were its cohesive unity/collective nature and the security it offered.

90 E. Davis, 'Decision-Making in the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights' Union', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1977, see especially pp. 358-360.

concerning their union irrespective of the source. This finding was taken both from the questionnaire responses and from empirical observation.[91]

TABLE 5.19: Principal Source of Information Concerning the Union

	AMFSU (N= 51)	ADSTE (N= 36)	VBEF (N=64)	TOTAL (N=151)	Davis 1976 (N=139)
Union Officials	5.9	2.8	4.7	4.6	-
Union Newspapers	23.5	38.9	14.1	23.2	28.0
Shop Steward	52.9	16.7	40.6	39.1	36.0
TV and Radio	-	2.8	1.6	1.3	20.0
Daily Papers	2.0	2.8	3.1	2.6	10.0
Other Workers	3.9	8.3	6.3	6.0	-
Various Sources including the above	11.8	27.8	28.1	22.5	-
Omitted	-	-	1.6	.7	6.0

When the Adelaide respondents were asked where they would prefer their source of information to originate the only source to demonstrate a marked increase in member preference was the union officials.[92] Overwhelmingly,

91 A further source of union information consisted of the worksite union noticeboards serviced by shop stewards.These helped facilitate formal communications and from the survey 92.1 per cent of members were able to view a frequently updated union noticeboard (Q. 9 and 11) with 90.7 per cent of members claiming to usually read it at least occasionally. However, despite ADSTE members indicating that a proportionally higher amount of information originated from union newspapers and newsletters, significantly fewer ADSTE members 'mostly' or 'always' read the union noticeboard in comparison with the other unions (Q.10). To the extent, therefore, that ADSTE members awaited the official union news bulletin posted to each member, then their knowledge of the union was formal, depersonalised and not generally more frequent than 4 times per year. This may explain, in part, why ADSTE members appeared comparatively more reluctant to prefer the steward as the prime source of union information and tended to view their particular forms of stewards less clearly in a mediating role.

92 This compares with Q.36 and 37 where members' responses toward full-time officials were generally favourable/satisfactory (with 84.3 per cent AMFSU, 69.4 per cent ADSTE and 55.1 per cent of VBEF members expressing a positive attitude). Moreover, a far greater proportion of members sought increased contact with full-time organisers than had sought increased contact with the steward. Although steward contact was of greater frequency this indicated that the intervention of the organiser at workplace was welcome in addition to the steward's activity.

shop stewards remained the preferred source of union information and this was more true of both the 'mass' blue-collar unions. The membership were reluctant to turn to sources of information from extra-union sources (including TV and radio, daily newspapers and management) or even other workers. Thus, from the responses to the survey,[93] it was evident that members were far more inclined to prefer information concerning the union to originate within the union from their elected representatives or through the official organs of the union. This served to affirm the intermediary position of shop stewards and promote their role as organisational cadres.

Conclusions from the Survey

Survey data on shop stewards usually emphasise the functions and experience of stewards as agents of plant level collective bargaining in place of more generally focussing on the nature of the steward's organisational role.[94] Much attention has been directed toward increasingly specialised taxonomies of steward types based on the perhaps implicit assumption that shop steward attitudes or situational definitions fundamentally influence the outcome of negotiations and as a result the welfare of their members. This present study attempted to avoid reproducing this research. Instead the intention of this chapter was to explain the limiting conditions shaping the role of the Australian shop steward in an industrial relations context where stewards do not sustain their position via a strategic collective bargaining role.

Certainly, shop stewards in the Adelaide sample performed the role of shop floor interpreter. The majority operated under conditions which

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93 Q. 53 and 54.

94 Cf. B. Partridge, op.cit., pp. 28-29.

emphasised the representational and protective aspects of the position rather than dimensions of leadership or trade union consistency. Some characteristics were found which indicated the emergence of embryonic steward leaders who were sufficiently confident to refer issues through their peer group structures. Nonetheless, these roles were located subject to the organisation rather than located upon decentralised mechanisms of collective bargaining. Essentially the Adelaide stewards did not constitute a lay bureaucracy but a strata of organisational mediators. This role involved stewards predominantly in the dimensions of politics and organisational development; dimensions which were limited to work groups, some steward committees and the official union structure. In other words the constraints on the steward's role limited it primarily within the organisation.

It was evident from the survey results that both stewards and workers shared this orientation toward the steward's role and that both displayed positive attitudes toward the intervention of full-time officials at the workshop level. Indeed, shop stewards and members indicated a pronounced preparedness to transmit workplace concerns vertically. For many shop stewards the key to representing the members interests was to expedite the intervention of the full-time official. This stress on the vertical transfer of issues served to emphasise the position and importance of leaders in the union. For the shop stewards, in contrast, this stress acted to undermine attempts at greater horizontal integration. Thus, these Australian stewards were often left little choice but to perceive their role as workplace representatives in terms of the maintenance of collective-unionist organisation and the conveyance of concerns vertically from this level through the union structure.

CHAPTER VI

THE POLITICS OF UNION ORGANISATION: LEADERSHIP - OFFICIALS AND OFFICERS

In his seminal study of power in British trade unions, Allen has argued that there was one particularly good reason for concentrating research on the leadership of trade unions: union leaders possessed organisational control through power becoming 'increasingly concentrated in the hands of a relatively small number of individuals at the centre'.[1] At one level this cannot be disputed. In the Australian development of trade unionism, under the influence of compulsory arbitration and federated State branch structures, this concentration of power in the hands of full-time officials occurred much earlier and more thoroughly than Britain.[2] Australian union leaders generally combined legislative

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1 V.L. Allen, Power in Trade Unions, Longmans Green, London, 1954, p.184. See also V.L. Allen, Trade Union Leadership, Longmans Green, London, 1957. Although Allen referred to national rather than regional/branch officials his point is relevant to the Australian case. The nature of Australia's federal unions places many administrative responsibilities and decision-making facilities at the State level. For the present study the senior State officials are considered as Allen's 'top leadership', although a division of labour existed between State and federal leaders.

2 Despite H.A.Turner's concept of the 'popular bossdom' to capture the formal control union leaders held in general unions, informal and lay influence in British unions generally remained high. In Australia, as was suggested earlier in Chapter V, shop stewards possess minimal bargaining autonomy and hence reinforce the position and importance of union leaders. (H.A.Turner, Trade Union Growth,Structure and Policy, George Allen and Unwin, London,1962). Cf. also R.Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction, Macmillan, London,1975, Chapter 3, for a discussion of official stabilisation and suppression of rank-and-file activities relative to external pressures such as managerial control. In Australia research has been slow to point to the importance of union officials. For instance, a recent collection of studies neglected to include a section discussing leadership, see K.Cole (ed.), Power, Conflict and Control in Australian Trade Unions, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982. Union leaders attract but the most fleeting mention in Dabscheck and J. Niland, Industrial Relations in Australia, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1981. A brief and highly empiricist portrayal is provided by R. Martin, Trade Unions in Australia, Penguin, Ringwood, (2nd edition), 1980.

and administrative functions subscribing to representative rather than consciousness-raising orientations toward their roles.[3] With the initial centralisation of organisational power at the State level, this tended to promote State-based executive dominance particularly in craft and general unions.

Against this background, the present chapter examines the politics of union leadership in each of the three unions before undertaking a comparative examination of the nature of executive dominance. Of importance to the initial examination are criteria of leadership turnover, selection or promotion processes, the duties and responsibilities of officials, factional and overt political divisions and indications of leadership support from the lay officials and membership.

I. ADSTE

The contention of Lipset et al. that the turnover of paid officials tended to be greater in unions with high status members, where the social and economic differences between the leaders and the membership are minimal, was not supported by the case of ADSTE.[4] In terms of the position of Federal Secretary seven office holders had occupied the position since 1945, with an average length of service of 6 years but with two remaining in the job for over a decade. In South Australia the branch had appointed only two full-time Secretaries (previously office manager) since that position was established in 1961. The present incumbent G.C. Meikle, had held the office continuously for a

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3 Cf. A. Cook, 'Dual Government in Unions: A Tool for Analysis', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 15, No.3, April 1962; D. Gallie, In Search of the New Working Class, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1978, Chapter 10.

4 S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, Union Democracy, Free Press, Glencoe, 1956, Section III, Chapter 10.

period of eighteen years. Prior to 1961 the division was managed by a number of part-time honorary Secretaries, the last having been a self-employed professional accountant.[5] Meikle in his lengthy tenure as office manager and Secretary had not faced an electoral challenge. Consequently, mechanisms to ensure continuity through the electoral system (e.g. fighting funds, campaign literature) were not developed in the union at the State branch level. In fact in the absence of contest, formalised practices to protect the established leadership were non-existent. At the federal level this became an issue during 1979-83 with the rivalry between the 'progressives' and the 'right dissidents' culminating in the electoral challenge for the position of Assistant Federal Secretary between Greig and Valentine. As a consequence of this rift the first ever officials' fighting fund in ADSTE was established in 1981. Although this re-election fund was an ad hoc response, proposals were made to the union's Future Planning Committee in late 1982 to establish electoral contingency funding organised on a regular basis.[6]

The position of organiser, the remaining full-time office at the State branch level, was similarly marked by the longevity of incumbent tenure. These positions staffed through collegiate appointment rather than electoral representation, were prior to 1983 excluded from Executive functions. The two organiser positions in the SA branch were established in December 1970 (covering private industry membership) and May 1974 (public sector membership) respectively. The latter organiser after ten years in office was continuing in the position at the time of writing, while the former on reaching retirement

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5 Personal Interview, G.C. Meikle 20.12.1982. The part time Secretary referred to was J. Niven. Prior to Meikle's appointment P. Warren was the first full-time office manager of ADSTE from 1961-65.

6 Personal Interview, G.C. Meikle, 20.12.1982. The ADSTE leadership subsequently imposed rule changes regulating printed election statements by candidates for union office. From 1983 candidates were permitted to lodge one single page A4 printed statement with their nomination for the approval of the returning officer. Blueprint, Vol. 7, No. 1, February 1983, p. 8.

age, had retired in December 1981 to be replaced by an ex-TUTA senior training officer and graduate from the University of New South Wales. Thus, discounting the 1982 appointment, ADSTE organisers had achieved an average period of tenure of over 10 years in office.[7] In the context of the State Secretary's 18 years in office this hardly constituted a high turnover of full-time officials.[8] Furthermore, the ADSTE (SA) branch in comparison with the AMFSU and VBEF branches, recorded the most stable and enduring pattern of leadership tenure.

Within the leadership of the SA branch of ADSTE no political or factional divisions were apparent.[9] Certainly no organised formal or informal rival group was identified. The leadership was comprised of an amalgam of 'progressives' who were less conservative and sectional than the membership generally, although not opposed by any particular opposition group from this quarter.[10] This may have been due in part to the relatively small size of the branch (approximately 3,000 members), the small number of officials (1 full-time official and 2 officers with the remaining 6 executive positions honorary) or the diverse occupational and industrial sector composition of the association. The absence of factionalism may also have been the result of the open structure of the organisation, within which a concerned activist could secure an honorary executive position without great difficulty. Indeed,

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7 Including the 1982 appointment the average period of tenure for the three office occupants was still a relatively high 7.6 years to mid 1984. However, three organisers filled the latter post between 1982-4.

8 The longevity of tenure of ADSTE officials may be a result of the appointment of organisers in place of regular elections, and of the fact that the secretary position was itself an appointed office from 1961-74. But, on the other hand, appointed organisers technically may be dismissed (Rule 55) after 3 months notice, making their tenure dependent upon performance. No pressure from within the union to establish electoral procedures for organiser selection were evident.

9 Chapter IV discussed the inter-State factionalism that marked ADSTE between 1979-83.

10 A.W. Gouldner, 'Attitudes of "Progressive" Trade Union Leaders', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 52, No. 5, March 1947.

ensuring that sufficient candidates nominated for the available positions, or alternatively persuading elected incumbents to remain in office, constituted at times a serious problem, which was usually resolved by moral suasion.[11] This situation was not in itself inherently stable in the sense of being free from apparent factionalism. On the contrary, latent factional divisions could well develop should a particular occupational, regional or political group initiate a challenge for the existing positions.

To illustrate this undeveloped concern for the construction of factions two examples will suffice, the first being the appointment of a union organiser in 1981. This involved the selection of a full-time officer by the Executive. Of the three applicants considered none were ADSTE members, and of the two interviewed one was an organiser with a comparable white-collar union, the other a graduate and ex-TUTA training officer. Although it became obvious which candidate the Executive preferred,[12] there was little by way of prior lobbying over the position. Indeed, Branch Councillors despite general reports were neither consulted nor actively involved in the selection process with most ignorant of the proceedings until the outcome was declared at a subsequent meeting. The successful applicant, the ex-training officer, enjoyed strong union and Labor Party connections which may have assisted her case in predisposing the 'progressives' on the Executive to her application.

The second involved the case of the Assistant State Secretary Joan Russell. A women's political activist who had secured an honorary Executive

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11 ADSTE's President C.R.Brown stated, for instance that there was little need to replace the returning officer with the Electoral Commissioner for union elections, because it was a 'rarity if we have more candidates than positions available - to have more candidates would be a luxury'. ADSTE Branch Council, 21.12.1982. The lack of enthusiasm for honorary office in the union's Executive was illustrated by the absence of nominations for both vice-president positions and that of the assistant secretary in December 1982. ADSTE, SA News Bulletin, December 1982, p. 1

12 I witnessed the interviews and subsequent discussion of the applicants. The four Executive members present for the interviews (10.11.1981) were all 'progressives'. Chapter VII discusses such leadership recruitment in more detail.

position, despite being unrepresentative of the membership and without a power base, Russell's main objective appeared to consist of moderating the sexism within the wider leadership group and using ADSTE both as a formal base of support and springboard for the furtherance of a feminist perspective in the labour movement. She had few reservations concerning the 'progressivist' orientation towards union policy but dissented from the Executive over three issues in 1980-81: the superannuation scheme for office assistants on the grounds that it should be equal to that of the officials, policy initiatives with respect to a case of sexual harassment, and opposition to the Executive's proposed abolition of the union's Women's Liaison Officer.[13] In this period some antipathy between senior Executive office holders and the Assistant Secretary prevailed,[14] but without an independent power base and having problems affecting her own attendance, Russell resigned in July 1981. After this resignation the position of Women's Liaison Officer was retained and a female full-time organiser was appointed, although both these two maintained a lower profile. While the new organiser continued some of Russell's concerns, this occurred in the context of her role as full-time officer with de facto responsbility for women's issues. In short, Russell's departure was a consequence of the display of symbolic solidarity from among the union hierarchy against

13 ADSTE Executive Meeting 10.3.1981, and Branch Council 24.2.1981 (Council Minutes, Item 8(a)iv). The Executive's decision to abolish the Women's Liaison Officer was rationalised in terms of the drive for women members and women's participation having 'fizzled out', such that a liaison officer had become 'defunct' (G.C. Meikle, 24.2.1981). In addition, the sole female member with regular attendance/participation at meetings was already Assistant State Secretary. Following the resignation of Russell, the position of Women's Liaison Officer was maintained because the replacement Assistant State Secretary was male. This suggested that the move to abolish the liaison officer had been part of a strategy to oust Russell.

14 Russell claimed that a vendetta to oust her had occurred. Two reasons put forward for this were that she no longer worked in the industry in full-time employment and that her politics/feminist concerns were resisted by the remaining leadership. One month prior to her resignation Russell claimed 'they don't want to hear anything about women. Just you watch, they are trying to get rid of me', Personal Interview, J. Russell, 12.5.1981. However, her politics were not anathema to the entire Executive and on industrial issues there was much agreement often with others taking a more left line. Reasons for her resignation, which were officially given as being in order to continue studies in the United Kingdom, involved personality differences, uncompromising and aggressive behaviour, outside interests and child rearing.

a particular activist, rather than an expression of nascent factionalism.

While political or factional divisions in the State branch leadership were not pronounced, a dimension of political controversy characterised the relationship between the Executive and the Branch Councillors/membership. Substantial proportions of the membership and Councillors were 'apolitical' in that they rigidly separated 'industrial' from the 'political' operations of the labour movement. These members opposed the association developing closer relations with the Labor Party through affiliation, financial donation or expressions of support regarding specific policies.[15] On the other hand, the Executive was agreed but with varying levels of commitment that the union was required to adopt a more visible political profile including stronger relations with the ALP.[16]

II. VBEF

Thirteen State Secretaries have held office in the South Australian branch of the VBEF since 1888, eleven of these since the union was re-formed in 1907.[17] Between 1932-82 ten Secretaries have occupied the position in

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15 On the question of whether ADSTE should affiliate to the ALP see Appendix IV(a), Q.172-177; from the 1980 survey over 70 per cent of ADSTE stewards (Branch Council area representatives in the private sector) were opposed to ADSTE affiliating with the Labor Party. Of the membership sample, over 55 per cent of ADSTE's members agreed that the ALP should reduce its links with the union movement (Appendix II(a), Q.46 and 47).

16 The May 1983 ADSTE Federal Conference decided, with respect to rule 72(c) precluding political affiliation or support to political parties, that

> 'the aspect of Rule 72(c) as it relates to the financial support of any political party being dependent on a plebiscite, be the subject of widespread membership debate with a view to consideration of an amendment to the rule to permit ADSTE to both publicly and financially support the policies of political parties where such policies are in accord with those of ADSTE'.

(Personal Correspondence, G.C. Meikle, 21.6.1983). See also ADSTE, SA News Bulletin, June 1983, p.2. The general view of the Federal and State (SA) officers of ADSTE was that ALP policies largely corresponded with those of ADSTE 'progressives'.

17 The first full-time Secretary was appointed in 1912 following a ballot of the membership (270) which determined to increase members contributions for the purpose of appointing a full-time Secretary. A.E.Pittman who had served as honorary Secretary from 1909 was appointed. VBEF, General Minutes, 16.2.1912.

fifty years, breaking the long and formative pattern of tenure established by A.E. Pittman, 1909-1934.[18] From 1959 as is shown in Table 6.1 the duration of tenure of the position was approximately five years.

TABLE 6.1: State Secretaries VBEF: Period in Office and Further Career

Date in Office	Secretary	Subsequent Position
1909-34	A.E.Pittman	Voluntarily resigned and retired
1935-43	A. Finlay	ALP Senator for South Australia
1943-50+	S.J. Lawn	ALP MP for Adelaide
1950-59	C.F. Ridley	ALP Senator for South Australia
1959-64	F.R. Birrell	ALP MHR for Port Adelaide
1964-66	C.I. Hayes	Chairman of Apprenticeship Commission
1966-70	C.A. Harrison	ALP MP for Albert Park
1970-75	R.K. Abbott	ALP MP for Spence
1975-81	D.J. Foreman*	ALP Senator for Adelaide
1981-	J.D. Bennett	

+ The Union's Assistant Secretary J.P. Toohey (1944-47) was appointed State Secretary of the ALP commencing November 1947, later becoming ALP Senator (SA).

* Foreman while elected in 1980 did not assume his Senate position until July 1981 and as a consequence did not effect his resignation from the position of union Secretary until that date.

The reason for this regular turnover is found in the consistent placement of incumbent Secretaries in high-salary status positions with greater tenure and superannuation provisions. These career positions,

18 Pittman's philosophy was cogently presented in the union's obituary to their first full-time Secretary in 1939.

> One of the greatest compliments that could be paid to the late Secretary is in fact that throughout his term of office as General Secretary, he had steered the organisation clear of any major industrial trouble and at the same time had not sacrificed anything in the way of wages and conditions for our members in doing so.

VBEF, Balance Sheet and Reports, 27.9.1939, p.6.

considered as promotions and as less demanding than union secretaryship, have consistently been appropriated from the ALP's safe parliamentary positions.[19] Such positions were purchased through the union's financial backing of and political influence within the Labor Party. Indeed, there existed a widely understood convention that the union secretary position be inherited by the next most senior official through internal sequential promotion, and that the present incumbent be permitted between four and five years to secure some sinecurist office.[20] The following table documents this trend, which in itself suggests a further reason for the union officials' conservatism and accommodationist approaches.

TABLE 6.2: VBEF Pattern of Senior Official Officeholding Since 1959

Position	1959	1964	1966	1972	1976	1982
Secretary	Birrell	Hayes	Harrison	Abbott	Foreman	Bennett
Assistant Secretary	Hayes	Harrison	Abbott	Foreman	Bennett	Meehan
Senior Organiser	Harrison	Abbott	Foreman	Bennett/ Sandilands*	Meehan	Walker

* J.K. Sandilands was appointed Assistant Federal Secretary in 1976.

19 Personal Interview, D.J. Foreman, 28.5.1981. Foreman acknowledged that 'I just felt that I had spent enough time in the trade on the industrial side of things. I felt that it's really a young persons job [union secretary] and I felt that it would be less demanding on my health and so forth - in the political side of things where I haven't got the same responsibilities at the top that I have here. Even though my health has been reasonably good, it has suffered somewhat as a result of the [union] job. But I really think that it is a young persons job. Once you start getting up to around the 50 [years] mark you are losing the input into the industrial side of things. As you probably know, parliamentarians are lobbied by different people in different industries, and no doubt I'll be able to have - be able to put some input into that once I get into Parliament'.

20 Personal Interviews, C.K. Lane, 22.8.1980 and F. Morris, 11.8.1981. Morris expressed unease at the continuing institutionalisation of sequential promotion, but along with many shop stewards shared a sense of impotence in challenging it. The career of D.J. Foreman provides a relevant example of this 5-yearly sequential promotion: in 1954 he joined the union, was organiser 1966-70, Assistant Secretary 1970-75, Secretary 1975-81 and Senator 1981+.

This method of promotion within the leadership group produced three important consequences for the turnover and performance of the senior leadership. First, the legitimacy of the union leadership was strengthened in that members were presented at regular intervals with new candidates who generally had not attracted the same degree of membership dissatisfaction as had the previous Secretary. With membership dissatisfaction with the leadership tending to erupt periodically, the credibility of the incoming Secretary was enhanced by the image that a 'new broom sweeps clean'.[21] Second, for the junior union leadership (organisers) the method proved a stable and self-sustaining system ensuring their compliance. Organisers had been reluctant to pursue changes to the selection process realising that with the regular turnover of the top official position and sequential inheritance, their main objective was simply to remain patient.[22] Finally, the system minimised the necessity for Secretaries to seek and win re-election. The consequence of this was that incumbent Secretaries were not constrained to be popularist leaders, did not have to 'face the membership'

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21 For example, D. Foreman argued that he was 'not altogether happy with the direction we were going' under the Secretaryships of C.Harrison and R. Abbott. Industrially, according to Foreman the union was 'too close to the boss and not enough benefits for the members were gained at that time'. Personal Interview, 28.5.1981. In assuming office after Foreman, J.D. Bennett promised a new administration based on efficient financial management. 'I don't know whether I can pull you out of the red in 12 months but I'll try as hard as I can and bring it up [the union] as efficient as possible', (sic). Part of Bennett's efficiency programme was aimed 'to modernise here and there' through consulting Adelaide Executive Services to audit the accounts on a monthly basis as part of an austerity campaign. J.D. Bennett, VBEF General Meeting, 9.12.1981.

22 Hence, it was rare for organisers to challenge either the Secretary or Assistant Secretary in an election. This diminished the chance of an electoral spill in avoiding contests between full-time officers each with the structural advantages of the positions. When organisers believed that they would each achieve top office in turn as a matter of course, little incentive existed for them to launch a premature electoral challenge. Thus, in 1975 Foreman (1,644 votes) was elected Secretary challenged only by the rank-and-filer K.C.Andrews (765 votes); Advertiser, 14.8.1975, p.3.

and could negotiate industrial agreements with employers which they personally were not subsequently accountable for.[23]

The position of president of the union while technically honorary was traditionally occupied by one of the full-time officials rotated almost consistently after the completion of the two year term. Of the 18 different Presidents covering the 21 terms of office since the war, only seven had not been full-time officials of the union. The tight rein the officials had held over the position of president was instrumental in membership meetings for both filtering discussion and orienting the outcome of meetings. For this reason, the VBEF leadership had restricted presidential office-holding (with its instrumental agenda-bias functions) largely to fellow full-time officials.

The role of organiser in the Vehicle Builder's union was essentially to serve specific sections of the membership. Two basic types of organiser emerged: those that used the position to dissipate demands on leadership, to 'sit on' issues raised by the membership, and others that viewed the role of organiser as involving the facilitation of expressions of industrial conflict. The former organiser type focussed their activities on organisational consolidation, attempting to control union affairs through authority structures. As one organiser put it, these officials, 'did not communicate on-the-job' and showed 'no cooperation with the shop-floor unless they had to'.[24] Primarily this role was conditional upon the existence of closed-

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23 A further point here regarding the Federal Secretary as reported at a General Meeting in 1981, was that the union's Federal Executive had communicated with the State Executive to the effect that should the Federal Secretary be challenged and defeated at the forthcoming election, the union would be financially embarrassed over the payment of entitlements to the ex-Secretary (superannuation, long-service and holiday pay etc.); P. Noack, VBEF, Annual General Meeting, 11.11.1981. Typically, the VBEF union leader was but a caricature of C. Wright Mills' description of the union leader as an 'army general and a parliamentary debater, a political boss and an entrepreneur, a rebel and a disciplinarian', New Men of Power, Harcourt Brace, New York, 1948, p. 9.

24 Personal Interview, C.K. Lane, 22.8.1980.

shop provisions extending to the majority of the membership together with the concentration of membership in four large vehicle producing worksites. In contrast, the latter type resembling AMFSU organisers acted as full-time 'flying shop stewards' seeing their place in operational terms at the frontier of control. This type of organiser was involved in some independent negotiations with management over issues outside the industrial award.[25]

The organisers of which in 1983 there were four in addition to the Secretary and Assistant Secretary positions, were elected by postal ballot of the union's entire financial membership for four year terms. Over the previous decade this selection method enabled two 'anti-machine' activists to be elected organisers, against the endorsement of the remaining officials, primarily by mobilising support from the larger worksites of GMH (Elizabeth) and Chrysler (Tonsley-Lonsdale).[26] One of these organisers became seriously ill and died in office after five years in the position; the other remained an 'anti-machine' populist with some links with other union activists but little influence among the officialdom.[27] To offset disaffection and potential sources of resistance, the VBEF 'machine' attempted to recruit officials from each of the major sections or company

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25 For example this often involved 'under the cuff' deals with management at the level of production. Where over-award provisions were granted for specific work processes these were technically not to serve as a precedent to be used either across the worksite or industry. On the other hand, organisers would also police award compliance by union members, often diffusing grievance issues or placating aggrieved members and stewards.

26 One of these organisers was a shop steward who struck a VBEF union official in the early 1970s, was taken to court and fined, and was later elected organiser against the union establishment on a 'left-wing' ticket from GMH Elizabeth. Personal Interview, C.K. Lane, 22.8.1980 and G.C. Meikle, 23.6.1981. Meikle claimed that this organiser, W.S. Peers, had 'soon changed' and 'been fobbed-off by the other officials'.

27 See Chapter VII. This activist organiser, C.K. Lane, retained the support of 'anti-machine' - progressive shop stewards. By late 1984 Lane had become Assistant Secretary through the support of this group.

worksites and to achieve some ethnic balance in correlation to the ethnic origins of the union's membership. In this way, the composition of the officialdom in 1983 consisted of four of British-Australian origin, (but with one of Irish descent), and one each of Italian and Greek origin. These officials with the exception of two from government railway workshop backgrounds, were drawn from different employer areas of membership.

Factional divisions were pronounced among the officials, shop stewards and activists, although such divisions were neither formally entrenched nor essentially characterised by political party orientations. These factions were stable but tended to operate on an issue-oriented basis and retained some fluidity within their compositional nature. Historically the origins of the factional cleavages were related to the antagonism of shop level activists to official collaboration. During the 1980s this factional division assumed a more complex dimension with shop steward activists concerned at the tendency for the officialdom to recruit compliant stewards to serve as 'machine' functionaries in replacing vacant full-time positions. One method through which the 'machine' engineered State-level dominance was by discrediting rank-and-file activist opposition. For example, in the 1976-77 Chrysler disputes referred to in Chapter V the official 'machine' was successful in out-manoeuvring an organised rank-and-file group (including members of the Maoist CPA-ML, Worker Student Alliance as well as International Socialists and anarchists).[28] Collaboration with Chrysler management enhanced the position of the officials during the 'log of claims' campaign, but this did not prevent a series of mass riots between August 1976 and July 1977. The VBEF officials moved against the rank-and-file group by participating with management in compiling a list of fractious union members

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28 G. Hill, 'Anatomy of an Industrial Struggle', Solidarity Motor Bulletins, No. 9, n.d. (1979).

to be dismissed in a mass sacking in July 1977.[29] Events such as this did little to endear the VBEF 'machine' to the membership, and what is more such events clearly indicate the tenuous nature of shop-floor organisation especially it has also adopted an anti-leadership stance. Indeed, with regard to the factionalism between the officialdom and the shop-floor, the behaviour of the VBEF leadership places a new interpretation on C. Wright Mills' depiction of union leaders as 'managers of discontent':[30] the VBEF 'machine' was not essentially managing class discontent but that of its own internal discord.

Essentially, the VBEF factional division existed between the officials' 'solidarity' 'machine bloc' and diverse 'anti-machine' alliances that remained antagonistic to the State and Federal leadership and were generally more responsive to more progressive and militant action. The relative strength of these organisational factions in 1980-83 was as follows.[31]

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29 G. Hill, ibid., p. 11. This was confirmed by the vehicle industry organiser in the AMFSU, Personal Interview, B. Mowbray, 3.9.1980. Mowbray intimated that 'after the bolt-throwing riot the VBU officials (Foreman and Walker) went into the company offices and went through the names of who could be dismissed with the company. Those who had roughed them up and swore at them were picked out as militants and trouble-makers to the union. They went through the company list of employees saying "that one...that one" etc.'. Cf. J. Hinton, Unions and Strikes, Sheed and Ward, London, 1968, pp. 32-6.

30 C. Wright Mills, op.cit., p. 9.

31 Compiled from various empirical estimates including election results, meeting attendance and voting patterns, and union minutes. See for example the 1979 election results in which two elections both registered a turn-out of 29 per cent. In the first election for Assistant Secretary the 'machine' candidate J.D. Bennett recorded 1,608 votes against two 'anti-machine' stewards N. Lesses (570) and P. Pinnegar (408). The second involved the election of organiser. The 'machine' candidate P.W. Meehan defeated M. Hafyn by 1,414 votes to 1,129. VBEF, General Minutes, 9.5.1979 and 12.9.1979. The vote at Foreman's 1975 election (above fn. 22) is also indicative. In a more recent election (1983) for organiser, G. Vassallo defeated shop steward J. Webb by 1,778 votes to 783 in a turnout of 34.1 per cent.

TABLE 6.3: VBEF Factional Identification: Composition of Support 1980-83

	'Solidarity' Machine Bloc	'Anti-Machine' Progressive Group	Overall Union Total
Union Officials	5	1	6
Shop Stewards	20	30	100-130
Activist Members	25	20	50+
Voting Support	1200-1800	800-1200	2000-2600
		Total Membership	8000

This factional division ensured that the 'anti-machine' group, although not united on all issues, possessed the capacity to modify the formal behaviour of the leadership 'machine'. This was particularly the case in the monthly membership meetings where shop stewards and activists performed a series of roles from institutionalised opposition to chaotic disruption. While the non-leadership group were at times acquiescent their main impact was a continual qualification of union leadership activity with all the appearances of a war of attrition. With the protracted resignation of D.J. Foreman and the succession of J.D. Bennett, General Meetings became farcical with none of the senior officials able to command respect.[32] The tactics of the opposing group consisted of preparing questions without notice directed towards

32 This was particularly the case after June 1981. A series of contentious issues, which they evaded rather than confronted, absorbed the leadership during this period. These issues included: the Full Court suspension of the union's lawyer M. Harrison for unprofessional conduct relating to worker compensation claims, avoidance of the 35 hour week campaign, a $9,000 bus protest of shop stewards and officials over the I.A.C. recommendations, the refusal to call mass meetings, financial accountability, over-affiliation to the UTLC and ALP, proxy-delegates to the ALP and steward resignations.

matters on which the leadership had little answer.[33] In the leadership's confusion the group would challenge the Secretary and Chairperson's rulings in order that a vote over the issue could be taken. This in effect launched a series of no-confidence motions against the leadership at regular intervals. Ultimately, by late 1981 the Chairman-President was sufficiently intimidated to refrain absolutely from making any rulings except as a last resort. As part of thisgeneral leadership exasperation together with the union's precarious financial position, the Executive in 1981 placed the administrative management of the union in the hands of a contract management advice bureau, Adelaide Executive Services.[34]

Factional composition was less reflected at the level of the officialdom because of the general election provision for organisers and the strength of the 'machine ticket'. These mechanisms were not restricted to the areas of that organiser's responsibility making it difficult for sectional opposition groups to initiate specific workplace-located challenges. Indeed, 'machine' organisers were structurally difficult to defeat due to the fact that opposing forces were required to mobilise broad support throughout the financial membership. In other words, strong oppositional groups in one plant were not likely to hold significant influence in another or across the smaller workshops. Organisers facing re-election were challenged, but the

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33 Often questions centred on the deteriorating financial situation of the union, for example, General Meetings, 14.10.1981 and 11.11.1981. 'Anti-machine' shop stewards were primarily 'stirrers' seeking to embarrass the officialdom within certain limits but not to the public detriment of the union. As Martin noted, these opponents tended to be either 'traditional opponents of the administration...[or] careerists who see nuisance value as the best guarantee of promotion into the higher ranks' of the union. R. Martin, 'Union Democracy: An Explanatory Framework', Sociology, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1968, p. 217.

34 Adelaide Executive Services was personally approached by State Secretary Bennett without informing the membership during October and November 1981. Bennett signed a four-year contract for their services, which included advice on office staffing, computerised accounting and a monthly contributions record. Their services which were to cost under $10,000 for four years were premised on streamlining office administration and saving the union $40,000-50,000 over five years. VBEF, General Meeting, 9.12.1981.

union operated on the unwritten convention that existing officials were collectively endorsed by the entire officialdom. Hence, while two organisers had broken the dominance of the 'machine' in recent years, they had both been incorporated within the hierarchy and the 'machine' became responsible for their continued re-election. In maintaining the leadership bloc and balancing the sectional composition of the officials, the 'machine' operated 'union tickets' which listed the candidates with 'machine' endorsement. These 'tickets' under the label of the 'Solidarity' group were endorsed unanimously by the full-time officials.[35] In order to finance 'Solidarity', the full-time officials operated their collective fighting fund into which (in 1981-82) each contributed $5 per week. This fighting fund financed the 'Solidarity' campaign for elections of senior officials, organisers and the State Executive Committee in producing promotional material and the 'how-to-vote tickets'.[36] As a result, 'machine' 'Solidarity' operations in effect meant that the real elections for union office were conducted within the union's Executive 'machine' and that those decisions were merely ratified by members.

Finally, because of the internal sequential promotion that existed within the officialdom, the requirement of subsequent parliamentary careers for Secretaries and the traditionally influential role of the union in Labor

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35 Two VBEF 'Solidarity' how-to-vote tickets are included in the accompanying documents in Appendix VIII.

36 Personal Interview, C.K.Lane, 2.9.1980; and P. Noack, 2.2.1982. Shop stewards believed this fighting fund to be union money. At one stage a shop steward activist and UTLC delegate approached the union for fighting fund donations to be paid to an 'anti-machine' shop floor ticket. The minutes recorded that

> The Secretary reported to the Executive that he had received correspondence from A. Harris, requesting a donation of $200 be granted to support a "United Shop Floor Ticket" in the forthcoming Executive election. [The Executive resolved] 'That no monies be granted to any candidate or candidates, and that it is the personal responsibility of each candidate to pay their own expenses in any elected position within the union'.

VBEF, State Executive Minutes, 6.7.1977, p. 3.

politics, the VBEF leadership, shop stewards and (by 1980-83) member activists were almost exclusively ALP members. All six officials were aligned to the ALP although their participation in the Party was generally conditional upon seniority within the union officialdom. In particular, VBEF officials were not committed Labor Party activists with long histories of activism, but rather developed enthusiasm correlative to the extent that they required subsequent career prospects. Shop stewards were also predominantly ALP aligned.[37] It was evident that no other formal political party was represented at the shop steward level with the exception of one CPA deputy shop steward from GMH Elizabeth. Moreoever, as will be discussed in the following chapter, party political allegiance was not in itself a prime reason for the existing leadership having sought office. In short, by the 1980s recession party political alignments corresponded neither to the cause nor effect of factionalism in the VBEF in South Australia.

III. AMFSU

Since 1956 four State Secretaries have occupied that position from the AEU to the AMFSU. Two of these Secretaries held office for nine and twelve years, while the present incumbent M.F. Tumbers assumed office in mid-1982. In comparison with the VBEF, metal worker officials experienced far less security of further career employment either in terms of internal promotion or supplementary office in parliament.[38] This has resulted in a relatively lower turnover of senior officials with State Secretaries regularly standing for re-election. Nonetheless, some flexibility has arisen in the officialdom hierarchy as a result of organisational mergers rather

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37 See Appendix IV(a), Q.175. Two-thirds of the VBEF stewards, the highest proportion of all three unions, were ALP members.

38 For example J. Goss State Secretary 1956-65 on losing to E. Bicknett in 1965 waited until 1972 to become the full-time Compensation Officer of the then AMWU. Three metalworker organisers (junior officials) did, however, accept positions outside the union: two (J.E. Shannon and R.J. Gregory) became State Secretary of the UTLC while one (H.H. O'Neill) became State Secretary of the ALP. Both O'Neill and Gregory subsequently entered State Parliament as ALP MPs.

than personal turnover, although two organisers during the 1970s transferred to the UTLC while the third most senior position changed hands due to the electoral defeat of the incumbent official. The means of career extension operated by the VBEF in purchasing safe ALP seats in parliament, was not generally a feature common to the AMFSU leadership.[39] Notwithstanding the fact that metal worker affiliation contributions to the ALP would entitle the union to similar numbers of parliamentary seats as the VBEF, this method of leadership turnover had only infrequently been adopted and had certainly not assumed the ritualistic patterns of the Vehicle Builders. The move of the previous State Secretary to Federal Parliament was an exception for the union, due partly to the rivalry between political factions within the organisation which effectively isolated the moderate-left J.L. Scott from broad-based support from among the other officials.

Table 6.4 lists the State Secretaries for the AMFSU and preceding organisations, although the various amalgamations make a more historical series problematic.

TABLE 6.4: State Secretaries AEU-AMFSU Period in Office and Further Career

Date in Office		Secretary	Subsequent Position
AEU	1956-65	J. Goss	Eventually Compensation Officer for the AMWU
	1965-69	E. Bicknett	
AMWU	1969-81	J.L. Scott	ALP MHR for Hindmarsh
	1982	M.F. Tumbers	

39 Martin in his study of the political development of Australian trade unionism noted that the 'lack of interest in political careers is probably strongest among the officials of unions, such as the Amalgamated Engineering Union, in which there exists strong loyalty to the union and a corporate pride in its capacity as an industrial organisation'. R.M. Martin, 'Trade Unions and the State in Australia', Ph.D. Thesis, Australian National University, Canberra, 1958, p. 66.

Comparing the tenure of State Secretaries across the three unions examined in this study, it was evident that the degree of technical and/or manual skill encompassed by the union and the level of leadership tenure were related. From 1961 when the ADSTE State secretaryship was established as a full-time position, that union had appointed a total of two Secretaries with an average of 12 years of service each, over the same time the AMFSU had appointed four with a service average of 6 years, and the VBEF with six Secretaries each had an average of 4 years of service. Contributing to this correlation was the various collective attitudes toward office-holding distinguishing the three separate unions. The officials and potential leadership strata in the VBEF regarded full-time office as a major improvement in their living standards and working environment.[40] AMFSU leaders and stewards regarded union office more in terms of commitment to unionism, but requiring specialised expertise and enormous stamina for relatively meagre financial rewards.[41] In relation to the Branch Councillors and Executive

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40 It was clear that VBEF officials and potential officials viewed full-time union responsibility as the main route of escape from the drudgery of the assembly line. Personal Interviews with D.J. Foreman, 28.5.1981 and J.D. Bennett, 28.10.1980. One steward commenting on the lack of leadership talent attracted by the union said, 'if this is what we have for the next 10-15 years then we've nothing, a void, that's all. There's Bennett, Meehan, Walker, they're all hopeless - they can't speak [at meetings], Meehan and Walker are lazy bastards'. Personal Interview, F. Morris, 11.8.1981. This attitude was common among 'anti-machine' stewards and served to enhance their cohesiveness.

41 Personal Interview, J. O'Neill, 16.7.1980. In 1980 the salary of the State Secretary was approximately $13,000 per annum plus the use of a motor vehicle. In 1980 AMWSU organiser B. Mowbray received $9,778 net ($189 per week) in wages (Personal Interview, B. Mowbray, 3.9.1980). In contrast the ASE State Secretary was paid in excess of $400 per week (AMWSU Shop Stewards School, 5.3.1979). The State Secretary of ADSTE received a salary package of $18,654 in 1978 and $30,042 in 1982 while organisers received $14,552 in 1978 and $23,926 in 1982 ('Salary Investigation Report - November 1982', ADSTE, Branch Council Minutes, 21.12.1982). The AMFSU salaries for officials were determined by National Conference using the formula of 156 per cent of the toolmakers' basic rate under the Metal Industry Award NSW, plus $35 expenses. See 1980 AMWSU National Conference Decisions, The Metal Worker: Supplement, July 1980. The State Secretary of ADSTE G.C. Meikle was categorical in stating that he 'wouldn't work for what the metalworkers pay their officials', Personal Interview, 23.6.1981.

members of ADSTE, their appreciation of office-holding was paradoxical: union positions were seen as important to the organisation, requiring specialised skills and temperament, while at the same time were viewed as demanding, less technically satisfying and often on a personal level less prestigious than their regular occupations.[42] ADSTE's ambivalence toward office-holding was particularly illustrated in the case already recounted where no union member solicited for the organiser position in 1981.

The most significant aspect characterising the officialdom of the metal-workers' union was the composition of the union's full-time officers following the amalgamation of 1972-73. AMWU Enabling Rules provided for three full-time officials from each of the AEU and BBS together with a complement of two officials from the SMWIU. The process of amalgamation installed the State Secretary of the AEU as the equivalent in the AMWU whereas the South Australian Branch Secretaries of the SMWIU and the BBS adopted the roles of Assistant State Secretary and State President respectively.[43] Excluding these executive officers, five additional organisers were established, four covering industry sectors in the Adelaide metropolitan area and one based as a regional official in Whyalla servicing the steel works and initially the now collapsed shipbuilding industry. The post-1972 metalworkers' leader-ship composition and changes within the officialdom are produced in

Table 6.5

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42 Only one ADSTE activist demonstrated enthusiasm for full-time union duties during the period of investigation. This person, G. Harris, Senior Technical Grades representative from GMH Elizabeth, was Federal Conference delegate for eleven years before being appointed to an industrial officer's position in Federal Office (Federal Organiser) in April 1983. See ADSTE, SA News Bulletin, June 1983, p. 1. As in the AMFSU an ordinary member becoming an industrial officer would generally be financially disadvantaged, work a longer working week and with being salaried not be eligible for overtime.

43 'AMWU Enabling Rules', Supplement to AMWSU Rules, Surry Hills, 1979. pp. 109-136.

TABLE 6.5: AMWU-AMFSU Officials, 1972-83

Position	1972-75 (AMWU)	1978 (AMWSU)	1980/1 (AMWSU)	1981 (Dec.) (AMWSU)	1983 (AMFSU)
President/Organiser	L.W. Heffernan (BBS)	B. Pointer	B. Pointer	B. Pointer	B. Pointer
Secretary	J.L. Scott (AEU)	J.L. Scott	--	M. Tumbers	M. Tumbers
Assistant Secretary	L.G. Lean (SMWIU)	L.G. Lean	L.G. Lean**	S. Naqui	S. Naqui
Org. Div. 1 (Whyalla)	S. Dickinson (BBS)	S. Dickinson	D. Elkins	D. Elkins	D. Elkins
Org. Div. 2 (Public Sector)	R.J. Gregory* (AEU)	J. Lodge	J. Lodge	J. Lodge	J. Lodge
Org. Div. 3 (Metal Ind.)	E.N. Wyman (BBS)	E.N. Wyman	E.N. Wyman	E.N. Wyman	E.N. Wyman
Org. Div. 4 (Vehic. Ind.)	B. Pointer (AEU)	B. Mowbray	B. Mowbray	B. Mowbray	B. Mowbray
Org. Div. 5 (Sheet Metal/ Fabrication)	M. Tumbers (SMWIU)	M. Tumbers	M. Tumbers+	J. O'Neill	J. O'Neill

* Elected to Secretary of UTLC 1976

** L.G. Lean was defeated in a Statewide election,

\+ Following the election of J.L. Scott to Federal Parliament in October 1980 the position of State Secretary was technically unfilled due to rule changes. During this time M. Tumbers was Acting Secretary with J. O'Neill acting organiser.

The AMFSU organisers have structurally been required to combine the role of 'flying shop steward' involving immediate and informal negotiating functions, with full-time administrative and legislative duties. This is because under conditions of compulsory arbitration the metal trades unions have traditionally conducted over-award bargaining setting the pace of changes to wage levels across industry. The peculiar nature of the organiser's position was related to limitations on autonomous workplace bargaining in Australia, the geographic dimensions and regional segregation of industry, and the relatively high density of union membership. This latter factor implied that the primary role of the metalworker organiser has not been one of 'organising' recruitment.[44] Instead, organisers fulfil a myriad of duties including: servicing union members at the workshop level, shop steward liaison, addressing factory gate and lunchtime union meetings, handling disputes with management, strike organising and flying picket activity, administration and regular report drafting, as well as industrial advocacy and court appearances before industrial tribunals. In the structural disjuncture between senior union officials, plant management, industrial arbitrators and the shop-floor, the organiser role developed especially in the AMFSU into a full-time servicing and liaison officer with limited day-to-day decision-making discretion. For the most part membership servicing by AMFSU organisers, unlike the regular pattern of visits to the worksites practised in the VBEF, was dependent upon specific issues of conflict arising

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44 Unlike many United States union organisers, Australian organisers spend very little time involved in membership recruitment. Rather with a high level of unionisation extant, union organisers essentially service existing members not organise new membership. Naturally organisers are not averse to signing up new members, but under Australian industrial relations such officials are more likely to seek to cover legitimately (i.e. through arbitration) new areas of job classification or less unionised sectors. In British terminology, organisers approximate senior shop steward convenors engaged full-time on union duties and with multi-worksite responsibilities. Organisers are often responsible (rather than worksite representatives) for negotiating specific enterprise-level makeshift agreements relating to industrial relations practice.

from the arena of the worksite.[45] This does not imply that much time was expended at the union office, rather that their weekly schedules were sufficiently occupied with site grievances that regular workshop visits with no particular issue at stake were rarely possible.

According to the present State Secretary of the AMFSU in South Australia, factionalism within the union was neither necessary nor inevitable but it certainly produced a politically healthy and effective industrial organisation.[46] Dissent within the confines of the organisation was seen more as a reflection of alternative rank-and-file policy expressions than obstruction or opportunism on behalf of dissident factions. Indeed, a certain level of difference of opinion over tactics was seen as an advantage to the reflexes of the organisation in facing economic and political change. Strategically, alternative factional policies posed real constraints on executive power in that counterproposals and compromises existed continually in the debate over policy implementation. In terms of union factionalism the AMFSU was the most politically polarised union of the three studied. Above simple oppositional groupings in the leadership strata, personality clashes or rivalry, the AMFSU factions were entrenched and consciously maintained divisions with definite commitments to formal political parties. However, a series of cohesive factors prevented these factions from engaging in overt internecine feuding, namely: the high degree of internal union discipline,

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45 Personal Interview, J. O'Neill, 16.7.1980. O'Neill found that 'organisers don't whip up members' feelings. Mostly we come in to cool off a dispute. We only get the jobs in the factories which are in trouble. We just don't get the luxury of going into a factory and having a cup of coffee and quiet chat with a steward'. Indeed, a standing joke existed among union officials, more ironic than humerous, that the persons who most needed an industrial award protecting their conditions were union organisers.

46 Personal Interview, M.F. Tumbers, 24.12.1982. Tumbers' view of union factionalism approximated that outlined by R. Martin, op.cit., especially pp. 206-7 and 212-3. See also M. Dickenson's formal political discussion of union factionalism in 'The Effects of Parties and Factions on Trade Union Elections', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1981.

the relatively balanced state of the factional groupings, the cadre shop steward movement which purposively monitored factional friction and recruitment among the officialdom, and finally the successful electoral challenge from the 'cowboy' right in the person of S. Naqui, who as an experienced outsider of dubious membership captured the post of Assistant Secretary.[47]

The factional structure of the AMFSU was one largely inherited and maintained from the three unions which had amalgamated in 1972. The dominant faction within the union during the late 1970s and early 1980s consisted of the group known as the ALP Left Caucus. This amalgam group solidified into a recognisable and regularly convening faction over this time as a result ofattempts from the other major faction to introduce their own supporters into key union positions and in jockeying for the vacant position

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47 The Naqui challenge began with his accusation of official indifference to his sacking from short-term employment for being incapable of performing skilled tradesman's work. His grievance with the union was also reinforced by feelings of frustration with the officialdom over the containment of shop steward area councils and the lack of branch-level decision-making powers. S. Naqui then unemployed nominated for the position of assistant State secretary but was rejected by the union's returning officer on the grounds of being unfinancial. His appeal to the State Council which lasted from 9.30am until 2.00pm declined into a series of emotional tirades from both sides. The State President summarised the officials' attitude accordingly:

> We refuse to have you slander the union. We require you to stop saying things which are untrue about the union. The State Council is the head of this organisation, this is where matters are brought up, and this is the leadership. You have to stop saying these things. State Council is not here to do what you or the Christies Beach Branch says it ought to'.

(B. Pointer, State Council, 6.8.1980).
In October 1980 it was announced that M.F. Tumbers would stand unopposed for the vacant State secretaryship. At the December 1980 State Council meeting it was reported that Naqui had been dismissed as Branch Secretary and that the union officer T. Gnatenko had been elected to the position, (AMWSU, State Council Minutes, 3.12.1980). Naqui commenced proceedings with the Federal Court and with the Industrial Relations Bureau to overturn the re-election of SPA member L.G. Lean as Assistant Secretary in December. The Federal Court case held 24-26.3.1981 annulled the election and ordered new elections on technical grounds (i.e. that while Naqui was unfinancial he had possessed an "OK" card) and ruled that the ballot be in a court-controlled full postal ballot, with nominations closing 30.6.1981 and a ballot

conducted between 24.9.1981 and 14.10.1981. In May 1981 Naqui announced his intention to stand on a ('cowboy'-right) platform attacking the existing leadership bloc. As nominations closed it was apparent that four nominations had been received: L.G. Lean (current Assistant Secretary - SPA faction), S. Naqui (unemployed - right independent), J. Hughes (Whyalla Branch Secretary - independent) and T.G. Roberts (S.E. shop steward - Left Caucus faction), (see Press Reports as listed in Appendix VIII). Lean (SPA) was supported by Pointer and Mowbray (SPA), Tumbers, Elkins and Saunders (Left Caucus) while Roberts received support from other Left Caucus officials: Wyman, Lodge, O'Neill and Gnatenko as well as the Left Caucus shop stewards (29 stewards and 150 members endorsed Roberts' ticket). With the union officials split Naqui emerged successful in the declaration of the poll. Voting figures were: Lean 908, Naqui 1,396, Hughes 355 and Roberts 805 and following the distribution of preferences Naqui held 1,811 votes to Lean's 1,522 (Advertiser, 16.10.1981, p. 1 and 10). Five days after his victory Naqui launched a challenge to the election of the incumbent State Secretary, M. Tumbers, on the grounds of irregularities in the election process and a financial error showing Tumbers to be not entirely financial. The left responded by charges of electoral mispractices ('ballot stuffing') in that and the subsequent Carmichael/Scott - Miller/Kelly national election (M. Tumbers, State Council Meeting, 2.6.1982; Advertiser, 29.10.1981, p.10 and Tribune, 19.5.1982, p.5 - cf. counter charges against the Victorian AMWSU branch, National Times, 13-19.9.1981, p. 4).

Following Naqui's election the union officialdom attempted once more to prevent him assuming office through a series of last ditch measures centring on the authority of the Australian Electoral Office over union rules. The Advertiser newspaper gave the Naqui affair much prominence, regarding him as a martyr: an 'unemployed outsider', a 'back-to-basics' advocate, an 'anti-Communist' campaigner and an independent rank-and-filer in a threadbare suit. The Advertiser's attention to Naqui was not impeded by his opposition to the 35 hour week campaign, his opposition to union 'politics' and his support of managerial prerogatives (Advertiser, 3.12.1981, p. 3). Naqui took office on 11.11.1981 after national union officials advised State officials to accept his election. The strategy of the State officialdom then became to expose Naqui to the membership in order that they should experience the effects of the Right's ploy and reject him at the next election. In a subsequent interview the union's State Secretary claimed that 'Naqui would not subscribe to the union's discipline... that State Council had to discipline him over statements to the public and media'. He added that numerous telegrams from members had been received calling for Naqui's resignation and that 'on current behaviour' he was 'likely to be challenged at the next election' but it was 'unlikely to be by more than one Left candidate' (Personal Interview, M.F. Tumbers, 24.12. 1982).

In Naqui's right challenge he received support from the right-wing Catholic National Civic Council, the union's right-wing Reform Group, the right-wing 'machine' of the ALP including the State PLP, and some sources also indicated that the Liberal Party assisted. While he was unemployed and responsible for three children, Naqui's campaign cost over $4,000 in 1981 not including subsequent legal costs. It involved how-to-vote information, printed leaflets, mail charges and initial legal charges. See Tribune, 21.10.1981, p. 4; Advertiser, 17.10.1981, p. 3; Tribune, 18.11.1981, p. 5 and 19.5.1982, p. 5.

of State secretary from mid-1980.[48] This second organised faction was comprised of members of the Socialist Party of Australia, a Moscow aligned communist party which had broken away from another splinter left party, the Communist Party of Australia in 1971 over the CPA's critical stance toward the Soviet Union. Active in the promotion of their leadership oriented Party within the union, this faction frequently provided the union with SPA literature and material from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Two major setbacks for the SPA faction during 1980-82 were the defeat of SPA member L.G. Lean from the position of assistant secretary, and the State secretaryship being directed toward M. Tumbers, who was more closely aligned with the Left Caucus faction. The CPA, a declining strength in South Australia, held no office in the union, although certain activists were members of this Party and one officer was regarded as sympathetic. Finally, S. Naqui had not aligned himself with either major faction at the leadership level, but continued to operate as a rightist 'maverick', convinced of his mission to 'clean up' the union and rid it of communist influence. The overall composition of the organisational factions appeared during 1980-83 as follows.

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48 This ALP Left Caucus was the successor to the victorious Communist-ALP faction that was challenged in the 1950s and 1960s by the anti-communist groupers 'opposition' (NCC-DLP): see T. Sheridan Mindful Militants, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1975, Chapters 8 and 9. By the 1980s after a period of increased communist (SPA) influence in the South Australian branch leadership, an experienced shop steward (ALP) stated that

> The ALP'ers are trying to open things up, but it'll probably go the same way - they'll [the officials-Left Caucus] just allow those they trust in but it might be better...I think that your face has to fit before they want you in the place.

Personal Interview, AMWSU Shop Steward, 26.3.1981.

TABLE 6.6: AMFSU Factional Identification: Composition of Support 1980-83

	ALP Left Caucus	SPA	CPA	Non-Aligned	Overall Union Total
Union Officials/ Officers	6	3	-	1	10
Shop Stewards	50-100	10	2	5	650
Activist Members	100	5	-	5	110
Voting Support	1100-1500	900	50	1300-1700	3400-4200
				Total Membership	13,000

* Includes 8 officials and 2 officers; should the three stewards who fulfilled periods on delegation as officials be included then CPA officials would register 1 and Left Caucus 8.

Factional composition at the level of the officialdom was sustained through the combined factional electoral 'machine' (which operated under various titles such as: 'Progressive Committee', 'militant and progressive' shop stewards, and 'Defend the Union for Rank-and-File Control') and through the procedure of electing divisional organisers at ballots held at summoned meetings of the union branches.[49] The AMFSU maintained a perennial but surreptitious committee to re-elect officials, which in election campaigns established itself on a semi-formal basis. This committee, involving a broad left front of officials together with activist shop stewards engaged in fund raising, unity-ticket endorsement and the longer-term negotiations

49 See AMWSU campaign literature in Appendix VIII documents. Divisional organisers were elected either through branch ballots or through postal provisions for members who had so indicated.

over potentially suitable candidates for future union office.[50] Further whereas VBEF organisers were elected from the entire financial membership by means of government supervised postal vote, AMFSU organisers were able to establish support within specific areas of responsibility and together with 'machine' endorsement encourage these supporters to attend the ballot meeting. In many ways it was possible for branch activists and shop stewards in an organiser division to cement the position of an organiser or secure the election of a faction candidate independently of the prevailing faction dominant within the union.[51] This allowed organisers to develop substantial power bases within their divisional responsibilities making their position more or less immune from challenge. For instance M.F. Tumbers who was elected unopposed to the position of State secretary in May 1981, had served continuously as a full-time union official (organiser Div. 5) since 1965 never having faced an electoral challenge.[52] Factional dissention was nevertheless heightened in the event of an electoral

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50 The AMFSU fighting funds consisted of a State officials' fund together with ad hoc funds such as the 'Defend the Union' Scott/Carmichael fund commenced in 1982. Donation receipts from this fund are included in Appendix VIII. The Left Caucus group of officials and shop stewards also met to select and endorse ALP candidates for parliamentary pre-selection, such as the meeting at TUTA 1.12.1980, at which a number of candidates were endorsed against the ALP 'machine ticket'.

51 This point was underlined by State Secretary, Personal Interview, M.F. Tumbers, 24.12.1982. This is not to assert that the existing composition or balance of factional groups was not considered by the union's electoral machine and especially the activist shop stewards. As well existing officials qualified their factional support. Tumbers was unaligned before becoming State Secretary but joined the Left Caucus in order to retain their support. Furthermore, following the defeat of the SPA Assistant State Secretary in 1981, one of the union's organisers previously not sympathetic began to show support for the SPA faction.

52 Personal Interview, M.F. Tumbers, 24.12. 1982.

contest over a vacancy arising in an official position.[53] Under these conditions an outgoing organiser may attempt to introduce an endorsed successor with similar factional connections in order to retain the political position of the faction in the union.

Moreoever, the factional composition was sustained through 'machine' recruitment patterns involving the initiation of activist shop stewards (often State Councillors) into full-time office via short term appointments. These stewards were officially placed 'on delegation' to the officialdom (State Council) and served as acting organisers usually for a period of three months or more. In effect, the process involving the existing officials (divided between the two distinct factions), selecting and promoting particular activists to union office corresponded to a semi-collegiate system of recruitment based on term probation.[54] By familiarising themselves both with the requirements of union office and with their prospective constituents these stewards 'on delegation' to the committee of management were progressively nurtured into the role of organiser. Thus, leadership appointments represented an effective apprenticeship in full-time union

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53 See the electoral contest between B. Mowbray and M. Appleby in 1976. Mowbray (SPA) was challenging for the organiser position previously held by B. Pointer (SPA). His opponent Appleby was centre-ALP employed at a large engineering factory Perry Engineering. Mowbray was endorsed unanimously by the AMWU Progressive Committee of SPA, ALP Left Caucus and steward activists. After winning the position (by 295 to 141 votes) Mowbray was later re-elected unopposed at the end of his first term. Appleby, a veteran electoral challenger, unsuccessfully challenged the existing State Secretary in 1977. (Scott 453 votes, Appleby 234 votes). In recent years, only in the Naqui/Lean/Roberts contest for Assistant State Secretary did SPA and the Left Caucus factions divide their electoral support.

54 See Bulletin, 15.6.1982, pp. 41-2. The union's executive was empowered to employ a member (usually a shop steward or activist) 'on delegation'. This involved full-time union duties for the period of delegation. Such temporary positions were created should officials be sick, on leave or seconded (e.g. to MTF), or should the union have a full-time vacant position and required the services immediately. The AMFSU, ADSTE and VBEF each employed the method of temporary official delegation. During the period of research the AMFSU separately appointed 5 activists to temporary organiser positions, the VBEF 3, and ADSTE one in 1982.

office-holding for union activists who fostered ambitions of becoming union leaders and who had demonstrated substantial commitment to one of the major factions. State Councillors or other union activists without strong factional alignment were not generally initiated into the apprenticeship scheme of joining the officialdom 'on delegation'. Neither was this recruitment process particularly marked by craft sectionalism from pre-amalgamation unions. Accordingly, the organiser replacing M. Tumbers (an ex-SMWIU official) was J. O'Neill a shop steward from the vehicle industry who won endorsement through his particular diligence and expertise as well as his political alignment with the Left Caucus faction. This example served to illustrate the essential character of AMFSU factionalism, that overt political cleavages were secondary to performance criteria but influenced by the existing faction composition, 'machine' collegiate selection[55] and by structural opportunities for organisers (temporary and permanent) to develop substantial support in the areas they serviced.

The Nature of Executive Centralism Within the State-level Union

The highly centralised nature of decision-making emerged as a common element in each of the three unions under investigation.[56] Yet, a dual tier

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55 In this sense, Allen's claim that in examining methods of selection of union officials 'the procedures used bear no relation to the type of leaders chosen' is disputed. From the above evidence AMFSU electoral selection through politically distinct factions produced the most able administrators and industrial service organisers. The VBEF with its selection through sequential promotion tended to elevate incompetence, while ADSTE had appointed (initially) both the present Secretary and full-time officers who had displayed diverse ability and enthusiasm. Cf. V.L. Allen, Power in Trade Unions, Longmans Green, London, 1954, p. 213.

56 This proposition is generally regarded as axiomatic with regard to union organisation. Certainly, leadership theory related to the labour movement has provided ample evidence sustaining this view. A critique of the assumptions of much of this theory is presented in the following chapter which examines the relationship between leadership centralisation and union government, while Chapter VIII examines the nature of AMFSU leadership decision-making in relation to policy formulation and implementation between State and Federal levels of the union officialdom.

of executive dominance was pronounced in every case. In two unions, the AMFSU and VBEF, a greater centralisation of decision-making was evident among the federal officialdom based inter-state.[57] Hence, one of the central questions confronting research into the politics of unionism concerns not the issue of whether executive dominance exists, but rather the extent, nature and different levels at which executive decision-making power is pronounced. As such, that some administrative and legislative power was centralised at the State level in each of the three unions of this study is not in question: what is in question is the quantitative and qualitative nature of that centralisation, the consequences and effects on membership mobilisation, and the various methods through which the leaderships structurally maintained their positions internally and externally.

One of the main forms of executive dominance involved the structural facilities of awards or agreements allowing leaders to impose and maintain control over the membership. Arbitration awards centralised the generation of workplace issues at the level of union officials. Generally State officials were called to intervene in shop-floor disputes to enforce or seek to alter award provisions. The award served to underline the power of the official allowing the authority of the industrial tribunal (and employers) to be invoked against membership spontaneity or against unilateral management policies. In seeking to change award provisions or extract over-award margins, union leaders would resort to representative criteria becoming the 'mouth piece' of the members. In such circumstances the AMFSU, for example,

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57 Cf. H.A. Clegg, Trade Unionism under Collective Bargaining, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976. Clegg suggested that under compulsory arbitration 'awards do not have the same centralising effect on union government as industry agreements do. Whether awards are state or federal, the business of applying them reinforces the power of the state secretary rather than that of the national union', p. 49.

employed the 'acid test' of solidarity to gauge membership commitment on the issues of award margins.[58] As a rule of thumb, unless at least sixty per cent of the members were 'on the grass' (i.e. had walked out of the factory and had voted to take industrial action) the issue was not worth pursuing. Where militancy was low arbitration was often used as a scapegoat; where it was high, officials would attempt collective bargaining. Moreover, when only sections of the membership were incensed over some issue, the authority of the award could be invoked thereby absolving the position of the official from apathy. Where membership support close to an absolute majority was extant, the official would proceed to negotiate with management or initiate moves to vary award provisions via the industrial tribunal confident in the knowledge of acting in the capacity of an exemplary representative.

While the nature of compulsory arbitration tended to centralise administration in the hands of the State officialdom, nationwide private industrial agreements conducted generally with federal union officials, such as the vehicle industry agreements, structurally enhanced the position principally of the unions' Federal officialdom. This process was most evident in the VBEF but was of increasing significance in the AMFSU in the aftermath of the 1971 private agreement in the metal industry followed by the 1981 national metal industry agreement.[59] Indeed, a feature of the existing

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58 This point was particularly stressed to shop stewards at AMFSU schools (for example this was stressed at basic shop steward training courses such as 7.3.1979 and 3.6.1980. See also the training manual, AMWSU, 'The Role of the Shop Steward', Education Committee SA, n.d. 1978?). Some ADSTE private industry representatives, especially those in the vehicle industry, held similar views. The President of ADSTE commented that in relation to income maintenance disputation 'you have got to get outside the door [taking action 'on-the-grass'] if you want to make a decision that will hurt the boss'. (C. Brown, ADSTE, Annual General Meeting, 16.2.1982).

59 See Tribune, 25.11.1981, p.5 ('Metal Workers Strike on Pay'); Age, 8.12.1981, p.1 and 4 ('Canberra to Fight Metal Industry Deal'); Advertiser, 8.12.1981, p. 1 ('Employers and Unions Agree'); Australian, 8.12.1981, p. 1 and 2 ('Metal Union Wins Hours-Wages Deal in Return for Peace - Showdown on Shorter Week'). See also the interview with J. Baird, AMWSU, Coordinator, National Research Centre in Tribune, 16.12.1981, p.10.

dualistic system of industrial relations operating in Australia, was that it encouraged bureaucratic control as a unifying element across high densities of unionisation irrespective of the occupational character of the union. Union leadership operating within this structure, therefore, had a strong interest in maintaining and defending the existing system, and in this sense participated in their own subordination in deflecting collective resistance to class power. Their objectives and behaviour corresponded to the pressures of everyday organisational control given the nature and level of industrial negotiation with management.[60]

Three distinct types of leadership dominance emerged at the State level as depicted in Table 6.7. First, ADSTE which had a smaller and largely honorary executive leadership was characterised by an administratively oriented leadership rather than one oriented toward bureaucratic control. The union's reconciliatory leadership formed a 'progressive' core, constituting a loosely structured and politically undisciplined vanguard in advance of the area representatives and membership.[61] The second type

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60 For discussion see A. Flanders, Trade Unions, Hutchinson, London (Seventh Edition), 1968, Chapter 3 especially pp. 48-50; S. Clegg and D. Dunkerley, Organization, Class and Control, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1980, Chapter 13; R.W. Connell and T. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 22-24; and R. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism, Pluto Press, London, 1971, Part 2.

61 See A.W. Gouldner, 'Attitudes of "Progressive" Trade Union Leaders...' op.cit.. Discussing the Victorian branch, Davis also found that ADSTE

> has a small team of officials which serves a very scattered membership. Member delegates play an active role at the monthly management meeting, although officials predominate in the discussions. An office-steward network of sorts exists, but while highly developed at certain worksites, appears undeveloped overall...A significant proportion of the members make telephone calls to the union office,...the telephone serves as an important channel of communication in this union.

E. Davis, 'Trade Union Democracy',in K. Cole (ed.), Power, Conflict and Control in Australian Trade Unions, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982, p.250.

evident in the AMFSU was essentially democratic centralist in character comprising of both a 'progressive' and disciplined clique but with a developed and highly routinised bureaucratic form. Typically the AMFSU leadership devoted a substantial portion of their time and resources to providing a political vanguard for the union especially in developing the consciousness of cadre shop stewards.[62] With militant craft union origins, AMFSU State officials perceived their role in explicit leadership terms as the 'translation of policy into activity'.[63] The VBEF operated with a 'business' oriented leadership displaying strong internal discipline through an essentially cohesive bureaucracy. This third type of leadership demonstrated greatest political cohesion but rarely performed a leading role in consciousness-raising. Conversely the VBEF officialdom, with the exception of one full-time official, were paternalistic conservatives motivated by collaborationist strategies with both management and the state apparatus.[64] Indeed, centralised control within the VBEF State branch effected membership containment, with the union leaders insulating their positions from the shop-floor struggles and displaying

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62 For an encapsulation of this approach see AMWSU 'Education Officers' Report',(T. Gnatenko) December 1981. According to the report 'the key to our union success has been the comprehensive education programme backed by the research department, which ensured that our shop stewards have always been aware of the issues and how to handle them. ...Our union is a living proof of the slogan "knowledge is power"', p. 10.

63 Personal Interview, M.F. Tumbers, 24.12.1982.

64 Cf. for a conservative view, W.J. Lambden, 'The Ford Strike 1973: A Critical Analysis of the Industrial Relations Processes used by the Vehicle Building Employees' Federation', MBA Research Report, University of Melbourne, 1974. On the conservatism of the South Australian leadership of the VBEF much evidence has already been cited but one example which is illustrative of the leadership's 'false consciousness' is worth recounting. In the interview with J.D. Bennett the Assistant Secretary argued the merits of private health insurance for his wife and family members at length, despite the long-standing ALP policy supporting public health. Bennett's defence, similar to the contemporary Federal Liberal Government, rested on the user-pays principle, 'better' health services under private enterprise and freedom of choice. Personal Interview, J.D. Bennett, 28.10.1980.

a marked lack of capacity to lead the membership in major disputes.[65] Finally, State-level executive dominance in the VBEF and AMFSU was qualified by the Federal leadership which formulated key policy issues and negotiated industrial agreements with the separate employer and multinational bodies.

TABLE 6.7: Patterns of Leadership Dominance Within the State-level Union

	Means of Executive Control	Leadership Type	Leadership Political Character	Relationship with Management
ADSTE	hierarchic, administrative, consensual	nascent leadership, undisciplined	progressive, ALP	reconciliatory
AMFSU	democratic centralist, bureaucratic	disciplined, representative, consciousness-raising vanguard	left progressive, ALP-communist	bargained corporatist
VBEF	cabalistic, bureaucratic	disciplined 'machine', opportunistic	'business', conservative, ALP centre-right	collaborationist

Membership satisfaction with their officialdom, in light of the three outlined patterns of leadership control (see Chart 6.1) highlighted the generally more favourable attitude of members to the 'progressivist' leadership of ADSTE and the AMFSU.[66] Shop stewards, by contrast, in each

65 Compare the national leadership of the British GMWU in relation to the Rank-and-File Strike Committee in T.Lane and K.Roberts, Strike at Pilkingtons, Fontana, Glasgow, 1971; and official indifference to shop floor initiatives in the lengthy strike at a Plymouth engineering firm. T. Beck, The Fine Tubes Strike, Stage 1, London, 1974, especially Chapters 6 and 16.

66 Membership Survey Appendix II(a), Q. 37. Almost one-fifth of VBEF members recorded unfavourable or derogatory opinions toward officials, while under 4 per cent of AMFSU members did the same. See also the member comments in Appendix II(b) especially ADSTE member 34, VBEF members 60, 61, 62 and 86 and AMFSU member 181.

CHART 6.1: Characteristics of Union Leadership Dominance at the State level

Characteristic of Leadership	ADSTE	AMFSU	VBEF
Honorary Leadership	+	-	-
Administrative type	+	-	-
Bureaucratic type	-	+	+
Cohesive	+	+/-	+
Democratic centralist	-	+	-
Cabalistic	-	+/-	+
Disciplined	-	+	+
Factional	-	+	+
Paternalistic	+/-	-	+
Consciousness-raising	+/-	+	-
Progressive	+/-	+	-
Conservative	-	-	+
Policy Implementation	+	+	+
State Leadership formulation of Major Union Policies	-	-	-
Steward encouragement	+/-	+/-	-

(+ = clearly evident characteristic; - = not generally evident characteristic; while +/- = occasionally evident or evident to a limited estent).

of the three unions displayed a dualistic relationship to the respective organisational centralism that characterised their union. On the one hand, stewards depended upon leadership activity, centralised administration and on officials for plant negotiation: yet, organisational centralism often excluded stewards from a prime initiating role leading to the accumulation of structural frustrations.[67] With a major source of weakness in steward organisation being the lack of an effective negotiating role, stewards were constrained to operate as intra-organisational mediators between the officialdom and the rank-and-file. Frustrations with these limitations rose as stewards transferred issues vertically to the officialdom and received little tangible evidence that their concerns had been attended to. Overworked officials typically found that they had little spare time to handle shop steward demands or that little scope for immediate action existed.[68] Hence, in a contradictory manner one expression of executive dominance was the capacity to conduct 'holding operations' with activist

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67 See Appendix IV(a), Q. 61 & Q. 169-170. Steward comments to this effect are included in Appendix IV(b) especially ADSTE steward 11, VBEF stewards 32, 35 and 45, (cf. AMFSU 68). One point of relevance here was that shop stewards were not allowed access to each other's addresses by the officialdom. This issue caused concern in the AMFSU where stewards tended to be more dispersed (AMWSU Shop Steward School, 28.7.1980). The officials including the President B. Pointer refused to grant this access on the grounds that the lists may fall into the wrong hands, and that the 'union has had a long-standing policy not to release such information to anyone - even our own members'. This suppression of steward communication was ironic given that the union provided lists of stewards and their addresses to employers such as GMH.

68 Nevertheless, the union executive committees attempted to introduce only those issues onto the executive agenda with which they were not uncomfortable. Sensitive issues in the AMFSU prior to Naqui's election had taken place within the 3-man Administrative Committee. State Council discussed such issues if this containment failed. For example, in the case of Naqui's appeal against the lack of union support over his dismissal, the State Council was confronted with the issue for over two hours. I was not permitted to witness this issue and was asked to sit in the next room - these precautions were to little avail as the shouting was clearly audible:indeed, all that transpired at the meeting could have been heard outside on the street. ADSTE's Executive was marked by collegial cooperation and open discussion, although as issues arose about which the Secretary held reservations, he made certain that a deal of latitude was incorporated for his personal discretion in either handling or pursuing the issue.

stewards. This trend produced intra-organisational tensions toward such means of containment, which paradoxically took the form of stewards charging the leadership with debility or with avoiding the adoption of a more positive vanguardist (i.e, dominant) position.

In this context, an AMFSU full-time officer and ex-shop steward claimed that shop steward action had to receive leadership encouragement:

> There's got to be a feedback from the top. But the stewards don't get it. It means more work for the officials and some of them are lazy in that regard. If they can get away with it they'll do other things instead, which don't involve so much work.[69]

On the question of greater shop steward autonomy he added,

> They've got real grievances. They should have more power but there are some here [at the union's office] who are afraid of giving them power. But the shop stewards shouldn't look upwards to get what they want. In a meeting like that [steward area councils] if those stewards decided something together, then that should be it.[70]

At the shop steward discussion sessions in the AMFSU the lack of steward autonomy over dispute handling proved a major issue of contention, with stewards being critical of 'secret' negotiations with management conducted by organisers or officials. Stewards resented officials 'going over our heads', not least of which because it placed them in a highly compromised position in that they were reluctant to recommend to their members either the acceptance or rejection of negotiation agreements in which they had not participated.[71] Similarly, ADSTE private industry area councillors expressed views to the effect that the 'front line should

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69 Personal Interview, T. Gnatenko, 31.7.1980.

70 Ibid.

71 This was an issue discussed in great detail at the AMWSU Shop Steward School, 3.6.1980.

carry out their own duties rather than push them up to the organiser' and that the 'workplace should take on more issues themselves'.[72] To this effect a number of ADSTE representatives (such as at the Mitsubishi and GMH plants but also at the government utility ETSA) instigated worksite union meetings insisting on organiser attendance, in place of attending regular Branch Council meetings. Such decentralisation and 'factory consciousness' was not discouraged by the Executive but neither was it condoned when it led to the demise of participation in Council and the fragmentation of the organisation.[73]

VBEF shop stewards with less independence from the 'business-type' officialdom than the other unions, generally proceeded to pressure both the Federal and State leadership into taking action on their behalf. For example, over the 35 hour week campaign, toward which the VBEF State Executive were largely indifferent, a senior and militant shop steward in calling for the initiation of a 'serious campaign' proposed that the 'main work has to be done by the leadership'.[74] Where shop stewards at worksite committee levels had ventured to adopt more autonomous shop floor organisation their efforts had been systematically suppressed by the Executive.[75] Two principal mechanisms were used to subordinate shop floor

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72 ADSTE Branch Councillors at Branch Council, 24.2.1981.

73 ADSTE State Secretary G.C. Meikle, Branch Council 24.2.1981. On the self-evaluation of honorary union office holders of their own efficacy, see H.A. Landsberger and C.L. Hulin, 'A Problem for Union Democracy: Officers' Attitudes Toward Union Members', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 14, No. 3, 1961.

74 VBEF shop steward, N. Lesses, General Meeting, 11.8.1981.

75 See Special Meeting of GMH Shop Stewards, VBEF, State Executive Minutes, 17.8.1976. Officials at this meeting (including the Federal and State Secretaries, Assistant Secretary and Past President) attempted to suppress shop steward and mass meeting decisions by dissociating themselves from the 'Action Shop Committee' and attempting to enforce the Federal Executive recommendation for a return to work, lifting of bans and acceptance of the company offer over the award.

steward action: (i) the arbitrary denial of authority to steward bodies through placing decision-making responsibility for the matter subsequently under the jurisdiction of the Executive, and (ii) through attempts to defuse steward initiatives designating them 'ACTU matters' over which the union had minimal control.[76] In a range of unsophisticated ways the VBEF 'business' Executive succeeded in subordinating steward decision-making capacity by overruling decisions, removing stewards from office, refusing to support steward action, bans or even stewards dismissed for union activities, and through attempting to recruit older workers with long company service to shop steward positions.[77] In 'log of claims' negotiations VBEF officials consistently excluded shop steward input.[78] J.D. Bennett as Acting State Secretary, for instance, in 1981 reported on leadership inertia over the campaign for a shorter working week, that

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76 At one General Meeting an altercation between an experienced steward and the union's President caused dissention from the Chairman's ruling over the issue of referring items to the ACTU's policy position in effect constituting a euphemistic ploy for inactivity. The steward claimed 'unions are often caught with their pants down, always waiting for the ACTU to propose action. What I'm asking is for the union to determine now that it will automatically support other unions if the Federal Government de-registers them - and then we can take immediate action'. In response the Chairman argued that 'the ACTU has the power to call on its affiliates for action. We can act then. We should not jump the gun'. VBEF, General Meeting, 11.8.1981.

77 On the officialdom's dismissal of shop stewards see VBEF, State Executive Minutes, 1.6.1977, p.4; and 7.9.1977, p. 8; on the lack of official support for activist stewards sacked for union activities see VBEF, State Executive Minutes, 17.7.1978, p. 2; 13.9.1978, p. 2; 4.10.1978, p. 5. The State Executive regularly directed General Meetings how to vote on Federal Council agenda items, see VBEF, State Executive Minutes, 1.2.1978, p. 4; and this took place at the General Meeting 8.4.1981. J.D. Bennett instructed a GMH Woodville shop steward to 'try to stop guys with only 3 to 4 years with the company from becoming shop stewards. They won't look out for your interests. You should keep it closer to shop stewards with 20 to 25 years experience with the company'. Personal Interview, J.D. Bennett, 28.10.1980.

78 For example, 'The Secretary advised the meeting on the decision of the Federal Executive - that all negotiations on the "Log of Claims" be left in the hands of the Federal Officials'. VBEF, General Meeting Minutes, 12.10.1977, p. 4. See also VBEF, General Meeting Minutes, 10.5.1978, where it was reported that shop stewards were ignorant of the progress of the log of claims negotiations and had to await reports given by the officials, p. 2.

> the Executive decided to take it on a national front [i.e. not proceed at the State level] and attack all GMH plants together. We can't go ahead unless other States do. No meeting had been called of shop stewards in SA. We wouldn't have the shop stewards in [i.e. call a meeting bringing stewards in together] without some instructions from our Federal Officers. We'd have nothing to report.[79]

On the other hand, four months later Bennett reported that in answer to the GMH Elizabeth shop steward committee's demand for a 35 hour week that

> this was an ACTU matter. This meeting [a monthly General Meeting] can put it to the ACTU. But ACTU policy cannot be overturned by a shop steward committee. The VBEF will not proceed with the 35 hour week campaign on an employer-by-employer basis. We should leave it in the hands of the [union's] Federal Executive.[80]

Vehicle industry shop stewards were, to put it euphemistically, unimpressed by this rationale. One summarised much of the 'anti-machine' shop steward attitude thus:

> You either get dictatorship or leadership and we've got dictatorship by the Executive cronies. They dare not face the members. They send them letters, newsletters and notices, but they won't address a mass meeting. There's no leadership talent here, and we've none to look forward to.[81]

Shop steward comments often epitomised the structural tensions between the executive's role and that of the mediating steward. From their perspective the officials' intransigence undermined the potentiality of the activists.

> We passed resolutions and sent them up to them [the union's executive] and that's it. Nothing happened to them. Sometimes it's a waste of time dealing with them.[82]

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79 J.D. Bennett, VBEF General Meeting, 10.6.1981.

80 J.D. Bennett, VBEF General Meeting 14.10.1981.

81 Personal Interview, F. Morris, 11.8.1981.

82 Personal Interview, K.G. Long, 9.7.1980. Further, another shop steward added (and significantly this was stated in the recession but before the mass displacement of labour after 1982), 'We don't deal with them [officials] much anymore. We want to be autonomous, independent, not be tied to what they want to do'. Personal Interview, G. Curtis,9.7.1980.

Statements such as this were frequently expressed. One metal worker shop steward in comparing the VBEF with the AMFSU continued

> We don't recognise [the union office as] 'Head' office. Your VBEF shop stewards do. Their head office can overrule a stopwork decision called by the members. They can and they do - just recently. We call a stopwork and we tell the office that we want someone [a full-time official] down to address the men. They've never refused. Sometimes they ask us to make it another day, a Friday or a Monday, because they're tied up at the Commission or at another meeting at that time...[The VBEF] shop stewards say 'Oh a stopwork meeting - what a good idea', but the next day they come back and say that they're not in it, they can't get involved. They've had pressure from up top. If they ring the office up they have to ask to hold a stopwork meeting. It's not just 'is it OK', they have to ask whether they can hold one and wait for an answer. We just call one and tell the official it's on. We always let them know and try to get their support so that it's 'official'. But if they say no we'd still go ahead. They've never opposed us as yet... [But the VBEF] they've had some trouble with their Federal people. They always have had. Their Federal Executive runs the show. The local boys [State VBEF officials] don't have room to manoeuvre.[83]

For other stewards the lack of steward or membership participation in formal union affairs was perceived as undermining the union's militant strength. A metal worker shop steward noted that,

> we're not organised. We claim to be the best organised organisation in the metal trades. But we're not organised. We're run by 6 or 8 people who attend the branch meeting. If you can't get the members to turn up then the mechanism can't operate.[84]

Yet each executive intentionally precluded representative activists from their formal decision-making process. The State Secretary of ADSTE volunteered

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83 Personal Interview, K.G. Long, 9.7.1980. Sheridan previously noted this organisational tendency for stewards and activists to modify executive behaviour, in that 'rank and file self-assertiveness carried over into internal AEU affairs where active members positively enjoyed bringing quickly to heel the slightest possible tendency towards executive misuse of authority'. T. Sheridan, 'Opposition, Factions and Candidates in AEU Elections in Australia 1907-72', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 22, No. 3, September 1980, p. 294.

84 Assistant Organiser (on delegation), I. Featherstone, Area Council - Central Districts, 16.7.1980.

> I save curly issues for the Executive. If you take them to the Council you get some real discussions and everyone wants their say. They [Council] eventually have the power of veto as well, [but] here [at the Executive level] you can thrash it out and get consensus.[85]

Indeed, the Branch Council possessed influence in decisions to the extent that the Executive was divided over policy. In a consensual Executive, such divisions occurred infrequently mainly due to the high degree of informal but strong collegiality existing between Executive members. Much of this rapport was the result of congenial small group working relationships which had developed over a number of years with a core of the Executive.[86] It had the effect, nonetheless, of centralising decision-making most effectively within the SA branch of ADSTE.

In both the AMFSU and the VBEF the exclusion of stewards, activists and even peripheral officials from formal decision-making was more routinised. The essential difference in this regard between these two unions involved the nature of the exclusion practiced by the leadership. The VBEF leadership practiced exclusion through organisational discipline

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85 Personal Interview, G.C. Meikle, ADSTE Executive Meeting, 12.8.1980.

86 This was particularly the case with C. Meikle, G. Harris, C. Brown and J. Frost with a more recent public sector addition to the collective being E. McAra. The informal liaison between ADSTE Executive members took many forms including: regular visits to the union office by the honorary office-holders, frequent (even daily) phone calls, informal briefing on meeting agendas, and with regard the monthly Federal Executive Committee meetings (attended by G. Harris) the delegate reported that 'after each meeting I have a fairly thorough de-briefing with Colin Meikle to keep the Branch fully up to date with what what transpired at the Federal Executive Committee'. G. Harris, Branch Council Meeting, 23.9.1980.

and a rigid clique control over employer bargaining.[87] An illustration of this practice was the top-level 'no strike-closed shop' agreements signed with Chrysler/Mitsubishi between August and November 1979. These agreements had been discussed between senior Federal and State union officials and the company for three years without negotiations with the servicing organiser or the rank-and-file involved.[88] The agreements were negotiated by Federal Secretary, L. Townsend, Assistant Federal Secretary J.K. Sandilands, State Secretary D.J. Foreman and the union's South Australian solicitor M. Harrison and fifteen management or company directors. VBEF organisers such as W.S. Peers and C.K. Lane were excluded from these negotiations because these meetings were 'not [their] level of talks' according to the senior union officials involved in the process of co-optation.[89] In other words, the VBEF dominant leadership 'machine' had effectively dissociated the subaltern officials and lay officialdom from organisational control and participation in formal decision-making.

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87 The previous State Secretary, D.J. Foreman (1975-81), recounted that

> at the mass meetings there would be recommendations sometimes from the officials, but generally from the shop committees, which they [the rank-and-filers] haven't been in favour with. So they [the contentious recommendations] haven't altogether been from the officials or the committee of management. [The rank-and-filers] haven't found favour with the recommendations from their representatives on-the-job...There were some very nasty meetings down at Chryslers where we had to finally decide whether we would have those meetings because it was dangerous.

Foreman added that many of the 'machine' bloc believed that the union was 'too democratic' in continuing to hold meetings of the membership. Personal Interview, D.J. Foreman, 28.5. 1981. Lambden in his study of the 1973 Ford strike noted the bureaucratic and centralised character of the VBEF. In referring to the union's 1974 demands on the employers Lambden reported that 'the log of claims has again been drawn up "in camera"...without the advice, consent and/or knowledge of the VBEF's membership or lesser officials'. W.J. Lambden, op.cit. p. 113.

88 Personal Interview, C.K. Lane, 2.9.1980.

89 Ibid.

In the AMFSU the process of exclusion was qualitatively of a different character. Shop stewards suffered repressive tolerance: the leadership devoted substantial resources toward developing lay officials into an effective political cadre movement capable of industrially advancing the union's objectives, yet paradoxically the leadership were unprepared to grant greater degrees of autonomy to the shop steward bodies.[90] State and National Councils were the instruments of organisational discipline through which shop floor and branch proposals, steward sector initiatives and executive policies were channelled. Essentially both these State and Federal executive bodies aimed to mobilise and coordinate organisational potential under strong leadership control. For example, during 1980-2 the AMFSU's top-level leadership* arbitrarily and independently pursued: the metal trades log of claims; the negotiations over the (no-strike/38 hour week) industrial agreement finalised in November-December 1981; the social wage-social contract campaign of 1982; and action (e.g. mass rallies) to counter increasing retrenchment in manufacturing from 1982.[91] The point at issue here, was not that the union leadership was not in the position to pursue the above issues, but

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90 For example, area councils possessed no authority to call special membership meetings to initiate industrial action. This effectively debiliated the scope of their activities often reducing them to 'talking shops'.

91 For instance, the 1981 twelve month 'no-strike' agreement was agreed to by the national AMWSU leadership before the membership were consulted. The members were then presented in mass meetings with the no-strike clause as a quid pro quo for the 38 hour week concession. Metal industry mass meetings endorsed the action of the officials in April and November 1981 (mass meeting Trades Hall, 28.4.1981 and mass meeting Apollo Stadium, 17.11.1981). See Advertiser, 28.10.1981, p.7. (Year's Peace for Short Week - Union), and 18.11.1981, p. 13 (Metal Workers Threaten Strike). At these mass meetings members were told that there was no business other than the reports and that they could only vote to accept or reject (not amend) the five point claims of the negotiating committee.

* As Chapter VIII argues these leadership policies were initiated by senior national officials, and national research officers, although initiatives over the retrenchments in manufacturing often stemmed from senior State officials.

that these issues primarily arose and were initiated from within the leadership itself without prior consultation with the membership.[92] As such the democratic centralism of the AMFSU organisation during this period became increasingly centralist and detached from the formal policy-making channels of the union.

This trend was sustained for two reasons. First the 'progressive' Federal leadership 'machine' came under direct challenge from the rightist 'reform group' and as a consequence adopted a policy of defending the existing union. Within the context of the union's democratic centralist framework, this defence centred onsustaining the national leftwing officials in terms of their service to members. The leadership accordingly acted on the premise that to cement their positions they needed to produce tangible results to sustain membership loyalty. Put simply, as a result of an electoral challenge the 'progressive' leadership felt constrained to 'deliver the goods':an objective it attempted to produce through autocratic means. As one senior steward and State Council member reflected

> The leadership is getting too far ahead. Ramming things down people's throats - a very uncomfortable thing is that - you want to regurgitate and get it out.[93]

Second, in order to maintain momentum in this series of initiatives the leadership needed active rank-and-file support. Such involvement inevitably became problematic as the membership were invited to endorse and

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92 A senior AMFSU union leader in South Australia responsible for research intimated that he had not seen the research publication Australia: On The Rack until it appeared on his desk. Chapter VIII continues discussion of this policy initiative.

93 AMFSU State Councillor, B. Sones, State Council, 2.6.1982.

implement policies formulated by the National Office. The dilemma for the leadership in pursuing arbitrary decision-making concerned the tendency for such progressive despotism to undermine leadership credibility. In an attempt to counteract this lack of participatory endorsement the national officialdom supported by sections of the State officialdom in South Australia, autonomously instigated a democratisation campaign entailing the promotion of shop steward industry sector committees to perform the role of a new consolidating force within the organisation. This national decision received support from the South Australian State executive although a number of the ALP Left Caucus faction, themselves products of shop floor struggles, reacted against executive manipulation of the lay officialdom.

Executive dominance in the AMFSU, therefore, contained significant contradictions: insofar as the officialdom pursued centralist and economistic leadership, lay activism was effectively curtailed. As such, rather than the less subtle forms of suppression imposed by the VBEF, the democratic centralism practiced by the AMFSU leadership sought to maintain lay activists in the position of institutionalised suspension. Thus, the AMFSU limited its mediating stewards to the role of political cadres awaiting activation from above without permitting legitimate recognition for the expression of workplace lay autonomy. The limitations of this contradiction and the dualistic tension between executive control and wider participation are reserved for the following chapters.

Conclusion

In the processes of Australian industrial relations the South Australian union officials served to limit the activities of the shop stewards and rank-and-file activists. Such limitation was imposed through

distinct means of control internal to the union organisation, and through vertical integration not only within the union hierarchy but toward management and the state. In ADSTE where shop stewards were least well developed structural control was maintained through the inability of area representatives to affect decision-making. In the VBEF shop stewards and activists were systematically suppressed while the senior officials were closely integrated with the ALP 'machine'. Finally, in the union with the most recognised lay officialdom, the AMFSU, the leadership promoted steward consciousness within given parameters but practised repressive tolerance more consistently toward the development of steward initiatives.

Under such different means of internal control it would be expected that resistance to hierarchic control would emerge. Particularly in the two larger unions opposition to executive dominance was a continuous feature. Indeed, within these unions the position of the shop steward body assumed a sharp contradiction. On the one hand, stewards politically existed as a potential power base within the organisation to counter the dominance of the full-time officials. On the other hand, in the capacity of organisational mediators, they served to consolidate the organisation, defend the union 'machine' and politically legitimise the leadership position of the officialdom. This contradiction directly confronted the union leadership and was not simply related to the maintenance of the officials in office, but was central to the nature of union government and process of policy-making.

CHAPTER VII

UNION GOVERNMENT: PARTICIPATION, BUREAUCRACY AND MOBILISATION

The government and administration of union organisation has a particularly dualistic character. On the one side, political control of union organisations is often centralised. Bureaucratic forms of administration tend to develop which may provide certain organisational advantages and technical efficiency. On the other side, bureaucratic structures serve to limit membership participation often reducing their formal influence to union government. Such limitations relate to the potential of unions to mobilise as political forces in capitalist economies. The strategies and attainments of union action will be modified by the constraints imposed through this mobilisation potential. One of the main purposes of this present chapter is to examine the extent to which the unions under consideration are characterised by a centralisation of structure, and the effect this has on membership participation and the rank-and-file's capacity for action. My intention in this chapter is to examine these constraints on union government as they arise from within the nature of union organisation and from the workplace level.

I. Approaches to Union Government

It is commonplace to suggest that on the issue of union government the majority of members exercise little or no influence over union policy and organisational practice.[1] Studies of union government have been founded in

1 An important critical coverage of various such suggestions is found in C.P. Magrath, 'Democracy in Overalls: The Futile Quest for Union Democracy', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol.12, No.4, July 1959. A sensitive theoretical understanding of internal union politics involving the shop floor-officialdom relationship is: R. Hyman, 'The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism', Capital and Class, No. 8, Summer 1979. For recent literature surveys see M.P. Jackson, Industrial Relations, Croom Helm, London, 1978, pp. 74-81; and with application to Australia, B. Dabscheck and J. Niland, Industrial Relations, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1981, pp. 119-128 and 147-154.

general upon a measurement of democratic participation based on liberal-representative and market-inspired theories of democracy.[2] Such conceptualisations are modelled on an ahistoric and holistic view of society in which ideally the democratic parts become pluralistic microcosms of the democratic whole.[3] In the elaboration of liberal-pluralist views on union government, tensions appear between the pursuit of individual liberty and the desire to acquire utilities and maximise satisfaction.[4] Applying this methodology to union structure,it is argued, has ultimately served to

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2 S.M. Lipset, 'Democracy in Private Government: A Case Study of the International Typographical Union', British Journal of Sociology, Vol.3 No. 1, March 1952. Two bibliographical studies with emphasis primarily on the U.S. are useful illustrations, G.Strauss, 'Union Government in the U.S.: Research Past and Future', Industrial Relations, Vol. 16, No. 2, May 1977; and D.L. Tagliacozzo, 'Trade Union Government: Its Nature and its Problems', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, No. 6, May 1956. A critique of liberal and market theories of democracy is C.B. MacPherson, Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1973, (especially Part I). Cf. C. Pateman, The Problem of a Political Obligation, Wiley & Sons, Chichester, 1979 (especially Chapter 5).

3 Substantial theoretical statements are: R.A.Dahl, Pluralist Democracy in the United States, Rand McNally, Chicago, 1967; and S.M. Lipset, Political Man, Mercury Books, London 1963 [1959]. See also Dahl's more recent restatement of pluralism as a ubiquitious phenomenon manifested in 'conflictive' and 'organisational' dimensions, R.A. Dahl, 'Pluralism Revisited', Comparative Politics, Vol.10, No. 2, January, 1978.

4 C.B. MacPherson, op.cit.. A substantial critique of MacPherson's The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy is E.M. Wood, 'C.B. Macpherson: Liberalism and the Task of Socialist Political Theory', Socialist Register, 1978, Merlin Press, London, 1978; see also L. Panitch's rejoinder and Wood's reply in Socialist Register, 1981, Merlin Press, London, 1981. On the limitations of pluralism as a concept of decision-making see J. Playford, 'The Myth of Pluralism', in F.G. Castles, et al. (eds), Decisions, Organisations and Society, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1971; and W.E. Connolly (ed.), The Bias of Pluralism, Atherton, New York, 1969. Connolly distinguishes three types of pluralist theory: classical, arena and umpire models.

predetermine available conclusions in an inappropriate manner. A strong case exists that such individualist centred approaches to union government have resulted in the elaboration of elitist theory.[5]

Themselves not immune from such criticism, the Webbs posited the tendential erosion of membership decision-making power.[6] This was despite their concern to portray union organisation as the natural initiator of workplace, co-operative and municipal participation in the industrial pyramid of capitalist society. 'What democracy requires is assent to results' they concluded after extensive observation.[7] To achieve both assent and results union government was marked by formal organisational mechanisms and 'check' factors (especially associated with 'primitive democracy'), collectivist customs and traditions, the sectionalism and exclusiveness of skilled labour, and the rise of distinct administrative authority perhaps best evinced by their notorious 'junta'. Despite the erosion of membership decision-making power the Webbs retained normative convictions. Their understanding of organisational government was subsequently both underscored and eclipsed by Robert Michels' more deterministic, positivist law of oligarchy.[8]

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5 This is not to claim that such results are without disillusionment, see J. Goldstein, The Government of British Trade Unions, Allen and Unwin, London, 1952. Cf. G. Mosca's view of political organisation as the inevitability of elites in The Ruling Class, McGraw-Hill,New York,1939.

6 S. and B. Webb, A History of Trade Unionism, Longmans, London, 1920 [1896].

7 S. and B. Webb,Industrial Democracy, (2nd edition), Longmans, London, 1920, p. 61.

8 R. Michels, Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy, Dover, New York, 1959 [1915]. J. Hemingway, Conflict and Democracy: Studies in Trade Union Government, Clarendon, Oxford, 1978 has categorised Michels as being between the conservative and radical traditions. In this study Michels emerges in the liberal-pluralist school 'who see pressure group organization as the means of ensuring equality in society', (p.2). This ignores the strong conservative assumptions underlying Michels' descriptive account.

The 'iron law of oligarchy' claimed to be universally applicable, especially with regard to labour and political mass organisations. Michels' contentions, indeed, proved to be of sustaining resonance offering hypotheses which allowed appealing if superficial verification.[9] In Michels' sociological study of oligarchic tendencies his conclusions rested on a number of central criteria of which the most important were: the identification of the professional and entrenched leadership elite, the esoteric exclusiveness of administrative imperatives and technical knowledge, (the 'dictatorship of the official'), and the apathy, ideological placement and

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9 For some insightful objections to Michels' account see both G. Hands, 'Roberto Michels and the Study of Political Parties', British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 1, No. 2, April, 1971; and D. Beetham, 'Michels and his Critics', European Journal of Sociology, Vol. 22, No. 1, 1981. Beetham concentrates on the synthesis achieved by Michels between his intellectual influences and political motives, arguing that serious limitations arise as a consequence of this composite theoretical framework. F. Parkin offers a critique of Michelsian extrapolations related to social democratic parties in Class, Inequality and the Political Order, Paladin, London, 1971. That Michels' iron law of oligarchic development lends itself to teleological application see M. Djilas , The New Class, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966 [1957]. Under capitalist social relations cf. E.O. Wright, 'Capitalism's Futures: A Provisional Reconceptualization of Alternatives to Capitalist Society', Paper presented to the State in Contemporary Capitalism Conference, Mexico City, October 1979, (mimeo) a subsequent version of which appears in Socialist Review, No. 68, March-April 1983; and I Szelenyi, 'The Relative Autonomy of the State or State Mode of Production', Paper to the 9th World Congress of Sociology, Uppsala, 1978 (mimeo). In terms of trade union research, even recent studies have been explicitly centred on Michelsian contentions. For example, E. Davis, 'Of Apathy and Participation in Australian Trade Unions', Paper to 50th ANZAAS Conference, May 1980. See also E Davis, 'Participation in Six Australian Trade Unions', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 23, No. 2, June 1981. Davis' contribution is restricted to explaining that crude organisational membership size is not in itself an indication of the lack of democracy. He has demonstrated little correlation between organisational size and the degree of oligarchic centralisation. Davis' work suffers from a selective reading of Michels. His research should have focussed instead on the structural imperatives of organisation and on the superior position of leadership.

'incompetence of the masses'.[10] The initial objectives responsible for the creation of the organisation, Michels argued, became increasingly unsurped and supplanted with the organisational requirements of the decision-making 'aristocracy'. Unions as well as political parties, it was argued, became oligarchies whose prime objective, despite rhetorical commitments, became the advancement of what Gouldner was later to call 'open-system' continuity. In pragmatic terms, the survival instinct of the organisational hierarchy became predominant Michels and others in the German Social Democratic Party, most notably Bernstein and Luxemburg, pointed out that in relation to social democratic parties organisational means developed institutional needs which increasingly became ends in their own right.[11] Within the organisational structure an efficient leadership minority pursued its own interests together with those compatible interests of the organisation which

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10 Michels, op.cit., Chapter 10. 'The incompetence of the masses is almost universal throughout the domains of political life...Since the rank and file are incapable of looking after their own interests,it is necessary that they should have experts to attend to their affairs...The incompetence of the masses, which is in last analysis always recognized by the leaders, serves to provide a theoretical justification for the domination of these', (pp. 86,87 and 88). While Michels' study centred on the social democratic political party he also attempted the description of oligarchy within trade unions. On the position of leaders Michels considered that 'in the trade union movement, the authoritative character of the leaders and their tendency to rule democratic organisations on oligarchic lines, are even more pronounced than in the political organisations', (p.143). Michels supported this assertion with a statement from Luxemburg to the effect that trade union bureaucracies have less political limitations imposed on their oligarchic tendencies. For further discussion on Michels' application to trade unionism as part of a 'pessimistic interpretation', see R. Hyman, Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism, Pluto Press, London, 1971, pp. 14-17 and 28-33.

11 R. Michels, op.cit., (Parts II and VI).

served to enhance the leadership's privileged position [12] This led those in authority, according to Michels, towards a more conservative reformist position Implicitly, despite their apathy, incompetence and supine gratefulness for solid leadership, the rank-and-file majority appeared more radical in a potential or popularist sense, because they were less constrained by organisational imperatives. As with many of Michels' assertions, this is open to much argument.

Problems with the Michelsian stress on organisational oligarchy centred on its inability to explain continued struggles for membership participation. The theory was restrictive due to its one-dimensional emphasis, which attributed insufficient weight to the ebb and flow effect of the inter-dependent tendencies of oligarchic imperativeness and rank-and-file responsiveness.[13] Michels' work, closely paralleling that of Weber, remained

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12 Ibid., Part II, passim. One particularly interesting illustration of the leadership's pursuit of its own interests is worth recounting here In 1980 I interviewed the collegiately appointed State Secretary of the Australasian Society of Engineers. His comments clearly demonstrated that he identified himself with the union, directly equating his views with those of the union and considering the furtherance of his own interests with the union's. In refusing to permit a sample survey of the union's membership, the Secretary stated: 'You want to know what the members think? I can tell you what they think, right now. Ask me. I haven't been a union secretary for all these years without getting to know what the members think'. A.R. Griffiths, Personal Interview, ASE office, 4.3.1980. (Following this discussion, I put Griffiths' claim to the State Director of TUTA, who indicated that Griffiths had 'probably made it all up. More likely he rings one or two of the stewards every now and again'. D. Ruff, Personal Interview, 6.3.1980.) On his retirement from the secretary's position in June 1980, Griffiths arranged a lucrative retrospective superannuation payment in excess of $89,000. The union, being unable to provide such payment from its funds had to acquire a short-term financial loan. The union hierarchy and replacement State Secretary attempted with little success to suppress information on this matter: AMFSU Shop Stewards' School, 20.8.1980. The ASE in South Australia is linked with the right-wing NCC - see Pattern of Deceit, Committee to Defend the Victorian ALP, Melbourne, 1980 This point was affirmed by a State organiser of the AMFSU, Personal Interview, 3.9.1980

13 Cf. A.W. Gouldner, 'Metaphysical Pathos and the Theory of Bureaucracy', American Political Science Review, Vol. 49, No. 2, June 1955.

within a paradigm of domination (Herrschaft), where the overriding concern became the non-existence of liberal-democracy Critics of Michels' sociological laws have concentrated more on specific assertions rather than his entire argument. Nevertheless, most criticisms have focussed on two interrelated themes in Michels' work: his analysis of organisations and his methodological approach. With regard to organisational theory, criticism is often levelled at his conservative stand on the inevitability of a ruling elite (from Mosca) and the circulation of contending elites (from Pareto). These theories are fundamentally static and circular, giving little recognition to occasions when leadership groups are tossed aside by less-oligarchic alliances and even by grass root membership action It is a deficiency of the theory to suggest that organisations are simply monolithic hierarchies nurturing oligarchic tendencies. Such a suggestion depreciates evidence of countervailing pressures, notwithstanding counter leadership groups and contending factions, acting upon the leadership structures of organisations. But this theoretical deficiency surfaces as a tension between normative and descriptive aspects of Michels' explanation.[14]

The second theme to attract criticism, the methodological approach undertaken, involved his psychology of leadership and power, together with the assumption that organisation produced intrinsically similar effects upon officials. Michels' assumptions owed much to a behaviourist psychology at the individual level where predominant values were naturally assimilated by aspiring elites irrespective of their personal desires. This led Michels to posit the existence not only of a predominantly instrumental attitude among organisational members, but also of an elitist 'iron law' with regard

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14 That Michels entertained idealised conceptions of the nature of democracy, and that the measure used to gauge democratic involvement (mass decision-making) was less than realistic, has been frequently noted in the critical literature. Cf. J. Coleman, 'The Compulsive Pressures of Democracy in Unionism', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, No. 6, May 1956.

to leadership His explanation of leadership in both its structural and motivational aspects, rested on a Darwinian view of social biology, special individual attributes, a crude (Paretian) appreciation of mass psychology, and codes of organisational practice which invariably elevated leading individuals

On the question of Michels' conception of power, the emphasis on access to the formal decision-making sphere is considered through authority structures in isolation from the more sociologically amorphous additional dimensions of power. Reflecting managerial orientations, Michels along with many subsequent writers on the internal affairs of labour organisations, demonstrated little sensitivity towards the less superficial exercise of power central to more recent political sociology.[15] Here our attention is drawn, by such as Lukes, towards purposive and non-purposive inaction, collective modification, the constraints of the (conscious and unconscious) political agenda:[16] and by others, notably Nichols to contradictory awareness or the persistent, class-related ill-fit between the various processes of living and working under capitalist social relations.[17] Nonetheless, theoretical awareness of additional dimensions of power could conceivably reinforce the tendency towards oligarchic control, in that the oligarchic clique may under certain conditions be capable of shaping the less-behavioural dimensions of power. Yet it is argued that this would not be the case, and that the further such dimensions were explored the greater qualifications to oligarchic rule would become apparent. The point remains,

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15 C.W.Mills, The Sociological Imagination, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1970. P.Bachrach and M.S.Baratz, 'The Two Faces of Power', American Political Science Review, Vol.56, 1962. M.A. Crenson, The Un-Politics of Air Pollution, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, 1971. S.Lukes, Power: A Radical View, Macmillan, London, 1974. T. Nichols, Ownership, Control and Ideology, Allen and Unwin, London, 1969

16 S. Lukes, op.cit., chapters 4 and 5.

17 See, T.Nichols and H. Beynon, Living with Capitalism, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1977.

however, that analysis of organisations based only on the formal decision-making level are misleadingly partial. Questioning behavioural methodology as the sole dimension of organisational power relations, one industrial relations commentator offered:

> how, for example, can a solid empirical foundation be given to an explanation of why a particular decision was not taken and perhaps not even contemplated. [18]

The legacy Michels conveyed to the study of organisational government has resulted in the circumscription of the issues of intellectual inquiry leaving an elitist typology that has proved difficult to dislodge. The result of this has been that for many analysts of organisational government, positivist deduction confirmed their adherence to the 'iron law of oligarchy':[19] some combined an appreciation of the oligarchic law with 'deviant' exceptions,[20] while others were led to postulate what could be perhaps termed a 'rubber' law of polyarchy.[21] This last view maintained the general validity of oligarchic tendencies but insisted that mitigating factors existed. Polyarchical systems, for instance, allowed for the rule of multiple elite minorities.[22]

In this sense much of the research into union government is paradigmatically narrow and one-dimensional. This is not simply because researchers quixotically search for bourgeois democracy in sectional working class structures. But, rather because the assumptions made allow for hypotheses

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18 R. Hyman. Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction, Macmillan, London, 1975, p. 67.

19 J. Goldstein, The Government of British Trade Unions, Allen and Unwin, London, 1952. Goldstein qualifies Michels' law in claiming that while oligarchy is dominant it may not be inevitable.

20 S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, Union Democracy, Free Press, Glencoe, 1956.

21 J.A. Banks, Trade Unionism, Collier-Macmillan, London, 1974.

22 See. R.A. Dahl, A Preface to Democratic Theory, University of Chicago Press, 1956; and T.B. Bottomore, Elites and Society, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1966, Chapter 7.

which attain limited penetration into the complexities of union association For instance, among liberal-behavioural analysts it is not uncommon to find an assumption made that participation in government flourishes in proportion to the closeness of union election results or the frequency of defeat among the officialdom.[23] Often overlooked, is that to achieve solidarity the only means to operate as a collective interest organisation in a hostile economic environment may be less than 'democratic' in a liberal sense. As such, a major contradiction in union government is presented between principles of 'bourgeois right' (the right not to join, or the right to vote freely, to disagree and speak openly in opposition), and the discipline of collective action. This is because many of the constraints of the prevailing political agenda, less apparent decisions, affecting union responsiveness emanate from other social forces (i.e. overseas or domestic capital, the state). These 'forces', of course, do not readily appear as candidates in union elections although their impact on union government is very real.[24] Accordingly, as recognised by those with a more conflictual view of society, social groups can condition the political agenda affecting organisations in such a way that decisions made more accurately reflect external constraints.[25]

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23 One of the better examples employing this methodology is J.D.Edelstein, 'Democracy in a National Union: The British AEU', Industrial Relations, Vol. 4, No. 3, May 1965.

24 Some critics may prefer to consider collaborationist union candidates for office as potentially loyal 'lieutenants of capital'. See L.Trotsky 'The Unions in Britain', Leon Trotsky On The Trade Unions, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1975, pp. 53-57. See also R. Hyman's discussion in Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism, op.cit., pp. 18-19. In relation to Australia: E.F. Hill, Looking Backward: Looking Forward - Revolutionary Socialist Politics Against Trade Union and Parliamentary Politics, C.P.A. (M-L), Melbourne, 1965, pp.26-32, 68-81. And Pattern of Deceit: The N.C.C. and the Labor Movement, Committee to Defend the Victorian A.L.P. (revised edition), Melbourne, 1981. The above, however are fundamentally different arguments from the ones usually put by industrial relations researchers into union government.

25 Cf. M.A. Crenson, op.cit., Chapters 6 and 7.

Hence, to reach negative conclusions with regard to membership participation in union government may indicate more about the nature of the conditions under which unions operate than about their internal relationships per se[26]

With these caveats in mind the dominant influence of Michels' work on studies into union government remains clear. At its most simplistic, the modern Michelsian controversy is largely a debate with the ghost of Michels, in which claims and counter-claims have sought to prove and disprove the character of oligarchic tendencies. Implicitly, most research appears to conceptualise authority relations along a sliding-scale political spectrum, with genuine mass democracy at one end and totalitarianism at the other. For the most part this ignores the underlying criteria that sustains such patterned relations of authority. Organisations are located along this spectrum according to a checklist of assessable criteria, which in the main centre on the level and nature of liberal democracy within the organisation. However, in this chapter the concern is not primarily with the intricacies of the problem of such democratic involvement. The emphasis on union democracy is important although it is only one aspect of internal governmental relations. But, to date, the concern with union democracy has

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26 V.L. Allen appeared to recognise this factor in British unionism when he commented that while unionism was essentially concerned with workers' living standards, it was 'not to provide workers with an exercise in self-government', Power in Trade Unions, Longmans, London, 1954, p. 15. Hyman noted that Allen later disavowed this view, (Industrial Relations., op cit., p. 83). This particular extract from Allen is frequently quoted, often unfavourably, although it in no way covers the many facets of Allen's substantial work. His later Militant Trade Unionism, Merlin Press, London, 1966, continued his analysis that union aims and action were directed toward improving living standards, but in the context of longer-term structural and distributive changes in society. A more straight forward instrumentalist view with regard efficient collective bargaining was aptly summarised by one American trade unionist who argued that 'the union is like a slot machine. You put your money in and see what comes out at the bottom', quoted in J. Jones, 'Unions Today and Tomorrow', in R. Blackburn and A. Cockburn (eds.), The Incompatibles: Trade Union Militancy and the Consensus, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1967, p. 123.

provided the main axis against which union government has been generally measured. Within this literature four broad areas of inquiry have attracted most concern: formal and constitutional processes of government; member attitudes and satisfaction; the structure, operation, responsiveness and factionalism of the officialdom; and lastly participatory involvement by the rank-and-file.[27]

In the tradition of Montesquieu, the development of constitutional provisions, electoral rules, objects of association, divisions of authority and the internal organisational regulation have been interpreted as checks and balances on the use and abuse of power.[28] Constitutional restraints are

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27 It is not intended to imply that studies into union democracy neatly fall into single categories. Most orthodox research overlaps these areas, but usually emphasises one area at the expense of others. In constructing four categories I have attempted to identify areas of focus. There may appear some similarity here with J.Hemingway's Conflict and Democracy: Studies in Trade Union Government, in which the author identifies participation, opposition and satisfaction as avenues for potential membership involvement within the union structure to attract leadership responsiveness. Hemingway's concern is, thus, different than mine because I am arguing that participation should be extended to include behaviour outside the union structure and to include participation in the labour process as well as in the areas of collective bargaining. I recognise that Strauss categorises research into union government into seven areas of speciality or interest, and that of internal democracy into three. Strauss' taxonomy is useful but can be reduced to four main areas, not necessarily adhering to the same categories. Strauss, unlike R. Fletcher, ('Trade Union Democracy-Structural Factors', in K. Coates, et al., (eds), Trade Union Register, Merlin, London, 1970), devotes little attention to the first approach that I identify. Strauss excludes participation from his three measurements of union democracy. See G. Strauss, 'Union Government in the U.S.: Research Past and Future', Industrial Relations, Vol.16, No. 2, May 1977.

28 J. Goldstein, op.cit., is typical. For a useful anatomy of the range of content found in union constitutions, see W.M.Leiserson, American Union Democracy, Columbia University Press, New York, 1959, pp. 106-11. Leiserson lists seven main areas, namely: objectives, jurisdiction and platform of the union; statutory provisions; operational by-laws; membership provisions and regulations; revenue and expenditure issues; and, disciplinary provisions. In relation to the majority of Australian unions a further area should be added - provision for affiliation to combined union councils and political parties.

considered in essence as facilitative practices permitting membership control or influence to operate.[29] However, in effect such restraints merely operate more or less effectively to minimise formal abuse of the electoral system.[30] Moreover, it is common for union rules to make no mention of membership participation or rank-and-file democratic control either as an objective or operational requirement. Indeed, this was the case with the unions under consideration. Accordingly, as with the AMFSU Rules, it would appear that constitutional requirements attempt to guarantee efficiency and to provide a formal guard against discrimination.[31]

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29 J.D.Edelstein and M. Warner, Comparative Union Democracy, Random House, New York, 1976. More generally, criticism of this constitutionalist approach from within its own scholarly genre has centred on its unconvincing and mechanical application of institutional behaviour codes. As such the sympathetic reviewer has tended to regard this view as partial and but a preliminary point of inquiry. For example, S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman, op.cit..

30 This point is recognised by R. Fletcher in K. Coates, et al., (eds), op.cit. Under the South Australian Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, 1972, as amended, there is no requirement for unions to be 'democratic'. The concern of the Act is only that the Union's rules and procedures are not particularly biased, in the Registrar's opinion, towards one group within or outside the union, or to the detriment of particular members. Thus, for instance, trade unions are required by Clause 132 (1,b) not to impose 'unreasonable conditions upon the continuance of membership, or...(be) in any way tyrannical or oppressive'. While all registered employee associations must endeavour to comply with these stipulations, few actually entertain similar statements in their own objectives and rules. This is possibly through fear of litigation and/or deregulation should registered organisations include such ambiguous objectives as 'democracy' in their charters. A recent example of rule challenging by members of an association led to the Public Service Association (S.A.), being deregistered by the Industrial Registrar for a period of over 2½ years. See R.R. Bowey v P.S.A. (S.A.), South Australian Industrial Court, 1976, No. 40; in the matter of an application for the cancellation of registration of the P.S.A.(S.A.), (1.12.1976, 13.9.1977); see also Application for Registration (P.S.A.) South Australia: Industrial Court, 1979, No.163 (28.1.1981). The matter was heard by Industrial Magistrate, F.K. Cawthorne after 39 objections to the initial application.

31 The AMFSU Rules explicitly gave principles of efficiency as the reason for organisation. While the constitutional objectives of the three unions varies considerably with regard specifics, language and to a lesser degree intent, each adhered to the prime objectives of the advancement of the welfare of members. This welfare was defined particularly as the achievement of reasonable or just working hours, rates of pay and industrial conditions. In addition to their objects of association the AMFSU also included in its Rules a prefatory statement relating to the status of working people being related to collective discipline (see Appendix V). Source: AMFSU, Rules, Surry Hills, May 1979, pp. 1-3.

Converging on the rank-and-file, the second major research theme has placed emphasis on indices of individual and small-group satisfaction, membership attitudes and motivation within the union.[32] Two types of approach can be identified: the presentation of members' views of their union and the analysis of local or branch level involvement.[33] Research has focussed on communication and information networks in both an official and unofficial nature, the particular characteristics of the membership, the industrial environment and technological constraints. Measurements of satisfaction are generally consigned to statistical correlates using survey material covering membership attendance, voting propensity and electoral choice, attitude findings and the activities of small-scale collective bodies (workplace groups, shop committees, district meetings and other representative bodies).[34] It is assumed, somewhat perplexingly, that the union's elections, activities and range of policies should bear a high degree of commensurability with the sampled goal orientations of the membership.[35] This remains despite the fact that such commensurability must

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32 R. Rogow, 'Membership Participation and Centralised Control', Industrial Relations, Vol. 7, No. 2, February 1968.

33 For personal accounts see J. Seidman, et al., The Worker Views His Union, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1958. Also L. Sayles and G. Strauss, The Local Union, Harper, New York, 1953. An individualist critique is P.E. Sutton, The Disenchanted Unionist, Harper, New York, 1963.

34 In particular, L. Sayles and G. Strauss, op.cit.. Cf. A.S. Tannenbaum, 'Control Structures and Union Functions', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, No. 6, May 1956.

35 Furthermore, it should be noted that it is not particularly difficult using the above criteria to demonstrate substantial dissatisfaction. In fact, as I experienced in surveying union members, such techniques aimed at ascertaining rank-and-file attitudes tend often to sample disgruntled elements. The incentive of grievance in practice proves to be a distortion difficult to estimate. Different and useful outcomes may well result if those members who did not respond were sampled.

generally endure both widespread rank-and-file non-involvement in union affairs, as well as oscillating and contradictory orientational expressions [36]

The third broad area of analysis of union government involves the extent to which various union practices allow more or less accurate reflections of collective goal orientations through the officialdom [37] Here, the concern is with the conditions necessary to constrain leadership autonomy effectively [38] Numerous studies have been undertaken in this area: some revolving around leadership stability and the capacity to deliver economistic benefits; [39] others involve the technicalities of subordinate influences on elite decision-making; [40] still others highlight the

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36 Commonly, membership satisfaction presentations describe members as but represented 'democrats' in union government and policy formation. It is not usual to find that activists among the rank-and-file seek to influence union affairs in inverse proportion to their degree of satisfaction. As a measure of union legitimacy membership satisfaction is not restricted to behavioural aspects of union operation, but also includes a range of factors involving society at large, work orientations, the nature of employment and the attitude towards and of employers, as well as private personal relations. A basic inconsistency exists among many research assumptions. Namely, that members are judged to be apathetic and uninformed, and yet perceived to be naturally alert and inquisitive, implying that in cases of low membership interest the union rather than the member has failed. This inconsistency, furthermore, presents rank-and-file attitudes as fixed, when a more sensitive analysis demands awareness be shown to the contradictory, flexible and often transient nature of individual perceptions. Thus, it is not surprising to find contradictory expressions of indications of satisfaction under capitalist socialisation. Cf. T. Nichols and P. Armstrong, Workers Divided, Fontana, London, 1976; in particular their treatment of workers' views in Part IV is significant.

37 V.L. Allen, op.cit..

38 J.D. Edelstein, op.cit.. Also F.A. Heller, 'Leadership, Decision-Making and Contingency Theory', Industrial Relations, Vol.12, No.2, May 1973. See in addition, H. Handelman, 'Oligarchy and Democracy in Two Mexican Labor Unions: A Test of Representation Theory', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 30, No. 2, January 1977.

39 V.L. Allen, op.cit., p. 24.

40 J.D. Edelstein and M. Warner, op.cit.. Also D.L. Tagliacozzo and J. Seidman, 'A Typology of Rank-and-File Union Members', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, No. 6, May 1956.

attitudinal characteristics of leadership groups.[41] But, undoubtedly the overwhelming interest in this area examines the composition of union government in the context of leadership opposition and rival factionalism.[42]

The sources of leadership rivalry are seen to stem from the representative electoral system employed by most unions, which allows a clear majority or coalition majority to be modified by minority groups.[43] In one idealised form, the U.S. International Typographical Union, the existence of institutionalised opposition has been elevated to the realms of romanticised parliamentary democracy.[44] Here Lipset et al, conflate their assumption of the normative political system into the constraints of union government. Liberal democracy tended to be perverted, they observed, by large organisations but encouraged when members identified with sub-groups expressed in two party competition following the model of the liberal-democratic state.[45] As such, representative democracy was permitted an

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41 H.A.Landsberger and C.L.Hulin, 'A Problem for Union Democracy: Officers Attitudes Toward Union Members', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 14, No. 3, April 1961. Cf. F.A. Heller, op.cit., Heller discusses British and American managers in terms of their attitudes toward and behaviour in decision-making methods. He concludes, and this concerns union leadership, that the decision process and leadership attitudes are situational rather than universal attributes of leadership. For a comparison of the value profiles of managerial and union leadership groups, see: G.W. England, N.C. Agarwal and R.E. Trerise, 'Union Leaders and Managers: A Comparison of Value Systems', Industrial Relations, Vol. 10, No. 2, May 1971.

42 See M. Dickenson's overview of this area of research in 'The Effects of Parties and Factions on Trade Union Elections', British Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 29, No. 2, July 1981. Cf. A. Cook, Union Democracy: Practice and Ideal, Cornell University Press, New York,1963.

43 J. Hemingway, op.cit., particularly Chapters 1 and 2. Hemingway's conflict model while it displays a sensitive and broad approach to union control, ultimately centres on challenges to authority by collective, organised groups (rebellious factions or minorities).

44 S.M.Lipset, et al., op.cit., Chapter 3.

45 G. Hands, op.cit. p.171. The institutionalised struggle between the progressives and the administrative group (Wahnetas, conservatives and independents) was nevertheless dominated by the former 'party'.

effective arena where limited political cleavage existed and where some measure of power sharing was extant.[46] But a further consideration for these authors was that even the most undemocratic, dictatorial union government served to sustain political pluralist democracy in society.[47] Again, the pluralist bias of accepted dominant values and limited conflict is assumed in spite of the apparent contradiction between the assumption of a democratic society founded on predominantly undemocratic elements.

In response to this U.S. study, some have questioned the mythical parliamentary pendulum supposedly exercising the role of regular government displacement within the union.[48] Martin, following a market-oriented

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46 S.M.Lipset, et al. op.cit., Chapters 1 and 4. Liberal democratic ideology based on a consumer choice of sub-group 'parties' creates a number of substantial problems in organisational government. For example, in advocating the concept of a two party or parliamentary democracy, a number of questions arise. Do these particular adjectives represent qualifications or terms of exclusion? Are such representative two party systems simply practical forms of democracy or are they the only possible form? Is it thereby implied that within union collective structures other better or worse forms exist? Is it, indeed, sufficient in analysing union government to point to the greater or lesser choice of representative blocs and the fluctuating percentages of choosers? This methodology, to follow Berlin's distinction, tends to judge collective power structures in terms of their tolerance of negative freedom supplemented with vague notions of the unfulfilment of the positive meanings of freedom. These principles rest on 'natural' rights, protective and legalistic notions of democracy, and the defence of individual freedom from oppressive restraint. To the extent that alternative 'parties' exist possible oppression is considered qualified. These principles may hold some level of relevance in society at large, despite the fact that they have been internally undermined by later generations of liberals, but, their application to labour collectives is misplaced. A major contradiction exists for liberal democratic theory in relation to the expression of individual freedom and the coercion structurally necessary to maintain effective organisation. This contradiction is not simply confined to unionism, but equally applies to the liberal dilemma over the nation state.

47 Ibid., Chapter 18.

48 R. Martin, 'Union Democracy: An Explanatory Framework', Sociology, Vol.2, No.2, May 1968. While he remains preoccupied with the responsiveness of union leadership to the membership, Martin dismisses parliamentary illusions and instead prefers to locate his analysis on the 'status of the opposition'. Cf. J. Hughes, Trade Union Structure and Government, Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers' Associations, Research Paper No. 5,Part 2, HMSO, 1967. In relation to the UK draughtsmen's association (ADSTE's equivalent), cf. G. Wootton, 'Parties in Union Government - the AESD', Political Studies, Vol. 9, No.2, June 1961.

approach involving an effective choice of representative leadership blocs, suggested that responsive government was the measure of toleration and status accorded to opposition groups In other words, assuming factionalism to be the 'life blood of democracy', union government became more responsive

> when union executives (were) unable to prevent opposition factions distributing propaganda and mobilizing electoral support . [49]

Nonetheless, the constraints of factional pressure, limiting single party autocracy in union affairs, appears either as policy modification or as an electoral mechanism reflecting a choice between contending alternative 'governments'. As many of the critiques of Labor Party governments under advanced capitalism have shown, in practice this alternative dimension may be largely perfunctory.[50] It remains methodologically inadequate as a result to

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49 R. Martin, op cit., p. 207. Martin argued that covert compromises between union factions tends to advance oligarchic control rather than democracy. Dickenson has challenged Martin's collapse of oppositional parties into (unspecified) factions. Following Sartori she asserts that factions are not parties. I can see little merit in her distinction with regard unions, except to note that factions appear less durable and possibly less institutionalised. Factions are thus embryonic 'parties'. But, I am at a loss to visualise Dickenson's 'discernable line which must be crossed' before union voters have a choice and political cleavage exists. See M. Dickenson, op.cit., especially pp. 193-4 and 198. Sartori uses faction to mean a specific power group within a party structure, such that the party itself is a 'miniature political system'. However, 'a party is any political group identified by an official label that presents at elections, and is capable of placing through election (free or non-free), candidates for public office' (p. 63). Empirically parties 'are instruments for running a pluralist whole: they presuppose diversity and institutionalize dissent' (p. 66). G. Sartori, Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis. Vol. I, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1976.

50 R. Miliband, Parliamentary Socialism, Merlin Press, London,1973. D.Coates, The Labour Party and the Struggle for Socialism, Cambridge University Press, London, 1975; especially Chapter 6. For an Australian source, an analysis of the Whitlam Labor Government criticised the 'technocratic Labor' outlook as an attempt to consolidate Australia's capitalist system. After the conservative 'Ice Age' the Whitlam Government appeared as a new administration with a new (imported) social model, not as an alternative government. R. Catley and B. McFarlane, From Tweedledum to Tweedledee: The New Labor Government in Australia, ANZ Book Co., Sydney, 1974.

assume that the organisational tolerance to personnel or faction replacement is an accurate indication of responsive union government.

Finally, the remaining approach of significance relates to the problems of mass participation in the decision-making processes of the union.[51] Potentially, a more fruitful line of inquiry this approach examines activism and participation through intra-organisational involvement and grass roots resistance.[52] Active participation clearly involves a plethora of behaviour, but a valid distinction, sometimes made in the literature, distinguishes 'hard core' activists from what may be labelled sporadic activists, and from the inactive.[53] The former display an insatiable interest in internal union business and are regular participants regardless of issues. The sporadic

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51 R. Rogow, 'Membership Participation and Centralized Control', Industrial Relations, Vol. 7, No. 2, February 1968. J.R. Coleman, 'The Compulsive Pressures of Democracy in Unionism', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, No. 6, May 1956. For Australasian sources, see: J.H. Kerr Inkson, 'Factors Influencing Worker's Involvement in their Unions', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 23, No. 4, December 1980; and in relation to union government in a specific union, T. Sheridan, 'Democracy Among the Aristocrats: Participation of Members in the Affairs of the AEU (Australian Section), 1900-1972', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 21, No. 2, June 1979. In general this view of membership participation in the decision-making processes, contains a strong emphasis that the responsibility for union government should come from below. See R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction, Chapter 6. Moreover compare the more elaborate statistical measures of employee participation in Decisions in Organisations, (P.J.D. Drenth, et al.), 'Participative Decision Making: A Comparative Study', Industrial Relations, Vol. 18, No. 3, Fall 1979. The D.I.O. study emphasised the lack of subordinate participatory influence in industrial organisations, noting that little correlation existed between nominal status power and the degree of influence. Thus, Yugoslavian workers had some decision-making status in organisations but little more influence than Dutch workers who held substantially less formal decision-making status.

52 See G. Strauss, 'Control by the Membership in Building Trades Unions', American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 61, No. 6, May 1956. See also, A.S. Tannenbaum, op.cit.. Rogow on the other hand analyses participation largely in terms of membership characteristics and satisfaction, R. Rogow, op.cit..

53 G. Strauss, 'Union Government in the U.S...' op.cit., pp. 221-225. Sporadic activists are expected to follow a higher rate of turnover and measure of personnel interchangeability than 'hard core' activists.

group primarily relate to specific issue motivation, as for example, over a particular subject of grievance The non-activist may also participate at a different level. For instance, Allen has argued that the voluntary nature of much unionisation permits members the privilege of 'voting with their feet' by either cancelling union membership entirely or transferring membership to another.[54] Alternatively as some sociologists have pointed out, hierarchical intransigence or lack of receptiveness can lead to wild-cat, self-directed action by rank-and-file activists.[55] Others like Fletcher have instead indicated worker participation criteria sufficient to sustain membership control.[56]

The criticism made of all these studies consists less of the suggestion that inconsistencies exist, than of arguing that the range of assumptions used is often inappropriate. The employment of values, which adopt preferences for union government as the expression in contrast to the restraint of members wishes, is fundamentally incongruous with union structures that require collective discipline to continue in existence.[57] This 'efficiency-versus-democracy' contrast, as some have described it, is a false dichotomy.[58] Organisational efficiency and membership involvement, it is suggested , are not mutually exclusive with regard to collective bodies.

II. Dimensions of Participation in Organisational Practice

Against the view that organisational totalitarianism and efficiency are at similar ends of a political spectrum, it is argued that such absolutism can lead to organisational inefficiency. Tendencies towards

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54 V.L. Allen, op.cit..

55 A.W. Gouldner, Wildcat Strike, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1955.

56 R. Fletcher in K. Coates (ed.), op.cit..

57 J. Hemingway, op.cit..

58 R. Hyman, Industrial Relations: A Marxist Introduction, pp. 74-93.

oligarchy within union structures produce inefficiency in the absence of short-term corporatism. The forces preventing union oligarchy determine the union's survival as a potential force of mobilisation. Conversely, the extent to which a continually fought out tension exists between participation and organisational imperatives, the greater the potential for mobilisation and hence collective effectiveness. In the Leninist criticisms of trade union conscious action of a spontaneous nature, the main point is not that such spontaneity should cease but that it should politically develop beyond these bounds.[59] However, this spontaneity itself need not be radical. Taking a most extreme hegemonic problematic, an argument could be made that as members participate in their own oppression within the union, the more durable and effective their subordinate relationship becomes.[60] Spontaneity of this sort will tend to generate either active or tacit consent to the policy directions of the union, and to the existing social relations under capitalism.

As well, following Pateman's work, participation in organisational bodies should be understood as the socialisation of active and passive participatory involvement in the wider political processes.[61] These wider political processes, encompassing the social relations of production

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59 Cf. 'On Strikes' with 'What is to be Done?', V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vols. 4 and 5, Progress Publishers, Moscow. In the latter, Lenin's point is not that spontaneous collective action is limited because the masses are incompetent (as Michels or Pareto would argue) or that the workers are unable to articulate their interests. But, that due to their closeness to the production relations workers display a tendency to adopt sectional-instrumental strategies. Such strategies especially of an opportunist type in Lenin's view can contradict the class interests of the proletariat. See also, T.T. Hammond, Lenin on Trade Unions and Revolution, Columbia University Press, New York, 1957; especially Chapters 1-4.

60 J. Hemingway, op.cit., in relation to the perceived acceptability of organisational rules among the membership. E. Etzioni argued that rules are followed to the extent that they are perceived to be necessary, see, Modern Organisations, Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1964.

61 C. Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, Cambridge University Press, London, 1970.

under capitalism, include: the relations at the place of work and outside it, the politics of the labour process, as well as grass roots activity of both a united (collectivist) and fragmented (isolated or individualist) character. Thus, rather than observing levels of participation in the means of union administration, emphasis is placed upon a broader collective involvement in which political and ideological mobilisation towards certain collective goals or 'customs and practice' procedures is of major concern.[62] To take one illustration, the enforcement of union bans and the maintenance of workplace solidarity would, therefore, appear as an important element of union participation in operation.

Accordingly, an evaluation of participation in union affairs needs to incorporate membership acceptance of discipline as a socialised collective practice.[63] By implication, this will mean that participation is at best contradictory and fragmented, consisting of disjointed episodes of involvement, and assuming a multiplicity of behavioural, motivational and attitudinal factors. More importantly, the development in the rank-and-file of an awareness of their political efficacy depends upon the development of a participatory environment, which may correspond to Mallet's educational, consciousness-raising initiatives in union organisation.[64] Thus, a common displayed aggressive attitude towards management indicates a measure of group participation and conformity. This links

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62 R. Hyman, Strikes, Fontana, London, 1972. On the bias of procedure see R. Hyman, Disputes Procedure in Action, Heinemann, London, 1972, (especially Chapters 3 and 5).

63 G. Therborn, What Does the Ruling Class Do When It Rules?, New left Books, London, 1978, pp. 57-59.

64 C. Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory, pp. 103-105. S. Mallet, The New Working Class, Spokesman, Nottingham, 1975.

the immediate employees to one another as a form of mobilisation potential which may subsequently be modified by union activity. Alternatively, the practice of union organisers continually meeting management with a rotating rank-and-file delegate, whose specific duty is to report back to the remainder, is another example of an organisational emphasis on active involvement.[65] Neither of these cases would rate much mention as criteria in most orthodox studies of union government, yet both circumstances aid in the development of a collective participatory environment.

Luxemburg, writing in the early decades of this century, added a number of insights relevant to this discussion in anticipating and reformulating Michels' arguments from an alternative theoretical perspective.[66] Insofar

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65 This practice appeared most common in the AMFSU where for some organisers it was standard workplace practice, B. Mowbray, Personal Interview, 3.9.1980. This practice may nevertheless serve to legitimise organiser bargaining or dispute handling with the respective membership. Cf. R. Hyman, 'The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism', op.cit. pp. 55-8.

66 As with Michels, Luxemburg's forte was tactical considerations for a socialist mass movement. More sympathetic than Lenin to spontaneity, Luxemburg is sometimes presented as critical both of vanguard tactics and the resort to an all-powerful 'centralism'. This is partly correct. She condemned the 'absolute, blind subordination' of the 'furthest peripheries' of the movement to the authority of the 'central committee'. Her alternative self-centralism recognised leadership based on the 'existence of a large contingent of workers educated in the political struggle' and on provision for these 'to develop their own political activity through direct influence' both internal and external to the movement. The Russian Bolshevik party, according to Luxemburg, did not possess these characteristics, hence, organic centralism was replaced by the 'absolute power of a Central Committee'. The issue Luxemburg here referred to was the particular circumstances of mass mobilisation under extremely adverse conditions. To the extent that the movement was isolated, divided, and sectionalised, as well as faced with autocratic opponents it tended itself to become centralised reflecting the structure of its opponents. See R. Luxemburg, Selected Political Writings, (ed. D. Howard), Monthly Review Press, New York, 1971, p. 289; and R. Luxemburg, Selected Political Writings, (ed. R. Lodier), Jonathan Cape, London, 1972, pp. 99-101.

as ultra-centralism may under certain circumstances be practical and efficient, it also contained in-built tendencies that became counter-productive.[67] These tendencies include: conservatism, inertia, opportunism or collaborationist practice, and in general, placing greater distances between the original collective goals of association and the leadership bloc. Luxemburg, instead, contended that neither centralisation nor mass involvement should be seen as independent and opposing poles. The relationship between the leadership and the mass base should centre ideally on mutual reciprocal interaction. Spontaneous action could never be avoided; it was not the role of leadership to suppress this action but to channel it.

For the union movement the significance of Luxemburg's theoretical scheme lies in its distinction between representative and participatory forms of government over workers' organisations. This distinction is unlike the one made by Pateman. Luxemburg's participation approximates syndicalist usage, where a process facilitating the condensation of issues, policies, political

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67 In a political party, for instance, the leadership echelon enjoying 'absolute powers of a negative character' results in a situation where 'a few dozen party leaders of inexhaustible energy and boundless experience direct and rule. Among them, in reality only a dozen outstanding heads do the leading and an elite of the working class is invited from time to time to meetings where they are to applaud the speeches of the leaders, and to approve proposed resolutions unanimously - at the bottom, then, a clique affair - a dictatorship, to be sure, not the dictatorship of the proletariat, however, but only the dictatorship of a handful of politicians...'. R. Luxemburg, Selected Political Writings, (ed. R. Lodier), p. 247. This quotation from Luxemburg's posthumously published 'The Russian Revolution' was written about 1918. The above initial quotation, 'absolute powers of a negative character', was an earlier warning written about 1904, attacking Lenin's One Step Forward, Two Steps Backward, and What is to be Done?.

attitudes and general orientations is initiated.[68] For collective bodies, the benefit of distinguishing representative from participatory aspects of representation relates to commitment and control. Mass organisations are founded on the common commitment to aims and not solely on administrative functionalism. Rank-and-file spontaneity may act on this value commitment outside the formal political direction of the organisation. Furthermore, collective involvement at the workplace, whether official or unofficial, direct or indirect, provides a basic level of influence on which the union structure depends. This influence, which may be regarded as on-the-job control of the labour process, is the basis of the union's existence and will serve as a base-line of 'control' toward the parameters of union government.

Accordingly, two levels of participation exist. In the first place, on-the-job collective influence over the labour process defines the nature of union action, is responsible for originating issues, modifying group behaviour and is a basic constraint of policy outcomes within the union. It is from this shop floor level that 'the union' permeates through its official and unofficial structure. In the second place, the more formalised, traditional political relationships of union administration embody a subordinate level of

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68 Typically at its most developed this usage of participation satisfies syndicalist ideology and practice. The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia summarised this view in 1914 by proclaiming, in the inaugural edition of Direct Action, that the IWW

> stands for straight-out direct-actionist principles, unhampered by the plausible theories of the parliamentarians, whether revolutionary or otherwise. We are, therefore, free from those handicaps which bind the working class aspirant for political 'honours', who sees before him a safe and sure means for advancing his material interests...Our age-long tendency of putting our trust in princes has been a most potent factor in our enslavement .

Cited in V.G. Childe, How Labour Governs, (2nd edition), Melbourne, University Press, Melbourne, 1964, p. 137. Of course, Michels' insistence on the invulnerability of such Labor 'princes' qualifies the significance of the above sentiments.

participation, but appear as the expressions of decision-making power. These relationships can be shown to have become institutionalised, routinised and bureaucratised; yet this institutionalisation does not appear as unqualified oligarchic authority. The question of whether union bureaucracy develops radical or conservative tendencies cannot be answered by resort to inevitability.

As such, the broader aspects of collective involvement that are of interest here, centre on the character of worker consciousness emanating from the capitalist labour process. This labour process is itself the subject of continual change. With the transformation of the labour process from simple commodity production to capitalist production it became a particular set of relationships based on social or cooperative effort. The technical division of labour, as a consequence, facilitated the formation of particular combinations of labour bearing degrees of commensurability with this social process. These sectionalised worker organisations, as will be discussed below, are not equivalent to state or corporate bureaucracies.[69] Because union organisations are more than either authority structures of technical competence or simply market organisations representing labour power, it is inappropriate to analyse their government processes as one-dimensional bureaucratic phenomenon per se. Because unions sustain various levels of collective commitment and consciousness, union government under capitalism presents a contradictory problematic. That problematic constrains the forms of membership involvement in capitalist societies, where participation is modified through contending tendencies of bureaucracy and mobilisation.

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69 G. Strauss, 'Union Government in the U.S.: Research Past and Future', op.cit., p. 232. Note also, the classic discussion of these transformations in the labour process in K. Marx, Capital, Vol. I, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, Chapters 13, 14 and 15.

III. Characteristics of Union Bureaucracy

Classical theories of bureaucracy were mainly concerned with organisational structure and the technical processes involved in bureaucratic operation. From the origin of the concept with the French physiocrat economist Vincent de Gournay, bureaucracy has been interpreted as a 'hierarchy of knowledge' and the 'rationalisation of collective activities'.[70] More recent research, usually based on evaluations of certain classical theories, has shifted the emphasis to the social nature of bureaucracy and toward the specification of more precise typologies.[71] Trade unions, as 'mutual-benefit' organisations, are increasingly appearing within this debate particularly as unions formalise their administrative behaviour.[72]

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70 M. Albrow, Bureaucracy, Pall Mall Press, London, 1970; M. Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1964. By classicial theories of bureaucracy I mean the development of the theory of bureaucracy in the works of Hegel, Marx, Mosca, Weber and Michels. Albrow gives something of an introduction to these theories from a neo-Weberian point of view.

71 Of the former, A.W. Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, Free Press, Glencoe, 1954; P.M. Blau and W.R. Scott, Formal Organisations, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1963, provides a comparative based example of the latter research.

72 Even in Blau and Scott's terms of prime beneficiary unions could appear as mutual aid organisations, business concerns or service organisations depending on how unionism itself is conceived. On the bureaucratic tendencies within modern unionism see H.L. Wilensky, Intellectuals in Labor Unions, Free Press, Glencoe, 1956. Union bureaucracy has been a feature of certain Marxist analyses of the labour movement. See E. Mandel, On Bureaucracy: A Marxist Analysis, Red Pamphlet No. 5, IMG Publications, London, n.d.; F. Dobbs, Teamster Bureaucracy, Monad Press, New York, 1977; L. Trotsky, On the Trade Unions, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1969. For a critique of union bureaucracy from a libertarian-socialist perspective read, G. Munis and J. Zerzan, Unions Against Revolution, Black and Red, Detroit, 1975.

Max Weber's liberal ambivalence to bureaucracy has been taken as a cornerstone of the theoretical analysis of authority relations.[73] Weber's ideal-type or composite view of the characteristics of bureaucracy can be distinguished into two separate categories: the characteristics of the bureaucratic system and the characteristics of the official.[74] Following Economy and Society, Weber's characteristics of the system of bureaucracy can be summarised thus:

1. A system of continuous administrative regulation in which the principle of fixed jurisdictional areas of responsibility is followed.
2. Rule is from above within the power hierarchy but mechanisms for appeal to higher levels exist.
3. Information is the currency of bureaucracy in the form of largely confidential documentation and files.
4. Promotion is based on meritocracy with recognised training and qualification criteria.
5. Positions are full-time and are the office holder's primary occupation: no position may be appropriated by the position holder.
6. Management and administration follow legal and technical codes which are extant and need not be reviewed according to each contingency.
7. The administration functions as a system of discipline with centralised and unified control.

Under these structural authority relations Weber identified consistent characteristics, which the officials would display in the most technically rational bureaucratic order. These characteristics consist of the following:

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73 See S. Clegg and D. Dunkerley, Organisation, Class and Control, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1980.

74 The following points were distilled from Weber following the classification in M. Albrow, op.cit., pp. 43-45. Albrow also includes Weber's five principles of legal authority including: obedience to a legal code, that the administration serves the organisation's interests and follows a law of abstract rules, that office holders obey the rules or impersonal order, that members obey the law qua member, and that obedience is to the impersonal order rather than to the person in authority.

1. Office holding is vocational involving a long-term commitment to the organisation.

2. Officials are appointed to tenurable positions by higher levels of authority.

3. Appointment is based on meritocratic principles and officials are recruited primarily on the grounds of technical qualifications and seniority.

4. Officials are motivated by status aspirations and the desire to obtain social esteem inside and outside the administrative order.

5. The salary of office holders is a fixed, regular money income (often plus pension rights). This salary is not a measure of worth performed but is related to the status of the position and to a lesser extent the length of service.

6. The office holder is responsible for specifically defined tasks, regulations or judicial areas, which are fixed and familiar to other officers.

7. The official is separated from ownership of the means of administration and can neither dispose of or appropriate the position, nor the available administrative resources. The official is not personally liable for financial losses or waste although the official's career prospects may be affected.[75]

At best, for Weber, bureaucratisation offered:

> the optimum possibility for carrying through the principle of specializing administrative functions according to purely objective considerations...(The) 'objective' discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business according to calculable rules and 'without regard for persons'.[76]

For most administrative structures the choice is thus between an objective bureaucratic efficiency and a subjective 'dilettantism' (arbitrary rule). The value assumption made here presupposes that bureaucracy remains administratively neutral irrespective of political or ethical considerations. Bureaucracy appears accordingly as a system based on criteria of technical efficiency and coercion.[77]

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75 M. Weber, Economy and Society, (G. Roth and C. Wittich, eds.), University of California Press, Berkeley, 1968, Vol. I, pp. 212-226, and Vol. 2, pp. 956-1005.

76 Ibid., p. 975.

77 See A.W. Gouldner, op.cit..

Many critiques and qualifications have been made of the Weberian ideal-type and it is not intended to pursue such general debates in this context.[78] Rather, the concept of bureaucracy is used below as a potential explanation of routinised strategies of control within organisations.

Bureaucracy is widely regarded as an inevitable element of trade union organisation. Writers such as Wilensky and Lipset have argued that this is a necessary, rational and predictable tendency. Even so, for these authors union bureaucracies are representative bodies (in Gouldner's terms) mirroring the attitudes and values of members.[79] Moreover, management authority encourages a similar bureaucratic structure in union counterparts. Thus, Lipset adopting a bastardisation of Weber's theory of bureaucracy, has stated that,

> increased bureaucratization of trade unions and industrial relations not only fulfils organisational imperatives for efficiency, predictability and 'responsibility', and the leadership's needs for stability and control, but also contributes to specific goals and purposes of the ordinary worker .[80]

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78 Neither, on the other hand, do I intend to produce a 'neo-Weberian synthesis'. Some of the major contributions to the study of bureaucracy relating to trade unionism are collated in M. Poole, Theories of Trade Unionism: A Sociology of Industrial Relations, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1981, Chapter 7 and passim. The general concept of bureaucratic efficiency (systems rationality) permeates most conventional organisational sociology. Without elaborating on the specifics of the overall debate it is enough at this stage to mention that, based on various intellectual interpretations of Weber, these theorists distinguish themselves into three groups: those stressing the functional-system aspects of bureaucracy (Etzioni, Dahrendorf, Mills, Kerr and Dunlop); those stressing unintended or dysfunctional aspects (Gouldner, Selznick, Merton); and various synthesist approaches (Bendix, March and Simon).

79 A.W. Gouldner, Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1955.

80 S.M.Lipset, 'The Political Processes in Trade Unions: A Theoretical Statement', in M. Berger, C. Page and T. Abel, (eds), Freedom and Control in Modern Society, Octagon, New York, 1954, p. 87.

Even when Communists become union leaders Lipset interprets this in similar fashion asserting that they are among 'the only persons...who know how to organise'.[81]

From a different perspective, Trotsky's writings, in this respect would not be too dissimilar. Shortly before his death he argued that the existing social conditions of monopoly capitalism caused a 'growing together' of union and state bureaucracies in the interests of capital. Labour leaders were driven to 'demonstrate to the "democratic" state how reliable and indispensible' they were.[82] Indeed, like Weber, Michels and de Tocqueville, Trotsky considered conservative bureaucratic centralisation to be an intrinsic and increasing tendency within capitalist societies. However for each of these writers the authority relations involved in this tendency were not the principal source of social conflict. Bureaucratic authority networks were respectively either: (1) legally established as a stable, technically efficient and impersonal administration of legitimate authority; (2) the inevitable outgrowth of mass organisations and the centralisation of decision-making; (3) were adaptive mechanisms within an increasingly complex industrial society; or (4) were designed to routinise and mitigate the fundamental class conflict through the incorporation of labour leaders.

An alternative conception of bureaucracy specifically argues the opposite. According to Dahrendorf authority relations instigate class-based conflict. These authority relations are defined as the differential distribution of legitimate power between social groups whose arrangement of

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81 Ibid., p. 92.

82 L. Trotsky, 'Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay', in On The Trade Unions, pp. 68-69. For a more recent evaluation of themes developed in Trotsky's conceptualisation of trade unions in monopoly capitalism, see T. Clarke and L. Clements, (eds), Trade Unions under Capitalism, Fontana, Glasgow, 1977, pp. 18-30, 93-8, and 309-332.

social roles sustains expectations of domination and subordination.[83] Bureaucratic structures being an advanced form of social organisation fulfil the role of minimising conflict that originates within the industrial authority sphere. Whereas Dahrendorf's industrial organisations (capitalist enterprises, corporations, etc.) reflect 'dichotomous characteristics', bureaucracies reflect only monolithic features. The term dichotomony refers here to a combination of two interest groups, one in a dominant authority position (management) and the other in a position of subordination (labour). In the monolithic character of bureaucracy, authority relations are gradational and hierarchic, and thus appear as continuous non-conflict producing social roles. Bureaucracy, then, is an authority structure which reduces social conflict by increasingly institutionalising its manifest dimensions. Authority struggles in industry generate class conflict for Dahrendorf, but such struggles simultaneously generate organisational forms through which to express that conflict.[84] These organisations, such as employers federations and trade unions, are based on the legitimacy of conflict and continue to exist through their institutionalisation of that conflict. The administrative officials form, not a structural caste,[85] but a 'service class' serving the established order in the respective organisations of dominance or subordination.[86] Simple administrative dominance cannot in Dahrendorf's view create a dominant bureaucratic class as it does for example in Djilas' ruling class in the Soviet Union.[87] It

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83 R. Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1953, especially part 2.

84 Ibid, pp. 64-7.

85 See. J. Hinton, Unions and Strikes, Sheed and Ward, London, 1968, pp. 8-9, and 29-39.

86 R. Dahrendorf, op.cit., pp. 300-301.

87 M. Djilas, The New Class, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1966 [1957]. Cf. R. Dahrendorf, op.cit., p. 301.

may, on the other hand, as Mills has also argued, constitute a political 'elite' whose performance is secured through the disciplined continuity of the bureaucratic operation. Indeed, one of the contradictions of this authority based explanation of the role of bureaucracy lies in its static one-dimensional account of continual authority conflict. In particular, the overt emphasis on incorporation within a framework of domination leaves it difficult to conceive of union bureaucracy as anything but entirely interpenetrated with corporate bureaucracy and that of the state. It also has difficulty in explaining processes of radicalisation within the bureaucratic echelon.

In the light of this discussion a number of points emerge of importance to the analysis of the unions under investigation. First, bureaucratic patterns of administration involve control. This control is sustained through a high level of the division of labour among the union officialdom. The nature of this control, whether it is restrictive or expressive, is the major point in need of explanation. Second, patterns of leadership recruitment are significant to the continual political performance and cohesiveness of the officialdom. Third, the perceptions and motivations of union officials may serve to qualify bureaucratic tendencies. Fourth, the bureaucratic characteristics of a union may relate to the technological constraints of workplace organisations. Fifth, a specific relationship appears to exist from the present research between bureaucratic tendencies and the level and nature of active membership participation.

To analyse these points a number of questions need to be asked: what are the avenues through which bureaucratic control within the union is exercised; how developed is the trend towards the bureaucratic regulation of the organisation; and what impact do bureaucratic tendencies have on the union's capacity to operate effectively? An attempt is made to provide some answers to these questions in the remainder of this chapter, and offer a more detailed discussion in relation to the AMFSU in the following chapter.

IV. The Division of Labour Among Union Leadership

The division of labour among the officialdom in each of the three unions has become increasingly pronounced. Full-time officials and officers fulfilled specific areas of responsibility, but while the divisions appeared clearly defined the numerous areas of responsibility allocated to each position indicated that at best only minimal attention could be given to lower priority areas. Typically each full-time official/officer was responsible for a myriad of duties, yet only the most pressing received sustained action. The fact that other 'peripheral' duties were categorised and fixed to a position in preparation for whatever contingency, was a measure of the bureaucratic gradation of tasks allowing for them to be systematically routinised. But, on matters of union policy and general strategy, as will be examined in the next chapter, the bureaucratic division of labour within the leadership was of major significance.

The division of labour among the full-time officials and officers in the unions in question appeared as follows:

CHART 7.1 DIVISION OF LABOUR AMONG FULL-TIME OFFICIALS/OFFICERS

AMFSU

Position	Duties
Executive Official (State Secretary)	General Office Administration Office Management Back Up Assistance to All Industrial Sectors Recruitment, Awards and Research AMFSU State Council (Executive) AMFSU Administrative Committee AMFSU National Council ALP Executive UTLC Executive Delegate to: WEA, TUTA, Local Trades Advisory Board and Sheet-metal and Plumbing Advisory Boards
Executive Official (Assistant State Secretary)	Servicing White Goods Industry Local Government Workshops Mallet Brick Industries Preparation of Wage Sheets Pulp and Paper Industry South East Region Organiser AMFSU State Council (Executive) AMFSU Administrative Committee
Executive Official (State President)	Coordinator of Organiser Activities Regional Councils and Industry Sector Committees AMFSU Branch Affairs Endorsement of Financial Accounts Back Up Assistance to All Industrial Sectors Servicing ANRC and STA workshops AMFSU State Council (Executive) AMFSU Administrative Committee UTLC Delegate (Previously coordinator of Shop Steward Area Councils)
Organiser Official (Div. 3)	Servicing Engineering Industry Some Metal Workshops Construction Industry AMFSU State Council (Executive) ALP Delegate UTLC Delegate

AMFSU (Continued)

Organiser Official (Div. 5)	Servicing Metal Industry, Air Conditioning, Building Industry, Electrical, Glass and Agricultural Implement Sectors AMFSU State Council (Executive) ALP Delegate UTLC Delegate
Organiser Official (Div. 2)	State Government Departments Federal Government Departments (SA) Chemical Industry (ICI and AWF) Mining Industry (CSR) Food Industry Education Ancillary Staff AMFSU State Council (Executive) ALP Delegate UTLC Delegate
Organiser Official (Div. 4)	Vehicle Industry and Auto Component Workshops Repair and Retail Establishments Oil Industry Fire Brigade (engineering) Power Industry (ETSA) AMFSU State Council (Executive) UTLC Delegate
Organiser Official (Div. 1)	Whyalla Regional Organiser Steel Industry Iron Triangle Combined Union Council Secretary AMFSU State Council (Executive)
Organiser Official (Delegation 1982)	Metal Fabrication Industry Aluminium Industry Agricultural and Food Processing Industry Recruitment AMFSU State Council (Executive)
Education Officer	Union Education Shop Steward Training Public Relations AMFSU State Council (Executive) ALP Delegate TUTA Delegate
Compensation Officer	Membership Worker Compensation Matters Legal Liaison (with State Secretary)

ADSTE

Position	Duties
Executive Official (State Secretary)	General Office Administration Office Staff Responsibility Coordinator and Assistant to Other Organisers Vehicle Industry ADSTE Executive and Council UTLC Executive MTF Delegate Diverse Committees (Energy, Technological Change)
Organiser/Officer	Metal Industry Private Industry State Award matters Universities Telecom/Australia Post Union Education Women's Centre
Organiser/Officer	Public Service (Comm.& State) State Instrumentalities (AMDEL, ETSA)

[N.B. The remaining ADSTE Executive officials were honorary positions].

VBEF

Position	Duties
Executive Official (State Secretary)	General Office Administration Supervisor to Office manager VBEF Federal Executive and Federal Council VBEF State Executive ALP State Executive UTLC Executive
Executive Official (Assistant State Secretary)	Servicing Sections of GMH,Elizabeth and Mitsubishi Tonsley plants (total, 1100 members) Freeman Motors (200 members) VBEF State Executive and Federal Council ALP Delegate UTLC Delegate

VBEF (Continued)

Position	Duties
Organiser Official	State President (rotating on 2-yearly basis) Servicing GMH Woodville plant Repair and Retail Establishments VBEF State Executive Educational Officer TUTA Delegate ALP Delegate UTLC Delegate
Organiser Official	Servicing GMH Elizabeth, Mitsubishi Tonsley and Lonsdale plants (total, 3,700 members) ETSA Vehicle Body Builders Log of Claims and Arbitration Advocacy Recruitment Disputes Coordination VBEF State Executive ALP Delegate UTLC Delegate
Organiser Official	Servicing Repair and Retail Smaller Establishments (total 300 members) Award Negotiations in Repair and Retail Sector VBEF State Executive UTLC Delegate
Organiser Official	Servicing Commonwealth Railways (ANRC) and State Transport Authority Workshops PMC Plant VBEF State Executive ALP Delegate UTLC Delegate Migrant Workers' Committee Delegate (UTLC)
Research Officer	Research and Library Award Matters

In the performance of their positional responsibilities the union officials|officers operatedautonomously. Theywere not directly supervised in any structural sense, butfound it appropriate to liaise especially with the union secretary or other senior officials For instance, the VBEF allowed each organiser the latitude to pursue their individual job responsibilities as they found appropriate. One VBEF organiser systematically toured the worksites under his care, directly servicing members and shop stewards on-the-job. This activity occupied most of that organiser's days (9.30am - 5.15pm), 5 days per week. A comparable organiser with the same union rarely ventured from the city office, servicing members 'over the phone' and through administration. Organisers, thus, combinedaspects of both the roles of the shop steward and the executive official.They displayedthe manoeuvrability of shop steward action with the more structured, routinised role of executive officials. In this sense the organiser in the Australian contextwas a bureaucratised shop steward with full-time union duties.[88]

Bureaucratic controlwas exercised by other more mechanical means. The rule bookwas a prime tool of control within the organisation, but, as Fletcher points out, it is a potential weapon for any group within the organisation depending on which group effectively 'uses' it.[89] Union meetings providedthe other context for bureaucratic control. Meetingswere regular, and as such only regular attenders were in a position to participate effectively. Sociological analysis of the behavioural procedures employed has highlighted the abstract codification of these procedures. As such only

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88 See Chapters V. and VI.

89 R. Fletcher, op.cit., passim, especially pp. 78-81.

the initiated weredisposed to formally participate even under the most encouraging conditions. Indeed, while the VBEF General Meetings were rowdy, emotional and exercises in evasion on the part of the officials, the AMFSU monthly Branch meetings were examples of sterile bureaucratic management. In these latter union meetings items on the agenda were routinely classified and categorised rather like input-output functions. Whereas, the object of the VBEF monthly meetings involved raising or suppressing contentious issues, in the AMFSU the object appeared to be the expeditious processing of the business on the agenda. Only ADSTE monthly meetings for Councillors were openly informative with substantial levels of discussion. The latter was premised on the conceptualisation of the union as a service-welfare organisation, in which communication (information and feedback) assumed a significant role in the legitimation of the union and its officials. Undoubtedly though, and common to each of the three unions, the nominal 'motion' of notation (either 'move it be noted' or 'move it be referred'...), provided the most expeditious means of administrative disposal.[90] As Crozier noted, in relation to the French civil service, items brought before a bureaucracy potentially offer a certain nuisance-value; consequently, items requiring action tend to bedispensed with by resorting to regulation.[91]

While ADSTE held no general meeting of members on a regular basis (excepting the Annual General Meeting), the AMFSU and VBEF both held their general meetings in the evenings. The VBEF held its monthly meeting at Trades

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90 Two levels of administrative practice were significant here. First, the formal movement of motions provided an expeditious method in the treatment of organisational business and policy. Second, the constitutional limitations imposed upon specific union bodies with respect to the capacity to refer matters to other bodies was in itself a means of organisational regulation. For example, the AMWSU's area shop steward councils were able to refer items of concern to the union's executive, but only in the form of recommendations.

91 M. Crozier, op. cit., Chapter 7.

Hall in the centre of Adelaide. The AMFSU Branch meetings were held at regional locations with both the Adelaide and Southern Branches meeting at the union's city headquarters. For both these two larger unions, membership meetings were outside working hours and often substantial distances from the members' workplace and residential location. This aspect structured membership meetings such that attendance while nominally open was restricted in practice to hardcore activists.[92] The AMFSU, as will be examined in the following chapter, attempted to counteract this restriction through the use of area shop stewards' councils and the more recent industry committees. Nevertheless, even these moves to generate involvement merely included lay activists. To increase the rank-and-file membership's attendance at and participation in union meetings would be to require them to be held at the workplace in the employer's time.

In the terms of the union affording career opportunities to its functionaries, Mandel has offered a number of explanations for such careerist trends within working class organisations. These include: professional specialisation, material incentives and better living standards, self-emancipation from the production process, and the psychological satisfaction for workers' representatives of fighting for the collective good on a full-time basis.[93] One of the main developments along these lines in the South Australian unions has been the increasing resort to the employment of full-time, tenured officers together with administrative and secretarial assistance at the central State office. In 1982 ADSTE employed two professional officers in the capacity of full-time organisers and two office

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92 Branch attendance at AMFSU branch meetings averaged 8.6 members over the period of research, while an average 44.8 attended the VBEF membership meetings. The average attendance at ADSTE's Branch Council (i.e. representatives rather than members) was 26.7.

93 See E. Mandel, On Bureaucracy: A Marxist Analysis, passim.

assistants. The VBEF had one professional officer as a research officer and six office assistants, while the AMFSU had appointed two professional officers to oversee union education and compensation matters, and employed eight office assistants. These officers were not elected but were appointed by the union's management committee.[94] The positions they held enjoyed tenure, commanded regular salaries and were appointed according to criteria of merit, worthiness, political acceptability or previous service. In addition, all three unions as circumstances dictated appointed active members or shop stewards to the position of union officer on delegation, appointed positions with specific duties for a temporary, fixed period of time. These officers on delegation usually occupied the position for a few months but occasionally remained in full-time union duties for a period of years. The performance and political ideology of officers on delegation was often monitored by the senior officials. This was in order to ascertain whether support for the officer would be forthcoming (from officials, stewards and the members serviced), should the officer decide or be encouraged to stand for an official position at subsequent elections.

For elected officials, union career opportunities while technically not guaranteed were certainly enhanced by a number of political factors. Union secretaries, for example, enjoyed significant security of employment. In ADSTE, the union Secretary had occupied the position for 18 years initially as full-time office manager and since 1974 as elected Secretary. In the VBEF and AMFSU only one union Secretary had been defeated in an election in the history of either organisation, and that was left-winger J. Goss of the AEU by the one-term NCC candidate E. Bicknett.

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94 In the course of the empirical research for this study I was present through the interviewing and discussion process for the appointment of one of these officers. The executive of the union concerned, ADSTE, interviewed two candidates both not of the organisation but with extensive trade union organising and training experience.

Three factors principally ensured the continued career or re-election of union officials:

1. The official acquired a technical efficiency that distinugished himself/herself from other ordinary members. Over time union officials developed a proficiency in such duties as: administration, meeting procedure and public relations. This provided established officials with a prospective advantage over rank-and-file contenders at union elections. Moreover, much of the official's full-time union activities fell into the category of full-time electioneering. This perpetual campaigning, where the official either personally or through the written word was constantly presented before the membership, served to familiarise the electors with the name, character and previous service of the official.

2. Each union developed a bureaucratic or leadership 'machine' whose raison d'etre was the defence of the existing status quo of the union. 'Machine' politics involved: obtaining numerical superiority at various elections, meetings or on committees; selecting and endorsing commensurable candidates for union positions; maintaining a secrecy over the affairs of leadership in order to avoid criticism; and supporting by endorsement and finance existing 'machine' functionaries at elections and sympathetic candidates as potential representatives. One of the major methods used particularly by the AMFSU and VBEF in 'getting the numbers' was the formation of a 'union ticket' listing either the preferred candidates or the order in which members should vote for candidates at elections. This 'union ticket' was compiled by the 'machine' to ensure their own survival.[95]

95 Of course rival factions adopt 'anti-machine ticket' strategies to counteract the influence of the 'machine ticket'. For example, in building an 'anti-machine ticket' for the position of assistant secretary in the AMFSU, J. Naqui received assistance from the right-wing of the ALP and the National Civic Council. There was some suspicion at the time of support from Liberal Party sources. See Tribune, 19.5.1982, p.4.

Thus, in terms of the officials' careers the 'machine's' role was one of effective electoral and promotional domination. To achieve this end, and to finance campaign literature and 'how-to-vote' election material, a 'machine' defence fund existed into which existing officials made financial contributions.[96]

The degree of development found in the bureaucratic 'machine', it has been suggested, is related to the type of union, in particular whether the union originated from a craft society or a general/mass type organisation.[97] Craft unions maintain, according to this hypothesis, traditions of activist involvement, while general unions have adopted a highly bureaucratic structure as a means of unification. The VBEF certainly displayed the most politically cohesive official 'machine', as was indicated in previous chapters, but the AMFSU with a faction-ridden 'machine' was no less developed in its bureaucratic structure. In fact it was clear that, rather than the AMFSU's less-unified 'machine' being less effective in its domination and credibility, the opposite was the case. This would suggest that in contrast to Clegg's study of a British general union, the bureaucratic 'machine' within such union types is more superficially pronounced and

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96 Personal Interviews with a wide selection of union secretaries, organisers and shop stewards. On 'machine' politics in the Labor Party see A. Parkin and J. Warhurst (eds), Machine Politics in the Australian Labor Party, George Allen and Unwin, Sydney 1983, Chapters 1 and 5. See also Appendix VIII for how-to-vote material.

97 R. Martin, 'Union Democracy', op.cit., p. 210. One historically relevant question here involves the degree to which the breakdown of union rituals, ceremonies and traditions leads to a breakdown in the cohesiveness and solidarity of the organisation. This process is exacerbated by privatised and technologically dependent living conditions as well as by the numerical increase in organisational size. From an alternative perspective, it is interesting to speculate whether trade union organisations have passed from something approaching a 'mechanical solidarity' type of interaction to a type of 'organic solidarity' relationships in Durkheim's terms.

often less subtle, but no more highly developed.[98] A table comparable with Martin's breakdown of the constraints on the bureaucracy, which supports the above contention is provided below.

3. The Union's career mechanisms were supplemented by promotional opportunities. Advancement through the union hierarchy tended to enhance tenurability. Moreover, at very senior levels in the union leadership, provision existed for horizontal or promotional transfers to other organisations or associated careers with greater degrees of tenure. Such promotion through and beyond the union official hierarchy was monitored by the 'machine', with promotion of officials out of the union to other status occupations depending upon the union's influence. The selection of a new State Secretary of the AMFSU, undertaken within the period of this research, was made within the union's 'machine', on criteria of merit and acceptability to the factional constraints. The selection of the VBEF State Secretary, also undertaken within the period of research, corresponded to a process of in-built sequential promotion based on hierarchic patronage, in which all senior officials were simply promoted through one position. This upward

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98 H.A.Clegg, General Union, Blackwell, Oxford, 1954, Part V. 'In a general union the officers are bound to exercise greater power than in most other unions...because there is less common interest between the various groups of members than in a craft or individual union. The union is therefore cemented together by its relatively small body of officers, and the power of these officers is accordingly increased', p. 342. R.J.Gregory during his term as AMWU organiser provided a further explanation at the local level in arguing that skilled tradesmen were 'more articulate, better able to express themselves when arguing things with the company's Personnel Officers. Further the tradesmen's unions are a little better organised than the production unions and consequently are able to protect their interests better. It must be also realised that these tradesmen can get work at a similar rate elsewhere within the Metal Industry. Consequently the fear of dismissal would not bring such economic tragedy in their life as it would to the unskilled worker'. 'Caged Animals', On Dit (University of Adelaide), Vol. 41, No. 10, July 1973, p. 5. K. Von Beyme, Challenge to Power: Trade Unions and Industrial Relations in Capitalist Countries, Sage, London, 1980, relates the development of union 'machine' bureaucracy to union size and to the degree of monopoly concentration in the industry (p. 114-5).

TABLE 7.1

RELATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF UNION ORGANISATION

	ADSTE	AMFSU	VBEF
1. Membership spread			
industrial	heterogeneous	homogeneous	homogeneous
occupational	restricted	restricted	heterogeneous
2. Industrial structure			
ownership concentration	high/moderate	high/low	high
employer unity	high	mixed	high
product range	technically varied	wide	narrow
collective bargaining	specific awards	consent award plus workshop bargaining	plant agreements
3. Economic environment	depressed technological change	depressed structural change	severely depressed technological displacement
4. Technology			
work situation	isolated	workshop groups	mass production - low level interaction
rate change	rapid	rapid	intensive
5. Membership characteristics			
substructural identification		+	+/-
inter-workplace/branch relations		+	
association on job		+	
isolation from non-members	+/-		+
membership turnover	low	medium	low*

6. Membership beliefs			
custom		+	
local autonomy	+/-	+	
7. Bargaining power	technical exclusiveness	workshop/skill	mass
8. Opposition expertise			
degree of factionalism	low	high	moderate
lay officials		+	+
resources		+	+/-
9. Union structure			
substructural autonomy		+/-	
lay authority		+/-	
centralisation	+	+/-	+
electoral system	+	+	+
10. Membership recruitment			
closed shop	+/-	+/-	+
selective admittance	+		
apprenticeship		+	+
11. Leadership attitude			
to employer/industrial relations	accommodationist	reconciliatory	collaborationist

* VBEF membership prior to 1977 displayed a high turnover of members due to the high turnover of labour in the producer plants.

Source: The Table is based with some significant variations on R. Martin, 'Union Democracy: An Explanatory Framework', Sociology, Vol. 2, No. 2, May 1968, p. 215.

relocation had little to do with personalities, individual capacities or factional conflict but was orchestrated on the principles of seniority and next in line. The promotion of senior officials to associated bodies for extended careers included: entering parliament as members for safe Labor seats, transferring to staff positions in the Trades and Labour Council and Labor Party, and through appointment to government commissions or boards, the Arbitration Commission, Apprenticeship Commission etc.. The promotion of officials to parliament had been by far the most accessible career path, providing a degree of 'machine' stability within affiliated union bodies by allowing some turnover of senior officials on a regular basis.[99]

Given these three prime mechanisms for the maintenance of career structures within union organisation, a further dimension of bureaucratic control is essential to this account: the potential for an existing 'machine bloc' to reproduce its domination over time. In this sense leadership recruitment procedures are of vital importance. Unless recruitment is by random selection, the characteristics of those recruited to official and officer positions will tend to reflect the composition of the existing alliance of officials within the bureaucratic 'machine'. Particularly in the two larger unions recruitment patterns appeared as a process involving the promotion of hardcore union activists who consistently displayed certain required characteristics at union gatherings and who had often been placed under surveillance while serving a term on delegation in a de facto official's apprenticeship capacity. The relevant characteristics potential candidates displayed, consisted in general of technical qualities, political

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99 See J. Wanna, Defence Not Defiance, Chapter 6.

connections and value orientations, as well as loyalty to the organisation, the leadership personnel, trade union principles or the opinions of membership groups. Four types of leadership were distinguished in the three unions studied which indicated some measure of previous recruitment processes.[100] 'Technocrats' were the most common type, holding strong trade union commitments together with 'expert' capacities with regard to union duties. Second, 'machine functionaries' were loyal to the existing organisation and defended the bureaucratic order as the 'machine' was their source of credibility. This type, particularly in the VBEF, enjoyed positions through being the recipients of patronage, but more generally were trusted office bearers occupying union positions in order that 'non-machine' contestants were excluded. A third type, 'ideologues' appeared technically capable but regarded union office primarily as a means for the advancement of certain political ideas or commitments. The fourth type 'populists' displayed less commitment to trade union principles and mainly perceived their role as embodying the opinions of the members. The classification of the full-time officials and officers appeared as shown in Table 7.2.

The table indicates that in terms of recruitment technical efficiency was overwhelmingly important for two unions (ADSTE and AMFSU), with 'machine' loyalty a significant factor in the VBEF. The AMFSU appeared to be the only union within which recruitment occurred on the basis of a commitment to the advancement of ideological concerns.[101] The predominance of competent

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100 This typology is adapted with important modifications from E. Batstone, I Boraston and S.Frenkel, Shop Stewards in Action, Blackwell, Oxford, 1977. The assignment of union leaders into these classifications was undertaken after consideration of the leaders' role perceptions, their conceptions of other leaders, and stewards' perceptions of their leaders. The classification was based on extensive observation and interviewing.

101 This factor would appear more evident if the previous Assistant State Secretary, defeated in 1981, was also included. It should be noted that this is not to assert that the VBEF did not harbour 'ideologues', nor that the present officials do not perform the role of ALP ideologues. But, this role is secondary to their defence of the 'machine'. The fact that VBEF officials perform ideological roles in the ALP is more a consequence of their behaviour in the position, rather than a prime reason for recruitment or for nominating as a candidate for the officialdom.

TABLE 7.2: Leadership Typology of the Three Unions, 1978-1982.

	ADSTE Officials		AMFSU Officials		VBEF Officials	
	1978	1982	1978	1982	1978	1982
Technocrats	1	1	3	6*	-	1
Machine functionaries	-	-	1	1	4	4
Ideologues	-	-	3	2	-	-
Populists	-	-	1	1	2	1
	Officers		Officers		Officers	
Technocrats	1	2	1	1	-	-
Machine functionaries	-	-	-	-	1	1
Ideologues	-	-	1	1	-	-
Populists	1	-	-	-	-	-

* 2 on delegation

'technocrats', particularly in the AMFSU, reflected a shop steward tradition through which activists and potential leadership recruits were encouraged and promoted.[102] Comparing changes between the two dates indicated a consolidation of the existing leadership-type in each of the large unions with the exception of AMFSU 'ideologues'. This trend was particularly evident towards the elevation of 'technocrats' who in 1978 constituted six of twenty officials/officers, but by 1982 constituted eleven of twenty-two (from 33.3 per cent to 50 per cent) of the existing officialdom. The reasons behind this consolidation are to be found in the process of recruitment through the 'machine ticket' mechanism. Only once throughout the period of research at an election for an official was the 'machine' candidate unsuccessful. On this occasion in 1981 a 'machine' factional split over the election occurred in the AMFSU and two 'left' candidates were endorsed

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102 At one stage a leading CPA cadre within the union was promoted as a potential union official as a result of activities in the 35-hour campaign and over his dismissal and reinstatement in a domestic manufacturing firm. This candidate was placed on full-time union delegation despite the fact that the CPA held no other official position in the union.

on separate 'tickets'. In the event, a third 'populist' candidate who had recently become a noticeable critic of the union was successful.[103]

To assess the impact of bureaucratic tendencies on the union's capacity to operate, involves an evaluation of the nature of the authoritative control exercised. In terms of union solidarity, it is conceivably the case that the greater the resort to the technical aspects of administration by the officialdom, the greater the opportunity for significant membership issues to be promoted. Alternatively, the greater the resort to centralised bureaucratic control within the officialdom, the greater the opportunity for the leadership to promote issues in abeyance of membership support.[104] Put differently, to the extent that union officials act in the capacity of a representative mouthpiece of the members this leads to the encouragement of organisational solidarity, but also, possibly to union conservatism.[105] To the extent that union officials, acting as a controlling 'machine', prescribe or constrain issues, this serves as a catalyst generating sporadic responses, sporadic opposition and producing intra-union conflict groupings. The significant question here relates to the conditions under which union bureaucracies become more or less radical. In other words, the relationship between mass levels of involvement and the bureaucratic echelon may evoke a latent tendency for the union bureaucracy to display radical policies relative to the consciousness of the bulk of the membership. This tendency is latent to the extent that the pursuit of either militant or radical

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103 Chapter VI provided further detail and analysis of this event.

104 For a discussion of this aspect see E.O. Wright, Class, Crisis and the State, New Left Books, London, 1978, pp. 181-225.

105 Conservatism is used here to denote the reduction of issues to the lowest common denominator (generally apathy and de-politicisation) and in the more populist leadership eschewing a more directive vanguard role. See also S. Mallet's (op.cit.) distinction between representative and consciousness-raising leadership.

directions succeed, in the sense that it provides the most appropriate way in which the union leadership can consolidate and legitimise their position.[106]

For example, ADSTE which has an administrative orientated, rather than bureaucratic, officialdom had no major intra-union conflict group within the State branch, although nationally serious conflicts between State/ Territory branches existed. The AMFSU 'machine' incorporated conflict groups active in the union within the union officialdom. This tended to elevate much of the political conflict above the broad rank-and-file, leading to sustained faction-fighting with occasional political splits. The VBEF 'machine', in contrast, sought consistently to prevent conflict groups becoming represented within the officialdom. Under an appearance of conservative bureaucratic stability, this led to the formation of spontaneous rank-and-file protest groups antagonistic to the union leadership. In contrast with the AMFSU, where rank-and-file groups formed to defend the whole or sections of the official leadership, in the VBEF such groups have traditionally organised to oppose the majority of the leadership bloc. In the VBEF this process has surfaced in periodic instability not without violent confrontations and the verbal and physical disruption of union meetings.

V. Mobilisation and Bureaucratic Control

The impact of bureaucratic control, while it remains contradictory, provides a serious problem for union mobilisation. The relationship between authoritative control exercised by the 'machine' and the involvement of the members is never static. Centralised bureaucratic control is in some

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106 See R. Hyman, 'The Politics of Workplace Trade Unionism', op.cit. pp. 54-67.

ways more 'efficient' in Allen's terms in combatting employers' ploys, in negotiation procedures and the like.[107] But, as emerged from the empirical research and observer involvement in this present study, a particular pattern arose in this relationship between the nature of bureaucratic control and membership involvement. This pattern, displayed by both the more highly bureaucratised unions, called Allen's argument into question especially in relation to the medium and longer term. It is to this pattern that the attention now turns in order to provide some explanation for its existence.

The problem faced by the AMFSU and VBEF involved the inducement of membership involvement in, and support for, the issues that the bureaucratic 'machine' were prepared to pursue. The hierarchy of both unions had been radicalised by militant grass roots involvement in the 1960s and early 1970s. Indeed, many of the officials/officers of these unions in the late 1970s and 1980s were activists in this previous period. With the onset of the world economic crisis, the end of the Vietnam war and the crisis in Australian manufacturing, the officialdom of both unions were confronted with the problem of sustaining the level of spontaneous membership activity, while channelling this potential in ways acceptable to the leadership bloc. Hence, as the depression in Australian manufacturing deepened, and the room to manoeuvre over wage bargaining became more constrained, this was accompanied by a general lowering of the level of mass militancy, evidenced in the rank-and-file responses to rising redundancies and unemployment. As a consequence for the larger unions this created a fragmentation of ideas and initiative over what strategies should be adopted for the union and the industry's defence.

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107 V.L. Allen, Power in Trade Unions, Part I.

The officialdom as a result of their lack of manoeuvrability, the fragmentation of strategy proposals, and membership disenchantment towards officials unable to 'deliver the goods', resorted to a defensive centralisation in their bureaucratic control over the union. Initially, the VBEF 'machine' attempted to undermine its limited and embryonic shop steward movement and to proscribe militant rank-and-file splinter groups. The AMFSU officials, on the other hand, increasingly centralised their authoritative control within the formal and informal structures of the union. Simultaneously, the AMFSU 'machine' with the intention of encouraging membership militancy, commenced the coaching of shop stewards and activist members through the union's education campaign, area council shop steward meetings and workshop committees. This coaching was designed to channel and encourage hardcore union activists into areas acceptable to the existing officials and in particular to mobilise them behind industrial campaigns in the union's own organisational development. Where these middle-level union bodies strayed from this brief, the response of the union 'machine' was much less sympathetic and on occasions antagonistic and repressive.

As such, a pattern of control emerged in these economically depressed circumstances. Union organisations tended towards centralisation as membership involvement declined and frustration increased. This response appeared directed not particularly to effect a greater or lesser degree of militancy at the workplace, but to counter spontaneous membership activity within the organisation itself. This process of centralisation attempted to exclude radical membership involvement and participation in the union. As declining levels of participation became manifest a general decline in broader union solidarity emerged, developing into a dissipation of

mobilisation potential through union structures. Hence, while the centralisation of authority was pursued initially on the grounds of efficiency, under these circumstances it served to reduce the capacity of the organisation to mobilise effectively. The result of this trend on union activity, and indeed on the raison d'etre of unionism, produced an erosion of the union's accustomed bargaining strength. Once this became evident and frustrations with the formal organisational codes emerged, the membership were forced into other avenues of expression.[108] With the union hierarchies, tendencies to devolve initiative developed, although not essentially with regard to decision-making power. But this devolution of initiative, as a response to union centralism, adopted many alternative forms of participatory expression.

Because membership initiative was less influential through the existing union structure, specific rank-and-file participation emerged during the 1970s in forms such as: anti-bureaucratic workplace activity, local level collective bargaining,specific agreements or sweetheart deals with employers, demonstrations of frustration towards the union officialdom, an increasing impetus at the shop steward level, and in some cases through revolutionary action groups. This transfer of leadership initiative within the agenda of union policy from the officialdom closer to the membership assisted a greater degree of shop floor autonomy within these unions. Organisational

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108 Relevant examples here include: the resort to wage indexation from 1975-81 throughout which real wages were eroded, the lack of militancy over the 35-hour week campaign (one major worksite withdrew entirely from the campaign in S.A. while others assigned it only low priority), and the 1980-82 'social wage-social contract' policy. See AMWSU, On The Rack, Surry Hills, 1982; M. Burford, 'Comments on the Australian Labour Movement's approach to Incomes Policy and Socialist Politics', (mimeo) Canberra June 1982; N. Apple, 'Incomes Policy and Industrial Relations: Britain, Sweden and Australia', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 22, No. 4, December 1980; J. Wanna and B. McFarlane, 'Of Incomes Policies, Social Agreements and National Economic Assessments', (mimeo), University of Adelaide, August 1982.

tensions developed as such embryonic grass roots involvement came into conflict with the existing union authority. Demands from the workplace filtered through the union structure, and while some, even a majority, were successfully blocked by the 'machine', a spectrum of workplace pressure points seeking change emerged. With these tensions, the potential for intra-organisational activity among the membership tended to increase, based on discontentment and dissent towards the bureaucratic 'machine'.

The general characteristics of this relationship between bureaucratic control and membership involvement under conditions of economic depression are shown below. This schematic chart is not intended as a series of causal effect mechanisms nor as subjectivist responses, but as an attempt to outline the important contradictory forces at work within collective labour organisations. The pattern can be summarised in the following points:

TABLE 7.3: Pattern of Intra-Organisational Relationships

	Phase Characteristics		Response Tendencies
(i)	previous levels of radicalism and mass militancy.	→	attempts by the union leadership to channel this potential and accommodate it.
(ii)	increases in membership involvement in union affairs together with growing frustration.	→	leadership resort to centralisation of authority in defence of its own position.
(iii)	bureaucratic centralisation within the officialdom.	→	tends to exclude membership involvement and lower the potential for mobilisation.
(iv)	decline in mobilisation potential.	→	reduction in bargaining strength.
(v)	rank-and-file pressure on officialdom, tensions accumulate and a general surfeit of issues become channelled within the organisation.	→	devolution of initiative as membership resort to on-the-job autonomy and lay official organisation.
(vi)	participation and the capacity for intra-organisational activity based on discontent rises.	→	attempts by the union leadership to channel this potential, possible instability and factional challenges to the bureaucratic 'machine'.

Two aspects of this relationship pattern are central to this thesis: first, why did these developments adopt this pattern and what sustained the contradictory forces operating within the union organisations; second, to what extent did the union leadership attempt to constrain or channel issues which were significant to the membership and on what did the rank-and-file's momentum rest in their continued attempts to mobilise, even in the midst of official intransigence. These aspects provide the thematic basis for the discussion of union policy in the AMFSU in the following chapter.

Before moving to this more detailed analysis, and as already mentioned, it is appropriate to indicate some reasons for the existence of this relationship pattern. These reasons relate directly tothe earlier criticisms of the Michelsian view of organisational tendencies. Studies into union government have highlighted the formal mechanisms of decision-making power, overlooking the wider context of non-decision-making and agenda-setting power. In fact, the stress on formal mechanisms of particip-ation, it was suggested, ignored the many levels of participation and collective regulation that characterised union organisation. Further, of more relevance in explaining the relationship pattern, was the criticism that the more conventional approaches to membership involvement fail to take account of the labour process and the nature of collective control at the point of production. It is to the level and nature of this control, it is suggested,that an explanation of the contradictory forces within union organisations is to be found.

VI. Collective Control over the Labour Process

Limited research has been conducted into what bearing on-the-job collectivist controls over the labour process have on the internal affairs of the union.[109] Some conclude that membership involvement in union affairs is enhanced by their 'weak control over the local labour and product market (thus discouraging cozy relationships with management)'.[110] Yet this contention, in divorcing labour control from the level of employer unity, is less tenable than it first appears. Its plausibility stems from the view that the greater the degree of local organisational control over the local conditions, the stronger the encouragement towards corporatism or business unionism.[111] But, this conclusion holds more in common with certain versions of liberal thinking that maintain that the less centralised and less effective a union becomes, the greater the chances for 'democratic' government from below. To the extent that this view posits weak control over production conditions as a prerequisite for meaningful membership participation, then, the view more closely approximates ideology or simple monocausality rather than the reasoned outcome of serious inquiry.

In contrast, the relationship between workplace control over the labour process and membership involvement is more complex. This is not simply to advance the contrary hypothesis that in circumstances where labour process control is high more avenues for internal participation will exist. Rather, the nature of the collective workers' control or of job regulation within the labour process contains many different levels of

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109 R. Herding, Job Control and Union Structure, Rotterdam University Press, Rotterdam, 1972; B.Pribicevic, The Shop Stewards' Movement and Workers' Control, Blackwell, Oxford, 1959. See also R. Edwards, Contested Terrain, Basic Books, New York, 1979.

110 G. Strauss, 'Union Government...' op.cit., p. 232.

111 Cf. K. Von Beyme, op.cit. for a discussion of the opposite hypothesis.

meanings for workers and may transcend technological changes.[112] This gives rise to particular mobilisation commitments relative to employer strategies. It is the specific nature of these particular forms of commitment and their relationship to control within the union that is of central importance. Union government, therefore, is fundamentally concerned with interest mediation, through formal and informal structures, rather than with the exercise of power per se. This interest mediation arises directly from the politics of collective labour at the workplace. The mobilisation of interest mediation is open both to expressions of consent and resistance in the political relationship between management and workers.

The analysis of collective workers' control of production is not simply a technique for shifting the analysis of labour organisations from the formal macro level to the informal micro level. Instead, the intention is to introduce a broader perspective on policy formation, one which focusses on the foundations of the generation of union policy issues. Within the shop floor culture this collective intervention primarily involves effort bargaining and the establishment of negotiated codes. This may involve forms of labour process compensation and job regulation practices to counter managerial control techniques. For those theorists like Goodrich or Braverman this relates to an increasing supervisory role over the deskilling processes of mass production, in which workers nonetheless attempt to establish some identifiable foothold from which to base individual or collective responses.[113] This often emphasises,for example in industrial democracy schemes, shop floor incorporation relative to the maintenance of labour's

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112 See W. Lazonick, 'Industrial Relations and Technical Change: The Case of the Self-Acting Mule', Cambridge Journal of Economics, Vol. 3, 1979. Lazonick relates the example of worker control in cotton spinning adjusting from one technological context to another. For a sociological account see A. Aldridge, Power, Authority and Restrictive Practices, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976.

113 C.L. Goodrich, The Frontier of Control, Pluto Press, London, 1973; and H. Braverman, Labor and Monopoly Capital, Monthly Review, New York, 1974.

frontier of control.[114] In post-Braverman terms, labour approaches an amalgam of conflict and consent organised by the shop floor. For Burawoy the labour experience in the process of production constitutes the generation of consent through 'game playing', the 'making out' to endure subordination and reduce deprivation in the labour process.[115] Workplace bargaining appeared less important and unions (themselves excluded from the 'game') were marginal.

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114 For a critique of this see P. Cressey and J. MacInnes, 'Voting for Ford: Industrial Democracy and the Control of Labour', Capital and Class, No. 11, Summer 1980; and for a more general discussion relating to industrial sectors (railways, steel, newspaper printing and motor vehicles) see R. Hyman and T. Elger, 'Job Controls, The Employers' Offensive and Alternative Strategies', Capital and Class, No. 15, Autumn 1981; and H. Beynon, Working For Ford, Allen Lane, London 1973, Chapter 6.

115 M. Burawoy, The Manufacture of Consent, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1979. Burawoy in a sustained critique of Braverman conflates the labour process into motivational criteria. The increased effort extracted by 'making out' via game playing depreciates the issues of labour process intensification and insecurity (unemployment). Certainly workers engage in a variety of techniques to enhance or relieve their work. For example, I was once employed as packer in a grindstone-producing factory, packaging 25 grindstones in carton boxes, day after day, month after month. This was the most tedious least preferred job in the section as the packer was tied to the line and was involved in monotonous motions. I devised various means to alleviate the repetition such as occasionally packing upside down, but mainly counting randomly in 2s, 3s, 4s, 5s etc. At any point the most important criteria was not the cash nexus nor reciprocal effort, but getting through to clocking off time or the next work break. In other words, while there were few direct supervisors and few sackings the direct oppression was time. Analysing the labour process as a game, superficially measures workers psychology separated from intensification. Automation, for example, will generally tend to reduce physical effort undermining Burawoy's labour processes of 'making out', yet the time dimension will persist, productivity will tend to increase, and games will no doubt continue. Burawoy does not explain if games are central to the labour experience, why counter games do not predominate serving to reduce effort, output or hasten time. For the most part workers are placed into a production process which has requirements independent of their attitudes or psychological game responses; the domination of dead labour over living. The major requirement irrespective of games is labour's standard working time in a given level of intensification. In relation to this aspect of cooperative subordination, technological restraint and market forces, see W. Lazonick, op.cit.. For an attempt to apply technological innovation to industrial relations under Australian arbitration, see C. Fisher, Innovation and Industrial Relations, Croom Helm, Canberra, 1983.

Historically under South Australian labour relations capital has conceded wage increments and marginal improvements in the conditions of employment and not the power of labour to exercise significant control over the labour process, job security, deskilling, technological or labour intensification. This is apparent in the composition of industrial awards which specify to the point of pedantry gradings related to wages, conditions and procedural practices, but do not mention aspects such as management practices, production techniques, effort bargaining, technological change, investment, profitability or market factors (labour or product). In the three South Australian unions, workplace unionism operated as an internal mediation of contradictory elements of resistance and accommodation towards capital. This level of union organisation was not the vanguard of class conscious action (revolutionary or reformist), neither was it an apathetic stratum of individual homo economicus. It was, however, an immediate source of what Gorz termed factory consciousness, Goodrich termed 'customary control' and Brooks the local generation of union vitality, in which workplace interests surrounding award or agreement conditions were defended. The best example of this was the shop steward area councils and industry section committees of the AMFSU or the informal workplace groups that emerged in industrial disputations.[116] Defensive by nature, these collectivist interests centred on job controls and the monitoring and modification of managerial strategies. They did not principally involve wage bargaining.

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116 For example in the dispute involving the AMFSU and ADSTE at the U.S.-based multinational company Schrader Scovill in July 1980, the strike and subsequent lockout/picket confrontation centred on managerial strategies and union restrictions relative to a period of over-production. The unions in order to defend employment levels and avoid retrenchments had agreed to a 4-day week. Despite this the company sacked 9 workers and threatened to dismiss a total of 25. As a result of this dispute, the first in 19 years at the company, an ad hoc joint union strike committee effected organised resistance for seven weeks. For the most part the struggle focused on the most basic aspect of labour process control, the continuation of employment. The strike concluded after legal, ministerial and police intervention with a negotiated compromise of severance pay for 29 employees ($300 each) and re-employment for the other 28. The author observed the initial strike strategy meetings and interviewed picketting unionists. The strike received some press coverage, see Advertiser, 20.8.1980 to 30.8.1980.

From observation between 1978-82 these struggles in the labour process included:

- absorbing new labour processes or fragmentation in the technical division of labour (specific machine operations, new techniques, work groups or new processes);
- resisting piece-rate wages on the basis of individual effort but to negotiate with respect to productivity collective bonuses and over-award payments;
- modifying the pace of work, particularly quota rates and in the vehicle assembly plants the speed of the line and continuous production groups;
- modifying labour displacement and the introduction of new technology and new management strategies (e.g. the Quality of Life scheme under GMH) or international sourcing;
- preventing the replacement of males in production by the cheaper labour of women and to prevent the excessive use of part-time (mainly female) work and sub-contracting;
- monitoring training and apprenticeship schemes, particularly in the use of underskilled trainees to perform tasks restricted to a particular training;
- establishing in a form of inverted mutual insurance standard provisions for redundancy. *

The main interest for the particular unions involved automation for the VBEF, the decline of technical local autonomy for ADSTE and the re-structuring of manufacturing for the AMFSU. The AMFSU more purposively attempting to advance the frontier of control, was considerably involved in rank-and-file actions in defence of the union together with struggles over workplace rights. The diagram below presents the relation between workplace interests and union structures with respect to union government defined as the generation of union policy issues.

* These redundancy struggles predominantly failed as the scale of labour displacement rose dramatically after mid-1982.

CHART 7.1: The Political Structure of Union Government

Formal Government-Union 'Machine'	Processes of Representation and Administration	Policy Structuration and limitation of Issues	Formal Articulation of Policies
Leadership Resources			
Informal Sub-Structural Collectivism	Collective Control over Labour Process Rank-and-File Involvement Workplace Resistance	Generation of Workplace Interests	Mobilisation Potential of Interest Mediation
Motivational Resources			

The significance of collectivist controls over the labour process relates to the context within which organised labour mediates the intensification of the labour process. The internal constraints on union government are generally imposed by the nature of this collective influence in the labour process. The forms these constraints take give rise to the union codes of behaviour, policy development, militancy or moderation, criteria of leadership recruitment - in short, the formal government of the union.

Conclusion

Union mobilisation for the most part is unlikely to mobilise workers as a revolutionary working class even in a political crisis. Because of the constraints on labour process control, existing unionism is primarily a form of resistance not revolt, seeking change from within the system. But this type of collective sanctioning, (limited influence over the conditions under which labour power is sold), while it may be a limited weapon politically, is the prime source of union operational power. Nonetheless, processes of union government and similarly democratic participation are removed from the workplace environment. The tendency of unions to centralise their processes of government contradictorily distances the rank-and-file from active involvement. To express more the measure of democratic participation in collective organisation a greater proportion of union government needs to be located at the worksite during working hours. It is from this source that compulsive pressures toward the internal regulation of the union originate. It is from this source that collective involvement takes shape, and upon which certain levels or perceptions of commitment and mobilisation are relevant. It is toward this point that studies in union government should focus.

In place of general theoretical statements, attention needs to be concentrated on analysing the tensions between the constraints and initiatives relating to union government. This is not simply to promote 'concrete' analysis, but is intended to indicate that one-dimensional notions of participatory influence are inappropriate. This is increasingly the case in as much as the limitations of the liberal-pluralist perspective

are applied to union structures. It has been argued in this chapter that union behaviour and motivation is formed within particular structural relationships. Consequently, the measurement of the expression of membership involvement can be evaluated in relation to the structure of the social and technical relations of production, especially at the point of production. It is to avoid analysis to attempt to measure union govenment against some abstract external principles. It is argued, instead, that participation in union organisation and the tensions inherent in organisational control, cannot be untangled from other involvement influences and dimensions of participation within the labour process and beyond.

It is these considerations of workplace involvement and the degree of collective participation over the control of the labour process that need to be extended and used to qualify the formal decision-making structure of organisations. Indeed, what remains unsatisfactory about much of the existing research in this area, is that little attention is given to the methods through which such considerations modify union government. What remains to be undertaken is a more comprehensive presentation of these methods.

CHAPTER VIII

The Politics of Policy Formation and Implementation

The severe economic depression folowing the mid-1970's precipitated an intensive and wide debate among trade unionists concerning the nature and future directions of union policy. During the early 1980's this debate was conducted in the context of major economic restructuring across manufacturing in which markedly different labour requirements became pronounced.[1] Responding to these developments, policy debate characterised both the internal politics of individual unions as well as the political division between union organisations and within the union movement generally. In addition, at a more formal political level expressions of these debates surfaced in qualified unionist support for contending, and increasingly federally constituted, factions of the Labor Party from 1979.[2] Initially debate within the union movement focussed on specific policy proposals reflecting tensions over tactical alternatives. These tensions, for example, were manifest in the campaign to secure the 35 hour week which recommenced in the metal and vehicle manufacturing sector after 1977. Accompanying debate over such specific policy issues prompted concern among the different protagonists over the nature of the decision-making process in relation to policy formation and its implementation.

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1 J. Wanna, 'Regional Development and Economic Restructuring in South Australia', Australian & New Zealand Journal of Sociology, Nov. 1984 (forthcoming).

2 See for example: R. Catley and B. McFarlane, Australian Capitalism in Boom and Depression, APCOL, Chippendale, 1981, Chapter 8; A. Ramsay, 'What Faction Wars mean to the ALP', National Times, 27.4.1984 - 3.5.1984, pp. 3-6; P. Kelly, The Hawke Ascendancy: a Definitive Account of its Origins and Climax 1975-1983, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1984.

Thus far, this study has examined the internal structure of union organisation, its internal dynamics and the nature of the various organisational roles concerned with collectivist mobilisation. The analysis of this chapter turns to examine the specific relationship between the organisation and its policies; the actual decisions made, the reasons for the introduction and formation of policy issues, and the designed strategies of implementation. The analysis focusses specifically on the AMFSU in this chapter. The analysis concentrates on the AMFSU because the process of policy-making was a more thorough-going and conscious process than in ADSTE or the VBEF.[3] The development of policy was an articulated process with many facets and levels of operation involved, and where with the union's more numerous and factionalised leadership a wider divergence of views existed. Policy development was a direct component of union politics and served explicitly as the major linkage between the union leadership and the membership. It was not, as it was for much of the time in the other unions, an indirect consequence of organising a particular industrial group with wider affiliations. Rather, policy determination constituted for the AMFSU a positive and essential expression of their existence as a working class orgnisation. Therefore, it is appropriate to analyse the relationship between union organisation and policy development where the expression of policy becomes a fundamental instrument to further organised class interests. Accordingly, the AMFSU is a type of organisation that considers policy development a crucial means in itself to shape to some extent their social existence. The formation and implementation of policy in the AMFSU served as their conscious

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3 This is not because relative to the AMFSU the politics of policy development in ADSTE or the VBEF were simply less 'advanced' and could be expected ultimately to follow suit. Nor is it that the process of policy formation was more opaque or difficult to fathom in the other two unions: indeed, the reverse was generally the case.

contribution to shaping social realities, instead of allowing social conditions simply to arise unchallenged.

The Politics of Mobilisation: the 35 Hour Week Campaign

Rank-and-file mobilisation emerged as a major issue in the AMFSU as well as to a lesser extent in ADSTE. In the context of the structural economic depression, the leadership group of the metalworkers' organisation was preoccupied with engineering strategies of mobilisation designed to counter managerial practice and the effects of the structural crisis. Initially in the AMFSU these strategies were launched against the technological erosion of established jobs and the maintenance of wage levels. Later, more stress was placed on resisting both plant closures and planned retrenchments.[4] Alternatively ADSTE's strategies centred on retaining employment levels given the introduction of computerised systems of draughting, expanding their coverage to include technicians, and toward educating their membership to actively repulse poaching attempts by allied industrial unions.[5] The AMFSU's leadership for their own credibility were concerned to improve the collective effectiveness of the union. Indeed, the leadership began explicitly identifying membership complacency and apathy as a major reason

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4 A good example of these strategies was the tent city struggle at GMH's Woodville plant in 1983. See AMFSU, Metalworker, Vol. 4, No. 5, June 1983, p. 10; also Vol. 4, No. 7, August 1983, p. 8; and Vol. 4 No. 8, September 1983, p. 24.

5 An example of ADSTE's embryonic articulation of policy interests during the economic recession was provided at a Branch Council meeting during 1980. The Federal Shadow Minister for Industry, C. Hurford, gave an invited address to the union arguing that Australia should remove economic protection and 'let the Asians do what they're best at while we do what we're best at'. Hurford made no mention of comparative wage rates, degrees of market penetration nor the highly repressive state apparatuses in many Asian countries. Significantly none of the union Councillors criticised Hurford's address despite the fact that many of their members' present jobs rested on protectionism and were already disappearing. ADSTE, Branch Council Meeting, 22.7.1980.

contributing to the decline in real wages of metalworkers, and the lack of initiative demonstrated against economic restructuring. Part of the reason for rank-and-file complacency was perceived by federal leaders of the union to be the result of the dominance of the left factions in the union hierarchy. According to this view, the wider membership began abdicating their responsibility for collective activism believing that the particular leadership group in office would actively represent their interests. In other words, the rank-and-file following the 1973-4 period of activism, adopted a subject relationship toward left officials, while the leadership adopted a subjectivist appreciation of membership potentiality.

Policies toward shorter working hours on a daily, weekly or annual basis have characterised Australian unionism since the mid-nineteenth century.[6] For a number of reasons mobilisation to reduce working hours has tended to follow a pattern of periodic and identifiable campaign actions or 'pushes' over specific targets. These campaigns have tended to centre round periods of economic recession or perceived recessionary phases with the commencement of the introduction of new technology.[7] The concept of a 'target' shorter working week has been significant in terms of the initial union mobilisation and for the prosecution of the duration of the campaign. Furthermore, given the standardisation of union demands conceded by employers this has resulted in a series of staged plateaus involving daily or weekly working hours. Through these plateau phases unions have continued to claim for further reductions in working hours in the form of paid annual leave, long service leave,

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6 J. Niland, 'The Movement for a Shorter Working Day in New South Wales, 1855-1875', M. C. Thesis, University of New South Wales, 1966; also J. Baird (AMFSU), 'History of Hours Cuts Shows Need for United Campaign'. AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, April-June 1981, pp. 20-24.

7 See K. Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976, especially pp. 389-411 and 533-542.

public holidays, and education leave, while employers have demanded 'flexibility' through overtime provisions.[8] Indeed, one of the most often voiced issues of the 35 hour week campaign in the metal industry, was the reduction of overtime and the elimination of employer entitlements to require their existing workforce to perform reasonable overtime.[9] Nevertheless, union policy to reduce working hours has been a consistent policy of over a hundred years duration. The 35 hour week campaign in the manual sector was specifically introduced in the mid-1960's although the campaign, which was revitalised after 1973, became intensified in the late 1970's and was conducted in earnest after May 1980.[10]

Therefore, it is apparent that policy issues over shorter working hours have been basic to the operation of the organisation in the sense of comprising an element in the continuing policies of job control in the production process. In this way shorter working hour policies such as the 35 hour week issue were integral to the particular forms of labour organisation and did not represent a particular policy direction that needed specific formulation. Of importance here are not the theoretical arguments concerning the 35 hour week per se, but rather the reasons why this policy was strenuously advanced in this particular recession, as

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8 For instance, the Metal Industry Award 1971 (varied to 1979) contained the clause that 'an employer may require any employee to work reasonable overtime at overtime rates and such employee shall work overtime in accordance with such requirements'. Clause 21 (b). This propensity for overtime work is also a specific phenomenon of British industry relating to male manual workers, see W. Brown, 'The Structure of Pay Bargaining in Britain', in F.T. Blackaby (ed.), The Future of Pay Bargaining, Heinemann, London, 1980.

9 This was a point which received almost unanimous endorsement at Metal Trades mass meetings, (e.g., MTF, Mass Meeting, Apollo Stadium, 23.5.1980).

10 See AMWSU, Monthly Journal, May 1980, pp. 15-18; and Monthly Journal, June 1980, pp. 3-4, 7 and 28. Cf. also Advertiser, 8.5.1980, p.1 and 10.5.1980, p.6.

well as the nature of the methods through which this policy was implemented in the development of a specific campaign of mobilisation. Nonetheless, it is not the assumption below that the manner of implementation necessarily determined the outcome of the campaign (indeed, in SA the campaign was noticeably restrained yet the eventual 38 hour agreement was national in application). In spite of this it remains important to analyse the reasons behind the sponsorship of particular methods of implementation and in what way they related to the politics of union organisation.[11]

Theoretical explanations of the phenomena of shorter working hours and of why and under what conditions unions adopt such policies have considered a variety of factors, most of which were expressed in various forms in the 35 hour week campaign in question.[12] For some shorter hours may be seen to increase the control labour holds over the particular commodity labour power that is offered.[13] Through restricting the quantity of labour power exchanged, this may improve the position of those workers relative to employers and more generally may reflect the nature of the wider power structure within labour relations

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11 While it is true that the shorter hours campaign in SA was less well organised, that SA made little breakthrough in the campaign, and the eastern State branches of the AMFSU won the major concessions on hours, this may simply have indicated that the pressures on SA employers were not of the same magnitude as those facing those in other States, (e.g., fulfilling orders, contracts, tendering for new orders, access to new technology, market competition, economies of scale or the degree of unity of employer associations).

12 Cf. A. Harding, 'The 35 Hour Week: Will it Bring Ruin or Partial Solution to Unemployment', Current Affairs Bulletin, Vol. 58, No. 5, 1.10.1981. The union's case for a shorter working week was best articulated in AMWSU, Toward a 35 Hour Week, Surry Hills, n.d. (1978?); and AMWSU, 35 Hours: More Jobs, More Leisure, Surry Hills, 1980.

13 And in particularly related to the efficiency of labour, see A. Flanders, The Fawley Productivity Agreements, Faber, London, 1964, Chapter 6. Cf. also K. Buckley, The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia, 1852-1920, Dept. of Economic History, ANU, Canberra, 1970, Chapters 18-22; and I. Turner, Industrial Labour and Politics, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1979, Chapters 2 and 6.

under capitalism.[14] Reduced working time is, therefore, perceived as a feature of market relations including the broader labour market, that of the particular industry sector and also the specific skill or attribute involved. Unionists are often concerned to stress the attractions of reduced working time for workers based on increased leisure, more opportunities for other activities, as well as increased relaxation time as recuperation.[15] In periods of high unemployment shorter hours for those employed are often presented as a form of job creation of collective job sharing. In the early 1980's, for instance, the AMFSU formally adopted the theme 'shorter hours-more jobs' designed to broaden the class base of the campaign.[16]

In a more orthodox vein shorter hours are seen as a component part within the ambit of industrial relations where the processes of collective bargaining determine the nature of concessions accepted by contending parties. Here shorter hours form an element of the trade-off between effort and remuneration, productivity and workplace control.[17]

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14 M.A. Bienfeld, Working Hours in British Industry: an Economic History, Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London, 1972.

15 See A.A. Evans, 'Work and Leisure 1919-1969', International Labour Review, Vol. 99, No. 1, January 1969; and W.McGaughey, A Shorter Workweek in the 1980's, Thistlerose, Minnesota, 1981. These points were explicit in the AMWSU's initial mobilisation, see A. Harding, op.cit; and G.E. O'Brien, 'Shorter Hours, Leisure and Productivity: an Examination of Assumptions about Individual and Organizational Behaviour', (mimeo) Psychology Dept., Flinders University, SA, September 1980. O'Brien noted that low job satisfaction rather than increased leisure appeared more significant to AMFSU members, yet was not an aspect of the campaign.

16 The 'shorter hours-more jobs' campaign coincided with the publication of the AMSWU, 35 Hours: More Jobs, More Leisure, Surry Hills, 1980. Cf. also J. Halfpenny, 'Hours Cut Boosts Jobs', Metalworker, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1981, p.3; and 'Demand for Shorter Working Hours', Metal Trades 35 Hour Bulletin, April 1980.

17 See J.D. Owen, Working Hours: and Economic Analysis, D.C. Heath, Lexington, 1979; D. Maric, Adapting Working Hours to Modern Needs, ILO, Geneva, 1977; H. Pritchard, 'Coping with a Shortage of Work', in J. Wilkes (ed.), The Future of Work, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981.

Many unionists have explicitly regarded 'intensive agitation' as a prime means of acnieving reductions in working hours.[18] Other research has extended this view of power interchange to encompass shorter hours as a function of intensification through rationalisation of the production process. The length of the working week is, in this view, determined by some economic optimum given knowledge of levels of intensification, technology, scale of operation, quality of labour and the nature of the particular production process.[19]

Throughout Australia, while the 35 hour week issue was formally endorsed as policy of the national peak and industry councils (ACTU and MTF), in practice the campaign was waged at the level of a relatively small number of individual unions.[20] Hence, the implementation of such policy initiative was principally the concern of particular union organisations often in confrontation with bodies of wider union representation. Theoretically in the metal industry, all metal unions as affiliated members of the Metal Trades Federation supported the policy, but, excepting the AMFSU few devoted resources toward the accomplishment of the objective.[21] Indeed, within metal unions the shorter hours campaign evoked antagonism between progressive and conservative unions, as well as between activist and non-activist memberships. For instance,

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18 For instance J. Garland, '35 Hour Week: the Main Issue in 1973' Amalgamated Metal Unions, Monthly Journal, January 1973, pp. 7-8.

19 C. Nyland, 'Capitalism and the Rationalisation of Work Time', manuscript for Ph.D. Thesis, University of Adelaide, intended submission date 1985.

20 Report to the AMWSU State Council Meeting by SA coordinator of the 35 hour campaign L.G. Lean, 3.9.1980. Moreover, as Lean pointed out in a written Report to the State Council, '35 Hour Week Campaign Meeting', 28.8.1980, the attempts at coordination by the ACTU only involved the federal officers of the relevant metal unions, not the State branches or the MTF.

21 At one stage during 1980 after the ACTU deferred the shorter hours issue, only the AMWSU, Moulders, FEDFA and one branch of the ETU were still actively pursuing the campaign.

in 1980 the State Secretary of the conservative ASE expressed the union leadership's attitude toward this issue, foreshadowing the ASE's subsequent marginal and on occasions obstructive involvement in the campaign.

> We've got that bloody 35 hour week campaign coming up. That's more bloody trouble....We're supposed to be supporting it. We've got that thing [a joint union advertisement committing support to the 35 hour week] in the [news]paper, but the members won't have it....Our members have chosen to follow ACTU Executive directions.[22]

No membership ballot of the ASE's affected members was ever held in SA or nationally. Moreover, an AMFSU area council meeting in 1981 noted that the 'ASE have told their stewards at Wylies [a large subsidiary of Mitsubishi] to pull out of the 35 hour campaign until the ACTU advises of its intention'.[23] Similarly, the leadership of the VBEF both nationally and in SA refused consistently to participate actively or endorse spontaneous shop floor activity over this issue. The SA leadership of the VBEF in practice purposely restrained shop steward activism.[24] With the declining labour requirements of the vehicle industry manifestly apparent, shop stewards were cognisant of the likelihood of victimisation by either the union officialdom or the

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22 A.R. Griffiths (State Secretary, ASE) Personal Interview, 31.3.1980.

23 Shop steward, AMFSU Area Council Meeting, 18.3.1980.

24 Not only did the VBEF officials attempt to limit the enthusiasm of their shop stewards towards the 35 hour week campaign, but they were also highly critical of the AMFSU leadership's promotion of the campaign. This was particularly the case under the Bennett - Meehan-Walker leadership who opposed any autonomous activity on the grounds that the 'ACTU will be handling our claim - we will wait and see how the other States handle it, not get into a hole like the metal trades', J. Bennett, VBEF, General Meeting, 10.6.1981. Ironically, the VBEF officials were critical of the AMFSU for inadequate 'education' over the 35 hour issue, and yet had themselves virtually ignored member 'education' over the issue in their own union. Indeed, VBEF shop stewards were in many cases motivated in tneir attempt to build a shopfloor campaign by AMFSU material.

company should they press 'extreme' measures or criticise the incumbent leadership.[25]

In terms of policy formation the AMFSU regarded the 35 hour week issue as a 'single issue' campaign, related to but not necessarily dependent upon the union's other activities. As a single issue, the campaign attracted its own specific mobilisation in addition to the regular wages and conditions bargaining and job regulation pursuits.[26] Thus, the campaign produced an intensive consciousness raising programme through membership education over the decade after 1973 involving sustained propaganda (literature, booklets, videos, posters, street banners, records, stickers and buttons), reinforced by shop steward schools, worksite meetings and occasional mass meetings. Certainly the union leadership in directing substantial resources toward the 35 hour week, organised the campaign around the 'single issue'. This demonstrated a recognition that while shorter working hours in some form were inevitable the timing of the campaign was arbitrary and hence no definite achievement date could be predicted; in other words, reduced hours were perceived as a general trend within which no particular 'deadline' for the industry was identifiable. Accordingly, the 35 hour week became an 'on-going' campaign involving a continuous undercurrent of pressure interspersed with periodically heightened activities. By not encouraging member expectations over the successful accomplishment within certain time

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25 By the early 1980's it was apparent that in the manual trades the 35 hour campaign was spearheaded by the AMFSU. Certainly the union strongly believed that this was the case and acted with this in mind. The fact that at the official and workplace level the broad metal and vehicle campaign received scant support from unions other than the AMFSU caused both some degree of discouragement and the development of an adversary and siege mentality among AMFSU activists.

26 A 'single issue' campaign implied that the union devoted specific resources, usually with some priority, to the matter, but regarded it as separate from other regular activities. This, in effect, meant that the 35 hour week campaign was initially adopted as an <u>additional</u> claim.

parameters, the union leadership avoided placing undue strain on their credibility to deliver.[27] Moreover, the union located the then newly formed shop steward area councils at the centre of the campaign to encourage the participation of lay officialdom and also to monitor the emerging effectiveness of these council bodies.[28] The leadership's intention behind these organisational strategies was designed to further the effectiveness of the union organisation by centrally involving the shop steward body, on which by the late seventies the union had devoted substantial resources through shop steward education, in the implementation of policy objectives. As such the union was concerned to construct mechanisms of policy consultation rather than initiation.

Nationally the strategy pursued by the AMFSU resorted to the traditional tactics of craft mutualism. While maintaining a certain momentum throughout the entire union, the campaign was focussed on specific establishments and sub-sectors of industry in which 'key' workers or high indications of productivity existed. None of the nationally identified worksites chosen to spearhead the metal campaign (e.g., Altona in Victora, Fox Industries NSW, David Brown Gears NSW,) were located in SA.[29] Similarly, in the industry sub-sectors at the

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27 This was also reflected in the leadership's preparedness to negotiate on compromise reductions to hours (eg. 38 hour week), phased-in reductions, the nine-day fortnight or simply an extra two days paid leave per month. The 1980 biennial National Conference of the union adopted a policy to 'substantially control the overtime worked' to reduce actual working hours and to pressure employers. See, AMWSU, 1980 National Conference Decisions for Ratification, Metalworker - Supplement, July 1980, p.1; and Metalworker, Vol. 1, No.3, August 1980, p. 4-5.

28 See AMWSU, Addresses Reports and Decisions of the Biennial National Conference, 19-23 June 1978, pp. 86-7. In South Australia steward educational courses were devoted to the 35 hour week, see T. Gnatenko, 'Education Courses Provide Backup for 35-Hour Campaign', Metalworker, Vol. 1, No. 3, August 1980, p. 7.

29 '35 Hours, Pay Rise After 10 Weeks of Lockout-the Fox is Skinned', AMWSU, Metalworker, Vol. 2, No. 4, May 1981, p.1; and Advertiser, 26.3.1981, p.6.

vanguard of the campaign (heavy engineering, steel fabrication, rolling stock, metal moulding and mining equipment) no significant breakthroughs occurred in SA.[30] Insofar as national and State officials of the AMFSU were concerned, the role of the SA branch and other participating unions in the 35 hour week issue, was essentially to maintain regional solidarity through moral support in order to preserve the momentum emanating from the NSW, Queensland and Victorian campaigns.[31]

Eventually the role of union activists in SA was reduced to attempts toward formally retaining separate worksite memberships in the campaign and preventing the spread of a demoralising series of shop floor withdrawals from the national campaign. This was particularly important as individual employers began urging their particular workers to disengage from the shorter hours push under threats of job losses, cost increases, rationalisation, plant closure and site relocation (the runaway shop phenomenon).[32] Certainly the AMFSU at no stage regarded either the economic circumstances or the union movement in SA as occupying a leading position in the struggle for breakthrough successes, which would serve as precedents for common rule application across the industry. On the contrary, as the campaign intensified workers at a number of important firms actually withdrew from the shorter hours policy

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30 See 'Hours Campaign in Industry Sectors', AMWSU, Metalworker, Vol. 1, No.6, November 1980, pp.1-2; Advertiser, 25.10.1980, p.15.

31 L. Carmichael, AMWSU Seminar, 4.12.1980.

32 See AMWSU, Toward a 35 Hour Week, Surry Hills n.d. (1978?), pp. 20-21. The employers argued that 'shorter hours is a disguised claim for a wage rise, [and that it was a] productivity hearing rather than shorter week claim', M. Deer (Confederation of Australian Industry), Address to SA Industrial Relations Society, 20.10.1980. The Confederation of Australian Industry issued the main points of their case in CAI, 'Will a Reduction in Hours of Work Bring Back Full Employment? We say No!', 1980; while the SA Employers' Federation issued an attack on the 35 hour week in SAEFI, 'A Fairy Story (35 hour week)'; Adelaide, 1980.

often by means of worksite meetings or through membership ballot.[33] Subsequently, by refusing to commit even formal adherence to the policy these workplaces were not only ineffective in the campaign, although activists within the sites may have continued support, but presented the employers and conservative governments with material for propaganda purposes.[34] For instance, workers at the Dudley Park plant of Simpson Ltd. and the Elizabeth plant of Hardies Iplex, tradesmen at Kelvinator-Email, and workers at the South East firm of Cellulose Australia Ltd., all decided to suspend their involvement.

The most significant withdrawal from the campaign occurred in April 1981 when metalworkers at the heavy engineering plant of Perry's Engineering left the campaign against the expressed advice of their shop stewards.[35] Thus, the exercise of rank-and-file decision-making to defer participation in the campaign in some cases served as a rebuttal of the leadership's direction and execution of policy. Such action presented union leaders with an explicit negative sanction over the pursuit of the policy matter, despite the fact that leadership behaviour or decision-making was not a major factor in effecting such membership decisions to withdraw. Nevertheless, employers, governments, the media oligarchy, conservative unions and right-wing elements within the AMFSU (eg., J. Naqui) were able pragmatically to capitalise on these events, depicting them as more genuine reflections of the wider membership view

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33 For example, see '400 Workers pull out of 35-hour bid', Advertiser, 24.6.1980, p.18.

34 For example, 'The Umpire Decides-Rejection', Advertiser, 28.4.1981, p. 9; and 'Shorter Hours Campaign "a Dead Duck"', Advertiser, 29.4.1981, p. 30. The Federal Government's campaign against the shorter working week became intense during the period March-May 1981 stressing the themes of: 'Not now', 'the Price of a Shorter Working Week is Too High', 'Australia Can't Stop Now for the Shorter Working Week'. (Advertiser, 28.3.1981, p.8; 1.4.1981, p.30; 4.4.1981, p.10; 28.4.1981, p.6; 13.5.1981, p.31; and 27.5.1981, p.20).

35 Advertiser, 18.4.1981, p.1.

and as indications of the union leadership having 'lost touch' with the membership generally.[36]

Within the AMFSU membership, South Australia's comparatively inactive participation over the 35 hour week issue continued throughout the metal industry campaign. Indeed, an AMFSU State Councillor maintained that 'the union in this State has moved cautiously because of earlier setbacks.'[37] While notable successes were recorded inter-State,[38] in SA the failure to secure the active involvement of other unions or their workplace memberships resulted in a concomitant hiatus between the AMFSU leadership's articulation of policy and the practical deferment of activity designed to further such policy.[39] Thus, the State President of the AMFSU noted at a State Council meeting in September 1980 that 'the campaign is still going on whether industrial action is taken or not....I don't care how low the level of industrial action is so long as they are still in the campaign.'[40] In other words, the implementation of the 35 hour week policy in SA patently exposed the limitations on membership mobilisation behind leadership initiatives. Moreover, it focussed

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36 See 'Back to Basics is Union Chief's Aim', Advertiser, 16.10.1981, p.10; and 'Union is Acting Badly - He Says', Advertiser, 3.12.1981, p.3. In 1980 the Advertiser claimed that 'there is not real interest in or commitment to the cause at present', and that 'militant union officials' were 'blindly committed to a course which can only adversely affect the economy and reduce job opportunities', (Editorial, 26.6.1980, p.5). The Director of the Metal Industries Association believed that 'certain trade union leaders have misjudged their members' feelings and must be embarrassed by the lack of detail they put into studying the effects of reducing annual working hours by an additional one and a half months', (Advertiser, 26.6.1980, p.1). The MIA maintained that 'an attendance of fewer than 1200 out of 60,000 metal-trade workers in SA was no justification for continuing the hours campaign' (p.1).

37 B. Sones, AMWSU, Adelaide Branch Meeting, 18.3.1981.

38 Metalworker, Vol. 2, No. 4, May 1981, p.1; Advertiser, 25.3.1981, p.3.

39 With the exception in late 1981 of the campaign at Clyde Engineering (Rosewater), involving 150 metal workers. See AMWSU and FIA, Clyde Campaign Committee, 'Metalworkers' Dispute: Clyde Engineering Rosewater', 14.7.1981.

40 B. Pointer, AMWSU State Council, 3.9.1980.

attention on the extent to which the union leadership was able to impose policy directions founded on members interests across the entire membership. This focus on leadership authority was all the more important because, while the union leadership may be expected to demonstrate skills in policy development, the programme and timing of the shorter hours campaign served the interests of the officialdom at that particular juncture.[41] For the enhancement of their political position, nowever, the successful mobilisation of the membership in the achievement of the policy goal was essential. In many sectors this mobilisation did not eventuate; a result which led the union leadership to conduct an internal review of the most appropriate and effective mechanisms of policy implementation.

Despite the emphasis on mass mobilisation behind the shorter working week policy during the late 1970's and early 1980's, mass action in support of the campaign was not extensive and certainly well below the anticipated level.[42] Following the launching of the national campaign in Melbourne and Sydney on the 7th May 1980, mass meetings were held bewteen 20th and 23rd May to endorse the leadership proposals. At these meetings, at which three predetermined recommendations were approved, approximately half the expected member turnout attended.[43] Nationally,

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41 Cf. B. Hayden's comment (as leader of the Federal ALP Opposition) that the timing of the sectional campaign was ill-conceived and that more jobs rather than shorter hours should be the major concern, Advertiser, 9.5.1980 p.1.

42 See Advertiser, 24.5.1980, p.3; 31.5.1980, p.1. Nevertheless on the first Friday of the stop work protests (29.5.1980) according to employer estimates about 100,000 metalworkers finished early in support of the campaign, thus losing between $50 and $60 each in lost wages. This represented one third of the total metal trades workforce (see below).

43 Nationally the unions expected 60,000 workers to attend the stopwork meetings. The recommendations put to these meetings from national officials were as follows:
(continued over page)

24,142 voted to support the campaign and 5,992 against, while for SA's part although predictions suggested that thousands would attend under one thousand stopped work and attended with 885 in support of the campaign, 84 against and 5 abstentions.[44] This relatively low level of attendance evoked the immediate response from management that the campaign lacked the broad support of the shop floor.[45] The policy as presented to these meetings was explicitly premised on job creation in an industry which was experiencing job erosion at a rapid rate (claimed to be in the vicinity of 63,000 jobs lost to technological and structural change since 1974).[46]

Recommendations:-

1. That this meeting of Metal Unions employed under the Metal Industry Award determine to campaign for a shorter week to be based on a nine (9) day fortnight with seventy (70) hours work for a two-weekly period.
2. That this meeting determine that thirty-five (35) hours only be worked in one week in each month and that only emergency maintenance or break-down overtime by worked. In the other weeks in the month overtime be limited to a maximum of eight (8) hours per week. Workers will demand at the job level for full pay for the week in which only thirty-five (35) hours are worked.
3. That this meeting determine that the first week of limiting work to no more than thirty-five (35) hours be taken during the week beginning May 26th, 1980.

44 Personal Observation, MTF Mass Meeting, Apollo Stadium, 23.5.1980. (Also reported Advertiser, 24.5.1980, p.3).

45 This was claimed immediately (Advertiser, 24.5.1980, p.3). Employers subsequently launched an advertising campaign (costing $170,000-180,000) using radio, television and publicity pamphlets. This was because, according to B. Evans, spokesman for the Metal Trades Industry Association, 'we believe the AMSWU campaign has been a failure, but we have to admit that a lot of factories are still stopping one week every month and working only 35 hours', Australian Financial Review, 1.8.1980, p.15.

46 Claimed by L.G. Lean (Assistant State Secretary, AMWSU), Personal Observation, MTF Mass Meeting, Apollo Stadium, 23.5.1980. Three factors were provided as sufficient justification for the formulation of the 35 hours policy, namely: (i) increased profits recorded in the 1978-80 period as the redeployment and concentration of capital took effect, (ii) increased worker awareness of both technological change (especially automation) and the associated productivity improvements accruing to labour, and (iii) the escalating and politically entrenched problem of unemployment. These factors are outlined in the AMWSU, Toward a 35 Hour Week, Surry Hills, 1978.

A further reason indicating why the campaign occurred at this point of time is also of relevance in this respect. That is, after the prolonged period of partial wage indexation based on adjustments according to cost of living criteria, when metal worker wage levels fell in real terms and against comparative trades,[47] the union leadership was concerned to promote a strategy aimed at 'delivering the goods'.[48] Yet, with wage increases even in money terms proving difficult to extract under the recession and the imposition of arbitration guidelines, the union officialdom sought to reappraise their traditional economistic tactics. In this way, shorter working hours were presented as a 'social-political' supplement to the more traditional economistic or industrial wage concerns of the union. The 35 hour week policy was, thus, not viewed by those responsible for policy determination as a 'social' issue replacing industrial issues, but as an expansion of the organisation's economistic agenda toward a more class-based concern for employment, technological displacement, productivity, structural change and industry relocation, investment directions and the concentration of economic power.[49] Moreover, within union committees the Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael, who was the union's main proponent of the shorter working week in the metal industry, considered that the hours campaign was a function of technological innovation and represented a quid pro quo for the union's acceptance of the introduction of technological change.

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47 See A. Harding, op.cit.; AMWSU, 35 Hours: More Jobs, More Leisure, pp. 9-15. In 1979 the union inserted full page newspaper advertisements supporting their case for a 48 hour stoppage over wage erosion (Advertiser, 11.7.1979, p. 8).

48 AMWSU, 'What Metal Industry Employers Want', National Administration Committee, Surry Hills, February 1981.

49 See L. Carmichael, 'Strategy for Shorter Hours', AMWSU, Amalgamated News, Vol. 7, February 1980, p.4.

As a result of these mass meetings around Australia, AMFSU members from the week commencing 26th May 1980 placed limitations on overtime and determined unilaterally to work indefinite 35 hour weeks for one week per month with an absolute ban on normal overtime. These trial 35 hour week experiments consisted of monthly half-day strikes on the last Friday of the month but with the union claiming full pay. These limitations according to shop stewards were effective at the point of production, but also resulted in union members from the FIA and ASE withdrawing from the campaign at particular worksites.[50] Despite pressure from employers and the Arbitration Commission in adjourning a national wage hearing, and from the ACTU leadership and affiliate unions, the initial action of the campaign (five hour strike on Friday 30th May 1980) was supported by approximately one third (or 100,000) of workers in the metal industry.[51] In June due to pressure from the Arbitration Commission to withhold any cost of living adjustment to wages from those unions participating in the 35 hour week campaign, further mass meetings were called to coincide with the scheduled half-day strike to decide whether to continue the campaign in face of such opposition. These meetings which were again poorly attended nationally, attracted only half the figure that attended the May mass meetings, although in SA, where the meetings were held at five regional locations to encourage involvement, the unions recorded an attendance of slightly under 2,000.[52]

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50 Reported at AMWSU, Area Council Meeting, 18.7.1980; and Advertiser, 25.6.1980, p.11; 9.7.1980, p.3; and 10.7.1980, p.3.

51 Advertiser, 22.5.1980, p.1; 24.5.1980, p.1; 28.5.1980, p.9; 30.5.1980, p. 1; 20.6.1980, p.7; 17.7.1980, p.3. The ACTU's objection to the hours campaign was related more to the scope of the action than opposition to sectional groups achieving shorter working hours, (Advertiser, 22.8.1981, p.1; 17.11.1981, p.9; 27.2.1981, p.11; and 21.3.1981, p.3).

52 Advertiser, 25.6.1980, p.11. This meeting held on 25th June was reported as an event that was 'boycotted' by SA metalworkers.
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Significantly, the vote to abandon the campaign after the intensive employer counter campaign was sizeably increased with 1,156 in support but 780 against continuing the campaign.[53] With their position vindicated by the ballot result, AMFSU leaders publicly expressed disappointment at the level of member opposition to the campaign.[54] This was taken to imply that external influences on member attitudes (including: employers, governments, the media, the ACTU and Labor politicians) possessed the potentiality to shape union policy implementation to a greater degree than the existing organisational structure. In response, as will be discussed below, the National Council of the AMFSU initiated the establishment of industry committees to intensify activity in support of the campaign.[55] Nonetheless, during the second half of 1980 the campaign lost much of its initial momentum with the metal campaign restricted to specific industrial sub-sectors as the inter-union alliance between relevant unions became fragmented.[56]

(Advertiser, 26.6.1980, p.1) Only four unions had continued to take part in this meeting (AMWSU, FIA, Moulders, and ADSTE). The FIA suspended its industrial action on 8.7.1980. See also 'The 35 Hour Week Campaign Leaves Major Unions Divided' National Times, 27.7.1980-2.8.1980, p. 57-61.

53 Advertiser, 26.6.1980, p.1.

54 In SA both L.G. Lean and E.N. Wyman expressed such attitudes. (Advertiser, 26.6.1980, p.1). The Victorian State Secretary claimed that 'of course the meetings today were below par and much less than we anticipated' but added that the union had been subject to a 'vicious employers campaign', ABC Radio, P.M., 26.6.1980.

55 Industry committees in each State set up by the AMWSU were to 'step up' the 35 hours campaign which had become substantially demobilised. This was a major leadership initiative to rekindle activism at the industry and workplace level. (See Advertiser, 22.10.1980, p. 3.)

56 See N. Wyman, Report to State Council - Shorter Working Week - Metals, AMWSU, State Council Minutes, 1.12.1980 pp. 1-2; cf. also Tribune, 24.9.1980, p.5. The industry sectors nominated by the unions to maintain the campaign afloat were: aluminium, glass, lifts, agricultural machinery, mining equipment, heavy engineering, rolling stock, and metal fabrication, (Advertiser, 27.9.1980, p. 15; and 25.10.1980, p.15).

In April 1981 a Metal Trades Federation mass meeting endorsed two recommendations arrived at following a meeting of officials of metal unions under ACTU auspices in Sydney on April 7th 1981.[57] The recommendations protested first against the decision by the Full Bench of the Commonwealth Arbitration Commission not to grant shorter hours, but to maintain the 40 hour week without review for a further two years, and second against the decision of the same body in its wages inquiry to suspend the exercise in wage indexation removing cost of living adjustments from award determinations. The first recommendation opposed the counter strategy by metal employers to urge the Arbitration Commission to apply the 40 hour week for a three year period, and to permit the introduction of a nine hour day before overtime payment to allow for a nine day 80 hour working fortnight.[58] Reaffirming its support of a 70 hour nine day fortnight, the MTF recommendation was comprised of four points: (i) an endorsement of the actions of union officials in negotiating 'to allow examination of the possible introduction of shorter hours without substantial extra cost and the offer to suspend industrial action whilst this examination took place'; (ii) support for the metal unions in following ACTU policy in refusing to participate in an arbitration test case over shorter hours; (iii) the expression of condemnation of the Federal Government and Arbitration Commission attempts to prevent shorter hours negotiations and discourage

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57 See Advertiser, 1.4.1981, p.8; 9.4.1981, p.20; and 29.4.1981, p.30. This was after metal employers rejected an eight-point plan by MTF unions for a 3 month investigation on the shorter working week question. The investigation was to be conducted on the guidelines that there be 'no substantial increase in costs....no substantial increase in overtime....[and that] productivity increases and production methods [would] be taken into consideration', 'MTF Proposals', published in Advertiser, 26.3.1981, p.9.

58 See AMWSU, 'What Metal Industry Employers Want', National Administration Committee, Surry Hills, February 1981. The countermove by employers proposing a 40 hour week for a three year period of duration was reported in Advertiser, 18.2.1981, p.3.

collective bargaining over productivity with the declaration that metal unions 'will continue to pursue the campaign in industry sectors as endorsed by mass meetings and co-ordinated through the ACTU to achieve negotiations and agreements for shorter hours'; and (iv) acknowledgement of the employers nine-day 80 hour fortnight strategy as adopted by the Arbitration Commission as irrelevant to the unions' campaign and likely to stimulate further industrial action should employers attempt to introduce it without negotiation and agreement. The second recommendation concerning living standards noted the emerging irrelevance of the arbitration system in determining industrial wages and conditions, and endorsed action to increase wages to compensate for inflation and productivity improvements.[59]

The April meeting represented a formal 'reporting back' communication to the mass membership of the unions concerned, but significantly the SA meeting and the simultaneous meetings throughout Australia were given no latitude to vary the conditions or wording of any of the proposed recommendations. The mass membership because of the 'national' nature of the dispute composed of inter-State and inter-union bodies were constrained after the officials' determination of terms either to accept or reject in entirety the proposed recommendations. Significantly, three unions (AMFSU, ADSTE and ASE) whose officials had been parties to the Sydney strategy discussions on the 7th April 1981, organised the mass meetings in Adelaide.[60] These unions collectively represented some 20,000 unionists from a total of more than 40,000 workers under the metal industry award in SA. Of the entire metal industry union membership less than 1,200 attended and voted at the 35 hour week mass meetings, 610 at

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59 The text of the full recommendations are included in Appendix VIII.

60 Eight unions were parties to the renewed campaign in SA, namely: AMWSU, ASE, ETU, FIA, Moulders, FEDFA, FSPU, and ADSTE.

Adelaide centres with 514 at Whyalla.[61] Discussion at the meeting consisted of both militant optimism coupled with frustration and even disillusionment. This contradictory attitude was also replicated within the internal forums of the AMFSU where shop stewards in the main reported on the diverse but predominantly discouraged attitudes of members to the campaign. At branch meetings frustration was heightened due to the officialdom's policy directive restricting the 35 hour campaign to the majority of union members under the Metal Industry Award but not including the entire membership. Activists in significant but excluded areas under the union's coverage such as the railway industry, government sector, and vehicle industry were instructed not to extend the mobilisation base of the campaign by commencing industrial action over the issue, and were as a result largely prevented from participating until after the December 1981 Metal Industry Agreement.[62]

From May 1981 until the commencement in November 1981 of negotiations toward the Metal Industry Agreement, the shorter working week campaign continued the tactics of unilateral action involving voluntarily reduced working hours combined with specific pressure on employers on an enterprise by enterprise basis. Nationally, the unions achieved limited success in a number of industries and enterprises (eg, the glass industry, ship repair, the brewing industry and aircraft industry).[63]

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61 Personal Observation, Metal Unions Steering Committee Meeting (Trades Hall) 28.4.1981. (Total State figures were conveyed in Advertiser, 29.4.1981, p. 30).

62 This appeared to be an issue at AMFSU area councils where shop stewards from different industry sectors met. In the case of the vehicle industry, the first industrial action of the post-1977 campaign in the SA vehicle industry occurred at GMH on 21.5.1980 when 38 AMWSU, ASE and VBEF tooling workers struck over the company's refusal to negotiate over the shorter working week. See Advertiser, 22.5.1981, p.8.

63 Metalworker, Vol. 1, No.6, November 1980, p.3; Advertiser, 26.3.1981, p.6; 6.5.1981, p.30; 18.6.1981, p.13; 2.7.1981, p.3; 16.7.1981, p.3; 17.7.1981, p.7.

In SA a major campaign developed between May and August at Clyde Engineering (Rosewater SA) wnere 150-180 workers were involved in an initial seven week strike over the dismissal of seven ironworkers.[64] Following a provisional resumption of work on the 23rd June to allow negotiations to take place on shorter hours, the company (in line with the employers association policy) refused to negotiate over shorter hours and the strike continued specifically as a shorter hours demand.[65] The union leadership in SA perceived tne Clyde dispute as a beach-head in the local shorter working week campaign, with the organiser involved in the strike, E.N. Wyman, AMFSU, also being the SA co-ordinator of the metal unions 35 hour week campaign. The strike continued for over 13 weeks before agreement was reacned over a compromise reduction of hours.[66] The settlement of this dispute meant that throughout the duration of the campaign to the end of August 1981, the metal unions in SA had negotiated shorter working hours with three companies, whereas in NSW over 100 metal workshops had conceded such reductions.[67] These incremental enterprise agreements were overtaken between August and October 1981 by the metal unions campaign over the metal industry award.

The Politics of Organisational Restructuring

During 1980-81 the politics of maintaining certain policy directions that were dividing the AMFSU, the metal unions and the labour movement generally, placed substantial strain on the internal politics of the

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64 Advertiser, 9.5.1981, p.6; 12.5.1981, p.6; 14.5.1981, p.13; 4.6.1981, p.9. A history of the dispute was provided in AMFSU and FIA, Clyde Campaign Committee, 'Metalworkers' Dispute: Clyde Engineering Rosewater', 14.7.1981.

65 Advertiser, 24.6.1981, p.10; and 26.6.1981, p.8; 11.7.1981, p.10.

66 Advertiser, 8.8.1982, p.9; 12.8.1981, p.7.

67 Australian Financial Review, 17.7.1981, p.4; Advertiser, 8.8.1981, p.9; and 22.8.1981, p.9.

AMFSU. In June 1980 the ACTU Executive pressured by the Arbitration Commission withdrew official backing from the metal workers 35 hour week campaign. The ACTU President, R.J. Hawke, attacked the union specifically for its militant sectionalism which the Arbitration Commission identified as the pretext for the adjournment of the national wage case hearing.[68] AMFSU shop stewards in SA considered this a 'sell-out' by the peak union leadership, and responded with criticisms to the effect that 'we're paying that bum money out of our trade union dues and he makes statements like that', and 'we'll disaffiliate from them [the ACTU] because we can't win with them'.[69]

In the SA labour movement, while the UTLC played a most ineffective role in the campaign, other individual unions such as the VBEF, FIA and the ASE were publicly critical and privately hostile toward the AMFSU's sustained strategy.[70] Moreover, within the AMFSU both nationally and at the State level rightwing provocateurs expressed their opposition to industrial action in support of the 35 hour week. In SA, for example, the Assistant State Secretary, J. Naqui, following his election through a court controlled ballot, opposed the policy for reduced working hours on the grounds that it was unpopular and detrimental to workers, who would

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68 See 'Hawke Attacks Metal Workers', Workers News, 14.6.1980, p.1 and 12.

69 AMWSU Shop Stewards, Central Area Council, 16.7.1980. With the statements by Hawke (who served also as National President of the ALP from 1973-8) following Hayden's criticisms of the shorter hours policy, shop stewards responded aggressively toward this 'betrayal'. As one steward put it, 'fuck the ALP. That's the political side - I can vote for them if I want to. I don't, but I can. Let's get the union pushing policy'.

70 This point served to reinforce the AMFSU officials' subjectivist orientation towards their own organisation. ADSTE officials and activists were supportive of the AMFSU campaign and tended to regret their own private industry membership's apathy over the shorter hours issue.

find it more conducive to work a 50 hour week.[71] Accordingly, in response to veiled and unveiled criticism over the shorter working week policy, the State Council of the AMFSU in November 1981 resolved 'unequivocal support for the policies' of the union 'and the democratic processes of consultation with the rank-and-file membership in developing campaigns'.[72]

As a result of the general organisational malaise brought to a head over the 35 hour issue and the lack of progress on the wages front, the AMFSU embarked on an investigation and subsequent reorganisation of the union's structure. This internal reorganisation was an attempt by the leadership to improve the effectiveness of the organisation by promoting greater scope for membership participation within certain defined areas. The restructuring exercise put simply was an attempt at social engineering to promote a more pronounced responsiveness from among the rank-and-file. The exercise was based on the explicit premise that democratic participation within the organisation in relation to specific policy initiatives was deficient and often perfunctory. Organisational restructuring, as a consistent element of AMFSU policies,[73] was also premised on the assumption that only on an effective mobilisation base could the union pursue 'non-reformist' reforms in their political strategies. As such, the 1980-2 reorganisation programme emphasised the union's fundamental subjectivist philosophy concerning trade union and working class activity: namely, that the development of consciousness and

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71 J. Naqui interviewed in Advertiser, 16.10.1981, p.10. Naqui believed that 'workers would sooner work 50 hours a week and have an easier day of it than work 35 hours and just go home and drop dead on the chair....I will definitely not have a 35 hour week on the basis you have to do more work'.

72 AMWSU, State Council Minutes, 4-5.11.1981, p.9, (emphasis mine).

73 Cf. E. Davis, 'Decision Making in the AMWSU', M.Ec. Thesis, Monash University, 1977.

the evolvement of organisational forms of mass mobilisation occupied a central role in determining the development of contemporary social relations.

The AMFSU's National Conferences of 1976, 1978 and 1980 adopted policy proposals designed to stimulate member involvement in the industrial and political defence of the union.[74] These particular proposals emanated from within the national leadership (and eastern State branch leaders) rather than the membership or shop committee level. Nevertheless, requests for more meaningful participation in decision-making and access to union resources from a strata of union activists were by no means new.[75] Yet, in the main, the membership interpretation of meaningful participation involved their determination both of policy directions and content, that is real decision-making power, while the leadership performed administrative functions. Members and especially the shop stewards were prepared to grant the leadership procedural decision-making power insofar as they retained an effective voice in policy decisions. Thus, over matters of administration members accepted delegated democracy; over matters of key concern they sought nothing less than direct democracy.

This dichotomy was not perceived in these same terms by the union leadership. Indeed, reliance on direct democracy was seen as

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74 See AMWU, Addresses, Reports and Decisions of the Third National Conference, Sydney, 21-26.6.1976, pp.21-2 and 138; AMWSU, Addresses, Reports and Decisions of the Biennial National Conference, Sydney, 19-23.6.1978, pp. 86-87 and 108; and AMWSU, 1980 National Conference Decisions for Ratification, (Metalworker-Supplement) July 1980, p.3. The 1978 Conference recognised that 'there is a need for discussion and debate throughout the organisation with the aim of greater involvement of rank-and-file members in our Union's activities', and that the union would 'initiate an in-depth discussion with the view of achieving this involvement', (p.108).

75 Although the non-skilled workers were often deterred from involvement in union government, T. Sheridan, 'Democracy Among the Aristocrats: Participation of Members in the Affairs of the AEU (Australian Section) 1900-1972, Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 21, No. 2, 1979.

directionless, often divisive, structurally utopian and essentially individualistic. From their viewpoint, leadership was necessary to provide a vanguard role in the formulation and co-ordination of policy decisions, while the membership were charged with policy implementation and feedback. The leadership considered that they possessed a certain degree of latitude over policy determination. They operated on the principle that the membership granted them a relative tolerance to initiate policy proposals, but which was not to be abused by leadership autocracy. In the case of the national restructuring proposals the 1980 guidelines were designed and implemented directly by the union officialdom over the rank-and-file. The reorganisation policy was formed in the main without substantial membership participation or consultation, and in the case of SA was implemented in the face of much opposition from activists. Yet, the leadership's directives toward encouraging levels of democratic involvement within the organisation was not viewed in any way as ironic, but as providing legitimate avenues for the activist membership to absorb and participate in the policies determined by the vanguard leadership. The lack of membership responsiveness rather than the lack of democracy was at the centre of the leadership's concern.

At the 1976 National Conference the decision to establish area shop steward councils, which according to the Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael, was 'vital to the future of our union', was taken in order to expand the union's policies through organisational involvement.[76] The proposal to form area councils represented an integral part of the emerging union policy to defend the organisation from employer and conservative attacks.[77] This policy, 'Defend Living Standards: Defend the Union', was adopted as a result of the political situation during the

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76 L. Carmichael, 'Activity of Shop Stewards' Councils', AMWSU Monthly Journal, July 1977, p.21.

77 AMWU, Monthly Journal, November 1976, p.14.

period 1973-76, in particular: the economic crisis in Australia, the dismissal of the Whitlam Labor Government and the repressive policies of the conservative Fraser Government, and the increased penetration of multinational corporations and foreign capital.[78] The 'People's Economic Program', a union manifesto issued by the National Council for the restructuring of Australian society upon a nationalist class alliance, comprised the major social pillar of this defensive policy.[79] The shop steward area councils were to provide a national body of workplace representatives which would constitute a 'dynamic and effective force of activists'.[80] Steward councils were to involve between 12 to 15 stewards drawn from as many worksites as possible but concentrating especially on large scale establishments. Generally area councils were to involve stewards based on the location of employment not on the residential location of the particular stewards. In SA five area councils were established, three in the Adelaide metropolitan area (northern, central and western councils) and two country councils (Spencer Gulf and the south east of the State). The councils were intended to meet monthly for two hour periods in worktime, supplemented with quarterly steward meetings involving a wider constituency of shop stewards. The union from its own funds reimbursed the amount of lost wages incurred for those shop stewards that attended.

The role performed by area councils was intended to compensate for the ineffectiveness of the traditional branch structure. Theoretically open to the entire membership of the union, branch meetings without

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78 L. Carmichael, 'Activity of Shop Stewards' Councils' op.cit, pp.21-3.

79 AMWSU, Australia: Up Rooted, Sydney, 1976, pp.18-19. The People's Economic Program constituted a far more radical series of proposals than the later 'social wage' campaign. The 1976 program is included in the documents in Appendix VIII.

80 L. Carmichael, 'Activity of Shop Stewards' Councils', op.cit, p.21.

direct connection to the workplace had lapsed into perfunctory 'rubber stamp' bodies which existed principally to endorse decisions made by the union's management bodies.[81] Of political concern to the existing officialdom, attendance at branch meetings was generally very low; indeed, some branches often attracted barely sufficient to satisfy the complement of officiating positions within the branch.[82] Moreover, branches had great difficulty in involving younger members of the union. As a long established AEU craft tradition, these residentially based bodies in the early 1980's had tended to become, in the words of an Assistant National Secretary, 'geriatric wards' comprised almost entirely of older or retired members.[83]

In contrast to the branch structure, shop steward councils were charged at the 1978 National Conference 'with the responsibility of maximum involvement in campaigns i.e. defence of the union against repressive government legislation, snorter working week, health and safety campaigns and all other issues that affect the working life of our members'.[84] Importantly, the shop steward bodies were to expand the

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81 As discussed in Chapter IV this involed the 'machine gun' ratification of National Conference decisions where (with few members familiar with the decisions prior to the meeting) branch members in under one half hour ratified 8 full newspaper-sized pages of decisions. This rapid endorsement simply involved the chairperson reading the title of the motion on which the members would instantly vote. The motions for ratification were not able to be altered or amended in any way by the branch.

82 For example of the branch meetings at which I was present the attendance ranged from 5 to 10. During the period of investigation two brancnes (Adelaide and Southern) combined due to the lack of attendance at each.

83 G. Campbell, Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980. At the same seminar L. Carmichael noted that 'every extension in the rights of workers on the job was a nail in the coffin of the branches'. The retiring State Secretary, J. Scott, argued that the union did not generate sufficient momentum to maintain both branch structures and area steward councils, and that 'one of them will have to go'. J. Scott, AMWSU, State Council, 6.8.1980.

84 AMWSU, Addresses, Reports and Decisions of the Biennial National Conference, 19-23.6.1978, p.87.

traditional role of monitoring industrial conditions to include political campaigns. Thus, the Conference decided that

> whilst the basic work of Shop Stewards and the Regional Councils must be the industrial needs of the membership, their wage levels and conditions, the greatest challenge confronting the Union is to make relevant to Shop Stewards the social, economic and political issues of the day which are, more and more, affecting workers' job security, living standards, housing, education, welfare, taxation, etc., to find the means of doing this is a day-to-day problem which all full-time officials, Councils and active members must continue to struggle with.[85]

Moreover, lest the shop steward councils adopt the role of policy-making bodies tne Conference warned that the councils

> be encouraged to discuss decisions of the National and State Conference of tne Union with the view of encouraging members to attend their Branch meetings and further their interests in these matters.[86]

The policy of the union leadership, given the decline of the effective role of the branch network, aimed to identify and consolidate the elements of organisational strength and experience. Yet, the intention of the leadership was not to facilitate the emergence of a highly autonomous shop steward movement. On the contrary, area councils were required to convey and respond more effectively to the established policies and campaigns of the union. Thus, in a specific introduction of the area council concept to the shop stewards, the Assistant National Secretary insisted that

> all experience shows that the more Shop Stewards understand, not only the words of union policies and campaigns, but also the inner meaning of them, the more determined they become in creatively applying themselves to achieving the objectives and solving the problems involved....To Shop Stewards, hearing the Unions's analysis, the facts speak very quickly for themselves. Daily press, T.V., Government and Employer arguments are quickly seen as lies and deception.[87]

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85 Ibid., p. 86.

86 Ibid., p. 87.

87 L. Carmichael, 'Activity of Shop Stewards' Councils', op.cit, p.21.

During 1977 shop steward area councils were constituted with the five already mentioned established in SA. In SA area councils were very successful as an organisational initiative particularly in comparison with other States where the councils were abandoned through insufficient interest or were conducted on such an infrequent basis as to render them insignificant.[88]

One of the first real tests provided by the national officialdom for their recent shop steward experimental bodies arose over the union's oppositional strategy against the Fraser Government's 1978 Federal Budget. The National Policy Campaign Committee which was responsible for the initiation and coordination of action 'faced substantial difficulty' in implementing the programme or achieving an effective response.[89] As a result, the national officialdom launched a post-Budget enquiry into the formal structure of the union, from which a National Council sub-committee was established to review the organisation and stimulate discussion for a period of 12 months before reporting to the 1980 National Conference.

By the 1980 National Conference it was apparent to the AMFSU leadership that the system of national wage indexation would be abandoned due to economic and political pressure to reduce general wage levels. Employers and the Federal Government were concerned to sever the nexus between price fluctuations as represented by the consumer price index and national wage adjustments. In 1980 this implied for unions such as the AMFSU that greater emphasis on collective bargaining would emerge once national wage indexation was abandoned.[90] Moreover, because of

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88 See AMWSU, 'Union Organisation: Some Proposals', National Council Discussion Paper, 1980, p. 4-5.

89 G. Campbell, Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980.

90 See for example the National Council decision on wages, AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, January-March 1981, p.24. Cf. also, D. Plowman, Wage Indexation: a Study of Australian Wage Issues 1975-1980, George Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1981, Chapters 4 and 5.

the partial and indiscriminate nature of the centralised wage fixation system, the AMFSU was determined to reestablish the metal industry wage level as a pace-setter among awards. To achieve this end necessarily meant that the union in 1981 would become involved in rounds of productivity bargaining inside or outside the Commission designed substantially to 'catch up and consolidate what had been lost on the industrial wage as a consequence of guidelines and partial indexation'.[91] Insofar as the leadership was concerned 'catch up' productivity bargaining required effective mobilisation from the membership particularly involving shop steward cadre bodies. Evidence also exists that in late 1980 the assessment of certain key national officials pointed towards an employer preparedness to negotiate either over wages or hours, but not both.[92] Such attempts to designate either wages or conditions as non-negotiable was seen by officials as politically contrived and potentially divisive among both the union's own membership as well as among the support of other unions.[93]

The policy deliberations over organisational restructuring within the senior national officialdom produced the discussion paper 'Union Organisation: Some Proposals', a seven page document presented to and adopted by the 1980 National Conference and subsequently circulated to State Councils, branches, shop steward forums and union seminars.[94] The paper aimed to promote the involvement of members in 'running the union' particularly concerning: participation in policy development and

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91 AMWSU, State President's Report, SA State Conference, 24-5.5.1982, p.5.

92 L. Carmichael, Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980.

93 Ibid.

94 The Discusion Paper is included in Appendix VIII. This document was produced by a National Council sub-committee to assist in the formation of 'concrete proposals' to be put to the 1982 National Conference.

assessment, elected representation, the monitoring of elected decision-makers and the active pursuit and implementation of union policy. Noting the diverse and conglomerate character of the union, the paper rejected previous proposals to locate the branch structure at the workshop level.[95] Instead, conventional recommendations to revamp the existing branch structures as a matter of course were presented with the objective of retaining the branch unit as the residual and legitimate basis of authority. On policy development greater emphasis was placed on ad hoc sub-committees under the auspices of the respective State Councils with explicit reference to the establishment of State level migrant and women member sub-committees. The above were in no sense novel suggestions, rather they restated familiar internal arguments over the efficacy of the traditional organisational structure. Nevertheless, of greater significance, the discussion paper represented a fundamental re-evaluation of the nature of shop steward organisation presented within three years of the establishment of the area shop steward council project.

Criticisms of the area council bodies addressed the fragmentation of activists involved in the small group project, and the inherent diversity of interests associated with broad area-based councils. The discussion paper argued that even after such a relatively short trial period involving these steward bodies, the strategy had proved ineffective.[96] This was particularly noticeable given that attendance at area councils was financially compensated automatically by the union at award rates. Yet despite this incentive, average attendances at these councils were lower than comparable steward meetings where stewards often forfeited pay

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95 AMWSU, 'Union Organisation: Some Proposals', National Council Discussion Paper, 1980, p.1.

96 Ibid., pp. 4-5. In an article introducing the industry committees, J. Baird, National Research Coordinator, argued that the area steward councils were 'not as successful as hoped' from the leadership's points of view, see J. Baird, 'National Conference Must Review Union's Organisation'. AMWSU, Monthly Journal, June 1980, p. 25-26.

or attempted to provide reimbursement by voluntary contributions from their members.[97] An 'objective evaluation', the paper maintained, 'must conclude that they have not been successful in achieving the objectives which were set for them'.[98] In place of these councils, it was proposed that 'an extensive system of industry committees' should be developed composed of 'regular meetings of all shop stewards from a particular industry'.[99] The major purpose of these committees was to

> determine what campaigns should be conducted in the industry on industry matters and how effect can be given to integrating general policy matters with the membership in that industry.[100]

As well, the committees would elect delegates both to national committees of the industry and to relevant State Council sub-committees. The committees would also organise seminars designed to coordinate union strategy more closely with developments shaping the future of the industries. In conjunction with these industry-based steward bodies, rank-and-file section committees based on occupational classification were to meet half-yearly to consider proposals relating to their sectional interests.[101] In addition, quarterly aggregate shop steward meetings were intended to provide some degree of integration of activity and communication between the various industry committees.

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97 AMWSU, 'Union Organisation: Some Proposals', p. 5.

98 Ibid., p.4.

99 Ibid., p.5.

100 Ibid., p.5.

101 Section committees were, according to the Assistant National Secretary G. Campbell, (Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980) a concept many officials and activists disagreed with, but which served the parochial and skilled interests and craft consciousness of sections of the membership. As such section committees were an attempt to recognise the wide diversity of occupations, skills and industries included in the union, in order to minimise the tendency (as had occurred with the Licensed Aircraft Engineers) of sectional groups breaking away from the union.

These restructuring proposals were not simply superficial manipulations. On the contrary, they represented a major shift in emphasis away from the more general class-based mobilisation strategy of the late 1970's (characterised by national manufacturing strategies) toward a highly specific and segmentalised internal strategy for the 1980's. While it aimed to be comprehensive, this latter strategy attempted to 'experiment with different forms of organisation to meet the diverse interests and needs of [the] organisation and its members'.[102] Thus, in response to the economic malaise the union advanced a political strategy increasingly based on sectional fragmentation. In other words, in order to prepare more fully for national-level industry collective bargaining, the union leadership sponsored a policy of differential mobilisation. One interpretation of this leadership initiative was that the prevailing leadership tacticians attempted to consolidate their own position in terms of generating organisational support sufficient to ensure the provision of instrumental gains at the industry level. This credibility became all the more significant as the 'progressive' union leadership bloc came under challenge from rightwing 'Reform Group' forces.

The internal debate over organisational restructuring, in addition to sponsoring a policy of mobilisation in the present economic crisis, was premised on a critique of the drift towards professionalism among the leadership. This trend was perceived as contributing both to the distancing of the rank-and-file from effectively participating in the union's affairs, and to the erosion of loyalty from the membership to the existing leadership and its associated policy directions. The concept of professionalism for the leadership conveyed an inherent dimension of union organisation in which established leaders attempted to ensure the continuity of their term of office. Such leaders, found at both the national and State levels of the AMFSU, increasingly tended to articulate

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102 AMWSU, 'Union Organisation: Some Proposals', op.cit, p.7.

policy from within their own ambit of experience rather than from the concerns of the members.[103] In particular, as professionalism within the officialdom became embedded, effective lines of communication between the membership and officials tended also to be severed. This not only reduced organisational effectiveness, it also increased the internal political vulnerability of the incumbent leadership group. Indeed, as the critique of professionalism was unfolded, the rightwing union dissidents had at that stage successfully defeated key officials in union elections.[104]

At a special State Council meeting to discuss the 1980 discussion paper, one Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael, argued that

> failure to change will lead to professionalisation. Officials delude themselves that there is rank-and-file participation in the union....What are the issues that we discuss at branches? Very little. We dreamily think that they are involved in decision-making, but they are all made at State and National Councils.[105]

The second Assistant National Secretary, G. Campbell, added

> Where is policy determined? Not in the branches. In the main policy is determined here [i.e., State Council] and at National Council.[106]

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103 For example, many union policies from the national leadership (Council members and the research centre) received only limited circulation prior to their release.

104 See 'AMWSU Election', Inside Trade Unions, (I. & P. Huntley), July 1979, pp. 10-12. The 'Reform Group's' D. Miller defeated the left's J. Baird in May 1979 over the position of national organiser, while R. Kelly narrowly lost in the re-election of the left's J. Halfpenny as State Secretary of Victoria.

105 L. Carmichael, Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980.

106 G. Campbell, Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980. Campbell also argued that 'democracy was not provided by entrenched mechanisms of democracy. It must be working. The best organisation is around the industry committees where the members are responsive'. Carmichael added that 'the only issue before you [SA State Council] is that we proliferate industry committees in 1981. Expressing "great dangers" may prohibit us from putting the issue to the test. An illusion exists in the union, a very great illusion, that there is democratic participation in the union when workers strike - democratically stop work that is - deciding democratically and doing something about it'.

Further, Campbell noted that the demise of rank-and-file input was attributable in the main to the unrelenting trend at the workshop level to transfer major or minor issues of concern to professional organisers, who, rather like the 'bush fireman chasing spot fires with a bucket of water', were preoccupied with the settlement of continuous series of petty disputes.[107] At one level, therefore, the reorganisation policy outlined in the 1980 debate represented a subjectivist attempt to stimulate greater self-motivation and limited self-reliance at the shop floor level in order that more effective communication between levels of the organisation would develop. At another level, the promotion of industry sectionalism was also a recognition that the specific conditions of the respective industries constituted both a major influence on the nature of participation in collective action, as well as differential degrees of industrial activism and loyalty displayed toward the official hierarchy. The reliance on activism from below was, thus, a measure designed to engineer particular types and levels of participation. It was designed to mobilise and constrain participation within the authorised parameters of policy development or campaign directions, which in the final analysis would serve to sustain the credibility of the existing officialdom.

In the South Australian branch of the AMFSU moves toward sectionalism were resisted by elements of the SA union leadership. Indeed, the SA officials, officers, and Councillors initially divided over this issue. Some such as Pointer, Lean, Elkins, Wyman and Mowbray (more generally the SPA faction) reacted positively to the reappraisal of the union's structure. For them reorganisation was needed as a result of communication problems with the rank-and-file, the frustrations engendered by little headway and general lack of enthusiasm over the 35 hour week campaign, as well as support in principle to exercises in

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107 Ibid..

self-criticism and policy debate. These officials were not in the main centrally involved with area councils. They rarely if ever attended and were largely uninterested in the reported proceedings of area councils or the recommendations emanating from them.[108] Indeed, while Pointer as President of the SA branch was responsible for the area council programme, many steward activists regarded critically his apparent indifference to the organisational needs of the councils.[109] Commenting on the formation of policy toward shop steward bodies by National Council at which Pointer was present as SA delegate, one experienced activist maintained that

> I'm not all that convinced that he tried [to defend area councils] all that hard at National Council. He's responsible for the area councils here and it means more work for him if they operate well....Pointer doesn't like being responsible for the area councils.[110]

Conversely, others among the State Councillors including O'Neill, Broad, Appleby, and Sones supported by influential senior shop stewards such as Featherstone, Cridland and Curtis, expressed concern for the principle of steward autonomy.[111] These protagonists proposed the continuation of area councils but with more effective resources and official encouragement devoted to them. Yet the most vociferous proponent of the potentiality tapped by the area council experience was the Education Officer (and previous senior shop steward and shop

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108 Personal Observation , AMWSU State Council/Area Councils. Part of the reason for the officials' indifference was that there were no votes per se to be gained in the area council forums.

109 Many of these criticisms were voiced at a one day seminar of stewards (attended by 35) on the restructuring programme. AMWSU, Shop Steward Seminar, 28.7.1980.

110 Personal Interview, AMWSU Senior Activist, 31.7.1980.

111 The retiring State Secretary J. Scott remained ambivalent over this issue, while the succeeding Secretary M. Tumbers, who was at this stage manoeuvring to win the nomination of State Secretary, also remained unaligned publicly. Subsequently he expressed strong support for the industry committees.

committee convenor) Ted Gnatenko, whose education programme was directed toward the development of union and class consciousness among the activist membership, and which tended to promote the emergence of an independent shop steward strata. According to Gnatenko area councils provided shop stewards with sufficient

> room to act....They can take action on their own behalf without State Council. They shouldn't always look up to State Council to push for what they are doing. They can make more than recommendations to the officials - they're not just a consultative committee. They can launch campaigns and they don't need State Council's permission. With the Dunstan and Salisbury Affair we had 10,000 workers in Victoria Square; in our organisation that action came from the shop stewards....They should have more power, but there are some here who are afraid to giving them power. But they shouldn't look upwards to get what they want. In a meeting like [area councils or seminars] if those stewards decided something together then that should be it. There would be not much the officials could do about it.[112]

The main point advanced by this group was that while area councils had not maintained sufficient momentum throughout Australia, they had achieved notable success within the SA branch (despite the obstacle of official indifference) and therefore should be reinforced not replaced. Thus, although SA was the exception in developing area councils which were potentially effective, this group charged that both insufficient resources and leadership encouragement had been devoted to the exercise.[113] Moreover, the alternative proposal toward industry committees was seen as overly narrow in focus and likely to degenerate into sectional bodies which would tend to display the conservative characteristics of enterprise unionism. Indeed, Gnatenko was most

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112 Personal Interview, T. Gnatenko, 31.7.1980.

113 Personal Observation, AMWSU Shop Steward Seminar, 28.7.1980. Further, the then State Secretary, J. Scott, suggested that the union leaders should 'keep the area councils on the agenda - keep them before us. We should allocate State Councillors to attend area councils in the next few months. I'll be doing that in the next months. It has been slack recently'. J. Scott, AMWSU State Council Meeting, 6.8.1980.

emphatic that steward area councils facilitated the emergence of wider social class issues beyond the 'introverted economism on the job'.[114] Such councils also provided shop stewards with an independent institutional base from which to monitor policy directions within the union. It was imperative, Gnatenko argued in his annual report on the union's education programme, that the union

> find the mechanism with which the active members can objectively examine the performance of the Union's officials, officers, State Council as to ensure that there is no deficiency in the pursuit of the Union's objectives.[115]

The debate in SA over restructuring was couched in terms of the means through which union activists and principally shop stewards should exercise influence over the decision-making process. On one hand the advocates of organisational restructuring considered that the role of lay activists should comprise essentially of consultation over policy implementation; policy which was centrally formulated by the union leadership. The SA President cogently expressed this attitude in August 1980 over the issue of the informal status of area councils and the union leadership's recognition of their decision-making practices. As area councils attempted to extend their influence by seeking recognition through the regular inclusion of their activities as standing items on the State Council agenda under the section 'Reports', the State President

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114 T. Gnatenko, AMSWU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980. Gnatenko argued that the 'leadership had failed' in not establishing successful area councils. He attacked industry committees as 'US style' developments that were prone to 'chase their own interests' and accept 'package deal' offers that rejected all progressive issues in return for cash payment. Gnatenko defended area councils from the experience in Italy, arguing that shop steward councils were the 'most progressive part of the union movement', that they introduced wider issues and were popular with stewards.

115 T. Gnatenko, Education Officers' Report 1981, AMWSU, State Council Minutes, p.5.

responded

> it's just as if everyone has just woken up to the fact that area councils exist. They have been going for four years now. State Council and area councils are not separate entities. State Council is the leadership. No discussion should go on either without State Council present or outside the State Council.[116]

From this viewpoint, area councils contributed little toward policy direction but tended merely to amplify the rhetoric of spontaneity. Thus, in September 1980 the Acting Secretary commenting on requests from the Western area council for union resources (head office printing facilities) argued that 'area councils take on projects easily, find they can't cope and then refer to State Council for assistance'.[117] Presented in this light, area councils displayed an undisciplined tendency to involve themselves spontaneously in the immediate concerns of their constituents without necessarily remaining cognisant of the broader union strategies. This feature was a result not simply of the spontaneous limitations of participatory involvement in decision-making, but also of the structural constraints placed on area council activities by the State Council leadership.

On the other hand those protagonists more sympathetic to the area council project defended this shop steward initiative on two grounds. First, councils convened according to the area of employment of stewards expressed a potentiality to politically progress from trade union consciousness toward an articulation of manifest and latent class

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116 B. Pointer, AMWSU State Council, 6.8.1980. In August 1980 after some concerted pressure from stewards, State Council agreed to accept 'reports' from area councils as regular agenda items. By April 1981 this was revoked due to the lodging of 'insufficient' reports. But, correspondence and area council minutes were not acceptable to the union officials as 'reports'. This decision appeared to area councillors as a patent act of repression, (eg. D. Cridland, Report on Area Councils to AMWSU Southern Branch, 15.4.1981).

117 M. Tumbers, AMWSU State Council, 3.9.1980. At this discussion the State President, B. Pointer, asserted that 'we must get away from the idea that State Council is a sounding-off place for other bodies of the union - all Councillors here are responsible to the State Council not other bodies of the union'.

interests. These bodies were not confined to mere consultation and the passive implementation of national policy, including the assessment of policies the union was developing as well as those it was not. As such, steward councils adopted the role of critical evaluation of policy development; a role that tended to produce an expansion of the policy agenda rather than the consolidation of existing policy directives. Second, as regular avenues for collective communication involving stewards from various worksites, different employers and even industries, the area council concept provided an initial step towards the development of greater shop steward autonomy within the organisation. Those officials or experienced activists who had devoted their formative years within the union to the incremental recognition of the position of shop steward, sought the extension of shop steward rights not only at the workplace vis-à-vis management, but also within the union vis-à-vis the officialdom. According to this position the development of an effective steward body aware of the political interests of the union and the working class in general provided a crucial countervailing power base to the full-time hierarchy, essential to wrest some degree of active participation in policy determination and to promote effective membership activity.

The shop steward body, thus, operated not simply as a democratic check and balance to centralised decision-making authority, but also as a positive means to articulate membership involvement in policy determination. The promotion of shop steward independence internal to the organisation was seen to contribute to the efficacy of collective action. However, the historical emergence of limited steward autonomy was engineered upon the internal manoeuvring of power relations within the union itself. Explicitly, the subjectivist concern for shop steward consciousness was largely a result of a number of activist key shop stewards winning full-time positions in the union during the 1970's and

introducing the tenets of their own experience through the organisational philosopny of the union. This partial autonomy represented essentially a degree of political transference of internal authority. It was not founded upon a greater degree of economic independence involving shop steward autonomy exercised in pursuing collective bargaining with management at the workplace level. Accordingly, the development of shop steward collective bodies such as area councils represented an internal political realignment which depended on leadership tolerance. This allowed stewards to establish a nominal autonomy contingent upon the politics of centralised policy-making and political expediency, not upon the stewards' own command of their organisational role.

The policy debate in SA during 1980 and 1981 over the national restructuring proposals proved both intense and symptomatic of more fundamental changes in policy directions and organisational decision-making. The SA officialdom increasingly adopted the organisational guidelines expressed in the National Council policy.[118] The State Secretary reflected that initially the SA leadership 'was not wholly in accord two years ago' with the concept of industry and sector committees, but were now committed to these guidelines as a means of 'bringing the management and functions of the union to the workshop level without the atomisation of the union'.[119] Indeed, certain compromises

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118 See State President's Report, AMWSU State Conference 24-25.5.1982, p.5. The President argued in this report that 'unfortunately, for South Australia, the firm establishment of industry sector committees will see the end of the regional councils as such. Although they have served us well as meeting grounds for stewards, they never ever really got off the ground in other States and even so far as we are concerned it must be acknowledged that they have had their limitations'. (p.5).

119 Personal Interview, M. Tumbers, 24.12.1982. Officials supported industry committees because while delegates were elected from the shop committees the industry committees were chaired by the respective organiser responsible for that industry.

between the two sides were achieved in which area councils were continued through a transitionary phase, the quarterly aggregate shop steward meetings were given greater prominence as a partial continuation of the area council concept,[120] and the agenda of industry committees was purposely set to integrate wider social issues. Ultimately the restructuring debate demonstrated the structural ability of the leadership bloc to impose nationally determined policies onto the various levels of the State organisation. But it also demonstrated the political ability of shop stewards, closer to the issues of the labour process, to exercise significant influence over the implementation of policy decisions. The predominant impetus behind the organisational restructuring was centralised policy-making, producing concrete policies the nature of which confronted the previous experience of the lay official strata as well as some of the full-time leadership in the SA branch.

Without a continuous institutional base, shop steward resistance to leadership policy was not sustained and remained sporadic. Yet by 1982-3 this resistance was in one sense subdued and in another rechannelled into the new organisational bodies by the severity of the economic and political events which had overtaken the organisational debate. Such events included: the announcement of the 'social wage' campaign, the national negotiations toward a social agreement with the Labor Party, the mass retrenchments in the metal industry during 1982 and the concerted campaign by rightwing forces within the union to wrest national leadership from the progressive left officeholders.[121] An indication

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120 The Assistant National Secretary stated that 'aggregate shop steward's meetings were left there on purpose to cater for wider issues and to relate general issues to concrete experience'. G. Campbell, AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980.

121 See: AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, July-September 1982, pp.9-10; Quarterly Journal, October-December, 1982, p.3; Advertiser, 13.11.1981, p.1 (Judge Ousts Metal Union Trio); Tribune, 5.3.1982, p.5.

of the underlying frustration experienced by shop steward activists was evident in the first motion carried under industrial matters at the 1982 State Conference. The Conference, in response to the demise of the area council project, accepted that in order to allow industry sector committees to realise their potential, the committees required access to (i) research information; (ii) an expanded education programme; (iii) basic resources including clerical and administrative assistance; and, (iv) autonomy of action within the rules of the union.[122] This represented a clear indication of the continued political pressure for a greater and effective role in policy-making arising from within the lay officials and activists of the union. These mediating agents of the State-level organisation were, therefore, in an unsystematic way resisting a secular historical process through attempting to wage a rear guard action against the centralisation of policy-making at the national level.

The Politics of Social Agreements

Throughout the debate on organisational restructuring the intention of the national leadership of the AMFSU was clearly to effect a more responsive mobilisation from the membership over authorised and established policy directions than had existed in the late 1970's. The leadership gambit in pursuing the reorganisational strategy attempted to realign the dynamic political sections of the union more closely with the existing leadership structure of the union. Hence, shop steward activism was diverted away from steward bodies *per se* toward industry-based activities, which would consolidate the sectional strength of the organisation rather than contribute to the institutional position of stewards as a political body. Industry-based activism would also, for

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122 AMWSU, State Conference 24-25.5.1982, State Council Minutes, (Industrial - Item 1:1).

example, tend to realign activist momentum behind specific organiser officials, thereby tending to weld together more securely the interests of the two. The necessity of organisational effectiveness became especially significant in the view of the officialdom because, under the conditions of the major economic crisis in the early 1980's, the leadership perceived that they were required to display a more prominent leadership role and to provide direction through coherent and decisive policy. The protracted processes of deferment by the Arbitration Commission leading to the eventual abandonment on 31st July 1981 of the national wage indexation system underscored the urgency of such leadership action as unions resorted to collective bargaining to maintain wage rates and restore real wages eroded under indexation.[123] According to the Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael, the role of union leadership was to 'put forward propositions' on which subsequently membership consultation would be sought.[124] One avenue through which policy propositions were manufactured involved influential liaison between officials of the National Administrative Committee and officers of the National Research Office.

Three major policy issues between 1981 and 1983 which were characterised by common underlying themes provide an indication of the consolidation of centralised policy formation within the union. These policies consisted of: the Metal Industry Agreement negotiated during late 1981; the 'social wage' campaign launched during 1982; and the Social Agreement (Incomes Policy) and Industrial Development proposals

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123 From the 17 wage adjustments under indexation only 6 awarded the full consumer price increases (See, D. Plowman, op.cit, p.80 and Chapter 4.) This degree of partial indexation was a prominent factor in the union's argument of wage erosion. Moreover, the union's over-award payments were not included in calculating wage indexation adjustments.

124 L. Carmichael, Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980. For an alternative view of the instrumental role of senior AMFSU leaders (particularly Carmichael) see W.J. Lambden 'The Ford Strike 1973: A Critical Analysis', MBA Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1974.

leading to the 'Statement of Accord by the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions Regarding Economic Policy' developed over the period 1981 to May 1983.

The 1981 Metal Industry Agreement finalised during November and December (announced 7th December and operational from 14th December), represented a collective bargaining agreement between senior metal trades union officials (National Metal Unions Negotiating Committee) and the leadership of the Metal Trades Industry Association. The agreement was concluded expeditiously following eight months of industrial action initially over the unilateral introduction of the 35 hour week, but increasingly over wage maintenance. Indeed, following the abandonment of cost of living adjustments under wage indexation in July 1981, the issue of wage restoration (involving a figure of between $20.00 and $26.30 plus productivity increments) was integrated with and to a large extent displaced the ongoing 35 hour week campaign in the metal industry.[125] The eventual agreement because it encompassed both wage and hours concessions became one of the most significant expressions of collective bargaining in recent industrial politics.

In large part, the reason behind the combination of a joint wages-hours claim involved the AMFSU leadership's decision to invigorate the 35 hour week campaign in 1981 prior to the wage maintenance issue. In early 1981 the AMFSU national officialdom consciously promoted industrial action over the metal industry 35 hour week in the expectation that automatic wage indexation would collapse and that wage concerns

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125 See AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, January-March 1981, p.24. The 1982 National Conference suggested that 'if metal workers had relied entirely upon Arbitration, their wages would have actually decreased by $26.30 between December 1975 and December 1981. However, by acting in other ways, gains achieved by metal workers amounted to $63.10 in addition to partial indexation granted by Arbitration', AMWSU, National Conference Decisions, Metalworker (supplement) August 1982, p.2.

would provide a backbone to the mobilisation of the mass membership.[126] In addition, the rejuvenation of the shorter hours campaign occurred with the broad support of the ACTU and other metal related unions.[127] Explicitly, therefore, the strategy of the union leadership involved the combination of substantial wage demands with the issue of reduced working hours.[128] Once this was underway, the leadership role centred on preventing employer or government bodies from separating the two policies, which would in effect indicate that reductions in working hours below 40 hours were non-negotiable. Consequently, by late 1981 the expeditious pace of the negotiations, from the AMFSU's point of view, became a means to preserve the coterminous character of the wages-hours package. Put simply, the more protracted the national bargaining process had become, the more likely the combined wages hours package would then become disjoined and regarded as mutually exclusive claims either through employer-government strategies or through an array of 'anomalous' separate collective bargaining agreements concluded with individual employers.[129]

Following the cancellation of indexation, metal unions lodged claims for between $50.00 to $55.90 wage increase on the tradesman's weekly wage. This comprised of $30.00 to $35.90 as an across the board claim plus a $20.00 claim as a margin for skill.[130] The National Negotiating

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126 L. Carmichael, Address to AMWSU Restructuring Seminar, 4.12.1980.

127 Thirty-one sectors were identified by the ACTU in September 1980 in which industrial action could accelerate (see Tribune,24.9.1980, p.5).

128 See Advertiser, 4.8.1981, p.1.

129 These agreements with single employers were increasing in number during late 1980 and 1981. During the negotiations for the new metal industry agreement strict time limitations were placed on each stage of the negotiations, especially concerning reports back to the membership and the scheduling of successive meetings. By October 1981 seven SA employers in the metal industry had conceded shorter hours (38 or 37 1/2 hours), Advertiser, 28.10.1981, p.7.

130 See AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, January-March 1981, p.11.

Committee commenced negotiations for either a national award or a private national agreement.[131] From the union's side the terms of negotiation were established by the Negotiating Committee but involved one initial report to members on 17th September 1981.[132] Employers demanded that the union undertake to agree to a 12 month agreement involving no extra claims to individual employers.[133] This was not a no strike agreement per se in that provision existed for anomalous or extraordinary circumstances to warrant industrial action. The employers consideration of the unions' claims was made conditional upon the acceptance of the 'no extra claims' provision. Union officials took steps to accommodate in principle the 12 month agreement as a quid pro quo for the inclusion of shorter hours in the wages claim. Consequently, the officials of the National Negotiating Committee began to marshal opinion initially at the level of the State officialdom behind the principle of the agreement.[134] Insofar as these officials were concerned the issue under negotiation was not whether a year 'no claims' agreement would eventuate, but concerned the detailed nature of the stipulated conditions that would accompany such an agreement.[135]

Mass meetings in November 1981 were presented with a series of narrowed conditional claims, predicated upon the acceptance of the 12 month agreement. By November the 'no extra claims' proposal was accepted as a virtual fait accompli despite the continuation of employers to

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131 Thus, the metal unions lodged a wage claim for $50.00 with the Arbitration Commission in August 1981, (see Advertiser, 7.8.1981, p.13; and 22.8.1981, p.11).

132 Advertiser, 16.9.1981 p.32; 17.9.1981, p.34.

133 Advertiser, 13.10.1981, p.11.

134 Ibid. National officials of the AMWSU, ASE and FIA visited Adelaide to 'test local opinion' toward the 12 month 'no extra claims' condition.

135 Advertiser, 28.10.1981, p.7.

refuse to respond directly to the substance of the unions' claims. The mass meetings were well attended with over 4,500 metal workers voting in support of the action recommended.[136] This was a 'massive turnout' according to one AMFSU officer, especially in comparison with the attendance records of the earlier 35 hour week meetings.[137] The debate conducted at the meeting centred not over the 'no claim' agreement but over the type of action best pursued to produce an expeditious acceptable offer. Urgency was stressed in order that the wages-hours package was maintained, to prevent prevarication on behalf of the employer negotiators, and because the Federal Court on 12th November ousted three senior national officials of the AMFSU on the grounds of electoral irregularities with respect to technicalities over official advertisements calling for nominations.[138]

To underscore the sense of urgency, the leadership advocated the commencement of a 48 hour strike throughout the metal industry in Australia.[139] In SA this strike was threatened for Monday and Tuesday (23-24th November 1981) only four days after the mass meeting on the 18th November. This strike was the first major national stoppage in the metal industry since the early 1970's. Union sources estimated that of the total 350,000 workers throughout Australia involved in the industry,

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136 The recommendations put to this meeting (17.11.1981) are included in Appendix VIII. See also Advertiser, 18.11.1981, p.13; and Tribune, 25.11.1981, p.5.

137 Personal Interview, A. Saunders, 17.11.1981.

138 Personal Observation, Metal Unions' Mass Meeting Apollo Stadium, 17.11.1981.

139 This 48 hour strike recommendation was an integral part of the National Negotiating Committee's recommendations, and was a calculated tactic explicitly designed as a 'show of strength'. The strike call did not originate from the floor of the meeting, and although it was popular at that forum was accompanied with calls for other action.

approximately 80-85 percent had participated in the industrial action.[140] In this context employers offered to accept a wage rise of initially between $15 and $30 but which firmed at $20 as well as the introduction of an industry wide 38 hour week.[141]

Negotiations were concluded when the metal officials in conjunction with shop stewards in Melbourne, reduced their wage claim from $35.90 to $25.00, including supplementary payments for those workers not receiving over-award payments ($9.30), shorter hours and a review of wage rates during the life of the agreement (April) in order to secure a mid-term adjustment.[142] Weekend talks on 5th December called to avert a second 48 hour national strike to begin Monday 7th December finally reached agreement.[143]

The final agreement comprised of five parts plus the 'no extra claims' clause.[144] Metal workers received a substantial wage rise of $25.00, hours of work were reduced from 15th March 1982 to a 38 hour week, the tool allowance was increased by $2.00 to $6.80, supplementary payments of between $9.30 for tradesmen and $22.00 for non-tradesmen increased the minimum wage rates in the industry to $243.90 at the base (fitter) tradesmen level, and finally a mid term wage increase of $14 for base

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140 See Advertiser, 24.11.1981, p.14. This was the estimate of the AMWSU's Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael. Following this strike SA employers (MIA) suggested that 'we will be attempting to develop a useful industrial relationship in terms of having people negotiate agreements without senseless strikes and wastages in the process...We would not be prepared to revert to the old system of making an offer and having that accepted or rejected. We are hoping to enter a new industrial era. We wanted to try to find a settlement between 500,000 workers and 6,000 or 7,000 companies which would mean an end to strikes'.

141 Reported in Tribune, 25.11.1981, p.5.

142 See Advertiser, 2.12.1981, p.38; and 5.12.1981, p.10.

143 The agreement was announced on Monday 7.12.1981. (See Advertiser, 7.12.1981, p.3; 8.12.1981, p.1; and Australian, 8.12.1981, p.1)

144 See appended documents - 'Metal Industry Award December 1981'. Appendix VIII.

tradesmen after 1st June 1982. The significance of the haste with which the agreement had been conducted was evident in the comments of the leader of the Negotiating Committee, the AMFSU's Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael, who believed that the agreement was a substantial Christmas package which would delight metal workers.[145] The agreement he maintained was considered by the unions 'to be a most satisfactory package', and this was especially the case because it was 'rare in the history of industrial relations for unions to be able to go to workers with a significant reduction in working hours simultaneously with a significant increase in wage rates'.[146] Metal workers did not disprove Carmichael's prediction, with mass meetings voting overwhelmingly to accept the outcome of the negotiations.

The significance of this metal industry agreement as a major collective bargaining policy initiative lies in the level at which the negotiations were conducted and in the terms entered into during the course of the negotiations. Throughout the period of industrial action the wages-hours package was controlled centrally by senior national officials with the occasional involvement of State metal industry officials. Further, with the technical removal of the three national officials from office, the union was apparently concerned to provide those officials with some latitude for manoeuvre. For the credibility of these national officials, in particular Carmichael, direct and tangible results were needed from the negotiations. It was, therefore, necessary to finalise the package prior to Christmas to capitalise on the mobilisation that had taken place during the latter half of 1981,

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145 Reported in Advertiser, 8.12.1981, p.1. Membership acceptance of the employers' offer was a formality with over 34,000 voting in favour of the agreement in Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide alone, (Advertiser, 9.12.1981, p.3).

146 L. Carmichael, Tribune, 9.12.1981, p.5. See also the interview with the AMWSU's coordinator of the National Research Centre, J. Baird, Tribune, 16.12.1981, p.10. Baird argued 'I know of no other union campaign which won a reduction in hours and wage increases'.

otnerwise the momentum of the campaign would dissipate over the summer vacation period. This mobilisation culminated during the period October to December 1981. Once the union leadership had accepted the moratorium on extra claims for a 12 month period, the accent was on the National Negotiating Committee to curtail the schedule of the negotiations. The high response from the membership of the metal unions to the 48 hour stoppage (23-24.11.1981) as the culmination of the campaign, provided national officials with sufficient bargaining power in the form of mass sanctionary action to enable the officials to adhere to their schedule.

For the employers part, given that many individual employers from the 7,000 under the Metal Industry Award had begun to break ranks and conclude separate collective bargaining agreements with the unions, the MTIA's main concern was to avoid further industrial disruption during the negotiations and after. The question of wage increases was less contentious with employers and amounts of between $15.00 and $30.00 were offered during the early negotiations. More contentious was the issue of reduced working hours over which the employers had effected a lengthy counter-propaganda campaign. However, concerned to institute wage rates and standard hours of work with national-wide application in the industry, yet recognising that some individual employers had negotiated separate shorter working hours agreements, the employers were prepared ultimately to trade-off a 2 hour reduction in weekly working hours for the establishment of industrial peace <u>via</u> a 'no claims' undertaking from the unions. In other words, employers were prepared to concede wages and hours improvements together on a planned basis, with the guarantee that no further award or over-award claims would eventuate.

The 1981 'no extra claims' agreement foreshadowed the subsequent policy directions of the AMFSU between late 1981 and 1983. For example, in the 1982 Draft Log of Claims in the metal industry the 'no extra claims' clause was reaffirmed with the exception of severance

settlements, wide discrepancies in wage rates in a particular location, and personal equipment provided by the employer (overalls and boots).[147]

That the terms of the 'no extra claims' Metal Industry Agreement were determined principally without rank-and-file input was reflected at the 1982 SA State Conference where State Council was urged to assess the recent Metal Industry Award campaign and in particular to consider 'ways of improving rank-and-file involvement in the campaign'.[148] Notwithstanding, this absence of direct rank-and-file participation in the centralised processes of collective bargaining became all the more pronounced as the national leadership unveiled their ensuing campaign involving taxation and social welfare. Essentially this initiative which became known as the 'social wage' campaign was an exercise in the professionalisation of union policy research.

In Adelaide the 'social wage' campaign commenced with an address by the Assistant National Secretary to the 1982 State Conference. Suggestions that the campaign was in the pipeline were indicated by a national organiser's report in early 1981. This report stated that on social welfare

> steps will be taken in February to generate a broad campaign but if the AMSWU State Councils and branches only carry resolutions instead of active State and local leadership and co-ordination, then it will die on the vine.[149]

Other internal union discussions concerning the limitations of the entire reliance on the industrial wage in the defence of members' living standards were also raised during 1981.[150]

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147 See Appendix VIII, 'Metal Industry Award - Draft Log of Claims' 14.9.1982

148 AMWSU, State Conference 24-25.5.1982, Item 1:7, p.3.

149 AMWSU, Metalworker, Vol. 2, No. 1, February 1981, p.6.

150 See AMWSU, SA Education Offier's Report, 1981, p.2.

Following the Metal Industry Agreement, the 'social wage' campaign was activiated in February 1982 by the decision of National Council. The establishment of criteria for a welfare-based 'social wage' was secondary to the principal objective of obtaining taxation redress by raising the income level at which higher and more progressive taxation rates applied. In essence, the initial campaign sought the indexation of direct taxation as a result of the recent substantial rises in money wages obtained by the union. Hence, preserving the 'social wage' became interpreted as involving the preservation of real disposable income via taxation relief, reductions in interest rates and health insurance, and higher pensions and benefits.[151] After the details of the policy had been articulated, union seminars were conducted to communicate the nature of the policy campaign to the shop stewards and by late April over 2,000 shop stewards throughout Australia had attended.[152] Leaflets outlining the existing social wage 'political rip-off' were distributed to the entire membership. With overtly professionalist overtones, the policy was introduced by Carmichael at an early NSW union seminar on the grounds that

> the bosses couldn't beat us industrially around the gross wage, so now they're tackling us through the social wage....The facts show quite clearly that the bulk of the rip-off of workers is political.[153]

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151 Other objectives included the establishment of fixed portions of banking funds to be deposited with the Reserve Bank, and the provision of cheap housing loans to low and medium income earners. See L. Carmichael, 'Potential of the Social Wage Campaign', AMSWU Quarterly Journal, July-September 1982, pp.9-10. Significantly the propaganda for membership consumption stressed the re-educative processes of pursuing social wage goals, with almost no mention of the associated incomes policy proposals.

152 Tribune, 7.4.1982, p.5; and 28.4.1982, p.4.

153 Tribune, 28.4.1982, p.4. Carmichael added that 'there are some people who say that we shouldn't be active in politics anyway, that there should be "no politics" in the union....But "no politics" means Fraser's politics. We either have that or we have labor politics', (p.4).

In May 1982 mass protest rallies were scheduled to coincide with the launching of a major 32 page booklet produced under the auspices of the National Council by the union's National Research Centre. This booklet entitled, Australia: On the Rack was launched in Sydney on 25.5.1982 by AMFSU officials, ACTU and ALP leaders.[154] In Adelaide substantial publicity was devoted to the sponsorship of a mid-week 'Day-in-May' 'social wage' protest rally held on 26.5.1982 involving the union, the UTLC, the Retired Union Members' Association, and a local representative of the Campaign Against Spiralling Home Interest Rates.[155] While for the launching of the On the Rack booklet the union in SA convened a one-day Public Forum on 29th May addressed by one of the authors of the booklet, National Research Officer, T. Wilshire, ALP Shadow Federal Treasurer, R. Willis, and State Secretary of the AMFSU. M.Tumbers.[156] At this Public Forum the main topic of debate, premised on an ALP electoral victory, was an impending incomes policy in conjunction with taxation reductions for workers and certain improvements to the 'social wage'. To coincide with the launching of this campaign and to underline their concern over 'high' taxes, the AMFSU distributed miniature 'not one dollar' notes, which emphasised that

> This non Dollar is 46% smaller than usual. BUT, when you earn $331.50 or over per week this is the size of your Dollar.

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154 AMWSU, Australia: On the Rack, (National Council), May 1982. The launching of this publication, which was warmly received by the CPA, was recorded in Tribune, 26.5.1982, p.4. The union printed 200,000 leaflets on the social wage and 100,000 On the Rack booklets.

155 See the series of half-page advertisements inserted by the AMWSU and UTLC in Advertiser, 21.5.1982, p.6; 25.5.1982, p.10 and p.18. (See the scant report on the Adelaide launching of the campaign in Advertiser, 27.5.1982, p.15).

156 Personal Observation, AMWSU, Public Forum, SAIT, 29.5.1982. Both Willis (ALP) and Wilshire (AMWSU) were insistent exponents of incomes policies. From this forum it was also apparent that the CPA endorsed a social contract between the ALP and the unions.

> THAT'S RIGHT! Even before you spend your Dollar often on purchases involving other forms of tax, FRASER's TAX MAN TAKES 46¢ of every Dollar in your pay packet.[157]

Hence, only the nine months after the collapse of partial wage indexation in Australia, the AMFSU leadership together with that of the ALP and ACTU embraced in principle a contradictory 'social wage'-incomes policy strategy. While the union leadership in particular were accused of pursuing a 'social contract' in the wake of British experience,[158] the AMWSU national strategists rejected this interpretation. Carmichael after addressing the ALP's Economic Policy Committee of the Federal Parliamentary Caucus, stated that

> if and when I do discuss the substance [of an incomes policy] I will be taking the position that real wages must rise, not simply be maintained through indexation. This can be afforded by reversing the massive redistribution of wealth that has taken place, in favour of the rich over the past seven years.[159]

Moreover, he reported to union members that

> preliminary talks are taking place on these matters between the ACTU and representatives of the future Labor government. The national leadership of the AMWSU is holding discussions with

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157 An example of which is included in Appendix VIII. This 'not one dollar' was launched in Adelaide to attract support for the 'Day-in-May' protest over cuts to the social wage, (Tribune, 19.5.1982, p.4). In an address to shop stewards Carmichael explained the essence of this aspect of the union's campaign. In annual income he argued 'from $17,895 to $34,480 you pay 46c in the dollar [tax]....This year, almost all metal award tradespeople's award wages will go into the 46 cents in the dollar tax bracket. That's another 14 cents in the dollar tax on every bit you earn over $331.50 a week....What do we do? Do we add an extra 14 cents in the dollar to claims above $331.50 a week to make up for the extra tax, when we make logs of claims in industry?', Tribune, 5.5.1982, p.8.

158 See National Times, 2-8.5.1982, p.5.; 'The Social Contract Swindle', Direct Action, 26.5.1982, pp.2, 6-7; 'Social Wage - Yes: Social Con-Trick - No', International Socialist Battler, (mimeo) Woodville, n.d. (May 1982). The 'social contract' also provided impetus for a SPA-SWP joint campaign launched at Easter 1984. This 'Social Rights Campaign' issued a 'Manifesto of Social Rights' which attacked the 'false assumptions' of the Accord.

159 L. Carmichael, 'Press Fabricates "Social Contract"', Tribune, 5.5.1982, p.4.

> both. The object is to reach agreement between unions and the ALP about co-operative policy over incomes, taxes, the social wage and industry policy....[160]

The union's National Research Officer, T. Wilshire, maintained that the union officials were negotiating 'not just an incomes policy', because there would be 'no agreement unless there was a substantial increase in workers'rights', and 'recognition of the social wage'.[161] As with the Metal Industry Agreement the nature of the voluntary agreement and its acceptance by the parties concerned was germane to the 'social wage'-incomes policy proposals. Indeed, Carmichael explicitly made the analogy between the experience of the 1981 Metal Industry Agreement and the construction of a union-Labor Party incomes policy agreement. Thus, in determining an incomes policy as with

> the Metal Industry Award Agreement the details must be thrashed out and the proposals taken to mass meetings all over the country for final decision....The national tax, social wage and interest rate campaign will provide an ideal opportunity for Australian workers all over the nation to discuss the significance and nature of such an agreement. As with the Metal Industry Agreement it will only stick if all parties to it have fully discussed it out and are aware of both the benefits and obligations.[162]

Despite this plea for retrospective democracy, the AMFSU's On the Rack proposal was written and researched by three senior research officers, J. Baird, T. Wilshire and B. Mountford with cooperation from the union's National Council and ALP leaders.[163] The booklet contained a summary of the AMFSU's critique of Fraserism, a serious proposal for

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160 L. Carmichael, Australia: On the Rack, AMWSU, Surry Hills, 1982, p.28. Carmichael endorsed the ALP's prices and incomes policy (the Hayden version) at the National Press Club, Canberra, see Advertiser, 11.6.1982, p.7.

161 T. Wilshire, Address to AMWSU Public Forum on the Economic Crisis in Australia, 29.5.1982.

162 L. Carmichael, Australia: On the Rack, op.cit, p.28.

163 AMWSU, Australia: On the Rack, p.33. See also B.Mountford, 'Industrial Policy' (mimeo) AMWSU Research Paper, 29.5.1982.

the 'social wage' to emerge as a political issue, the non-progressive nature of taxation, some discussion of workers' health and social security issues, and a description of increasing inequalities in the education system.[164] The main policy initiatives of the document stemmed, however, not from analysis of wage and taxation problems but from the nature of the solutions offered. To be sure, the proposed policy directions included under 'What We Can Do' in On the Rack differed noticeably from those contained in the union's 1977 pamphlet Australia Uprooted, which called for a 'People's Economic Program' based on the public ownership of Australian and foreign-owned transnational corporations as well as of Australia's mineral resources. The 1982 policy document proposed a joint union-ALP incomes policy as a step toward 'a more equitable distribution of income, wealth and economic power' within which

> the ability of a Labor Government to remain in office to implement these objectives will be dependent on the extent to which the trade unions are prepared to co-operate in an equitable prices and incomes policy. On the other hand though, if the redistributive policies are too ambitious by seeking to obtain mammoth changes overnight the likely result will be an investment strike, flight of capital overseas and other actions by owners of capital which would defeat the objective of restoring full employment.[165]

The origin of the incomes policy concept in Australia which was integrated into the 'social wage' campaign of the AMFSU dated from Labor

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164 The AMWSU's National Research Officer, T. Wilshire, was seconded for a 12 month term to the ALP's Federal Deputy Leader (PLP), L. Bowen - a major parliamentary lobbyist for domestic manufacturing. This period was also instrumental in forging AMWSU-ALP relations toward a 'social agreement'. Wilshire was subsequently able to promote the Accord to Australian business.

165 R. Willis, (then ALP Shadow Federal Treasurer) AMWSU, Australia: On the Rack , p.28, (emphasis mine). There were no specific policy suggestions in On the Rack in terms of either investment proposals or the objective of restoring full employment.

Party discussions over alternative economic policy.[166] Such Labor Party discussions were oriented towards the achievement of office through capitalising on the role that their traditional links with the union movement could fulfil in contributing toward electoral gain by restraining union behaviour. Between 1979 and 1983 the Federal ALP's incomes policy proposals were interposed in the struggle between the centre faction (in alliance with the left) and the right wing factions, which ultimately became manifested in the rivalry between the Hayden leadership versus that of Hawke.[167] Both the major factional-leadership groups advocated the bilateral regulation of labour (through Labor governments in conjunction with the trade union movement); the

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166 The ALP proposals dated from 1973: see T.C. Winter, Power Over Prices and Incomes, Report to the Australian Government, AGPS, Canberra, November, 1973. More recently the incomes policy debate was revived by R. Willis, 'The Role of Incomes Policy', Paper to Labour Economists Conference, Adelaide, 1979. In this paper Willis argued that in the economic crisis an incomes policy was inevitable, yet rested on trade union 'co-operation' ('sacrifice') for its success. See M. Burford, 'Prices and Incomes Policy and Socialist Politics', Journal of Australian Political Economy, No.14, April 1983, especially pp.12-27. Prior to the 1980 federal election the ALP and the ACTU announced a joint agreement on wage restraint and economic policy, which provided a basis for the 1981-3 discussions, see Age, 22.8.1980, p.1.

167 See Advertiser, 9.7.1982, p.1. An unnamed spokesperson from the AMWSU was reported as indicating that 'the horse trading will have to begin all over again' if Hawke defeated Hayden for the leadership of the ALP, see 'Labor's next battle: making an incomes policy stick', National Times, 18-24.7.1982, p.5. There was subsequently some suggestion that the failure of Hayden to successfully negotiate and finalise an incomes policy agreement with the ACTU played a strategic role in encouraging the challenge to his leadership and his defeat by Hawke. According to Summers, the incomes policy became a 'weapon in Hawke's leadership aspirations' and that Hayden was receiving little cooperation from the ACTU. In fact, 'only the week before he [Hayden] had had to announce that due to further delays in negotiating the fine print of the prices and incomes policy, the scheduled launch of Labor's economic policy on 19 February would be postponed to a date in March. Yet the day after Hawke assumed the leadership, Cliff Dolan, who had asked Hayden to defer the launch, suddenly announced that the ACTU was in "complete agreement" with Labor over the prices and incomes policy'. See A. Summers, Gamble for Power, Nelson, Melbourne, 1983, pp.77-78.

differences that did exist between the ALP factions were not of substance but of detail.[168] Hence, the essence of the incomes policy debate within the labour movement centred on both the phraseology of the policy and the composition of union support behind the proposals. For the AMFSU leadership their reading of the situation suggested that moves to negotiate incomes policy agreements (together with 'social wage' trade-offs) with the Hayden (centre and left) faction, provided the sole viable means of resisting a rightwing Hawke leadership in a subsequent Labor government.[169]

The AMFSU policy document Australia: On the Rack, signalled that 'social wage'-incomes policies had politically emerged as the union's major policy alternative to the deteriorating economic crisis, to monetarist-inspired government policies and to the likely advent of conservative laborism under an ALP government. The union policy recognised that in a worsening labour market the union would find it increasingly difficult to maintain organisational momentum over the industrial wage (as it had over the 1981 wages campaign), and, accordingly, turned to a non-industrial protection of income through the provision of an improving 'social wage' involving the reduction of costs associated with health care, education, housing, and other public goods. This AMFSU policy in effect reflected the expression of trade union consciousness across two levels of economism. That is, union organisation has predominantly effected an economism involving wage struggle with employers, but increasingly in the protracted economic crisis in the advanced capitalist societies during the 1970's and 1980's

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168 K. Cole, 'Unions and the Labor Party', in K. Cole (ed.), Power, Conflict and Control in Australian Trade Unions, Penguin, Ringwood, 1982, pp. 93-7. Cf. 'Hawke wants Referendum - Control on Pay-Prices Sought', Advertiser, 13.8.1981, p.13.

169 Personal Interviews, AMWSU State Officials. Moreover, Hayden was chosen by the AMWSU to assist launch the booklet Australia: On the Rack: a booklet which implicitly endorsed the Hayden-Willis 'version' of the ALP-union incomes policy.

economism has turned to a 'social wage' struggle with the state apparatus.

Yet, of importance to a study of union decision-making, the articulation of a top-level incomes policy agreement between the union and a Labor Government was neither within the endorsed policy agenda of the union nor the frame of reference of the rank-and-file. This incomes policy proposal was, on the contrary, specifically introduced from outside the union's policy-making bodies. More explicitly, the incomes policy proposal was introduced into the union by senior Labor Party officials through the union's National Research Centre and more directly in specific talks with the union's Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael. As a consequence, the policy proposals included in the document were neither widely circulated prior to release nor familiar to many of the union's officials or stewards, let alone members.[170] Thus, the booklet was not released in draft form for comment and feedback as with other union publications. On the contrary, the SA State officials while conversant with the objectives of the 'social wage' campaign were unaware of the inclusion of the incomes policy proposals in On the Rack until the State launching of the document on 29th May 1982. Indeed, the SA State Secretary, M. Tumbers, expressed publicly at that Public Forum that the union 'won't have a bar of a prices and incomes policy'.[171]

This lack of membership or shop steward involvement in policy formation, once again, created problems in communicating the policy proposals to the membership and securing membership support and endorsement. Indeed, while still ignorant of the incomes policy proposals, SA shop stewards did not officially endorse the 'social wage'

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170 Personal Correspondence, National Research Centre, AMWSU, 14.6.1982.

171 M. Tumbers, Address to AMWSU Public Forum on the Economic Crisis in Australia, 29.5.1982. Indeed, the SA branch of the AMWSU did not adopt the 'social wage' campaign until early June 1982, over three months after the announcement of the policy. AMWSU, State Council Minutes, 2.6.1982, p.5.

campaign collectively until early May 1982.[172] At the 'Day-in-May' 'social wage' protest at which organisers expected some 6,000, on the day less than 1,000 attended.[173] Similarly an attendance of only 120 at the Public Forum, at which almost no SA Labor Party representatives attended, was disappointing to the union leaders especially as they felt used by the Parliamentarians. According to the convenor of the Public Forum, T. Gnatenko, the 'boycott' by ALP Parliamentarians of such an exercise designed to promote the union-ALP 'social wage'-incomes policy implied that the union 'were doing their work for them; even our previous members don't bother with our union once they are in Parliament', (referring to J.L. Scott, Federal ALP Member for Hindmarsh and previous union Secretary).[174] This lack of involvement was also of concern to Carmichael, representing problems in communication between the leaders and rank-and-file. In July 1982 Carmichael addressing the issue of internal communications in the AMFSU volunteered that

> one of the problems we have with....communications, is to be able to allow for time. That is, to consciously understand that at the origin of a debate - at the origin of new issue - there will be confusion. There will inevitably be misunderstanding and you have to allow the necessary time for that to be overcome, and to welcome the debate. In fact, to encourage the debate. While everybody pleads for purity of understanding before you start such a thing is impossible....We're in the middle of this at the moment with, for example, the significance of the 'social wage' campaign and the necessity to elevate the political content of trade union work so as to come to grips with taxation and what's happening with the social wage.[175]

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172 See Tribune, 12.5.1982, p.5.

173 Advertiser, 27.5.1982, p.15. The following AMWSU State Council estimated that 'around 2,000' had attended the 26.5.1982 rally. While the State Secretary claimed he was not disappointed with the turnout, he blamed not a lack of community interest, but the inclement weather for the low attendance. (AMWSU, State Council, 2.6.1982).

174 T. Gnatenko, AMWSU State Council, 2.6.1982. Others noted at this meeting that the union appeared to be 'blackballed' by the ALP.

175 L. Carmichael, 'Communications in the AMWSU', AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, July-September, 1982, p.15.

As a result of the professionalist determination of policy the 'social wage'-incomes policy strategy patently displayed an internally contradictory character. Incomes policies have tended to emerge as perennial contradictions in advanced capitalist nations where established institutionalised wage bargaining exists. The AMFSU top leadership strategy in effect urged further wage moderation to metal workers whose real wages had suffered erosion since 1975. As a corollary to wage moderation, the union proposed the Industrial Development Policy, a 27 point plan for economic growth and employment creation endorsed by the 1982 National Conference of the union.[176] This policy was produced because

> both the jobs and living standards of Australian workers are threatened. The more equal redistribution of income by agreement with Government over wages, tax, social wage and interest rates, is the most desirable method of defending living standards. However, in both the short and long term, security of employment and progressive income redistribution depend also on the redistribution of power. Therefore, an alternative industrial development policy with increased workers' power over the pattern of industry development is a crucial aspect of any social agreement with government.[177]

The thrust of this policy was designed to anticipate the subsequent Accord agreement, which it did by 7 months.[178] Insofar as the union's

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176 Included in Appendix VIII.

177 1982 AMWSU National Conference Decisions for Ratification, Metalworker, Supplement, August 1982, p.2. (Included in the Industrial Development Policy, p.1. Appendix VIII).

178 See 'Statement of Accord by the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions Regarding Economic Policy', February 1983. Discussion documents passed between the ACTU Executive and Federal ALP leaders from mid-1980: see 'The Relationship Between the Australian Labor Party and the Trade Unions' August 1980; 'Discussion Paper on Economic Policy', Australian Labor Advisory Committee, June 1982, (prepared by: B. Hayden, R, Hawke, R. Willis - ALP and C. Fitzgibbon, B. Kelty and J. Marsh - ACTU). See also the contemporary advocacy of a voluntary incomes policy as an 'essential part of alternative economic policies' by a senior ALP parliamentary economic adviser J. Langmore, 'An Economic Strategy for a Labor Government', Journal of Australian Political Economy, Nos. 12/13. June 1982, p.33.

national leaders were concerned, this industrial development policy served as part of the counterclaim, together with the 'social wage' maintenance demands, for the union's acceptance of an incomes policy agreement as outlined in the union's On The Rack. In content, the Industrial Development Policy was a moderate reformist document promoting the expansion of manufacturing principally through the instrumental intervention of government action. The role of government was conceived to be broadly reformist, involving: economic coordination, planning and research, the establishment of a sectoral balance between manufacturing, mining and rural industries, liaison with unions, essentially short-term trade protection, the regulation of MNC's, the promotion of public equity in industry, the reform of a series of government acts and regulations, and the provision of loan capital to small business.[179] The moderate nature of the Industrial Development Policy was explicitly designed in 1982 to be politically acceptable to the opposition Labor Party with aspirations for office sometime in the 1983-4 period. Accordingly, the union leadership recognised that while

> the primary objective of a Labor Government's economic policy should be the restoration of full employment....this cannot be done overnight. The claims on a Labor Government in this area should therefore begin with a demand for a specific amount to be committed to an employment creation program and a responsible expansion of government spending generally.[180]

Hence, the intention behind the negotiations centred on the negotiation of a 'social wage'-incomes policy package that both sides found politically acceptable and to which they would adhere. In the absence of subsequent governmental adherence (i.e., a restrictive incomes

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179 See Clauses 13-27. The AMWSU also took direct steps in this period to support domestic manufacturing. For example it was reported at a State Council meeting that the Victorian State Secretary J.F. Halfpenny had raised a financial loan "to bail out" a Portland (Vic.) employer who was threatening closure and who employed AMWSU members. AMWSU, State Council, 2.10.1982.

180 AMWSU, Australia: On the Rack, p.30.

policy without social and economic amelioration) then the union believed it would hold just grounds for the annulment of the agreement and be able to resort to collective bargaining. During the ALP-union negotiations the SA State Secretary stressed that

> Carmichael's main concern was how do we enshrine such commitments and extract guarantees for the 'social wage' from the Labor Party.[181]

This concern was pursued despite the widespread leadership view that the trade-off agreement between the unions and the ALP 'probably would not work the first time but will generate enough response to have other goes'.[182] Thus, the 'social wage', industrial development policy and the incomes policy were seen not as ends in themselves, but as part of a continuing structural integration of the union's policies within the politics of the Labor Party and ultimately within the state apparatus.

Throughout the entire period of debate, the union leadership recognised that the coincidence of their interpretation of the 'social wage'-incomes policy agreement with that of the ALP leadership was tenuous. Many union leaders regarded the processes of negotiating a social agreement as a mere reflection of the opposition Labor Party's desire to win office, and accordingly were prepared to entertain the idea of a social agreement essentially for electoral consumption. However, in this phase of policy development the question of whether an agreement would eventuate was never an issue. Basically, the union leadership, as

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181 M. Tumbers, AMWSU, State Council, 2.6.1982. In response to a direct question from a State Councillor asking 'how far has the National Council gone in negotiating a social agreement between the ACTU and the Hayden ALP?', the State Secretary replied,....'Both our interests coincide at the moment. This union has discussed a social contract with the ALP. The concept shouldn't frighten us but it does....[but] we are not only concerned with a prices and incomes policy - we want trade union policing powers removed, reductions in taxation and a redistribution of wealth. There is no fear that the AMWSU will sell out'. M. Tumbers, AMWSU, State Council, 2.6.1982.

182 M. Tumbers, AMWSU, State Council, 2.6.1982.

with the Metal Industry Agreement, had accepted that an incomes policy agreement of some sort was inevitable, and that the issue at stake was the political nature of the reciprocal conditions that would accompany such an agreement. For this reason the policies for the maintenance of the 'social wage' and industrial development were expressedly specific in an attempt to prevent general and vacuous principles from substituting for substance. In other words, while it was realised in a pre-election context that any ultimate agreement would necessarily need to satisfy diverse objectives and that the agreement to secure support would possess something for all parties, it was also believed that concrete results could eventuate if specific reforms were addressed. This was especially the case over the promotion of domestic manufacturing, the maintenance of protection and over the indexation of the higher taxation threshold over which AMFSU members had fallen. The AMFSU leadership at both the national and State levels were conscious that they and the Labor Party leadership would inevitaby interpret the agreement clauses differently corresponding to the pursuit of their specific interests.

With this in mind, the leadership of the AMFSU purposely conceived a series of possible scenarios intending that the union would be able to pursue various options according to circumstances. One of the options that gained much private currency among officials involved the union's participation in discussions with the ALP prior to the election, after which the union would revert to private bargaining with employers. Should the ALP win office then the union would continue this bargaining while awaiting policy initiatives from the new Labor Government. In this way, whether an accord was finally arrived at, the union believed that they commanded the ultimate veto power; a tactical withdrawal from the political agenda and spirit of understanding established in 1982. This factor helped sustain the credibility of the union officials engaged in the process of negotiating wage moderation with agencies of the state.

Union officials, therefore, perceived the incomes policy negotiations not as a process effectively compromising their legitimacy but as a political tactic with both short and long term consequences for the nature of the union-Labor Party relationship. In advancing this policy they intended not to adopt an incomes policy per se, but to accede to income moderation only in conjunction with substantial ameliorations to both the 'social wage' and individual taxation scales in the context of economic growth in manufacturing. As such the AMFSU leadership engaged consciously in a process of political economism, which provided the essential framework necessary for a formal national relationship between the Labor Party and the union movement based not on traditional ties but on economic intervention. This political economism essentially involved direct bargaining with the Labor Party not for union electoral support but for economic and political planning.

Nonetheless, despite the integration of union policy into state economic planning through the medium of the ALP, this did not establish an on-going bilateral process of planning. On the contrary, rather than a system of joint planning, the ALP sought agreement on principles of policy direction with the union movement. This provided the Party in government with a degree of latitude which was not primarily contingent upon union consensus toward its economic management.[183] Moreover, the union leadership cautious of becoming 'locked-in' to the policy ambit of Labor governments also displayed reservations over systematic joint planning on the grounds that the union leadership represented sectional interests and therefore needed to preserve its arbitrary flexibility.

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183 That the Labor leadership was not prepared to engage in bi-lateral planning over economic management (except over some aspects of wage restraint and taxation) was evident with both the ten per cent devaluation of the Australian dollar in 1983, and the decision in 1984 to allow foreign banks to operate in Australia.

As such the negotiations leading to the agreement of the Accord in February 1983,[184] were seen by the AMFSU as an offer of union compliance in the event of a Labor government honouring specific commitments that were agreed during the negotiation phase. Hence, the AMFSU behaved during the negotiations with the ALP as if it were engaged in a private collective bargaining exercise with employers, out of which would emerge some compromise 'award' agreement. The significant difference between such employer bargaining and the bargaining with the parties of the state apparatus, was that in the event of non-complicance by employers the union had some recourse to the legal processes of arbitration, whereas with the state apparatus the unions were devoid of even this level of indemnification.

Initially the union considered that it was in a position to dissolve the Accord agreement should the Labor government not fulfil its commitments. In point of fact the dramatic change of circumstances during the latter half of 1982 and the early months of 1983, not only preoccupied the AMFSU leadership but also overtook its political economistic calculations. While maintaining the 'no extra claims' conditions, the deteriorating labour market in the metal industry toward the second half of 1982, was exacerbated by what the union regarded as a politically motivated campaign by employers involving a ten per cent reduction (40,000+ workers) in their workforces.[185] To compound the

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184 'Statement of Accord by the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions Regarding Economic Policy', February 1983. Apparently, however, the details of the negotiations over the Accord were not conveyed to State union officials. One senior SA State official indicated that the SA officials in February 1983 were given a day to consider and endorse the previously unseen final draft document.

185 M. Tumbers, AMWSU, State Council, 6.10.1982. Hughes suggested in relation to such labour market vulnerability, that a more optimistic appraisal of union cooperation toward incomes policies could be entertained where unions were regarded as conservative institutions concerned primarily with security of employment. B. Hughes, 'The Industrial Relations Consequences of Incomes Policy', in K. Hancock, (ed.), Incomes Policy in Australia, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1981, pp. 242-5.

vulnerability of the union's political position, the metal trades employers refused to negotiate over the 1982 log of claims for the metal industry, which advanced a claim for no wage increases beyond indexation adjustments to the existing wage levels.[186] While the union attempted to mobilise in the face of this situation,[187] the officials were largely preoccupied with a series of internal challenges to their leadership position.

In the midst of the 1981 Metal Industry Agreement negotiations in November 1981 a Federal Court judge declared invalid the election of three senior AMFSU officials (National President, D. Scott, Assistant National Secretary, L. Carmichael, and National Organiser, B. Martin).[188] The successful legal action against the three officials was initiated by the 'Reform Group'[189] (R. Kelly) on technical grounds involving the incorrect notification of the date for candidate

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186 The 1982 log of claims are included in Appendix VIII. These claims were a moderate continuation of the 1981 agreement package, and included a claim in relation to working conditions for a 35 hour week (70 hour-9 day fortnight). The AMWSU regarded the employer's refusal to negotiate over these claims as an attempt to 'cut wages' through their non-indexed erosion. See D. Scott, 'Reject Wage Cuts', AMWSU, Quarterly Journal, October-December 1982, p.2. On the employers' refusal to consider the claims see Advertiser, 27.9.1982, p.6. In October the employers' rejected the accusation that the 40,000 workers retrenched in Australia between February and October 1982 had been retrenched because new award negotiations were in process, (Advertiser, 9.10.1982, p.3).

187 See, AMWSU, National Council Resolution, 27.10.1982. This nationally circulated resolution protested that the 'rapid increase in unemployment has been caused most of all by the deliberate intent' of major employers. In response, the AMWSU National Council urged action on 8 fronts to counter retrenchments. These included: control over production, guarantees of no further retrenchments, entitlement continuity, full pay on reduced hours, control over the rate at which new technology is introduced, overtime bans, worksite consultation between levels of the union, and the abolition of contract labour.

188 Advertiser, 13.11.1981, p.1.

189 See Chapter IV, pp. 285-6 and Chapter VI, Part 3.

nominations.[190] With a re-election ordered, the 'Reform Group' instigated an acrimonious campaign involving anti-communist propaganda and the support of the rightwing National Civic Council.[191] The campaign commenced in earnest from March 1982 with the period designated for the ballot falling between June 15 and July 6 1982.[192] While the challenge was unsuccessful, the result was close with both Scott and Carmichael losing in three States but winning overall by margins of only 5,098 and 2,872 respectively.[193]

In response to this electoral contest the officials of the union adopted something of a siege mentality, arguing that the rightwing challenge both eroded the union's autonomous regulation of its own affairs as well as its industrial activities. At one level the 'Reform Group' contest produced an unintended fusion of the various left factions of the AMFSU into a 'progressive' anti-right bloc. At another level, however, the momentum generated by the 'Reform Group' contributed towards the moderation of union policy during the latter half of 1982. In other words, the AMFSU's centralised policy formation was modified by competitive pressure. Furthermore, the leadership's assessment of its own instrumental position was encouraged in a direction more conducive to the constraints of a social democratic incomes policy, which the union would not only agree to but also uphold. Hence, by 1982 the possible scenarios that had been envisaged earlier were largely redundant: to the

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190 Despite the fact that the union had inserted advertisements in both the union's journal and newspapers.

191 See Bulletin, 15.6.1982, pp. 41-2; Tribune, 5.5.1982, p.5. Later the Metalworker reported that the National Civic Council spent $140,000 on the 1982 rightwing challenges for national office, Metalworker, Vol. 4, No. 5, June 1983, p.3.

192 Advertiser, 25.3.1982, p.10; Tribune, 31.3.1982, p.4; and 9.6.1982, p.5.

193 See: Tribune, 7.7.1982, p.4; and 14.7.1982, pp. 8-9; Advertiser, 7.7.1982, p.3.

AMFSU officials it appeared that they were locked inextricably into the Labor Party policy objectives of union complicance toward wage moderation. The union leadership's strategy of pursuing goals of political economism through a collectively bargained process with the ALP became attenuated. By early 1983 the union leadership were clearly in a subordinate position to the 'co-optive' policy objectives of the Labor Party. For an interventionist oriented leadership this, in effect, meant that in the interim they had ceded the determination of major policy formation to the representative arm of the state apparatus.

The eventual signing of the social contract Accord in February 1983, based largely on the earlier Australian Labor Advisory Committee draft agreement of June 1982, represented a logical extension of the terms of the Metal Industry Agreement together with the programme of the 'social wage' campaign. This consensus agreement was characteristically a top-level decision-making process of policy formation, involving senior representatives of the ALP and ACTU, but subsequently ratified by a special Conference of ACTU affiliates.[194] Given the historical significance of the metalworkers' union in the general wages and award determination process, the continued support of the AMFSU toward this agreement was indispensible. From the June 1982 draft version to the final February 1983 Accord, the declaration of agreement emerged transparently as a 'save face' document which was sufficiently accommodating not only to both major parties but to the various political-ideological factional groups encompassed by each party. Despite this, the AMFSU leadership did not involve its membership in this process of policy determination. Evidence exists that the rank-and-file membership were predominantly ignorant of the nature of the Accord

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194 See 'Foreword - Essential and Historic' to the AMFSU 'Agreement: Unions and Government', National Council, Surry Hills, May 1983, p.3.

contract.[195]

Moreover, while the ACTU in effect transferred responsibility to the ALP through the Accord over economic policy, the union movement subsequently surrendered more influence over this policy as the (then) Labor Government extended the Accord toward a tripartite agreement involving Australian business interests. The tripartite National Economic Summit Conference of April 1983, as the AMFSU later acknowledged, further eroded the nature of the class-specific terms of the ALP-ACTU agreement. Indeed, the fifty-five item series of agreements included in the Summit Communique modified significantly many of the Accord principles.[196] Thus, unlike the Accord, the Summit document specifically avoided reference to the full cost of living maintenance of wages, enervated proposals for prices and non-wage income control, restricted social security provision to 'deprived groups' alone rather than a broader 'social wage' concept, and amended the detailed policy on taxation simply to produce 'equity and efficiency'. On the other hand, the Communique re-affirmed the Accord's commitment to establish an 'effective incomes and prices policy' and to outlaw additional sectional claims (the 'no extra claims' clause). But, the tripartite agreement failed to record, in contrast to the Accord, that the concept of an incomes policy was premised on the desire to 'bring about an equitable and clearly discernable redistribution of income'.[197] The politics of

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195 During 1982 there was little clear indication of the specifics of the union-ALP agreement. In recognising this fact, the AMFSU State Council in May 1983 acknowledged that the 'task of acquainting our members with full information on the current complex situation, the contents of the Accord and its relationship to the Summit Communique is of paramount important'. AMFSU, State Council Minutes, 4.5.1983, p.6.

196 National Economic Summit Conference, Communique, Parliament House, Canberra, 14.4.1983.

197 'Statement of Accord by the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Council of Trade Unions Regarding Economic Policy', February 1983, p.7.

compromise pursued in two discrete stages by the Labor Party, basically undermined the collective policy position of the union movement at the same time as it retained their compliance. The acommodationist policies of the ALP in opposition and government, aimed to ensure without enforcement the cooperation or neutralisation of unions toward a social contract agreement, to ensure that unions were 'locked in' to the process of compromise as it developed, and to effectively circumscribe the degree of policy determination effected by the union movement.

Conclusion

This chapter in concentrating on the AMFSU has examined the ways in which both the characteristics of the policy formation process and the nature of the policies pursued within the union shaped considerably the political directions open to the union in the present recession. The questions at issue in this chapter concerned the extent to which the union leadership was able to impose particular policy strategies on the organisation and the means through which such policy initiatives were advanced. Both the nature of organisational decision-making and the leadership's perception of their political role imposed important limitations on the political agenda of union policy. In particular, the specific leadership policies undertaken from the mid 1970's through the early 1980's predisposed the union leadership to enter into a contractual social agreement with the Labor Government. The politics of policy formation in the AMFSU suggested that, while the union leadership considered that it was engaged in a programme of 'non-reformist reforms', the subsequent moderation of such policies into marginal reforms was a function of the centralised process of policy determination.

The problems of conducting the 35 hour week campaign in the economic recession culminated in a leadership inspired internal restructuring exerise designed to produce greater effectiveness in industrial

campaigns. The leadership were explicit in their identification of organisational dysfunction as the prime cause of the union's mobilisation problems over the shorter working week issue. In response, the union officials increasingly adopted the tactics of sectional mobilisation in place of the earlier (and more class oriented) area council concept, which was seen by the national leaders as not performing a sufficiently effective mediation between the leadership and the rank-and-file. While some fears were expressed to the effect that the industrial based restructuring plan would exacerbate internal sectionalism, the leadership purposely sought to widen the scope of operation granted to industry committees.

Characteristically union officials in the more heterogeneous unions, such as the AMFSU, have tended to curtail rank-and-file involvement in policy formation on the grounds that such membership participation frequently promoted the pursuit of sectional interests which were likely to undermine the general strength of the union.[198] In this light, the AMFSU by using techniques of social engineering attempted to stimulate sectional mobilisation designed to improve the effectiveness of policy implementation. The leadership policy did not attempt to encourage wider participation in relation to the formation of policy objectives and the pace of their development. In other words, the restructuring exercise was intended to consolidate activist momentum, member solidarity, political consciousness, policy education and feedback response involved in the implementation of national policy. This aspect of AMFSU politics emphasised the leadership's subjectivist appreciation of the membership potential. Hence, the 1980-82 programme of reorganisation aimed to

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198 Cf. H.A. Turner, Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962, pp. 215-232, 288-325. Turner argued, however, that the limitation of membership participation often produced an enlightened leadership, (p.305).

harness the potential of membership activism through the development of a sectionalised organisational consciousness. The policy of differential mobilisation within the organisation was intended to result in the more effective implementation of top-down policy.

The leadership's conception of membership participation in the development of policy was essentially limited to retrospective democracy: the legitimising of decisions already taken within the senior officialdom. Consistent with the development of organisational consciousness, the processes of consultation and legitimation rather than participation were fundamental to the internal politics of policy formulation. In this sense, the shop stewards in occupying a crucial mediating role and with the experience of much activist training, were instrumental in this process of consultation and in the transmission of policy programmes. Yet, the economic depression after 1974 caused the AMFSU to reassess and restructure its internal dynamics on two occasions, in 1976-7 and in 1980-2. Despite the rhetoric, these occasions were not exercises in the rehabilitation of democracy; such measures were seen as divisive and ineffective. Instead, union reorganisation was a secular strategy of mobilisation aimed to promote activism rather than offer participation.

CHAPTER IX

THE POLITICS OF UNION ORGANISATION AND THE CONTRADICTIONS OF INCORPORATISM

The preceding chapters have discussed the specific union structure of the AMFSU, ADSTE and the VBEF, their organisational ability to mobilise membership action in pursuit of collective interests, and the relationship between the determination of policy, the implementation of policy and rank-and-file participation. It was argued that to dwell on the issues of union democracy or organisational oligarchy in analysing trade unionism was simply to restrict an understanding of unionism to a superficial aspect of their behaviour and in class terms, with respect to liberal conceptions of democracy, to introduce an irrelevancy over the nature of their collectivity. In the previous chapter focussing on the AMFSU, it was argued that union policy was determined principally by both the conditions of the contemporary economic crisis and the internal political processes of the union organisation. The central axis of policy development remained the key relationship between the articulation of policy and the broad nature of class control stemming from the labour process.

This concluding chapter attempts to draw together the analysis of the internal political processes of union organisation with an appreciation of the limitations and potentialities of such unionism as a representative form of organisation of wage labour interests. It is suggested that, from the basis of the AMFSU experience, Australian unionism has been confronted with substantial strategies aimed at the vertical incorporation of unionism within capitalist solutions to the present economic crisis. Moreover, this is not a new phenomenon. What is significant within the recent Australian situation is that such incorporation strategies have not largely been introduced by private capital but by agencies of the state apparatus. Hence, in the present

crisis a pronounced tendency has developed integrating unionism less witnin the specitic capitalist production process at the enterprise level via managerial policy,[1] out principally through assimilation with the Labor Party and tne state. Tne characteristics of this integration have oeen dependent to a large degree on the structure and policies of unions and their dual reliance on the arbitration system and (with increasing importance) on policy mediation through the Labor Party.

From the analysis developed in Chapters VII and VIII, it was argued that the explicit but often informal control over the labour process at the workplace level constituted the major determinant or limitation of union mobilisation. Yet to preserve the organisation as a heterogenous body and prevent an organisational fragmentation to enterprise based unionism, involving sectional non-uniform conditions, the unions under analysis were found to have concentrated their operations away from the place of work. In other words, in the case of these Australian unions operating under compulsory arbitration, little effective collective organisation was either present or active at the place of work.[2] Hence, the union presence and its capacity to mobilise was neglected organisationally at the point of production. As such an organisational structure involving a means of executive control detached from the workplace, may from an institutionalist viewpoint provide continuity for the union, yet it also considerably erodes the very foundations of the union itself.

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1 Managerial strategies of incorporation remained important with regard to specific companies and unions, as, for example, in the vehicle and mining industries. Cf. S. Frenkel, 'Industrial Conflict, Workplace Characteristics and Accommodation Structure in the Pilbara Iron Ore Industry', Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 20, No. 4, 1978.

2 There was, indeed, in Gramsci's terms little shop floor organic worker organisation either for or against the particular union leadership bloc. See Chapter I of this study pp. 60-2.

The important point to be made here, is not that working class voluntaristic action is potentially unlimited providing that effective rank-and-file organisational avenues exist,[3] but simply that the relative absence of workplace collectivism fails to elevate the real (and immediate) interests and political experience of the workers. This is particularly marked when unions become confronted with policies emanating from capital and the state which attempt to integrate and regulate them. Under such conditions, the more pronounced becomes the organisation of collective labour away from the place of work, the greater the tendency for union organisations to be structurally and ideologically integrated into state policies. This effectively generates a union consciousness towards political economism from within the leadership and activist echelons of the union organisations. Accordingly, the political character of union consciousness in advanced capitalist society emerges as a political extension of their economic identity; or in Mann's terms a political extension of their accommodationist-oriented conflict consciousness.[4] Thus, the structural pressures and the permeation of underlying values transmitted from the industrial bargaining process to the political bargaining process, constrains the formulators of union policies to negotiate package agreements with the state apparatus (and principally with social democratic parties) in a manner similar to their negotiations with employers.

Through their organisational incorporation within the state by way of social democratic party connections, trade union organisations have integrated their own discrete political momentum into the processes of state policy formation. Trade unions such as the AMFSU considered that

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3 This view is explicitly dismissed in R. Hyman, 'Theory in Industrial Relations: Towards a Materialist Analysis', (mimeo) University of Warwick, 1979, pp. 17-18.

4 M. Mann, Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working Class, Macmillan, London, 1973.

through this they were able to extend their social impact. This was because they believed that under depressed economic conditions they would be capable of influencing state policy both to improve the distribution of income and politically secure their conditions of existence. With some parallels to the British experience (1974-1979), union leaders accepted in part the case for wage restraint in return for government provision of increased welfare benefits (the 'social wage'), indexed taxation adjustments, and economic planning for employment generation. Yet, whereas in the European experiments of this sort, unions typically sought to maintain their net (after tax) money incomes, in the Australian case unionists have attempted actually to increase their net incomes by augmenting wage indexation with tax cuts and changes in the threshold tax rates to ensure that the unionised blue-collar wage earners remained in the lower taxing bracket.[5]

This characteristic of the Australian union position resulted principally from the AMFSU's policy over the 'social wage' campaign, which aimed to expand social services at the same time as claiming _de facto_ wage improvements by tax cuts and the indexation of tax scales.[6] Such a calculated strategy was intended to win membership acceptance for non-industrial demands (welfare improvements) simultaneously with policies of wage moderation under 'no extra claims' agreements with employers. It was also a deliberate policy on behalf of the AMFSU to cater for the representation of their members' interests by promoting money wage restraint under the guise of real wage maintenance.

For the Australian union leadership, in the face of increasingly severe structural and long-term unemployment, a bargained agreement in

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5 Cf. R. Klein, 'The Welfare State: A Self-Inflicted Crisis?', _Political Quarterly_, Vol. 51, No. 1, 1980.

6 This debate developed in the 1984 Federal Budget of the Hawke Government into one of tax reductions for wage earners versus state expenditure on welfare.

the form of the Accord presented a policy direction that aimed to provide a certain degree of security for organised labour. As such, given the erosion of labour bargaining power in the labour market together with the hegemony of capital's interpretation of both the economic crisis and its likely solutions, trade union agreement over wage restraint appeared to many union leaders as an inevitable outcome of centralised wage fixation.[7] This process of moderation was intensified by the rapid displacement of labour in certain key industries, the trend towards the capital substitution of labour, and the inflexible private collective bargaining climate after 1981-2. Furthermore, unionist acceptance of restraint occurred simultaneously with the increasing orientation toward a more corporatist strategy of interest intermediation within the ALP. As such the Accord presented an integrative initiative from within labour's political party representation based on an assumed pre-existing value convergence between large capitalist interests and organised labour.

The Accord agreement, nonetheless, did not constitute a novel 'corporatist' development in the history of the relations between the union movement and the Labor Party. Because of the union-based nature of the ALP and the pervasiveness of the system of compulsory arbitration, such cooptive 'relationships' have been institutionalised and become entrenched within the ambit of social democratic practice. However, the union-ALP relations have traditionally involved a more informal interrelation focussed at the State level where State union branches (as well as the StateTLC's) and the State branches of the Labor Party intersect. Thus, the Accord represented an extension rather than a radical departure from previous practice. It extended the agreement to the national level of politics in Australia and explicitly formalised the nature of the relationship in the form of a 'social contract' agreement.

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7 For the pervasiveness of incomes policies in centralised wage fixing in Australia see W. Brown, 'Antipodean Contrasts in Incomes Policy', in J.K. Bowers (ed.), Inflation, Development and Integration, Leeds University Press, Leeds, 1979.

Yet, the importance of this particular attempt by the federal leadership of the ALP to incorporate the union movement within the parameters of state policy was not only related to the cooptive dimensions of the initiative. It was also more crucially related to the fact that this integrative initiative occurred substantially without the existence of a militant working class providing the necessary precondition for incorporation. In other words, in the case of the Australian social agreement reached over the period 1981-3, the ALP in its capacity as an agency of the state aimed to incorporate an enervated union movement both into the short-term processes of economic management in the present long-term recession, and into the pluralistic solutions devised to reduce the severity of that economic crisis. Two factors, therefore, characterised the 1983 Australian Accord agreement, which distinguish it from overseas comparisons. First, the unions entered the agreement from a bargaining position that was essentially weak, and from which substantial governmental concessions were eclipsed.[8] And second, the ALP economic planners were confronted with sufficient historical precedents to be aware of the inherent instability of such government-union undertakings; an instability that was exacerbated by state non-compliance to agreed commitments.[9]

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8 Hence, the marked emphasis that unions such as the AMFSU made of the benefits for unionists in order to maintain membership compliance with the Accord. The AMFSU's own publication of the Accord statement contained strategic emphasis on principles more favourable to their membership but no emphasis on the quid pro quo conditions relating to wage restrain. Cf. Crouch's claim that corporatist bargaining enters the political agenda when unions are strong and other constraints on labour are inappropriate or inoperative, see C. Crouch, Class Conflict and the Industrial Relations Crisis, Heinemann, London, 1977, pp. 33-40.

9 See: P. Bentley, 'The Industrial Relations Consequences of Incomes Policies', in K. Hancock, (ed.), Incomes Policy in Australia, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Sydney, 1981; M.R. Cooper, The Search for Consensus: the Role of Institutional Dialogue between Government, Labour and Employers, O.E.C.D. Paris, 1982.

Such attempts at union incorporation have, for some commentators, recently constituted a 'coming corporatism' where

> the state intensively channels predominantly privately-owned business towards four goals, which have become increasingly explicit during the current economic crisis: Order, Unity, Nationalism and 'Success'.[10]

In this view of the emergence of 'corporatist society' the major difference beyond certain commitments to public or private control between the more conservative and social democratic variants of corporatism 'may be in the extent of their commitment to a goal of egalitarian redistribution of incomes'.[11] Yet various types or conceptions of corporatism exist including: state corporatism, democratic corporatism, liberal corporatism, bargained, pluralistic of societal corporatism or simply neo-corporatism, with each retaining different emphases on the process of mediation between class interests and the state.[12] From these discussions, the recent literature has addressed the role occupied by the state less in terms of coercive intervention than of the state's power to facilitate and complement interest negotiation and to process rival class demands.[13]

In this role the state, during periods of economic downturn, has attempted to initiate and monitor the mediation between organised interest groups in order to consolidate the process of capital

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10 R.E. Pahl and J.T. Winkler, 'The Coming Corporatism', New Society, 10.10.1974, pp. 72-6.

11 Ibid., p. 75.

12 L. Panitch, 'Recent Theorizations of Corporatism: Reflections on a Growth Industry', British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 31, No. 2, 1980. There have also been recent attempts to demarcate strong, medium and weak corporatism see G. Lehmbruch, 'Neo-Corporatism in Comparative Perspective', in G. Lehmbruch and P.C. Schmitter (eds.), Patterns of Corporatist Policy-Making, Sage, Beverley Hills, 1982.

13 A.W.J. Thomson, 'Trade Unions and the Corporate State in Britain', Industrial and Labor Relations Review, Vol. 33, No. 1, 1979; C. Crouch, Class Conflict and the Industrial Relations Crisis, Heinemann, London, 1977.

accumulation. Such corporatist models generally provide structural accounts of interest group (or inter-class) mediation where a process of corporatism involves legitimate interest groups approaching agreement with regard to specific policies. This agreement also involves the establishment of a political process where class groups activate parallel (but unequal) structures of representation to approach such negotiated consensus.[14]

Schmitter, for instance has described a corporatist 'mode' of organizing interest intermediation that initially served to generate class collaborative policies between representational monopolies, but which became increasingly unstable as contradictory tendencies stemming from corporatist structures became pronounced.[15] Offe has referred to a process of restructuring interest group relations through the political avenues of the liberal democratic state, which ultimately displays a class-bias through the 'differential impact' on the organisations of capital and labour.[16] Under the general prescription of the institutionalisation of conflict, Lehmbruch has suggested that neo-corporatism exists where a consociational state operates within a capitalist economy to manage the 'interdependence of interests' between conflicting social groups.[17] Jessop has presented an emerging

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14 For a useful account of the dubious theoretical value of corporatist conceptualisations and their simplistic and functionalist arguments, see J. Tomlinson, 'Corporatism: a Further Sociologisation of Marxism', Politics and Power, No.4, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1981.

15 P.C. Schmitter, 'Modes of Interest Intermediation an Models of Societal Change in Western Europe', in P.C. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds.), Trends Toward Corporatist Intermediation, Sage, Beverly Hills, 1979.

16 C. Offe, 'The Attribution of Public Status to Interest Groups: Observations on the West German Case', in S. Berger (ed.), Organizing Interests in Western Europe, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981.

17 G. Lehmbruch, 'Consociational Democracy, Class Conflict and the New Corporatism', in P.C. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds.), op.cit..

tripartite liberal corporatism where economic intervention through state power is dependent on parliamentarism and social democratic politics, and where a mediating social democratic party stands 'at the apex of both the corporatist and parliamentary systems'.[18] Similarly Cawson has used corporatism to denote the relationship between the state and structural interests in civil society where representation and intervention 'are fused within a mutually dependent bargaining relationship in which favourable policy outcomes are traded for co-operation and expertise'.[19]

Specifically related to industrial relations, Thomson has viewed the expanding influence of union power in corporatist decision-making as voluntary cooptation leading to bargained corporatism.[20] From a similar perspective Crouch has suggested that corporatism maintains the capitalist nature of the economy 'in the sense of being privately owned, but the stability of the system is ensured through the close integration of political, economic and moral forces'. Management and employee organisations become integrated hierarchically, but not as private individuals rather as legitimate leadership representatives. Thus, with regard to working class collectivities, these constitute 'organizations which represent them and also regulate them'.[21] Panitch on the other hand, classified corporatism as an unstable 'political structure' that 'integrates organized socio-economic producer groups through a system of representation and cooperative mutual interaction at the leadership

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18 B. Jessop, 'Corporatism, Parliamentarism and Social Democracy', in P. Schmitter and G. Lehmbruch (eds.), op.cit.

19 A. Cawson, Corporatism and Welfare, Heinemann, London, 1982, p.39.

20 A.W.J. Thomson, op.cit., pp. 37-50.

21 C. Crouch, The Politics of Industrial Relations, Fontana, Glasgow, 1979, pp. 123-4; and C. Crouch, Class Conflict...op.cit., pp. 40, and 259-68.

level, and mobilization and social control at the mass level'.[22]

State cooptation through corporatist mediation between interest organisations is seen to reflect the nature of state administration based on the institutionalisation of representative democracy. For example, the relationship between the institution of parliament and the organisation of class interests in society is often portrayed as the crux of modern corporatist developments.[23] On the one hand, one view maintains that 'determinate power' in society has become fundamentally located within the realms of corporate interest groups rather than in the parliamentary process. Newman has argued that

> corporatism manifests itself primarily in the greatly reduced real power allotted to parliament, in the monolithic nature of party organisation, in virtual inter-changability of much of the party-political process...[although] the essence of political power does persist - and indeed the part played by parliament and the political parties has become structurally no less essential - the weight of determinate power has emphatically shifted into different hands.[24]

But this view suffers from serious conceptual inadequacies. It tends to over-exaggerate the real power of the parliamentary process; an issue that has long absorbed the interests of bourgeois political scientists. Moreover, it neglects historical appreciation of the traditional nature and role of social democratic parties in serving continuously to assimilate the specific economistic interests of the working class within class alliances under the state's promulgation of the 'national interest'. And, further, this view underemphasises the importance of the liberal democratic state and the role of political parties in generating policy processes through which representational interest groups attempt to negotiate the class struggle. Hence, it is not the case that

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22 L. Panitch, 'Trade Unions and the Capitalist State', New Left Review, No. 125, 1981, p. 24.

23 Cf. B. Jessop, op.cit..

24 O. Newman, The Challenge of Corporatism, Macmillan, London, 1981, p.54.

parliament loses some of its putative power to corporatist structures, but that the parliamentary and party institutions perform particular vital functions in initiating and legitimising processes of corporate mediation in advanced capitalist societies.

Panitch has made this point explicitly in arguing that

> it is incorrect to see the institutionalised network of state-business-labour collaborations as displacing party/parliamentary activity....the viability of trade union integration in corporatist structures in any given conjuncture depends in large part on its articulation with complementary party/parliamentary activity, and on the public legitimation which trade unions accord to the 'national interest' ....compromises made by the working class in corporatist structures would be compensated for via the parliamentary process, whether through the 'social wage', industrial relations legislation or direct impositions on capital....corporatism should be seen not as displacing parliament, but rather as depending on it for the conditions necessary for its success.[25]

In the Australian case, this 'complementary party/parliamentary' articulation of class interests has traditionally been fulfilled with respect to the union movement by the Labor Party, which was both formed and then has since maintained its momentum precisely through linking certain crucial interests of the working class into the character of Australian capitalism.

Yet, much of the corporatist literature is confined to a particular level of structural abstraction in placing and analytical preeminence on the processes of the inter-class liaison rather than on organisational politics or policy liaison within class representative organisations. Such corporatist explanations focus directly on the hierarchically structured forms of integration that have been engineered by class interest groups. They acknowledge the central significance of levels of apparent consensus marking 'shared' values that characterise such corporatist structures. This, in effect, represents a top-level interlocking of organisational hierarchies over and above their respective represented constituencies. While some accounts have been

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25 L. Panitch, 'Trade Unions...' op.cit., p. 40-1.

sensitive to the limitations of such tripartite convergence, most descriptions have attempted to portray short-term consensus achieved through asymmetrical social interests that intersect around common shared values.[26] Accordingly, there is an apparent tendency to assume that the vertical integration of the major interest group constituencies of capital and labour remains unproblematical given the recent nature of inter-imperialist rivalry, the organisational composition of advanced capitalism and the prolonged effects of the economic crisis. This hierarchical integration involves both a structural dimension through a process of decision-making centralisation within the peak bodies of capital and labour organisations, as well as a hegemonic dimension involving the channelling of values and objectives of social policy. The inadequacies of such explanations lie first, in the assumed close correspondence between the upper echelons of the trade union movement and the state over both the structures of policy formation as well as the nature of joint policy programmes; and second in the practice and the experience of the rank-and-file.[27]

Trade unions are thus seen to accept integration with the state

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26 See the arguments relating to European trade union integration in the special issue of Government and Opposition, Vol. 13, No.4, 1978. These articles plot the increasing corporatist character of European societies as trade unions become agents of the state. In the concluding article D. Coombes suggested that seven important factors need examining relating to the role and structure of trade unions under corporatism. These were: industrial development, state legal and labour market regulation, the power of rival interests, internal ideological divisions within unions, historical precedents of cooptive relationships, the internal unity in unions over corporatist policies and the preparedness of the national government to integrate unions in intervention policy. See D. Coombes, 'Trade Unions and Political Parties in Britain, France, Italy and West Germany, p.495.

27 Further criticisms of corporatist explanations of interest integration include: its functionalist assumptions, its stress on stabilising behaviour and organisational integration, the ascribed degrees of autonomy granted to the state apparatus, the focus on structural mechanisms of mediation, its collapse of interests into interest groups and representational forms of mediation, and a tendency to ignore the contradictions of incorporation especially relating to rank-and-file assimilation.

apparatus agencies in order to assist in the realisation of indicative planning by both business and the state. Alternatively, in resisting integration trade unions may, as Mandel has argued, come into 'collision' with the state.[28] In Australia's case after 1974 such collision involved repressive industrial relations legislation covering unions and the de-legitimisation of union monopoly over worker representation.[29] In the integrative scenario unions are often seen to be manoeuvred by social democratic governments into becoming unwilling conscripts in unequal partnership with the state and capital, and where their 'agreement' despite certain attractions to the union leadership is essentially state induced. As such, corporatist integration appears neither as direct state coercion, nor as is sometimes suggested as a voluntary association, in the sense that cooptation is conditional upon some degree of state or party involvement and often confronts unions not with a voluntarist scope in the determination of their affairs but with compliance to state directives. Therefore, it is generally predicted by many critical commentators that the capacity of the unions to uphold such constraining regulations remains transitory.

Yet the analysis of this study suggests that such agreements are far from aberrant episodes. Indeed, at least in the case of Australia they have historical roots that date from the 1880's. It is important to recognise in this regard that the specificity of the character of

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28 E. Mandel, Late Capitalism, New Left Books, London, 1975, pp. 238-241. Mandel has noted the corporatist 'trend towards the elimination of the struggle between the buyer and seller of the commodity of labour power'. Yet he suggested that if unions 'successfully escape further integration into the bourgeois state apparatus and revert to resolute defence of the direct interests of the wage-earners, they can shatter not only the exact planning of costs and wage costs within large companies but also any possibility of indicative economic planning by bourgeois governments', (p.240).

29 See for example the argument presented by one of the AMFSU's national research officers S. Cooper, 'Repressive Legislation and Australian Trade Unions', in G. Crough, T. Wheelwright and T. Wilshire (eds.), Australia and World Capitalism, Penguin, Ringwood, 1980.

union-ALP relations has undergone substantial change over this period. Thus, the integration of the union movement by the Labor Party has itself become an institutionalised process constituting a persistent relationship expressing the consolidation of associational class interests. The 1983 Accord agreement represented simply the latest manifestation of this relationship. Hence, from the Australian experience the predisposition of working class organisations to attempt the partial redress of economic inequalities and the extension of political influence through integration with state agencies in the form of Labor Parties should not be conceived of as an isolated process.

A distinctive characteristic of the Australian social agreement between the unions and the ALP at the federal level arose during the period from 1981 to 1983. That is, following some initial propositions toward the concept of an unspecified incomes policy strategy from within ALP circles, much of the subsequent impetus over the agreement package emanated from the union movement. This was especially the case with the AMFSU leadership. They considered that the process of political bargaining was necessary because they represented a major manufacturing union which was both a pacesetter in the wider institutional determination of wage levels, and yet was vulnerable to the prolonged economic crisis and subsequent de-labouring in domestic manufacturing. The consequent political shift in emphasis, from the pursuit of wage-centred economism through collective bargaining with employers, to a wage-maintenance/'social wage' centred political economism within the state, resulted in the AMFSU leadership assuming a key role in the determination of the nature of the agreement. While the AMFSU leadership were not uncritical of the 'compromise' Accord statement, and in fact emphasised different aspects of the document subsequently to their members, nonetheless, they were less the 'unwilling conscripts' to the process than institutional participants concerned to re-negotiate the terms of the political agenda. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that

during 1982 the leadership of the union movement, in the wake of the AMFSU campaign over the 'social wage', were more committed to the undertaking of a social agreement than were the federal leadership of the Labor Party.

The AMFSU leadership interpreted its vertical integration with the state in terms of an erosion of the formal 'industrial' tactics and their replacement by 'political' tactics, a structural and ideological division which has long characterised the labour movement and Labor Party relationship. From the negotiations over the 1983 ALP-union agreement, three dimensions of the process of integration were important in shaping the nature of union integration and in constraining the political bargaining agenda. First, the ambit of discussion focussed on immediate interests involving a political economism based on compensation for restricted wage demands. Second, a sphere of containment existed in that union leaders accepted the rationale of an incomes policy strategy and hence became committed to a consensus over the political terrain. Third, the process of union integration was a process of structural preclusion in that the political exercise was conducted from within a social democratic frame of reference, was restricted to senior or peak union officials and involved no mass participation.

Given the deterioration in the labour market, the central participation of the AMFSU leadership in constructing a social Accord was largely a consequence of the specific political processes within the union itself. Thus, the internal political structure, the absence of countervailing bases of power closer to the workplace, the type of democratic centralist leadership, the permeation of retrospective democracy, and the low levels of membership involvement, not only provided sufficient necessary conditions for the leadership to exercise a pronounced degree of latitude in policy determination relating to the social agreement. But, the political processes of the union in effect severely constrained the effective choices available to the national

leadership. In this respect the pressure toward the politics of social integration with the ALP proved to be difficult either to abate or escape. Certainly, once the 'social wage' campaign gained momentum, a social contract in the event of a Labor government was difficult to avoid. For the AMFSU national leadership operating within an organisation conditioned to the transmission of policy determinations from the leadership down, the central issue after early 1982 was not whether a social agreement would be signed but when and in what form.

In this context it is important to stress, however, that union integration with the state should not be seen to represent the systematic incorporation of the working class under capitalist regimes, but rather the integration of particular decision-making echelons of working class organisations.[30] It constitutes a pervasive and reflexive assimilation of working class patterns of organisation. Hence, it was the national echelon of the AMFSU that was assimilated initially into the ambit of social democratic planning. Furthermore, this occurred without wide consultation throughout the union. Negotiations and commitments were entered into without the evident knowledge of other levels of the organisation. This lack of awareness and involvement by the membership, shop stewards and even State officials, provided a clear indication of the structural hiatus between the politics of policy formation by the centralised leadership and the politics of policy implementation by other levels. It also demonstrated the structural capacity of the national leadership within the political processes of the union to determine or manipulate union policies before consultation occurred with the State level.

This instrumental capacity was not only reflected in a structural

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30 Cf. C. Offe and H. Wiesenthal, 'Two Logics of Collective Action: Theoretical Notes on Social Class and Organizational Form', (mimeo), Dept. of Sociology, Bielenfeld, 1978.

tolerance to interventionist pragmatic changes in policy direction without membership consultation. It also existed in the membership's preparedness to accredit the leadership with a prescribed latitude of decision-making power relating to the qualitative nature of the policy proposals. As was discussed in Chapter VIII such latitude involved even the surrender and cooptation of the union's policies to social democratic state policies. Furthermore, the activist rank-and-file responded to such indicative and vanguardist policy orientations by engineering a process of consolidation behind the leadership's direction. In particular, the elements of leadership decisions were retrospectively legitimised through subsequent endorsement by intermediate levels of the union; a process which served to sustain both the credibility of the leadership bloc as well as their activist philosophy.

It was argued in the previous two chapters that the AMFSU had institutionally developed a centralist character of decision-making as an organisational means of mobilisation. This feature of the organisation's politics depended fundamentally on intensive membership development. As a consequence, the democratic centralist emphasis on policy initiation from the national leadership group was premised on and complemented by an extensive union-conducted educative process aimed at the union's mediating agents with links to the rank-and-file. This separation of policy conception from its execution effectively constrained the participation of the activist membership in union politics to the subordinate realm of post hoc discussion, as well as tactical and procedural considerations. This implied that membership participation was directed not into union government, but into the educative process to specify and shape the methods of policy implementation. Moreover, the position of the mediating agents (essentially shop stewards) was structurally too weak either to formulate alternative policies consistently or to secure greater organisational decision-making power.

Yet, within the AMFSU's democratic centralist character, the leadership's structural capacity to determine policy did not constitute the unrestrained exercise of oligarchic power. Rather, political leadership represented an instrumental dimension contradictorily related to the political processes of the organisation and in particular the intermediation of shop stewards and State officials. For their part, the leadership's role constituted the political advocacy of policy alternatives that were subsequently assessed according to membership expectations through their implementation. The leadership were continuously engaged in the calculated promotion of populist policy initiatives aimed to stimulate rank-and-file activism. Such calculations were centred on the assessments of the national leadership rather than those of the shop stewards, State officials or workplace bodies. Thus, the internal politics of the union were not characterised by an oligarchic polarisation of leadership politics from the politics of the mass membership, but rather by specific patterns of interdependence that were more contradictory than simple oligarchic control. The issue of collective action within the AMFSU did not revolve around whether 'democracy' existed or not, but whether and to what extent the articulated policies of the union reflected the real interests of the membership.

Certainly the union leadership had become bureaucratic and more professionally oriented in the AMFSU to counter the diversity between State level branches, the industrial heterogeneity of the union and the great diversity in mobilisation potential throughout the union. In this respect a classic contradiction existed between the vanguard determination of strategy by a professional leadership and the involvement of mass participation in sustaining consciousness and organisational momentum. For the union leadership at the State and national level vanguard decisiveness was an effective instrument in

stimulating rank-and-file involvement in union programmes, in developing membership conflict-consciousness and for inciting mass mobilisation over industrial and political campaigns.

But, in the case of the AMFSU it was not evident that increasing bureaucratisation necessarily suppressed or nullified membership participation in the conveyance of policy.[31] Indeed, while the AMFSU was more highly bureaucratic from a technical point of view, it was more open to membership influence than either the VBEF or ADSTE. It was the case, however, that the bureaucratic centralist character of policy determination effectively restricted membership involvement to the implementation of policy. Such bureaucratic control in turn tended to undermine participatory involvement on behalf of the membership. This tension in union politics between bureaucratisation and mobilisation existed as a predominant characteristic of the AMFSU organisation.

Once policy had been centrally determined, the union membership were generally prepared to legitimise and concur with such policy directions for some unspecified but transient period of time. This was especially the case with the induced subjectivist consciousness characterising the rank-and-file activists, shop stewards and State officials. To the extent that these internal intermediate levels of the organisation depreciated the particular strategy direction undertaken within a specified context, then, internal dissatisfaction became subordinate to the need for cohesion in support of the articulated policies. Excepting occasional expressions of overt opposition or the resort to formal electoral challenges, the extent of non-mobilisation over policy initiatives represented an indication that such policy did not intersect with wide rank-and-file expectations. Yet in the main, membership

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31 Cf. the contrary claim made by S.M. Lipset, in 'The Political Process in Trade Unions: a Theoretical Statement' in M. Berger, T. Abel and C. Page (eds.), Freedom and Control in Modern Society, Octagon, New York, 1954.

mobilisation behind policy initiatives was structurally generated through the activist ethos prevalent within the union and the effectiveness of the intermediary levels within the organisational structure. Both of these factors engineered a degree of organisational consolidation toward the strategic initiatives emanating from the national leadership. To be sure, the political structure of the union (and in particular the pursuit by the leadership of an activist based political philosophy through democratic centralist means) established a campaign-oriented mentality across the activist membership that provided the centralist leadership with a credible discretion over major policy initiatives.

Together with this the national leadership, in large part because of its explicit promotion of activist mobilisation which generated wide opposition from conservative governments, employers and dissident union members, were able to characterise the non-support of announced policies as non-support for the union as a collectivist class institution. Thus, national officials mobilised support for leadership policy by representing the defence of particular strategies as synonymous with the defence of the union. The capacity of the leadership to achieve this rested on the prevalence of a marked union organisational consciousness as distinct from other levels of worker consciousness.

Two important theoretical points stemmed from these relationships in the political processes of the union. The first involved the more recent (post-amalgamation 1972) emergence of an identifiable division of labour and political roles witnin the wider leadership of the union between national and State level officials. The second point related to the establishment of a specific organisational identification generated among the membership both by the impact of external influences and by its own internal character.

One of the principal concerns of this study has been to examine the political status of State branch unionism within the context of federal

unionism. Historically Australia developed a decentralised regional (State-level) union structure where power resided at the State branch or individual union level rather than at a centralised or peak organisational level. This decentralised development was founded upon the political and economic structure of Australia. While State unions exercised political control over their specific policies and regional organisation, this decentralised power was not based on established traditions of shop floor autonomy. Indeed, because of the processes of arbitration and the centralisation of bargaining with major employer groups, little latitude existed for workplace bargaining under company, industry or award agreements. This is not to claim that this precluded workplace bargaining but that it served to severely limit the scope of plant negotiations and entrench the structural position of full-time officials. Hence, the development of a strata of full-time union officials qua policy-makers and industrial bargaining agents, facilitated the integration of the union movement within the state apparatus. Hence, while a certain regional decentralisation of organisation existed historically, a concomitant tendency towards centralisation and assimilation with the state through social democratic politics emerged as a secular feature of unionism in Australia.

From the present study, a salient feature of the extant political processes within the AMFSU was the emerging division in the use and deployment of leadership resources. While the national leadership assumed a more instrumental vanguardist role, the State officialdom were essentially delegated to monitor the implementation of policy, to administer union affairs at the local level and to provide day-to-day membership servicing within the State region. In the events of 1981-83, for example, the non-elected research officers at the AMFSU's National Research Centre effected a far greater impact on national policy determination than the State branch officials. This trend served to

undermine the political influence of State officials relegating their role to that of subordinate administrators of organisational policy.

Accordingly, the union was affected by a process similar to that affecting State level units of capital in the process of corporate centralisation; a process which typically reduced State units to subordinate 'branch office' agencies. With the AMFSU, the State organisation and its own officialdom were undergoing the transition from being more autonomous units of the organisation to becoming dependent servicing agencies responsible for certain regional areas. This process of attenuation was relegating the State organisation to that of a 'branch office' status with prescribed spheres of responsibility. In this process the leadership types recruited at the State level were important relative to the designated functions of the State branch. Thus, the predominance of career-oriented 'technocratic' leaders at the South Australian State level who characteristically held strong union commitment to trade unionism and possessed expertise in their capacity to perform union duties, indicated both the nature of the organisational role that such officials predominantly occupied, and that the State officialdom tended to recruit officials according to criteria of aptitude corresponding to the role of the State branch. Hence, the recruitment and promotion of 'technocratic-type' leaders was qualitatively important in ensuring that the mediation of top-down policies was effectively transmitted to members and the administration and servicing were effectively conducted. Nevertheless, the existence of some level of 'ideological-type' recruitment suggested that within the left officialdom some alternative activist approaches were continually embryonic. These latter political activists constituted a rival group not in the sense of an internal opposition, but in the sense that they were strategically placed to introduce alternative 'left' policies while still promoting an activist philosophy of leadership, should the articulated policies of the

predominant leadership group lose credibility.

The analysis of the present study has essentially conceived union organisations as institutionalised class organisations basically operating as transmission agencies that articulate specific interests, policies and consciousness and promote particular leadership types. Unions as such constitute political structures that can be seen empirically as engineering an organisational consciousness that is predicated upon the principal defence of organisational interests. The close correspondence of organisational consciousness and the internal political structure that engenders such consciousness remains a condition of both the nature of the employment bargaining process as well as their level of labour process control, and the internal institutional processes of the union organisation. In terms of the union organisation as a political structure, a major contradiction was apparent not only within the AMFSU but in the VBEF and ADSTE also, in that while unionism was established on the political control that workers exerted over the labour process at the workplace level, the political structures constructed by the specific unions under examination were found to be entirely distinct from that level.

Therefore, although Chapter VII argued that membership participation should be viewed from the basis of labour control over the workplace, it was apparent that the union organisation as a particular transmission agency served to sever aspects of that control. But, the attempts by the union leadership over and above the basis of membership participation to vertically integrate the union into the policy ambit and structural agencies of the state apparatus, represented not the direct negation of this membership control. Indeed, given the political structure of the union, the union's social agreement with the ALP expressed the leadership's concern to preserve the degree of labour process control that the membership retained. Thus, as a democratic centralist policy

the social agreement following the earlier negotiated terms of the 1981 Metal Industry Agreement, aimed to preserve the bargaining power of the union as an entire organisation.

The national officialdom attempted to consolidate such bargaining power through a combination of economic and political proposals negotiated with the Labor Party and subsequently Labor Government. With the prevailing high levels of unemployment, together with the national level rightwing electoral challenge in 1982 and the leadership's industry-centred reorganisation strategy, the national leadership was in an incontestable position to carry through its own political economistic policy of vertical integration with the state. The implications of the Accord integration for membership participation based on labour process control signalled that job security in the present economic depression had emerged as the major constraint on intra-union participation in policy implementation. In other words the specific integration through the Accord undertakings with the ALP constituted a strategic move on behalf of the AMFSU national leadership following the 1981 Metal Industry Agreement in the aftermath of which membership mobilisation was severely eroded by industry retrenchments. It also signalled that the union leadership were motivated by the subjectivist view that their behaviour and conscious leadership would greatly influence the outcome of the union's attempts to preserve control of the labour process and regulate the terms of employment of the membership.

Finally, the consequences of the national leadership's formal integration with the state may be seen as contributing towards a 'crisis of representation' within the political processes of the union organisation.[32] In the case of the AMFSU there is a sense in which the

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32 See M. Regini, 'The Crisis of Representation in Class-Oriented Unions: some Reflections Based on the Italian Case', in S. Clegg, G. Dow and P. Boreham (eds.), The State, Class and the Recession, Croom Helm, London, 1983.

union has always expressed a 'crisis of representation' throughout its history. That is, the union has consistently and increasingly relied on a representative political structure established on internal electoral processes in conjunction with the autonomous regulation of its internal affairs. The union has not devoted resources to the establishment of a more participatory political structure located upon workplace autonomy. Nor has it promoted the existence of alternative representative power bases at intermediary levels within the union. Hence, shop stewards, for example, as was suggested in Chapter V, have largely played a mediating role transmitting policy initiatives from the leadership to the shop floor membership. They have not principally developed (towards which the area council project may have eventually contributed) as a consolidated body of lay officialdom representative of member expectations.

Thus, in its representational crisis the policy control within the AMFSU may be considered in taxonomic terms to have passed historically from a craft-dominated 'aristocracy' type of government to a more heterogenous 'popular bossdom' type where the activist leadership retained a vanguard position through bureaucratic centralism.[33] At this latter stage the intention of the AMFSU's intensive educational programme and industry-oriented schemes of restructuring aimed to promote the dissemination of the union's organisational consciousness in order to express support for the leadership bloc through the electoral machine of the union. Yet, within the contradictory dynamics of the organisation, those members activated in the promotion of organisational consciousness increasingly were concerned to exert greater influence in the choice of policies and character of leadership they assisted in selecting. Given this stimulation of union organisational consciousness, therefore, the consequences of the leadership's integration within state policy

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33 See H.A. Turner, Trade Union Growth, Structure and Policy, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1962, p. 226.

parameters surfaced not as a 'crisis of representation' within the organisation. Indeed, for trade unionism generally such 'crises of representation' are endemic. Rather, such vertical integration in the context of the economic crisis and social democratic administration under Hawke, surfaced as both a crisis of mediation and a crisis of mobiliation within tne internal political processes of the union.

In other words, integration with the state apparatus served to incorporate the union's own dynamics into the formal and informal processes of the capitalist state. This alignment of union politics with the state has been a secular historical tendency and has made union organisations more dependent on the state. This dependence is not a one-dimensional relationship involving the convergence of union goals with state policy objectives, but involves the wider structural and ideological integration of union representatives within agencies of the capitalist state. Yet, the tendency of union leaders to promote the integration of union organisations with the state apparatus generates some capacity of resistance through alternative membership mobilisation. Indeed, membership development and the promotion of organisational consciousness provides both a basis for vertical integration with the state and a basis for autonomous resistance to such integration. But this process of integration and the commitment to consensual interest formation undermines the legitimacy of union leadership and inhibits membership mobilisation. Together with the centralisation of organisational decision-making over policy this vertical integration approaches a crisis of mediation within union organisation. In response rank-and-file consciousness of their immediate, instrumental and long-term collective interests will nurture new methods of expression over the articulation of alternative policy orientations in defence of their interests.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis has been to analyse the political nature of union organisation at the State level in Australia. The intention of the study was to contribute toward the understanding of the factors that shape the political development of specific forms of union organisation. Analysis was not restricted to an examination of the narrow institutional aspects and political processes internal to the unions themselves, but was located within the processes of conflict regulation within the constraints of a particular capitalist economy.

The economic and political conditions in South Australia within which the politics of organised labour have emerged were examined in the initial part of the study. It was argued that the characteristics of the SA economy, its peripheral economic development, its late, narrowly-based industrialisation and vulnerability to depressions, together with its domination by a number of large enterprises controlled by multinational corporations, assisted in the development of a labour movement that was essentially non-militant. These factors enhanced the effectiveness of the regulation of organised labour principally through state arbitration and corporate labour control. Historically it was found that the labour movement in SA had been contained by a pervasive conciliatory consciousness. Moreover, this conciliatory compliance that emerged from the forms and political development of organised labour occurred concomitantly with its incorporation. Traditionally the dimensions of incorporation at the State level in SA were expressed in the attempts to contain and discipline labour activity within the processes of judicial regulation in order to enhance capital accumulation and state induced industrial development. It was within this context that the political processes of the three unions chosen for this study were examined.

With regard the specific political processes of the three unions it

was found that union organisation served to facilitate the vertical transfer of issues from the point of production and membership base through the union hierarchy. Under the processes of compulsory arbitration, this stress on the vertical transmission of issues emphasised the position of the union leadership and limited lay activists to a position of institutionalised suspension within the union organisation. Shop stewards, thus, it was found, operated essentially as a stratum of organisational mediators. Their positions were dependent not on decentralised workplace collective bargaining, but on the internal political processes of the union organisation. Shop stewards, thus, occupied a politically contradictory role in that as political cadres they existed as a potential power base distinct from the full-time leadership, yet as organisational mediators served to consolidate the political position of the union officialdom.

A secular trend toward centralisation and executive dominance was found in each of the three unions, but was especially pronounced in the VBEF and AMFSU. Indeed, the processes of industrial relations in Australia (involving compulsory arbitration or top-level private negotiations) encouraged bureaucratic control as a unifying element across high densities of unionisation irrespective of the occupational character of the union. However, important differences existed over the patterns of leadership dominance at the State level, especially concerning the means of executive control and the distinct types of leadership.

From the empirical analysis it was argued in Chapter VII that the dimensions of union government essentially involved the forms of membership participation, the nature of centralised bureaucracy and the relationship between the leadership and organisational mobilisation. In this context a critical review of existing theories of union government was presented, in which the underlying approaches of many of the studies

were seen as misplaced. Instead a more contradictory pattern of centralism and mobilisation was identified which addressed the tensions that existed in the government of labour organisations. This relationship, it was argued, was premised upon membership participation at the point of production expressed through the dimensions of collective control within the labour process.

In the final section of the study the analysis focussed on the AMFSU and in particular on the relationship between the leadership's formation of policy and the means through which such policy initiatives were advanced. It was argued that the formation of union policy was structurally distinct from the implementation of policy, and that this corresponded with an emerging division in the use and deployment of leadership resources between national and State officials. In the economic crisis of the 1970's and 1980's, the national leadership of this union encouraged sectional mobilisation with the intention of improving the effectiveness of policy implementation. It was found that in relation to the pattern of union government identified in Chapter VII, the AMFSU had undertaken a programme aimed to stimulate mobilisation via the development of a sectionalised organisational consciousness.

The study concluded with an extension of the previous discussion of the centralisation of policy formation and the vertical transmission of issues within the organisation. Following the key role of the AMFSU in negotiating the social agreement with the Labor Party between 1981-3, the analysis turned to explore the vertical incorporation of organised labour within the state apparatus. The 1983 Accord with the Labor Party/Government, far from being an aberrant episode of union- ALP relations, was an extension of the long-term integration of the union movement by the Labor Party. From the union leadership's viewpoint, this vertical integration represented an extension toward political economism, where the union by participating in its own containment gained limited

access to the state policy-making process. However, the agreement was concluded without either the involvement of or consultation with the union membership. Rather, it involved exclusively the top national echelon of the union. Finally, it was suggested that this alignment of union politics with the Labor Party served to incorporate the dynamics of organised labour within the capitalist state. The nature of this process of integration together with the centralisation of organisational decision-making retains the potential to generate a major crisis of mediation within the internal political processes of the union. The union membership will tend increasingly to express alternative policy orientations in the pursuit of their interests.