

Papers in Labour History No. 11, June 1993, ISSN 1030-6218

PAPERS IN LABOUR HISTORY No. 11

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Perth Branch, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

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Papers in Labour History seeks to publish material of a serious nature about the historical development of the Labour Movement, and of the history of work in Western Australia. It is intended to carry a balance of contributions from students and workers and veterans of the Labour Movement. Naturally this raises controversial issues and no apology is made for the fact that few readers will be able to agree with all the views expressed here. While the editors have made suggestions regarding each of the contributions these have been of a stylistic nature and have not been intended in any way to interfere with the expression of the views of the authors.

Acknowledgements

As well as those listed above who contributed to this edition, acknowledgement is due to fellow workers who made suggestions, typed, proofread and supported the publication, especially Cheryl MacFarlane and Lorna Duffy. *Papers in Labour History No. 11*, is available from the Office of the Department of Industrial Relations, The University of Western Australia for \$10.00. It is anticipated that *Papers in Labour History No. 12* will be available for a similar cost in December 1993. Correspondence and proposed contributions should be addressed to The Editors, *Papers in Labour History*, Department of Industrial Relations, The University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6009.

Obituary

Harold Peden was present at the birth of the W.A. branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, and so he should have been because he lived and made labour history for most of his life. He was born in Perth in 1920, went to school, first in Victoria Park and then in the city, and, after experiencing a few jobs, attained the status of a tradesman boilermaker, probably during World War Two. He worked at his trade for most of the big engineering, metal fabricating and ship repair companies in W.A. and from 1952 through to the late 1960s he combined this work with his duties as a shop steward for the Boilermaker's and Blacksmith's Society. But he had been a political activist much longer than this, he had joined the then outlawed Communist Party in 1941. In 1970 he was elected as a full time organiser for his union and continued that work on its incorporation into the A.M.W.U. in 1978 when he was elected State President, a position which he held until his retirement in 1985. He was also elected to the State Executive of the T.L.C. in 1963 and ended his career as a Senior Vice President. He was made a life member on his retirement. For his services to the trade union movement (and to so many Western Australian workers), in 1990 Harold was awarded the Order of Australia.

Harold was a member of the Committee of the W.A. branch of the A.S.S.L.H. He was more than a valued contributor to this Journal too, because his own writing helped get it off the ground. He wrote a short story entitled "The Sack", for our first issue in January 1988 and a short article on the 1971 metal trades dispute for our second. In 1990 he allowed us to reprint his speech to the Society's A.G.M., which we did in Issue No. 6, in an article entitled 'Unions, Overtime and Wage Struggle. The Metal Trades in Western Australia in the 1950s and 1960s'. Harold's writings are, therefore, always going to be with us. His voice is too, because Stuart Reid interviewed him in the late eighties as part of the T.L.C.'s Labour history project. Ten hours of Harold's reminiscences are lodged in the Battye Library.

To commemorate his life and work the W.A. branch of the A.S.S.L.H. has announced that it will hold a lecture to be entitled 'The Harold Peden Lecture in Labour History'. It is, we hope, a fitting gesture to a man who took the cause of labour history to his heart.

Award restructuring - but how did we get our awards in the first place? The development of the award and union structures in the iron ore industry

R E Fells*

During the late 1980's, the Pilbara iron ore industry embarked on a process of bringing about major change in the awards which govern work relationships. In fact, across Australia 'Award Restructuring' has been one of the major challenges facing management and workers. Awards have been seen as too complex and not reflecting the needs of workplaces so through the process of award restructuring hundreds of classifications representing specific tasks and skills are being replaced with broad banded and graded structures. At the same time unions which represented workers in these classifications are having to reconsider how they can effectively represent their members and a process of union mergers is leading to fewer unions and changes in representation arrangements.

The fact that it is now considered advantageous, if not essential, to reduce the number of unions in the industry and to relax the classification structures raises the question as to how they came into existence in the first place. This paper will seek to provide some insights into the origins of award classifications and union structures by looking at the development of the iron ore industry. The iron ore industry is an interesting example, not only because of its importance in the economic and industrial relations development of the State but because it was a new industry where the parties had the opportunity to develop new arrangements and it is a relatively young industry. An examination of how awards were established for it in the late 1960s will offer a contrast to the way industrial relations are currently being handled.

This paper is structured as follows. In the remainder of this introduction the scene is set by briefly describing the development of the iron ore industry. The first major section of the paper describes the development of the awards relating to the Cockatoo and Koolan Island operations and shows how the experience of the mining industry in the goldfields was a key factor.

The second main section of the paper describes the nature of industrial relations in the 1960's and does so through the recollections of four people who were heavily involved in industrial relations at that time and were key participants in the process of establishing the 1967 Award. These people are Chief Commissioner Eric Kelly, John Ince, the principal

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advocate for the Employers' Federation, Lindsay McGuinness, the industrial relations officer for Dampier Mining at the time and Owen Salmon who was one of the Trades and Labor Council advocates. From their comments it can be seen that industrial relations in WA in the 1960s operated in a stable close knit system which focused on the tribunal rather than the workplace.

The third section presents a brief description of the process of establishing the 1967 award, a process which led to a result which the parties are now trying to undo but which was entirely consistent with the established practices of the parties at that time. A concluding section reviews the lessons of the paper.

A brief history of the early development of the iron ore industry

Iron ore is found throughout the State and mining first took place at Koolyanobbing near Southern Cross to supply the state owned smelter at Wundowie, established in 1948. However, it was much earlier that the prospects for the industry were explored. During the 1930's leases over the ore reserves at Cockatoo and Koolan Islands in the Yampi Sound, were obtained and initial exploration was undertaken to prove the reserves. The Cockatoo lease was held by AIS and the plan was to ship the ore to AIS refineries and steel works in the Newcastle and Port Kembla. Initial construction started in 1935.

Overseas interests, including Japanese companies, showed interest in obtaining the lease for the Koolan Island deposits with a view to exporting the ore to Japan. The lease was eventually granted to a British syndicate and preliminary development work started in 1936. However, the application to export the Koolan ore led to the imposition by the Federal government of the export embargo in 1938. For its part the State government then took control of the leases on all deposits and so effectively gained control over the development of the industry within the State. Because of the limitations on exporting and then the onset of war, mining did not start on Cockatoo until 1951 and the development of Koolan started in 1960 with the first shipment in 1965.

In the immediate post war period, BHP (AIS) was seeking to move away from its NSW base. The strategy included the establishment of a steel rolling mill at Kwinana which was achieved in 1954 as part of an arrangement whereby the company obtained the leases over the Yampi sound deposits. A similar arrangement saw the company establish a blast furnace at Kwinana in 1960 in return for leases over the iron ore deposits at Koolyanobbing

(Southern Cross). Ore from Koolyanobbing was mined for Kwinana until the furnace's closure in 1983.¹

The Early Iron Ore Awards: 1937-1955

The first award in what was to become the iron ore industry was that which was established to apply to the anticipated operations at Cockatoo and Koolan in the Yampi Sound. Construction work was taking place but there were no laid down conditions of employment and no mechanisms for dealing with issues or claims, though the Australian Workers Union had established a committee on site in March 1936.² An Industrial Board for the Mining Section of the Iron Ore Industry was set up and empowered to make an award. The Board comprised the Industrial Registrar, employer and employee representatives. The award was handed down in August, 1937 following hearing of the Arbitration Court held on the 'Yampi Lass', first off Koolan Island (in what is now called Arbitration Bay) and then off Cockatoo. This Yampi Award (39 of 1936; 17 WAIG 275) was between the Australian Workers Union Westralian Goldfields Mining Branch Industrial Union of Workers as the applicant and the Yampi Mining Company. However, five unions participated in the hearing, the AWU, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, the Electrical Trade Union and the Carpenters and Painters unions; the Plumbers Union was represented by the AEU.³

The unions raised issues about working and living conditions as well as issues such as wages, overtime and hours. Another issue was that of the cost of fares to get to Koolan to work there. The employers' case was for a three year award and to be one which would suit the situation at Yampi rather than being drawn from the coal or gold mining industries - a claim for an enterprise award which would perhaps be acceptable now under the enterprise bargaining guidelines.

The final award did establish local conditions but the classifications and rates followed the Goldfields Award and those applying to the ore mining at Iron Knob in SA. Provision for the appointment of union representatives who then had the right of access to workers, a Board of Reference to handle disputes, and conditions relating to pieceworkers/contract, all were as in the gold award. The company had agreed to a 44 hour week, rather than the 48 hour standard prevailing at that time. (The AWU claim was for a 35 hour week.) In what might now be called an 'enterprise flexibility clause' it was determined that actual times of work should be negotiated between the employer and workers with failures to agree being handled by the Board of Reference.

In the establishment of this award we begin to see how the system worked. The two basic awards were the Metal Trades (General) and Construction Workers (General) Awards. With the potential for the development of a new industry in a new location it fell to the AWU representing the workers involved in construction and mine development to secure an award which reflected the specific working conditions and which set a standard over and above that of the general awards. In this first award there are 18 classifications relating to construction and mine development so from the outset, there was the beginnings of the multi-classification structure which is now being dismantled. There does not appear to have been any employer opposition; the classification structure was the means of differentiating rates of pay and one of the roles of the Board of Reference was to classify and fix wages for any occupation not specifically mentioned in the award.

Other unions also became involved in the award process, not because they had members working on site, but because they were anticipating having some there in the future. Again there was no general opposition by employers to this process, though Smith reports that there was a demarcation between the plumbers and metal workers over who should erect windmills.⁴

For its part, the Court worked on the comparative principle both in terms of drawing clauses from other awards, and the specific classifications, most of which were also to be found in the Goldmining Award. As an example in agreeing to 44 hours the company was accepting the gold industry standard. Any 'enterpriseness' related solely to the consequences of the remote location of Koolan Island.

There was, therefore, the basis of characteristic union coverage and award structure - multi-union, multi-classification with major terms determined on the basis of comparability, three of the features which enterprise focused system is currently attempting to eradicate. The next award, determined in December 1945 (25 WAIG 239) revealed how the process developed through proliferation. The award was the result of applications by eight unions - the AWU, FEDFA, Boilermakers, Plumbers and Sheet Metal Workers, AEU and ASE (joint application), Painters and Decorators, Carpenters and Joiners with AIS as the respondent. The part dealing with rates of pay was divided into divisions, each relating to an applicant union. The AWU section now had 43 main classifications, the FEDFA, 10 classifications; boilermakers classifications included 1st to 4th class welders, machinists, etc, in 10 main classifications and Engineers had 42 classifications.

So, in 1945, still 6 years before any ore was actually mined on Cockatoo and with the embargo holding up the development of Koolan, we find a multi-union award containing a multi-classification structure with all the inherent demarcations. At least it was an enterprise based award. Although some work on mine and town construction would have been taking place on Cockatoo, the award was set in place before the full scale mining operation was established. This award set the conditions under which employees could be recruited but it also set the classifications and therefore established the rules of work organisation. In this sense, job design was not an issue for management though it must also be pointed out that there are not many different ways to 'design' the jobs involved in the mining process.

Why the proliferation of classifications? Firstly, because the work became more clearly defined as it developed beyond the initial construction and development phase where the work would tend to be flexible rather than structured. Similarly as the mining stage was anticipated the tasks involved could be clearly identified from mining practice elsewhere. Then as workers came to work at Yampi they would bring their experience of working under classifications in other awards. Secondly, the system of wage determination of establishing the basic wage plus the margin encouraged the proliferation of classifications. This meant that for a worker to get anything above the basic wage additional job requirements had to be established, refined and differentiated in order to provide the basis for a margins claim.

Why the proliferation of unions? From the Yampi Award we also find examples of multiple union coverage: the AEU and the ASE, AEU and boilermakers, electricians in AEU for example. This would have stemmed from the scope of union coverage as laid down in their rule books. Again, a pre-existing situation was 'translated' into the workplace in the iron ore industry as the unions saw increased potential for membership, or at the least, to protect against encroachment by other unions.

A new Yampi Award in 1948, (49 of 1948; 29 WAIG 83) was basically the same. It was the result of a joint application by the unions, now including the bricklayers and electricians with wage divisions in the award to cover the AWU, boilermakers, plumbers, engineers and electrical workers, painters, carpenters and joiners, bricklayers. The award was subsequently consolidated and updated (17 of 1955; 36 WAIG 593) though still only applying to the operations at Cockatoo; the deposits on Koolan were not being mined because of the embargo.

There were indications as to how the Court reached its decision on several of the issues before it with the main comparator still being what had been determined in the goldfields. For example, in determining a claim that shift hours should be inclusive of crib time, "We

have modelled the clause on the Goldmining Award except for those workers who must attend to their duties while they take their crib” and on the unions’ claim on overtime, “It is similar to the Goldmining Awards and no real reason was advanced by the respondent why it should be changed.” An overtime subclause was deleted, in part because “it has not been found necessary in the Goldmining Awards.” Annual leave, the provision of a first aider, payment for sickness, height money, protective equipment were all determined by reference to the Goldmining Award. The arguments for an industry allowance, based on the existence of one in the gold industry, were rejected because the conditions giving rise to the allowance in that case, namely the prosperity of the gold industry, were not established in the iron ore industry. One area where there was a departure was on the issue of long service leave. The Court noted that in handing down the Goldmining Award the industry had been warned to anticipate long service leave becoming an award provision. In considering the claim to insert such a provision in the iron ore industry the Court, largely on grounds of the geographical isolation of Cockatoo being likely to give rise to long term employment, inserted a service leave provision, based on the conditions of State Government employees.

In terms of wage determination the process undertaken was described in the decision of the 1967 Award (47 WAIG 28)

Wage rates for workers in the iron ore production industry at Yampi were determined by the Court of Arbitration in 1945 (...) when with minor exceptions, the Court adopted the margins prescribed in other relevant awards then operating in this State. Since that time marginal rates for these workers have been arrived at by consent with the exception of the rate for the ore and mullock truck driver which was recently assessed by the Chief Industrial Commissioner by reference to rates payable in the same industry in South Australia.

Thus it can be seen that award determination in both establishing and then renewing an award was strongly influenced by practice in related industries. Arguably, at this state the iron ore industry had not established itself as an independent industry and, for the purposes of industrial relations at least, it was an extension of the State’s gold mining industry. To use a term now used about the new mining operations it was, perhaps a ‘piggy back’ operation.

Industrial Relations in the 1960s

It was the 1955 award which became the standard for the first mainland award, the one which related to the Pilbara, namely the 1967 Iron Ore Award. While the development of the early awards in the industry provides a background for this award it is

also necessary to take note of some of the changes which were taking place in the State at the time.

Industrial relations in the 1960s appears to have been a lot more straightforward than it is today. There was a dominant employer association, an established set of key awards and a reliance on the tribunal. And in terms of economic activity the State was 'quiet'. As Lindsay McGuinness recalls,

We had very little industry in WA. We had the goldfields and that was about it. We didn't have any shift work except in service industries. Milk, power generation, trains and public transport and Kalgoorlie and the gold mines. For years it was always referred to as the 'goldfields roster' and when industry came down to Kwinana for example, BP Oil Refinery Kwinana and ALCOA, there was a lot of trouble over different roster systems because the unions here only used one roster, the goldfields roster, and the influence of industry and other states spreading over here brought with it practices from other states. Some of the time it was brought over by the individual employer, that's what we did back in NSW, Victoria and Queensland. ⁵

As an indication of how things were very different then, Eric Kelly recalls how when he had to do an inspection of a Main Roads work site just north of Bunbury the workers were living in tents and had erected a cooking shelter of pieces of corrugated iron. They did not want any of these new caravans which some of the employers were trying to provide for their workers. In the mid-1960's there were around 30 recorded industrial disputes in a year. In 1966, the year in which the negotiations over the new iron ore award commenced there were 25 disputes involving 2860 workers and a total of 6239 working days lost, half of which were in building and construction.⁶

John Ince recalls the dominance of the Federation in the early 1960's:

I guess the IR environment in WA. about up until the mid 1960s could easily be described from the employer angle - absolutely dominated by the WA. Employers' Federation, to a point that was the envy of employer groups in the other states. This had the effect of maintaining a strongly disciplined local scene. Over-award payments were rare- unheard of according to our director; those that did exist were most clandestine. The Federation appeared for pretty well every employer that had award dealings in WA. Indeed, right off the top of my head, I can only think of a couple of locally based companies that didn't use us; they were WA. Newspapers and Swan Brewery. Even national firms who were very much inclined to do their own thing industrially tended to use us when involved in State issues. We had the unique experience of being the only employer association that appeared for B.H.P. ⁷

The actual practice of industrial relations was built around the role of the Federation and the parties operated through reliance on a few dominant awards, on standard clauses and on a series of understandings. This all operated in the context of the tribunal. The three dominant awards were the general awards - metal trades, building trades and transport - and these tended to be the basis upon which other awards were constructed. Creating a new award was by means of drawing upon standard clauses. John Ince:

The procedures in WA. were quite straight forward- perhaps a bit legalistic- formal is a better word than legalistic. You could sit down and draft an award by identifying about fifteen clauses and say, well, these are standard provisions included in every award in WA. So they sorted themselves out.

This standardised set-up provided the same advantages to the unions. They did not have to present a separate argument for each award to obtain the standard conditions which could cover as much as 80% of the award document. And that therefore made it a lot easier for the unions. They didn't have to come up with all sorts of novel ideas to convince people, or to reinvent the wheel every time they wanted something.⁸

Lindsay McGuinness recalls how it worked:

In fact I was involved in setting up an earlier award which took us, in conjunction with the union, about 20 minutes to do a first award right from the beginning because you had a big box of clauses and there was a sick leave clause, an annual leave clause, long service leave clause and overtime standard, and that was taken to be the standard.⁹

These standard clauses had been established as a result of 'test case' hearings before the Commission, agreed to as such by the Employers' Federation and the TLC. This understanding between the employers and union peak organisations then flowed through to the parties making a new award.

This system also provided the mechanism for change, as explained here by John Ince:

If somebody decided that the time had come in WA. for a forty hour week, or an extra week's annual leave, or more public holidays or accumulated sick leave, the unions through the Trades Hall Council would get together. they put in a claim through one of the key awards; it would tend to be the Metal Trades award. It would be argued as a test case with the Government and other parties who were not associated with either the T.H.C. or ourselves invited to make submissions. So whatever the outcome, that would then set the standard for every other award negotiated during the next ten years or so, unless someone had a good reason to show that it should be something different in their particular case.¹⁰

It was the dominance of the Employers' Federation which enabled this to happen, The Federation had the facilities and so used to do a lot of the drafting of the awards even though the unions were going to be the party seeking the award. Then once a clause was accepted as a standard, it acted as a sort of clearing house. Lindsay McGuinness observed: 'Though people using the good offices of the Employers' Federation (*a change*) gradually worked it's way through all awards in WA and that was the understanding'.¹¹

The compelling influence of the standard clauses, coupled with the availability of the tribunal, had its effect on the award negotiations. John Ince:

Negotiations tended to be, 'if you could - agree; if not, off to the Court, the Commission'. There really wasn't a lot of serious negotiation done and I don't think it was really conditioned by anybody but the system. The compulsory arbitration system encourages people not to sit down and accept the responsibilities for their own compromised decisions. There was a tendency to say 'if you want to go away from the standard, then you argue it'.¹²

The key issues of coverage and classifications were determined in much the same way, go by the award and the understandings, in the context of the tribunal. John Ince put the employers' perspective:

Well the employers' role was really a passive one. We couldn't become involved in matters that were purely constitutional because we had no rights except in cases where there was a demarcation dispute which was fouling up a particular work operation. So we were very much in the hands of the unions, but what we could do was to say to a particular union "You put in for coverage of a classification, we'll support you and see how it goes." But apart from establishing the benefits of convenience, uniformity and the like, that's as far as we could go.

Rather than be continually contesting questions of coverage, 'understandings' developed and were then perpetuated within the system, such as the understanding over truck driving. While both the AWU and TWU has constitutional coverage of truck drivers, it was accepted that the AWU took the off-highway work and the TWU the highway work.¹³ Similarly, another understanding was that T/As would be covered by AWU north of the 26 parallel, they were covered by their respective trade union south of that line. Where there was no such understanding then, according to Owen Salmon,

The Commission always applied strict rules of interpretation. They would look at the constitution of the union, they would look at the work being done by the employers concerned and they would first of all their

objective was to decide whether, in terms of law, those persons fell within the constitution of one union - the constitution covered one union or the other. Then, of course, where you had this situation where that couldn't be decided, that began to create a problem.¹⁴

It was in these situations that strong membership support 'first come, best dressed' could become a compelling factor in the Court's decision making but generally the way the system worked was for the key players in Perth to resolve these issues rather than contest them at the work site. Coverage was important because once it was determined, then it followed from the decision on coverage what the classification structure would be, it would be the standard clauses in that union's general award.

The pressures which emerged to disturb this stable, somewhat comfortable looking mode of industrial relations practice in WA are outlined by Owen Salmon:

There was a new system to cover the North-west Cape, it was known as the 54 hour week proposal. They reckoned that everybody that went there was prepared to accept a 54 hour week as the minimum length of working week. They obviously went there to get money but working 54 hours per week was an obvious advantage to the employer as to the employee and so there was within that a justification for lifting the overtime rate in a sort of roundabout way - a non direct way. They prescribed a second shift in the metal trades award which gave the ordinary rate of pay per person who wished to work a 40 hour week and for those who made themselves available 6 days of the week to work 54 hours, they received a much higher rate. So the Commission had found a way of prescribing in awards, on basis of principle, a high wage structure for construction industry. Once they'd done that, of course, on the one project they had set the scene for competition amongst employers on other projects in the northwest. Now it wasn't long after that, of course, that the iron contracts were signed and you had the Goldsworthy project being built and the Hamersley project and then before the completion of the Hamersley project you had the Mt. Newman coming on stream, all of them operating in the same area, all of them competing for the available labour force in the hottest part of WA. The official acceptance of the higher rates was the Commission's way of keeping itself in the scene and you had the Companies competing against each other for the available labour force. This was the beginning of, the circumstances that surrounded the introduction of the iron ore industry.¹⁵

It was this major growth in the level of economic activity which put pressure on the industrial relations system. The informal understandings and the 'off the shelf' system of establishing awards could not cope with these new pressures. The Pilbara, 'had the smell of money about it' (to use Eric Kelly's phrase) which changed attitudes and practices. Companies were under contractual pressures and the unions needed to establish their presence at the new sites. Previously accepted understandings broke down, the clearest

example of which was that relating to truck drivers. The competition for drivers, where both AWU and TWU had constitutional coverage started at Koolan and Lindsay McGuinness was involved from the employer's side as the TWU sought to establish its position and secure its standard classification structure in the iron ore industry:

There was arguments for example in the early days, in fact, it was my first major case at Cockatoo Island. Ore trucks are a good example because the off-highway transport award said that the 5-ton truck - I think that was benchmark - rate was for so much and then there was a formula of 2/6 a ton for each ton above that. We had in those days 50 ton trucks and we went up to 85. 50-ton haulpack trucks in those days and the union argued that they should give 2/6 a ton for every ton beyond 5-ton. The company, as it turns out successfully, argued against that for a couple of reasons - one was it had been similarly argued in respect of the company's operations at Iron Knob in SA before the Federal Commission on the basis that you couldn't compare an ore truck with a relatively simple operation where you drove two or three miles from the quarry face to the crusher and back again - you couldn't compare that with driving through capital cities. And in many cases the trucks were a darn sight easier to drive than the ordinary 5-ton trucks. You had all sorts of advantages, power steering, these sorts of things.

The union case was argued by Don Cully an early TWU Secretary and although there weren't that many TWU members; I doubt if they had any, but that was beside the point. The TWU had constitutional coverage for truck drivers.¹⁶

So, although, because of that gentlemen's agreement that off-highway work went to the AWU, with the development of the iron ore industry the understandings began to break down. There was more at stake in terms of potential membership and as the industry expanded, new company and union representatives became involved, people who had not worked within the earlier understandings and did not feel that they were bound by them.¹⁷

Putting Together the 1967 Iron Ore Industry Award

On the basis of the picture which we have built up of how industrial relations worked in the 1960's we have the background for the development of the iron ore award. We can anticipate that the understandings would come under pressure as unions sought to establish a position in the industry but the process of constructing the award would be based around utilising the standard clauses with the arguments before the Commission being in terms of utilising standards yet arguing special allowances for the Pilbara factor. We would also anticipate that the process would be system rather than workplace driven.

The first step in the process was taken by Commissioner Kelly. The new industry was 'roped in' to the award system by the Commissioner through the mechanism of including

one of the mining companies as respondent to the new Metal Trades (General) Award (13 of 65; 46 WAIG 707). This had the effect of bringing the iron ore industry as a whole within the scope of that award and would provide the basis for industry's own award.

One distinctive feature of the 1967 award was that it was as a result of an initiative by one of the companies, Hamersley Iron, which argued that the companies should apply for an award rather than the unions. There had been negotiations during 1966 but the unions had not lodged a log of claims. Consequently the reference to the Commission was made by the companies Goldsworthy Mining, Hamersley Iron and Western Mining. It was Hamersley's view that unless the companies took control of the situation they would not be able to handle the increasing difficulties being experienced in trying to attract and establish a stable labour force. (Labour turnover in 1967 was 180%)¹⁸ The Yampi Award was clearly geographical in its scope and the operating company, now Dampier Mining (BHP), argued that it should not be brought into the scope of an award designed to cover the mainland industry. The argument was unsuccessful, the Commission noting that the operations would be similar and that BHP would become covered by the award in respect of its operation at Koolyanobbing.

The hearing commenced in November 1966, that is after shipments of ore had commenced (from Geraldton in March, Finucane Island in June and Dampier in August). Therefore this award applied to existing employees in contrast to the early Yampi awards which were established in anticipation of mining taking place. However, because the industry was still in its infancy and the sites - even though producing - were still undergoing development, the award was only an interim one.

From the outset, in the industry there was the typical multi-union, multi-classification, demarcation laden award with the terms and conditions established on the principle of comparability. The respondents were AWU, FEDFU, Boilermakers, AEU, ETU, Bricklayers, Painters and Decorators, ASE, TWU, Carpenters and Joiners, Plumbers and Sheetmetal workers. The case for the respondent unions was put by the TLC on behalf of its affiliates and by the AWU which was not a member of the TLC. The preference clause specifies a total of 23 unions or branches.

In the wages sections of the award there are 72 different classifications imported into the award from the General Awards or by unions using another award as a reference point in order to secure the classification in the Pilbara mine sites. According to Eric Kelly, the employers had little impact on this process - the existence of a particular classification in another award was a basically irrefutable argument for its inclusion. Owen Salmon:

The metal trades award, the building trades award, transport award, as far as classifications were concerned. Indeed I would say if you go back and look at the record of the award that was served on the union by the employers you would find that it was nothing more than a reflection of the major awards of each of the unions. So there was no attempt by the iron ore companies to introduce anything new at all except that they had new classifications to run their railways and they were the only controversial classifications and insofar as the metal trades classifications were concerned that the iron ore industry could use different conditions, those were conditions which were confronted in the pit where the maintenance tradesmen were required to work outside and do the maintenance on hot greasy equipment and Kelly dealt with that in his first award - gave them an allowance for working in those conditions.¹⁹

John Ince from the employers side:

In the first award particularly my main task was to work out with company officials what were the duties and working conditions of the new classifications; what was required of the train drivers; what was involved in operating those Heath Robinson contraptions that turned rail cars upside down to empty them or the ship loading facilities none of us had had experience with; how bad were the conditions in the tunnels housing the conveyor belts where maintenance people were required to work. Ultimately these were the sorts of issues that took up most of the time of the Commissioner when he visited the various sites for inspections and taking evidence. There were the normal conniving and orchestrating situations to try and show them in the best light for our arguments. The unions made sure that the Commissioner heard many comments like "it's terrible working in that site". The company officials were there to counter these remarks. It was the usual battle of tactics, fairly transparent and not very subtle. Most of the actual commission hearings on special jobs and conditions took place on site allowing both sides to call evidence. There was no attempt by either party to change standards; the employers were concerned with getting an award made and sticking to traditional WA. thinking. As a group the companies wanted to play down the 'newness', the 'bigness' and the 'glamour' of this huge Pilbara development.²⁰

The purpose would be to see if a job as a genuinely new job or was one which could be fitted into an existing classification. It was the former case, then it was necessary to attempt to define it and to identify the factors that went into the making up of a rate for it which, according to John Ince were mainly skills, disability levels, and levels of responsibility, though the final selection was 'a bit hard'.

Coverage was determined in the same way, by looking first to the standard awards, and going to the Commission for a resolution of the contested areas. As Owen Salmon explains it:

You had in the original awards, a preference to unionist clause which named all of the unions to the award and which made it mandatory for employees within 14 or 21 days of being served with a copy of the union rules to make application to one of the main unions for membership of the union unless they could show that they had a conscientious objection. Now that was effectively compulsory unionism and those persons joined the unions that traditionally looked after their classification. The electricians were under the ETU, the AEU took the mechanical people; the boilermakers took the boilermakers; the transport workers took theirs
.....

There was always a reasonable disputation between the AWU and the metal trades. You also had disputes between unions such as the AWU and the FED. Those disputes were ongoing. They seem to go from site to site and they would arise when the AWU believed that the drillers ought to be members of theirs and FED said 'no, they're members of ours'. They had a preference to unions clause, the question was 'which union should they be members of?'. Those things would manifest themselves in strikes, there would be a conference, the Commission would've heard them out of hearing and decided that would settle it.²¹

One interesting area work was that of the rail operations. With regard to coverage for drivers, the only award was that covering the State rail system and the railway unions showed no interest in the new Pilbara operations. Owen Salmon:

Train driving in WA was always the preserve of the locomotive engine drivers' union, but the Locomotive Engine Drivers' Union constitution never extended beyond the WA Govt Railway System. They were a discreet industry union in terms of WA Railway Commission. Now they couldn't get award coverage in that area (*iron ore*) and they weren't interested in it because notwithstanding the fact that the railway system is an extremely important and very large part of the iron ore industry, the number of people employed in it was probably not worth the unions trouble to worry about. Now the FED however, always had engine driver coverage - the title itself suggests it - so what you had was people who had previously been members of the locomotive engine drivers union going north, simply changing their membership to FED which was that union recognised by the Commission in control of railways and various other people in the iron ore industry. It was a Commission acceptance right here in the State... There was never any argument of that - never any argument in the first place. ²²

According to John Ince there was an employer preference:

Well the employers had a simple approach- whenever possible to get them all in the A.W.U.. They were not very popular with the rest of the unions and there were fairly regular arguments over union coverage. The A.W.U. was also regarded as an industrial wimp, not prone to direct action. But from the employers' angle the biggest single factor was that the more you get under one union the better chance you have of starting to

achieve industry coverage rather distinctions based on craft or occupation.²³

But Owen Salmon recalls that the FED had the better constitutional claim:

And I think the FED, historically, had coverage for the train drivers in the timber industry. You see at the turn of the century in WA, timber industry was almost the early edition of the iron ore industry. You had Millers and Bunnings and these big international timber companies exploiting the jarrah and karri forests at the turn of the century and they were, in a way, doing the same as the iron ore companies, they were providing housing and building settlements etc., etc., and they had railway operators and it was the FED traditionally that had those people and they also controlled the stationary steam engines. And they had coverage in the gold mining industry (*on the winding machines*) and insofar as there was any locomotion at all, the FED had coverage, so that I suppose there was a very, very strong historical impetus in that as well. So there was no question - nobody asked, it just went without saying that the coverage in the iron ore industry would've been the FED. And then of course, there was the amalgamation between the FED and BWIU, that became a construction mining industry union.²⁴

There is clear evidence from the award itself that issues were determined by comparison wherever possible and the principal comparator was the Yampi Award. There are several examples. In the clause on junior workers the presence of a Board of Reference at Yampi to resolve issues was noted and a Board was also one set up in the 1967 award. The limits in respect of meal breaks was set as per the Yampi Award, as were public holidays and annual leave arrangements. Arguments to vary from the mess personnel rates failed to sway the Commission away from the provisions already applying at Yampi. On overtime issues the parties agreed to broadly follow the Metal Trades (General) Award though two disputed clauses were arbitrated upon. On one the Commission made a new provision, on the other he accepted the unions' proposition which was based on a clause in a South Australian BHP award. The importance of the comparative process can be seen from the Commissioner's judgment on the absence through sickness clause. He referred to a standard set in another award but concluded "...it seems to me that, having relied largely on the Yampi award elsewhere in this judgment I should, for the sake of consistency, follow it here."

As mentioned above, wage rates (margins) in the Yampi Award were established by comparison, principally with the goldfields. The same comparative arguments were mounted in the hearing for the 1967 award. The companies favoured the Yampi Award as the base, the unions preferred comparison to be made with awards covering quarry work in the Eastern States. (The Commission noted that the rates in the WA quarry industry are lower than those in the eastern states.) The decision indicated that the margins prescribed in

the award broadly followed the applicant's proposals (that is, based on the Yampi Award) but taking account, where necessary, of internal and external relativities. In respect of the latter, the decision spelt out the comparators which were relied upon: awards relating to mining elsewhere in Australia, cleaners', transport and railway awards. So, in essence, unless there was specific reason for variation, the basic process was that of incorporating existing standards into the award.

Conclusion: Undoing History

No one appeared to question the system of writing into a new award the structures of union coverage and of classifications which were established elsewhere. It was a sign of the administrative 'efficiency' of the award system beginning to have an effect wherein issues which had the potential to be a source of dispute were dealt with by looking to how the issue had already been resolved elsewhere. The way the system operated was also a reflection of the power of arbitrated decisions coupled with the notion of equity. If the rate for a machine minder had been set in an award for the gold industry, if that type of work turned up in an iron ore mine, then the existing rate for the work, being authoritatively established by the tribunal, was the one to apply, and any special conditions which might apply to iron ore rather than gold would be compensated for in other allowances.

Managements and unions who are now working hard to negotiate new awards in the Pilbara iron ore industry might wish that their predecessors had done things differently and not left them such a hard task. What this brief review has shown is that the way the industrial relations system was working when the industry was being developed was one which operated on established principles which were accepted by the parties involved. It was accepted because it worked and it worked to such an extent that it was not questioned. Naturally each party sought to work the system to get the best possible result but the fundamentals - multi-unionism, precise classifications and the principle of comparability were generally not challenged. This took place in a period of rapid economic expansion which provided opportunities for companies, workers and unions alike to prosper. Employers did not exert influence to reshape the system; employer strategies of designing work tasks with preferred union coverage in mind emerged much later and in this regard the developments in the iron ore industry in the late 1980s provide a strong contrast to those of the late 1960s.

While the companies and unions accepted and operated within the award structure, the one aspect of industrial relations strategy over which there was tension was that of scope,

whether the awards should be industry wide or company specific. In time, the industry settled for the latter - what we would now call enterprise bargaining - but in each case the features of multi-unionism and classification structures were accepted into the company specific awards and remained in place until the changing economic circumstances of the 1980s caused the fundamentals of the awards to be reconsidered. Awards and employment relationships more generally are undergoing substantial change. Perhaps this look at the history of the awards will help to place the current changes in context and suggest that just as the early awards suited the parties then but not now, so too the present emphasis on workplace arrangements may in time no longer suit the parties and come under the pressure of change.

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- 1 Iron ore was also mined by WMC at Koolyanooka, near Geraldton from 1966 but it was a small
operation with only 5m tonned being mined. As an indication of the circle of history the older mining
centers are again attracting the interest of mining companies as improved processing techniques and
better transport gives these deposits a potential viability. Talling Peak, which the State government
offered on tender in the early 1960s is now being examined again as a potential mining operation.
- 2 K. R. Smith, *The Great Challenge. The Saga of Yampi*, Perth, 1979, p. 113.
- 3 *Ibid*, p. 156
- 4 *Ibid*.
- 5 Lindsay McGuinness. Interview.
- 6 Statistical Register of Western Australia, 1965-66; statistics refer only to disputes involving a
stoppage of work of 10 man-days or more.
- 7 John Ince. Interview.
- 8 *Ibid*.
- 9 Lindsay McGuinness. Interview.
- 10 John Ince. Interview.
- 11 *Ibid*.
- 12 *Ibid*.
- 13 For a review of the AWU-TWU coverage issue see the judgment of Commissioner Kelly at 53 WAIG
332.
- 14 Owen Salmon. Interview.
- 15 *Ibid*.
- 16 Lindsay McGuinness. Interview.
- 17 In the proceedings leading to the 1967 Iron Ore Award it was the AWU which argued the case on behalf
of haulpack drivers and other plant operators. The issue of coverage across the Pilbara sites was dealt
with by the Commission in the 'carve up' of 1975 (55 WAIG 1469) which determined exclusive
coverage on a site by site basis. It resurfaced again as a major issue in the development of the Argyle
diamond mine in 1985.
- 18 A. Trengrove, *Adventure in Iron. Hamersley's First Decade*. Clayton, N.D., p. 123.
- 19 Owen Salmon. Interview.
- 20 John Ince. Interview.
- 21 Owen Salmon. Interview.
- 22 *Ibid*.
- 23 John Ince. Interview.
- 24 Owen Salmon. Interview.

Control and Response: the experience of Chinese indentured labour in colonial Western Australia.

Anne Atkinson*

Between 1847 and 1897, an estimated 1,000 Chinese male labourers were imported into Western Australia under contract to meet the demands of employers for a healthy, cheap and plentiful source of labour in the pastoral, agricultural and pearling industries. Recruited from Singapore through both public (colonial government funded) and private importation schemes, Chinese were introduced in two periods: in 1847 and 1848 and from the mid-1870s to 1897. Although Chinese indentured labour partly fulfilled the expectations of employers as a plentiful source of servants, the retention of their image as cheap, docile and submissive required the strict application of a series of controls; through conditions contained in contracts, the Master and Servants Act and the use of threat and violence by employers. Even then Chinese workers asserted a degree of independence within the workplace. Their responses - as individual rather than organised communal activity - was determined by these controls, by the physical isolation of their workplaces and their social isolation within the general workforce, and the immigration scheme through which Chinese entered the colony.

Even before Chinese indentured labourers entered Western Australia, they had demonstrated characteristics which were contrary to the colonial stereotype of 'ideal' labour.¹ In recruiting the first shipment of Chinese labour in Singapore in 1847, Commander Helpman of the *Champion* which transported the Chinese, reported that he was 'compelled' to make compromises on several points relating to the conditions of employment before the Chinese would come to Western Australia.² These conditions included two instead of three year contracts, advance payments and payment of half wages from the time of departure from Singapore. Helpman commented that the Chinese 'are very particular in all these arrangements and have a copy of the Articles'. The refusal of Chinese in Hong Kong to consider wages and conditions offered by the Western Australian colonial government in 1878 was another indication that Chinese labour was not the passive, compliant and submissive labour force which settlers could easily dominate.³

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Forms of control

The contracts, which each Chinese indentured worker was required to sign before the Protector of Chinese in Singapore, were designed to protect the Western Australian colonial government and employers.⁴ The clauses which proved to be most influential in controlling Chinese labour were those specifying the employer, advance payments and the provisions of the Master and Servants Act under which Chinese workers were employed in Western Australia. Contracts effectively bound the employee to work in Western Australia for periods ranging from one to three years. Chinese engaged through the private scheme were bound to nominated employers for the period of contract and had no opportunity to leave their employment or to seek other employers.⁵ On the other hand, Chinese engaged through the public scheme were bound primarily to the colonial government which then acted as an employment agency for nominated settlers requiring labour. Chinese were not bound to remain with the nominated employer but could request to transfer to another employer.⁶ The public importation scheme, therefore, allowed Chinese an opportunity to change employers and express grievances although the form of contract used by both schemes was similar.

The system of advance payments, a sum equal to three months' wages given to the contracted labourer before departure from Singapore, was also an effective means of control as it meant that Chinese arrived in Western Australia already in debt. The Resident Magistrate for the Roebourne district noted that

three months advance of pay, [is] a plan which works badly as the money is squandered, the men begin work in debt, and with the high price of goods and the low rate of wages they can hardly hope for a balance in their favour at the end of their service.⁷

Some workers, particularly station workers in the North West, had little choice but to use the station store to buy tobacco, matches and occasional pieces of clothing at inflated prices. For many station workers there seemed little chance of leaving the colony at the expiration of the contract with more than a few shillings. Continual debt allowed Chinese contract labourers few opportunities to leave employers until the debt had been repaid, even after the period of the contract had been worked out.

The contracts also stipulated that, once in Western Australia, Chinese contract workers would come under the provisions of the *Master and Servants Act*. The Act of 1842 was based on an English Act which tied employees to employers through penalties of up to three months' imprisonment with hard labour for employees who breached contracts. Servants were also liable to forfeit any wages owing to them.⁸ Breaches of contract included

absconding from service and refusal to work. The Act also contained provisions for complaints to be made against employers for cruelty and ill-treatment, refusal to pay wages or provide necessary provisions.⁹ Although the Act appears to have provided an equitable relationship between master and servant, with each party having access to the legal system, it worked heavily in favour of the employer. Servants were more likely to be charged under the Act than be in the position to charge their Masters. Servants could be sentenced to imprisonment, Masters could only be fined a sum not exceeding £10. In 1868 the Act was amended to raise the period of imprisonment for servants to a term not exceeding six months and to force them to pay compensation to the employer for any damage done to property.¹⁰

Governor Ord was well aware of severity of the Act and concerned that Chinese workers brought before magistrates would probably be treated harshly, thus jeopardising a promising source of cheap labour. In 1879 he issued a letter of instruction that all magistrates notify the Governor of the circumstances of any charges before judgement was made.¹¹ He further requested that,

I would ask you not only to act in your capacity as the judge but also as the friend of the undefended and the ignorant accused.

At least one Resident Magistrate agreed with the Governor that the Act was indeed harsh. J.E.A. Hare, the Resident Magistrate at Albany, commented that:

The Master and Servants Act in my opinion presses very hard on any servant - I feel myself almost bound to protect the servant as far as I can, much more so in the case of foreigners who can barely make themselves understood.¹²

The Governor's letter of instruction was condemned by employers who argued that it weakened their control over workers. Henry Toll, an Albany farmer, suggested that the leniency shown by Resident Magistrates contravened the Master and Servants Act and called for the Governor's letter to be recalled so that 'this valuable class of labourers can be retained, to their advantage: as also to the Colonists of Western Australia'.¹³ In support of this argument Toll claimed that

John Chinaman knowing the state of the Labour market, when he sees a chance of bettering himself becomes mutinous and refuses duty, he knows that he will be taken to the Court House and there dealt leniently, - gets a fortnights incarceration, and then becomes free.¹⁴

Despite general opposition, judgements concerning Chinese in the late 1870s tended to be more lenient than sentences passed several years later. For example, in August 1879, the Resident Magistrate at Pinjarra was advised to offer a caution to three Chinese charged with 'deserting service and petty larceny'.¹⁵ The harshest sentences in 1880 and 1881 ranged from 48 hours to eight days' imprisonment with hard labour for absconding. However, the most common outcome was a caution. In 1880, a judgement which resulted in two Chinese being imprisoned for one month for absconding from service was used by the Crown Solicitor, George Leake, as an example of 'the harsh operation of the Masters and Servants Act'.¹⁶

There is no record to suggest that Governor Ord's letter of instruction was rescinded but, by 1882, sentences for absconding had risen to fourteen days in the South West while in the North West sentences for the same offence ranged from one month to three months with hard labour. The reports of the Quarter Sessions at Roebourne indicate that in 1881/1882 the average sentence given to Chinese indentured labourers for breaches of the Act was two months with hard labour. Chinese could be ordered to pay costs from wages accruing as well as to serve prison terms¹⁷ and could also be fined for loss of a Master's property. Wages could be forfeited or a prison sentence imposed if the fine could not be paid.¹⁸

On the other hand, Chinese charging employers with assault and non-payment of wages rarely received judgements in their favour. Most of these cases were dismissed or, if the employer was found guilty of the charge, fines were minimal. The Attorney General, A.C. Onslow, recognised the difficulty for Chinese charging masters with ill-treatment or non-payment of wages but was unable to 'see in what respect it [Master and Servants Act] can be altered, so as to afford greater protection to the servant'.¹⁹ The problem, as he saw it, was that the Act was difficult to enforce properly especially as 'the sympathies of police (in this Colony at all events) would be with the Master and against the servant' and the master would not 'I think run much danger of being convicted'.²⁰

The *Master and Servants Act* was not an equitable piece of legislation and, despite instructions to be lenient toward Chinese indentured labour, was a very effective measure of control for employers. Combined with the contract system, it put employers in a position to exert very tight control. For non-contracted servants, the Master and Servants Act allowed employees to give a month's notice of intention to leave employment. Contracts required that employees be bound to employers for the period of contract. Thus the contracted servant, unless employed by the colonial government, was forced to remain with the original employer, despite adverse working and living conditions, until the term of the contract had

expired. On rare occasions a contracted employee was released from the contract after a Resident Magistrate had investigated the reasons for habitual absconding. However, this decision was made to reduce the numbers of contracted employees becoming 'burdens on the state' through lengthy prison sentences, rather than to protect the employee.²¹

Contracts also stipulated that any employee who 'wilfully refused to perform his work' should have the time absent from work made up through overtime or the period added to the length of contract.²² 'Wilfully refusing to perform his work' included periods in which the employee was absent from work through absconding and imprisonment as well as industrial action. Employees who continually absconded might find themselves bound to an employer for longer than their contracts stipulated regardless of ill-treatment or adversity in the workplace.

Beyond institutionalised forms of control, employers also exercised domination through threats and violence. It is not possible to determine the extent of violence used by employers in the workplace as many cases probably went unreported. However, there are sufficient incidents where Chinese laid charges against employers to determine that assault was not unknown in the workplace. Chinese indentured labourers reported being beaten, kicked and tormented. Ah Ha, a Chinese labourer employed on a station at Victoria Plains, absconded after he was physically abused and tormented. In defending himself in the Magistrates Court on a charge of absconding from service, Ah Ha stated that on one night

he had undressed and gone to bed, about 8 o'clock, he was summoned by one of Mr Clinch's sons to get up and press wool, that he refused to do so saying that he had gone to sleep. One of the men then came and pulled him out, he asked to be allowed to put his boots on, but was not allowed, he then sat down and refused to move, whereupon the man struck him, he then went to Mr Clinch who asked why he did not want to go to work and stamped on his bare foot, he showed a mark on his foot which he stated had been caused in the way described, he still refused to work and next day Mr Clinch ordered him to work and he [Ah Ha] told him he could not walk. Mr Clinch then told him if he did not work he should get no food. He was turned away from the kitchen when he went for his supper and went without four meals.²³

On at least two occasions, physical assault resulted in death. One case concerned a Chinese laundryman, Ah Hing, who was employed by Jas Clarke at Onslow in 1893.²⁴ Three Chinese witnesses claimed that they had heard Clarke and Ah Hing arguing in the washhouse before Clarke struck Ah Hing in the face causing him to fall to the ground. Clarke was then seen to kick Ah Hing several times in the back. Ah Hing died that night. The inquest report stated that Ah Hing 'came to his death from natural causes'.²⁵

Employers also used threats to maintain control. These ranged from threats to withhold food or wages to instant dismissal without providing a means for reaching the nearest settlement. One employer was reported as having threatened to take Chinese workers into 'the bush where natives would eat them'.²⁶

Physical and mental abuse were not the only grievances. General complaints concerning employers, working conditions, hours of work, wages, the non-payment of return fares to Singapore and lack of medical treatment were common. In April 1848, F.D.Wittenoom, the colony's Protector of Chinese, reported a number of complaints made by Chinese workers about 'wages, treatment and occasional removal from one master to another'.²⁷ The most serious complaint was lodged by a servant who alleged that his employer, W.I.Harris, had assaulted him and withheld his wages for five months.²⁸ The Resident Magistrate for Swan was requested by the Colonial Secretary's Office to find alternative employment for the servant after the case had been investigated.

In the late 1870s and 1880s, complaints were received by the Immigration Superintendent, W.Dale, who was responsible for matters relating to Chinese indentured labour. Dale recorded cases of dissatisfaction with wages, including one Chinese who refused to work unless his daily rate of pay was raised from three to five shillings.²⁹ Another case involved three Chinese who

grumble at being underpaid, those who were promised 8 dollars a month only receiving 30/- and others who were to receive 9 dollars and getting but 34/-or 35/- a month.³⁰

Other complaints concerned non-payment of wages, including one against W.Harris for non-payment and assault. This complaint was similar to that documented in 1848 and may have involved the same employer. Harris withheld wages amounting to £6 and was reported to have set his dog on the servant when he asked for his wages.³¹

Another common cause for complaint was the quality and quantity of food. Many settlers, including the members of the Toodyay Roads Board, assumed that the 'cheapness' of Chinese labour meant not only lower wages but also inferior food. As one settler observed 'Coolies or Chinese do not require meat 3 times a day or at a certain season of the year'.³² Often, complaints concerned the lack of variety in food or an excess of unfamiliar food, such as mutton.³³ One of the more frivolous complaints made by a Chinese servant was that he was 'not allowed tea with his dinner'.³⁴ However, most grievances were related to the small

quantities of food Chinese received or the withdrawal of food as a punishment. Excessive working hours, working after dark and performing tasks over and above those agreed to in the contract were also reasons for protest. Grievances over the level of wages assumed a secondary position to those complaints.³⁵

Chinese workers responded to conditions in the workplace which they did not like and to the controls used to regulate their behaviour with either acceptance, negotiation, or resistance. With some exceptions, their actions were generally spontaneous and individual and without the support of other Chinese or non-Chinese labour in the workplace. This can be explained by the physical isolation of Chinese from each other and their social isolation from white labour in the workplace and wider community.

These individual responses were in marked contrast to those of Chinese labour elsewhere. In other Australian colonies, Chinese indentured labourers had organised collectively. In 1848, for example, 108 Chinese went on strike for higher wages in Darling Downs.³⁶ In 1885, Chinese joined forces with Malays to destroy their employer's crops in Cairns.³⁷ And further afield, in Canada and the United States, where Chinese were also employed as indentured labour, collective resistance strategies were used from the earliest period of Chinese labour settlement. Chan, writing on Chinese labourers employed on the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway refers to strikes and the destruction of property and refers to Chinese labour as a 'formidable adversary' when it came to labour demands.³⁸ Sucheng Chan, in her study of Chinese agricultural labourers in California in the late nineteenth century, cites numerous cases where Chinese workers stopped work and took other forms of industrial action.³⁹ Ping Chiu, in an economic study of Chinese labour in California, also notes that Chinese workers were far from the 'docile' and 'submissive' images often portrayed.⁴⁰ He refers to strikes involving hundreds of Chinese workers, including one in 1868 in which seven thousand Chinese struck for higher wages.⁴¹

In Western Australia, particularly in the pastoral industry, the Chinese were isolated by distance and therefore unable to organise. At least one potential employer of Chinese labour was aware of the effectiveness of this isolation. Andrew Edgar, a prospective plantation owner and keen to establish a sugar and coffee plantation in the Kimberley in 1882, sought the approval of the colonial government to import 'Malabars', instead of Chinese, to meet the labour requirements.⁴² He had previously had several interviews with one of the leading Chinese in the eastern colonies, Lowe Kong Meng, on the matter of using Chinese labour and was advised

not to have too many of his countrymen together so far away from protection as they would be sure to turn upon us at the first opportunity.⁴³

Between 1847 and 1897, most Chinese labourers recruited to work in Western Australia were employed in the pastoral industry.⁴⁴ A survey of 679 individual Chinese who could be matched by employer and location, indicates that 451 were employed on farms or stations, 56 in the pearling industry and 42 were general labourers in the North West. Thirty five Chinese worked as cooks or general servants in hotels throughout Western Australia and 26 were employed in clubs in Fremantle and Perth. Fifty nine Chinese worked as gardeners, cooks and general domestic servants in private residences in the Perth metropolitan area. Lack of detailed information prevents an estimate of the number of Chinese working under contract and those who worked as 'free' labour.

A limited census conducted in 1888 to determine the number and location of Chinese in the colony, confirms this distribution. Approximately 75 percent of the total Chinese population lived in the North West, 10 percent were located in the Perth metropolitan area, while the remaining 15 percent were scattered throughout the South West. Moreover, most Chinese were employed under contract and a significant number - approximately 74 percent - were associated with the pastoral industry.

In the pastoral industry, Chinese worked outdoors as shepherds, stationhands, stockmen and boundary riders. As pastoral activity expanded further into the interior and northern areas, which were more sparsely grassed and less fertile than the land used for sheep in the South West, pastoral workers were confronted by greater isolation and distance. For example, Muccan Station, where Ah Fong was a cook in 1887, was 75 miles from the port of Condon. It was claimed that it took a bullock cart six weeks to travel from the station to Condon and back.⁴⁵ Ted Hooley's station on the Ashburton, which employed two Chinese general labourers in 1887 and a Chinese cook in 1889, was 120 miles from the nearest neighbour and 200 miles from Roebourne, the nearest settlement.⁴⁶

The location of shepherding was dictated by a reliable water supply, obtained either from wells or water holes, which could be many miles from the homestation or homestead. The outstation from which Tam Bon Son worked in 1884 was nine miles from the homestation at Yarraloola on the Robe River.⁴⁷ An outstation at Millstream Station at Tableland was fifteen miles from the homestation and took a morning's ride to reach.⁴⁸ Instead of using the home station as a base, shepherds operated from camps or outstations situated at wells.⁴⁹

The daily routine for shepherds began at daybreak, when they and their flocks left the outstation in search of fresh feed. They were expected to be out all day, only returning at sunset for the sheep to be watered. The work and daily routine of a shepherd is conveyed in the following statement which was recorded in the Roebourne Magistrates Court in July 1885.

I found the prisoner [Sing Wit] with his sheep rounded up in spinifex near camp (at 3 or 4 pm). I drove him and his sheep away to feed. I told the prisoner if I caught him there again I'd kick his behind. He had no business to be there so early. I did not touch him. I spoke to him in English. He brought in his sheep at sundown. I told him to count his bells and marked sheep. He did so and gave a correct return. He was under my orders. I told him to cook some meat and damper so as to have his dinner out next day from the water. He usually had it at my camp. He said he wouldn't take his dinner out, he'd have it at the water, at the camp. I said, "Wait till morning and see who'll be boss". He said something in Chinese. I then went to bed.⁵⁰

The isolation of shepherds varied according to the number operating from each outstation. The outstation of Lorenzen and Stevenson's station on which Sing Wit worked, catered for at least two Chinese shepherds and a white overseer. An outstation on Clarkson's Station, Roebourne, accommodated a "Swan River native" and a Chinese shepherd.⁵¹ Some outstations had just one shepherd, as was the case with Loo Ah Chit, who worked alone from an outstation on the Hamersley Range.⁵² The only regular visitor to outstations was the station overseer or ration carrier whose job was to check on sheep numbers and replenish rations.⁵³

The isolation of shepherding on a large pastoral station is described in an inquest report on Loo Ah Chit in January 1883.

... the remains of a Chinese coolie named Loo Ah Chit was found [by] Mr W Hall on the Hamersley Range on the 17 ultimo. The body lay in a hut quite dried up and is identified by an ivory ring on the arm.

Deceased arrived here in 188[?] to serve Mr J A Hall and was shepherding at the hut above referred to - 9 miles from the home station whence he was missed in October when rations were taken out to him. Search was made without success and the loss reported to the Police some 3 weeks later. The station is 170 miles from town.

On the 17 December Mr W Hall and Mr Hester visited the hut which had been unoccupied since Loo Ah Chit was missed, and found the body lying in a natural position on his rug, his boots and trousers being beside him. The water had dried up at this camp.⁵⁴

Physical isolation also affected other Chinese station workers, although to a lesser extent than that experienced by shepherds, because of the vast distances to the nearest town or another station. A few of the larger stations, such as Millstream, Cherritta and Hamersley, employed a workforce which included two or more Chinese. For example, between 1887 and 1890 Hamersley Station employed sixteen Chinese station hands, one cook and an indoor servant.⁵⁵ Chinese station hands, also referred to as 'coolies' or 'general outdoor servants', took part in all aspects of station work, included shearing, woolwashing, fencing, boundary riding, mustering, drawing water, clearing scrub, cutting timber, blacksmithing and carpentry.

Stations engaging Chinese labour usually had a Chinese cook. Chinese cooks were regarded as skilled workers and their monthly wages were considerably more than those for station hands: £3.5.0 a month compared to £1.11.6 per month in 1890.⁵⁶ On larger stations, one or more cooks and several assistants, who were often Aboriginal girls, cooked for the station manager and his family as well as for the white station hands.⁵⁷ These stations also employed Chinese 'indoor' servants to clean, wash, serve meals and tend the station's kitchen garden. On smaller stations, one cook was required to cook for all the staff and the main house. The number of workers cooked for on stations varied according to seasonal work. During shearing, for example, the station workforce increased to include shearers. Some shearing teams included a cook, but others relied on the station cook to provide the meals and substantial morning and afternoon teas. Ah Yum, a Chinese cook on Boolardy station in the mid 1890s, received an extra £1 a week for four weeks for additional work during shearing time.⁵⁸

Physical isolation also affected Chinese working on farms in the South West. However, they were in a much better position to overcome the problems of isolation which confronted Chinese in the North West. Chinese employed as general farm labour in the South West were engaged in shepherding and cattle herding which, like shepherding in the North West, were solitary occupations. However, shorter distances to the main homestead meant that shepherds could return to the settlement in the evening.⁵⁹ The work of general farm servants included shepherding, as well as cutting wood, gardening, 'dressing vines' and 'field work'.⁶⁰ Several farmers also employed skilled Chinese carpenters who were employed for specific duties for which they received ten shillings a month more than other Chinese workers.⁶¹ Chinese domestic servants on farms worked both inside the house and outdoors. Some employers expected their Chinese domestic servants to perform such additional tasks as gardening and milling.⁶²

Although domestic servants in towns did not have to contend with the problem of distance, as farm servants did, most worked by themselves and worked extremely long hours which left little time for social activity.⁶³ Notwithstanding the close proximity of other Chinese in towns, the problem of isolation was as real for these domestic servants as it was for Chinese employed on farms in the South West of the colony.

The social isolation of the Chinese was the result of developing anti-Chinese attitudes and language barriers. These excluded Chinese from the politics of white labour both in the workplace and in the wider community. From the arrival of the first indentured Chinese in 1847, scattered reports indicated that white labour generally reacted with hostility towards Chinese in the workplace. One report concerned a Chinese servant, Ah Chee, who was sent to work for Lady Spencer in Albany in 1848. After only a few hours he left and returned to the Resident Magistrate who had arranged his employment. In reporting to the Colonial Secretary, the Resident Magistrate suggested that 'The Chinese do not seem to get on well where there are other servants'. He concluded his report by commenting that Mr Wollaston is also well satisfied with his man A. Kin, but in both our cases no other servants have interference with them.⁶⁴

In the next phase of Chinese labour migration, from the 1870s to 1897, the opposition of white labour to the introduction of Chinese was more clearly apparent. In 1878, the Officer in Charge of Lacapède Islands reported to the Colonial Secretary's Office on the reception of 22 Chinese brought from Melbourne to work on the guano deposits. 'As might be expected a jealous spirit soon became manifest on the part of the European labourers towards them, and some trivial cases were disposed of by fines and short terms of imprisonment'.⁶⁵

By 1880, anti-Chinese attitudes were evident among the wider white population in Perth and Fremantle. White workers and other sections of the community, including urban gentry, tradesmen and small business proprietors expressed reservations over the presence of Chinese labour. The first reported cases of anti-Chinese violence occurred within a few days of each other in 1880 and involved assaults on Chinese in Fremantle. In the first case a Chinese, Hung, was violently assaulted by four men. It was reported that Hung was struck on the head by a fist which knocked him down. He was then kicked in the ribs. The 'prosecution fell through and the delinquents escaped punishment'.⁶⁶ In the second case Tam Ah had 'flour sacks and handfuls of flour thrown at him' by two youths. The two youths were sentenced to 21 days' imprisonment.

Both cases were treated seriously and brought to the Governor's notice in February 1880 by the Resident Magistrate in Fremantle, J.G.Slade. Slade felt that to protect the Chinese against further attacks an example had to be made and this accounts for the severity of the sentence.⁶⁷ The matter might have stopped there but a petition was sent to the Governor from the 'Principal Inhabitants of Fremantle' asking that clemency be shown to the youths and a letter was sent to Slade which threatened that:

If you do not release these boys you imprisoned for pelting the Chinaman you will not live to the end of their sentence and the Governor is in immediate danger of his life for the same affair - From a friend.⁶⁸

The threats were never carried out and the youths served out their sentences.

These anti-Chinese attitudes resulted in the exclusion of Chinese workers in and outside of workplaces throughout the colony. On stations, Chinese were treated as an outgroup by other station workers separated from white and Aboriginal workers. Chinese station workers generally lived in separate quarters on the homestation. The quarters which accommodated five Chinese on Cherritta Station, Roebourne, was 150 to 200 yards from the main house and was known as the 'Chinamen's house'.⁶⁹ On the Woolhouse's Robe River station in 1884, three Chinese slept in a room 100 yards from the 'station dwelling'.⁷⁰ Eating arrangements were also kept separate. As one employer at Mt Stirling wrote in 1881, 'the men I have did not like taking their food at the table with them [Chinese]. Therefore I gave them their food by themselves in the room where they slept'.⁷¹

Chinese also kept to themselves after workhours. Whatever leisure time was available was probably spent in the 'Chinamen's house', talking, gambling and smoking tobacco or opium. Ah Mo described a typical evening's activity for Chinese employed on Woolhouse's station in 1884. 'There were Ah Wah, Ah Sin and the prisoner [Ah Chow] occupying the same room. We had supper together and went to our room. We were talking about opium being bought'.⁷²

Segregation extended beyond the workplace and into the prison cells and cemeteries, especially in the North West. In 1885 the police at Carnarvon wrote to the Resident Magistrate of the Gascoigne district, asking where Chinese prisoners might be located, 'there being only two cells, one for whites, and one for natives'.⁷³ The question of maintaining separate cemeteries, particularly in the North West, was resolved in 1882 after a public meeting of the residents of Roebourne which passed a resolution expressing concern that a

Chinese was buried in the local cemetery in 'violation of the laws of common decency and a direct outrage to the feelings of the whole Christian population of the District'.⁷⁴

The issue was resolved by fencing off the area of the cemetery in which, what the locals called, the 'offending Pagan' was buried. The Resident Magistrate for Roebourne, who had been responsible for the burial, commented that Chinese burials in general cemeteries were common in the eastern colonies and he found the whole matter incomprehensible. Nevertheless, separate cemeteries were built for Chinese, as well as Japanese, Indians and Malays, in the main centres of settlement in the North West.⁷⁵

The isolation of the Chinese was not only the consequence of anti-Chinese ideology, but it was also the outcome of language barriers. Very few Chinese were in a position to learn English before arriving in the colony and throughout most of the nineteenth century, very few settlers spoke any of the Chinese dialects. In 1848, the Colonial Secretary, aware of the problem, attempted to obtain 'vocabularies containing English and Chinese words' for the government. Settlers, when applying for Chinese servants, requested that they 'speak a little English'.⁷⁶ The evidence, however, suggests that this request was almost impossible to meet. This situation created problems, not only for Chinese but also for employers and government officials dealing with them.

Employers also felt the frustration of being unable to communicate. Thomas Brown of York wrote in September 1848:

I have at present two Chinese labourers engaged for me at Singapore and brought here on the Government Schooner. They are not accustomed to our mode of husbandry and as we do not understand their language it is very difficult to make them understand what is required of them. One is a good active man, the other useful.⁷⁷

In the later period of Chinese importation, from the 1870s to 1897, employers complained that they were unable to communicate instructions to Chinese contracted to work for them and, therefore, such workers were next to useless. M. Parker of Mt Stirling described at length in a letter to the Colonial Secretary his frustration at being unable to communicate with two Chinese he had engaged through the colonial government. He remarked that 'old native women are certainly more useful than thes [sic] fellows who are incomprehensible'. He concluded by advising the government that it would have spent its money more wisely by 'getting some good English labourers who would be useful settlers' rather than sending for Chinese unable to speak English.⁷⁸

For Chinese, the inability to communicate in English generated problems which extended beyond the workplace. Several reports of Chinese being arrested on charges of vagrancy because they were unable to explain their situation or circumstances were recorded in the 1890s. One such case was that of Ah Han of Geraldton.⁷⁹ Ah Han was employed by a Mrs Commerfield to cut firewood and generally clean up. Mrs Commerfield described 'John', as she called Ah Han, as 'a hard working, useful and honest Chinaman' and 'a good fellow about the house'. He did not live at the Commerfield's residence but camped with an Aboriginal man in the sandhills close by. He received food and clothing and small wage from the Commerfields and they considered him to be in 'useful employment'. However, three times Ah Han was arrested for vagrancy. On each occasion he was unable to 'give a satisfactory account of himself to the Police as required by law' because he could not speak English. This situation was made worse because no other Chinese living in Geraldton could speak his particular dialect. The police claimed that, in their opinion,

this man is not right in the head, he cannot speak English neither can an interpreter be got to speak to him. On the 16th Nov 1894 I tried 5 or 6 Chinamen but none of them could make him understand.⁸⁰

Resident Magistrates also complained of language barriers and the difficulty in acquiring interpreters for court cases involving Chinese unable to speak English or with limited English.⁸¹ The Resident Magistrate at Roebourne requested the appointment of a Chinese interpreter on several occasions, pointing out that 'the proper protection of Chinese is made difficult by the want of Interpreters' and that he had to call on 'a prisoner in the Lockup who could make his countryman understand a little'.⁸² The Roebourne Resident Magistrate's request was either refused or ignored as there is no evidence that the Court ever employed an interpreter. It was not until the 1899 that the government acknowledged the need for a 'small gratuity' for the services of an interpreter to deal with legal and immigration matters.⁸³

Agreement - however willing or reluctantly extracted - by the servant to work according to the employer's demands without resorting to negotiation or resistance, was the most common form of response by the Chinese and the least likely to be recorded in official documents and correspondence. This implies that the Chinese were especially passive, obedient and submissive employees. However, it must be recognised that the measures of control exerted by employers and the colonial government were such that Chinese workers had little other option but to accept their situation to survive. So some Chinese workers remained with the employer for the full term of the contract, while others chose to renew contracts and stayed with the employer for many years. Acceptance, although common throughout the period of indentured labour, was more prevalent in the later period, from the

1880s to the 1890s, when there were fewer opportunities for negotiation and effective resistance.

Some Chinese servants smoked opium to help them to endure their situation when negotiation or resistance was not feasible. This was common amongst overseas Chinese workers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁸⁴ Warren, in his book *Rickshaw Coolies*, suggests that the Chinese smoked opium because it was a 'remedy for sickness', and 'an antidote for sorrow' and they continued to use it because it was believed to sustain strength and induce sleep after a strenuous day's work.⁸⁵

Apart from using opium in moderate amounts as a panacea for the everyday tedium and grind of the workplace, some Chinese used it in excess with longer term effects. Whether deliberately or unintentionally, the effect was to render the smoker temporarily insane and, therefore, incapable of work. Medical reports suggest that opium smoking was the chief cause of 'feeble mindedness' and 'temporary insanity' among Chinese in Western Australia.⁸⁶ To save the colonial government the expense and burden of caring for 'temporarily insane' Chinese workers, many were repatriated to Singapore as soon as possible. A case representative of several Tan A Chion who was contracted to work for Stevenson and Lorenzon in the Roebourne district in 1885.⁸⁷ Tan was 'locked up' and reported to be suffering from madness before an examination by a medical officer found Tan 'was not insane but temporarily suffering from excessive opium smoking'. As was the practice with most cases of Chinese indentured workers who lost their physical or mental incapacity to work, Tan was returned to Singapore.

Negotiation, the process by which employer and employee accommodate their respective positions, was another form of response by the Chinese to their work. Its use was limited by the degree of employer control and the isolation of the worker, however, negotiation was available to Chinese introduced through the public importation scheme because the colonial government acted as the primary employer with the nominated settler as the 'immediate' employer. The colonial government, through the officers of the Protector of Chinese, the Immigration Superintendent and Resident Magistrates, acted as a forum for mediation and intervention between the employee and 'immediate' employer. For the short period in which it operated, both servants and masters used the office of Protector of Chinese as an agent for negotiation.⁸⁸ As this process was reasonably successful, the number of recorded cases of active resistance was negligible. Employees were aware that, if dissatisfied, they could make a complaint which would probably lead to them being moved to a more pleasant workplace, or they could give a month's notice and another employer would be found for them.

Where language barriers prevented this process of negotiation, the Chinese employed non-cooperative or passive forms of resistance. One of the first indentured servants introduced to the colony in 1847, Ay Chong, unable to speak English and reluctant to remain with his initial employer, W.Cowan at York, defied orders and refused food. Cowan, somewhat bewildered at this behaviour, wrote of the problem to the Colonial Secretary.

The Chinese servant Ay Chong having taken offence for some cause, which I cannot ascertain, has applied to be removed to another situation. For five days he has tasted nothing in my house but a cup of tea and persisted in rejecting all other food. During the greater part of that time having been suffering from severe inflammation in the eyes he was directed by the Doctor to confine himself to the house but he has continually gone out in the heat of the day and at night, absenting himself for hours at a time, contrary to my express orders, explained to him by some of his countrymen.⁸⁹

Chinese indentured servants used various forms of passive and active resistance as a preliminary phase to negotiation, where negotiation was not possible because of language barriers or where neither party was prepared to confer. Active forms of resistance such as absconding and work stoppages were illegal under colonial legislation and came to the notice of the Resident Magistrate's Courts and the Colonial Secretary's Office. Resistance strategies were used more frequently in the later period of Chinese indentured labour by Chinese introduced under private importation schemes where there was greater direct employer control and fewer opportunities for negotiation. The majority of acts of resistance were made on an individual basis in the few instances of collective action, however, the rigour with which employers re-exerted control prevented employees from achieving their aims.

Non co-operation and other forms of passive resistance, such as 'brooding and moping', were used to express dissatisfaction with workplace conditions. They also indicated homesickness and loneliness. Several Chinese were reported to be so 'broody' and homesick as to be 'quite useless'. William Parker of Mt Stirling, for example, wrote of two Chinese indentured servants he had employed through the public scheme in 1881 who complained of the food they were offered. One servant was reported to have 'flown into a passion' and walked off, leaving the other, who did not go

but remained gazing upon his departing friend until out of sight, after that he became quiet, dull and motionless, he will not take any food. I cannot understand what he wants. On Sunday morning he was crying most pitifully, yet he would not be comforted, nor take any food from my hands, or anyone else. And not wishing to see the poor fellow starve to

death here I have got Mr F Sewell, who was going to York, to take him to town where he can be with his fellow countrymen.⁹⁰

Passive resistance, such as refusing food and 'moping', appears to have been tolerated more readily by employers, like William Parker, who knew they could be relieved of such servants. Employers engaging Chinese through private schemes had no recourse but to keep the servant for the full length of contract. Passive resistance was not treated with the same degree of tolerance. Ah Lik, for example, was employed by Frederick Wells on Millhouse Station for three years as a general servant in 1886. Shortly after his arrival on the station, Ah Lik was described as 'cranky'; he would not eat and refused to work. Wells admitted that he gave Ah Lik 'a slight kick with the side of my boot' after he became 'cranky'. That evening Ah Lik absconded and was discovered barely alive the next day, at the bottom of a well. Before he died, he gave a statement in which he claimed that he had escaped to the well because he was 'very frightened of the foreman' and wanted to be returned to Singapore.⁹¹

For Chinese workers in particularly difficult work situations, absconding was the only form of resistance which allowed them some respite and, if repeatedly carried out, could even release them from their contracts. To abscond was an offence under the Master and Servants Act and servants could be sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour for up to six months. Instead of a deterrent, some Chinese, like those on McLeod's station in the Roebourne district in 1881, treated the prison sentence as a means of escape.⁹² Between 1881 and 1882, McLeod employed eleven Chinese indentured workers. Of these, six recorded convictions and served prison sentences for absconding. One servant had 'previously been imprisoned for one, two and three months successively and refused to go back', rendering him liable for the maximum term of six months, which the servant was quite willing to serve. In March 1882, six of McLeod's servants 'absented themselves from service without permission' in a group walk-out.⁹³ All six servants were later arrested and each sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour and fined six shillings. The case was the first recorded incident of mass action by Chinese servants in Western Australia. McLeod's servants were not the only Chinese indentured workers who used absconding and the subsequent prison term to escape harsh conditions and treatment in the workplace. A survey of 67 cases brought before the Magistrate's Court in Roebourne between 1881 and 1883 involving Chinese indicates that 30, or almost half, involved absconding.⁹⁴

To abscond from the workplace, particularly in remote areas of the North West, was not a course of action to be taken lightly. Few Chinese possessed the skills to deal with vast distances and the unfamiliar environment in which water was difficult to find and the

chances of getting lost very high. Several reports in the Colonial Secretary's Office files tell of Chinese indentured servants found dead from dehydration and heat exhaustion, weeks or months after they had been reported missing from stations. One case, typical of these reports, concerned a Chinese shepherd employed by Clarkson in the Roebourne district in 1883 and 1884.⁹⁵ In January 1884, the servant had written a letter 'complaining of being insufficiently fed, too much work and beating'. He was reported missing shortly after having written the letter and his body found two miles from Roebourne a week later. The inquest report on his death noted that 'deceased had died from exhaustion and want of water; he had walked about 40 miles in 2 or 3 days and was 11 miles from the last water ...'.⁹⁶

That Chinese servants were prepared to risk death in an attempt to escape from their workplaces shows the extent of their discontent. Absconding gave individual Chinese some hope of escape.

Collective action by Chinese workers, to achieve its desired outcomes, required effective communication and inadequate control. In colonial Western Australia, with a few hundred Chinese indentured workers scattered over vast distances and with strict control maintained by employers and reinforced by the colonial government, Chinese indentured labourers were in no position to improve wages or conditions through collective strategies. The few recorded cases of planned, collective resistance all failed.

One case which occurred in January 1882 involved six servants in the Roebourne district who absconded after complaints that 'they had salt meat, that the master was sulky, and they had run short of rations'.⁹⁷ Each servant was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour and fined six shillings. There is no indication that the food or attitude of the employer had changed following the 'walk-out'.

Another 'walk-out' in May 1882 involved five Chinese indentured servants who were engaged by Donald McPhearson at Glentromie station through the public importation scheme. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary's Office, McPhearson gave his account of the events leading up the 'walk-out' and the outcome.

At the end of six months the cook incited the others to become dissatisfied requesting more wages, (this idea was put into his head by letters which he was constantly receiving from his friends in the Towns) and upon being told they were under a three years engagement, they protested they were engaged to remain in the Colony for that term, not to one Master. So four out of the five left within the month and the other followed shortly. After simply saying, he had nothing to complain of only the others had gone and he must follow. With much loss of time and considerable

expense I got warrants for four, to make them return, after much trouble and delay three of them were tried in Newcastle and treated as the victims of my injustice and severity, they were then reluctantly sentenced to three months imprisonment, at the expiration of which they were allowed to choose for themselves. The Resident Magistrate even writing me a letter, requesting me to give the carpenter back his tools and to render him every possible assistance, before he had absconded he had himself placed his belongings in security.⁹⁸

Although the servant's 'walk-out' did not achieve higher wages and resulted in imprisonment, their action succeeded in releasing them from McPhearson's employment. The case for their release was determined primarily by their engagement through the public importation scheme which placed them in a better position to change employers. However, their collective action helped their cause. A Chinese servant employed by McPhearson in the previous year and who absconded after being assaulted by McPhearson's son, was not afforded the same consideration.⁹⁹ Ah Loo was given three months' imprisonment with hard labour and returned to McPhearson, the Resident Magistrate finding that he 'did not consider Ah Loo justified in leaving his master's employ'.

Other collective actions failed. In 1884, Chinese workers held two strikes which resulted in their imprisonment and return to their original employers. The first involved eleven servants employed by I.H. Monger at York.¹⁰⁰ The Chinese, Monger alleged to have been the 'ring leader', Ah Yong Sien, was reported to have 'repeatedly refused to work unless his wages were raised' and 'conducted Ten of the Chinese to refuse to work'. Ah Yong Sien was sentenced to three months' imprisonment which was remitted after he had 'expressed his sorrow for his conduct, and his desire to return to work, and promise[d] faithfully to behave and fulfil his agreement in future'. The other ten Chinese were returned to Monger after a 'few days confinement'. The pressure placed on Ah Yong Sien to abrogate his original position is not known, but no doubt he was made aware of the hopeless position he was in, in attempting to seek higher wages, and that he had no other recourse but to return to Monger.

Seven months later, in November 1884, another strike occurred which involved seven indentured Chinese employed by C.D. Price to work on the construction of the Roebourne Telegraph Line.¹⁰¹ The reasons for the strike are not recorded but, according to the report submitted by the Resident Magistrate at Carnarvon,

Seven Chinese in service of C D Price refused to work. Price informed them that if they did not work he would take their rations from them they still refused to work and when Price attempted to take their rations they attacked him and his party with axes and sticks.¹⁰²

The Chinese were arrested and each sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labour for refusing to work and two months' for assaulting Price. The cost of transporting them by cart from the construction site to Carnarvon was deducted from their wages.

Although collective action had no effect on improving wages and conditions in the workplace, group action did allow Chinese to make certain responses which, as individuals, would have been difficult or impossible without employer retaliation. These included deliberate tardy or 'impertinent' behaviour and charging employers under the Master and Servants Act.

There are few recorded cases of tardy or impertinent behaviour, probably because employers dealt with the offenders and the problem did not reach the attention of the Resident Magistrate or the Colonial Secretary's Office. However, two cases heard in the Albany Magistrate's Court in 1880 exemplify what colonial employers defined as 'impertinent behaviour'. The case concerned two Chinese servants who, although not engaged in the same workplace, lived and worked in close proximity and probably conferred on the manner of their action.¹⁰³ One Chinese refused to get out of bed at 6.30 am 'asserting the right to lay by when he liked, and finishing off by blowing a puff of tobacco smoke in her Ladyship's face'. The other refused to undertake additional work and claimed that although 'he had no objection to blacking Mrs and Mr McKails boots but that he objected doing so for two visitors'. Both Chinese were given a short prison sentence and discharged from their contracts. These two seemingly trivial cases drew attention in Albany as employers were concerned that Chinese were behaving badly, becoming 'mutinous' and giving 'great trouble'.¹⁰⁴ To prevent a further deterioration in the bonds of control, the cases were taken to the Magistrate's Court rather than dealt with by employers.¹⁰⁵

Conclusion

Chinese indentured workers provided colonial pastoralists, agriculturalists and pearlers with a source of labour in times when white labour was difficult to acquire or retain. Moreover, Chinese labour was perceived by employers to be 'cheap' and 'submissive'. However, in order to retain that perception employers acquired and used a variety of controls. Despite these, Chinese workers demonstrated that they were far from being 'cheap' and 'submissive'. That they were rarely successful in their demands for better working conditions was largely due to their inability to participate in organised industrial action because of the physical and social isolation in which they worked rather than any innate submissiveness.

- 1 The general stereotype of an 'ideal' Chinese servant was one who was 'cheap, trustworthy and useful' and prepared to work at menial tasks for less wages than white labour demanded. Servants who satisfied employers were described as 'very steady, quiet and works hard' (State Archives, Western Australia (SA): Acc.36; Vol.179/113. 1848) and 'quick, active and willing, and may be taught to do anything and do it well'. (SA: Acc.36; Vol.171/249. 1848) Servants who did not meet the criteria of the 'ideal' servant were presented as 'useless', 'slow' and 'stupid', 'obstinate' and 'insolent'. (SA: Acc.36; Vol.171/249 and 181/177, 1848 and Acc.527; File 1265/1881.)
- 2 SA: Acc.35; Vol.160/46. 1847.
- 3 SA: Acc.527; File 530/1878.
- 4 See Anne Atkinson, 'Chinese Labour and Capital in Western Australia, 1847-1947', Ph.D. Thesis, Murdoch University, 1991, for an examination of the process of recruiting and engaging Chinese indentured labour and the details of contracts.
- 5 The patterns of response shown by Chinese imported through private schemes are similar to those demonstrated by Chinese indentured labour, also imported privately, in Moreton Bay between 1848 and 1860. See Rod Fisher, 'Roots of Racism: The Chinese Experience In Early Brisbane, 1848-1860', *Labour History*, No.59, November 1990.
- 6 SA: Acc.527; File 1428/1881.
- 7 SA: Acc.527; File 1478/1882.
- 8 See F.K. Crowley, 'Master and Servant in Western Australia 1829-1851', *Royal Western Australian Historical Society Journal*, Vol.4, Part V, 1953 and 'Master and Servant in Western Australia 1851-1901', i, Vol.4, Part 6, 1954 for a detailed examination of the history of the Master and Servants Act in Western Australia.
- 9 Master and Servants Act, 1842, 6 Vic., No.5, 1842.
- 10 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880.
- 11 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880.
- 12 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880.
- 13 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880.
- 14 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880.
- 15 SA: Acc.527; File 718/1880.
- 16 SA: Acc.527; File 1250/1880.
- 17 Ah Hook was sentenced to serve two months' imprisonment with hard labour and ordered to pay £2.3.6 costs for 'absenting himself from service without permission' in the Roebourne district in 1881. (SA: Acc.527; File 1444/1882.)
- 18 SA: Acc.527; File 1444/1882.
- 19 SA: Acc.527; File 1394/1881.
- 20 SA: Acc.527; File 1394/1881.
- 21 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882.
- 22 SA: Acc.527; File 2682/1884.
- 23 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1882. Charges against Ah Ha for absconding were dismissed because Clinch did not appear at the Magistrate's Court to give evidence.
24SA: Acc.527; File 1440/1893.
- 25 The other case of a reported death through assault involved Chou Jum Chu and Leopold Bibra. It was claimed that Chou was kicked with heavy boots then hit with a stick. (SA: Acc.527; File 375/1886)
- 26 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882.
- 27 SA: Acc.36; Vol. 168/201. 1848.
- 28 SA: Acc.49; Vol.24/368. 1848.
- 29 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880. Daily rates of pay for gardeners and general labourers were six to seven shillings for white labour. (Blue Books, 1880)
- 30 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1882. In 1881, 30 shillings was the equivalent of \$8.18. The average wage for white workers in 1881 was 34 shillings a month. (Blue Books, 1881)
- 31 SA: Acc.527; File 1394/1881.
- 32 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880. Several misconceptions arose amongst settlers as to the food requirements of Chinese. A more notable one was that Chinese required special rations, including 'an unusual form of Fish Bile'.
- 33 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1881.

- 34 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1881.
- 35 Sucheng Chan, *This Bitter Sweet Soil: The Chinese in California Agriculture, 1860-1910*, Berkely, 1986. pp.332-333 and Anthony B. Chan, 'Chinese bachelor workers in nineteenth century Canada', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol.5, No.4, October 1982. pp.516-523.
- 36 Kay Saunders, 'The Workers' Paradox: Indentured Labour in the Queensland Sugar Industry to 1920', in Kay Saunders (ed), *Indentured Labour in the British Empire 1834 - 1920*, Croom Helm, London, 1984. p.218.
- 37 Kay Saunders, *Workers in Bondage: The Origins and Bases of Unfree Labour in Queensland 1824-1916*, St Lucia, 1982. p.135.
- 38 Anthony B. Chan, 'Chinese bachelor workers'. pp.516-523.
- 39 Sucheng Chan, 'This Bitter Sweet Soil'. pp.331-333.
- 40 Ping Chiu, *Chinese Labor in California, 1850-1889*, Wisconsin, 1963. pp.36-37 and 47-48.
- 41 Ping Chiu, 'Chinese Labor in California'. p.47.
- 42 SA: Acc.527; File 1459/1882.
- 43 SA: Acc.527; File 1459/1882. Lowe Kong Meng was a wealthy Victorian Chinese who had interests in shipping, trade, agriculture, banking and plantations and was a leader of the Australian Chinese community.
- 44 The survey covered Chinese resident in Western Australia between 1847 and 1900. Information from Anne Atkinson, *Asian Immigrants to Western Australia, 1829-1901*, Perth, 1988.
- 45 Jenny Hardie, *Nor'Westers of the Pilbara Breed*, Port Hedland, 1981. p.34.
- 46 Nancy E. Withnell Taylor, *Yeera-muk-a-doo*, Fremantle, 1980. p.217.
- 47 SA: Acc 527; File 1426/1884.
- 48 SA: Acc.527; File 4417/1886.
- 49 See Peter Taylor, *Station Life in Australia: Pioneers and Pastoralists*, Sydney, 1988, for a general description of the organisation and operation of pastoral stations.
- 50 SA: Acc.527; File 3218/1885. The statement was made by James Kelly, a ration carrier on Lorenzen and Stevenson's station in the Roebourne district. Sing Wit was found guilty of assaulting Kelly with a knife causing several wounds and was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment.
- 51 SA: Acc.527; File 1422/1884.
- 52 SA: Acc.527; File 1521/1883.
- 53 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882. In 1882, shepherds on McLeod's station in the Roebourne district, for example, 'were supplied with meat from the homestead - on Monday and Thursday'.
- 54 SA: Acc 527; File 1521/1883.
- 55 Information from a survey of Chinese indentured labour from Atkinson, 'Asian Immigrants to Western Australia'.
⁵⁶SA: Acc 527; File 1653/1890.
- 57 Ann McGrath, *Born in the Cattle*, Sydney, 1987. p.66.
- 58 Christopher Fyfe, *The Bale Fillers: Western Australian Wool, 1826-1916*, Perth, 1983. p.169. In the mid-1890s, indentured Chinese cooks received £3.5.0 a month. An extra £1 a week would have more than doubled Ah Yum's monthly pay during shearing time.
- 59 The introduction of fencing also lessened the tedium and isolation of shepherding. Fyfe refers to the enclosure of several runs on Beringarra Station in the North West in 1883. Fyfe, 'The Bale Fillers'. p.147.
- 60 SA: Acc.49; Vol.24/187-188. 1848.
- 61 SA: Acc.49; Vol.24/187-188. 1848. General farm hands and domestic servants received £1.5.0 (\$SS6) per month and carpenters £2.0.0 (\$SS10) per month.
- 62 For example, S.W.Viveash, the Resident Magistrate for Swan and a property owner, expected his domestic servant to 'milk and garden' as well as cook. (SA: Acc.36; Vol.157/90. 1847)
- 63 Beverly Kingston argues that loneliness and isolation were conditions common to all general domestic servants in this period and were compounded if the servant was the only employee in the house. *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann*, Melbourne, 1975. p.32.
- 64 SA: Acc.36; Vol.179/113. 1848.
- 65 SA: Acc.527; File 100/1878. This report is the only indication that Chinese were imported from anywhere but Singapore.
- 66 SA: Acc.527; File 1228/1880.
- 67 SA: Acc.527; File 1228/1880.

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- 68 SA: Acc.527; File 1228/1880.
- 69 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882. Made of brush walls, the 'Chinaman's house' measured 11 feet by 10 feet and contained five bunks around which were hung mosquito curtaining.
- 70 SA: Acc.527; File 5857/1884.
- 71 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1881.
- 72 SA: Acc.527; File 5857/1884.
- 73 SA: Acc.527; File 799/1885.
- 74 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882.
- 75 Carnarvon, Cossack, Port Hedland, Broome, Derby and Wyndham all have sections of cemeteries set aside for Asian burials. Except in the Karrakatta Cemetery, the practice was not carried out in the South West. For example, Chinese graves are scattered throughout the Albany Cemetery.
- 76 SA: Acc.49; Vol.24/184-186. 1848.
- 77 Peter Cowan (ed), *A Faithful Picture: the letters of Eliza and Thomas Brown at York in the Swan River Colony, 1841-1852*, Fremantle, 1977. p.82.
- 78 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1881.
- 79 SA: Acc.527; File 126/1896.
- 80 SA: Acc.527; File 126/1896.
- 81 See for example (SA: Acc.527; File 1361/1881.)
- 82 SA: Acc.527; File 1475/1882.
- 83 SA: Acc.527; File 1508/1898. The government assented to paying an interpreter, H. Diction, a gratuity of £5 after he had asked for some funding as a 'favour' as he was dealing with all Chinese and Japanese entries and departures at Fremantle for which he received no payment.
- 84 The major studies of Chinese in Australia by May, Cronin and Yong, as well as several minor studies, all mention opium smoking as a common leisure activity of Chinese workers. No statistical data remain, however, as to the extent of opium smoking among Chinese. Studies of Chinese in the Americas and South East Asia also refer to opium smoking as a universal practice amongst Chinese labourers.
- 85 James Francis Warren, *Rickshaw Coolie: A Peoples History of Singapore (1880-1940)*, Singapore, 1986. pp.241-242. Warren states that only two per cent of Chinese rickshaw pullers were opium smokers when they arrived in Singapore. After arrival, however, this figure rose to eighty per cent.
- 86 SA: Acc.527; Files 798/1885 and 141/1885.
- 87 SA: Acc.527; File 793/1885.
- 88 In the first period of importation - 1847/1848 - the Guardian of Juvenile Immigrants was officially appointed Protector of Chinese. In the second period of importation, the Superintendent of Immigration assumed the responsibility whilst the public importation scheme was in operation.
- 89 SA: Acc.36; Vol.180/327. 1847.
- 90 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1881.
- 91 SA: Acc.527; File 4417/1886.
- 92 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882.
- 93 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882.
- 94 SA: Acc.527; Files 1444/1881, 11481/1882 and 1521/1883.
- 95 SA: Acc.527; File 1422/1884.
- 96 SA: Acc.527; File 1422/1884.
- 97 SA: Acc.527; File 1422/1884.
- 98 SA: Acc.527; File 1481/1882.
- 99 SA: Acc.527; File 1424/1882.
- 100 SA: Acc.527; File 570/1884.
- 101 SA: Acc.527; File 6411/1884.
- 102 SA: Acc.527; File 6411/1884.
- 103 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880.
- 104 SA: Acc.527; File 1265/1880.
- 105 Several cases of individual Chinese charged with being 'obstinate' and 'refusing to obey the master' were heard in the Roebourne Magistrate's Court in 1882. In all cases the offenders were employed in a labour force involving several Chinese.

'Wayward Girls': The Policing of Women in Western Australia Between the Wars.

Leonie Stella*

The history of the policing of women and the appointment of women police¹ is a contentious one replete with contradictions between the protection and control of women, their resistance to moral's policing and masculine responses to their struggles. The origins of the Women's Police lie in first wave feminism in Britain where voluntary women's police were founded by militant suffragettes for the dual purpose of facilitating women's entry into the public sphere and protecting women and girls from men's violence.² This initiative was subverted by state authorities through the official appointment of women police during World War I for the specific purpose of policing the morals of women, their justification being the fear of venereal disease.³ The official entry of women into the police force in Britain met decades of resistance marked by inequality and the restriction of their role to that of morals police.⁴

The history of the women police in Australia is very similar. Women were appointed to the Women's Police⁵ between 1915 and 1917 at the height of concern about venereal disease, specifically to control the sexuality of women and 'children', a label usually applied to young women. Judith Allen maintains that the surveillance of women increased during the interwar period despite the fact that 'one in seven [returned World War I servicemen] had been discharged venereally diseased' in order to ensure that 'clean' women would be available for men.⁶ This concern took precedence over any need to protect the rights of women and undermined demands from women's organisations for women's entry into the public sphere. However, those women who challenged such restrictions and sought to create initiatives for the benefit of all women were faced with a 'masculine fraternity' which closed ranks on those wanting to enter the public sphere, who also resisted attempts to obtain redress for crimes committed against women and female children, and who regarded females as inherently sexually depraved. Allen argues that the early twentieth century was characterised by an increase in, but an under-policing of, violent crimes committed by men against women.⁷

This article examines the extent to which Western Australian women and girls between the wars became the objects of a 'moral panic', were subjected to increased surveillance by state authorities and resisted attempts to control them. As well, it shows how a Western Australia 'masculine fraternity' closed ranks against Western Australian women, and their attempts to deal with crimes committed against women and girls.⁸

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In Australia the first suggestion for the appointment of women police came in 1902 from the National Council of Women in Victoria as part of a package of prison reforms.⁹ In Western Australia, over the next fifteen years, members of the National Council of Women (NCW), Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Labor Women's Organisation (LWO), and the Women's Service Guild (WSG), lobbied the government for increased protection of women and children through the appointment of women as lawyers, magistrates, justices of the peace, women's probationary officers and policewomen.¹⁰ The first suggestion that the government should appoint women police seems to have been made, in 1915, by labour women in the *Westralian Worker*, alongside a report on the Women's Service Guild's opposition to the Health Act Amendment Bill.¹¹ Jean Beadle, the writer of the women's column and a prominent union activist, was a member of the LWO and WSG. The reports that appeared in the *Westralian Worker* indicate that members of the LWO, WSG and WCTU supported the appointment of women police in the belief that they would assist women and protect women and children from abuse or 'white slave trafficking'. Although the WCTU subsequently expressed the belief that the *need* for women police was a 'disgrace to any civilised country' and was brought about by intemperance, the organisation clearly expected them to be protectors of women and 'punish those who deliberately plan their destruction'.¹²

For the next two years the government was lobbied by the Australian Labor Federation, the women's organisations and members of the clergy on a range of social issues including the appointment of women police. The women's organisations were aware of the unequal social and economic position of women. They knew that women who had no economic support faced the very real dangers of poverty, disease, 'illegitimacy', and discrimination on the grounds that they were not 'respectable'. They also referred the government to cases of child assault and agreed that the appointment of a woman's probationary officer, and women's police was an essential part of child welfare reforms.¹³ However they were divided over the issue of the compulsory examination of people suspected of carrying venereal disease and the signed statement clause being inserted into the Health Act Amendment Bill. The WSG, under the leadership of Bessie Rischbieth, and supported by Jean Beadle, was opposed to it on the grounds that it would result in what they called a 'tyranny over defenceless women and girls'.¹⁴ Edith Cowan and the eugenicist Dr. Roberta Jull of the NCW supported the clause and the WSG subsequently severed its affiliation with the NCW.¹⁵

In May 1917, a deputation (led by the Anglican Social Questions Committee and Edith Cowan of the NCW) to the Colonial Secretary, Colebatch recommended the appointment of women police to save girls and young women who walked the streets from 'social degradation and from disease', . The clergymen present referred to the necessity to appoint what they called a 'good woman' to 'watch over the social purity of the sex she represented'. Not that they were concerned about women. Rather they were most worried about fourteen and fifteen year old boys who, they alleged, were being 'tempted to vice' by corrupt young girls.¹⁶ Persuaded, at least partly, by the deputation, the government decided to appoint women police and the decision was subsequently announced in July 1917. The WSG, although not represented on the deputation, supported the decision after a separate meeting with the Commissioner of Police.¹⁷ Since Rischbieth had drawn attention in 1915 to collusion between magistrates, police and health authorities over the forced examination of women suspected of carrying venereal disease, it is tempting to suggest that the support given by the WSG and LWO for the appointment of women police was a compromise to ensure that such women would be examined by other women. Indeed the state's first police-women were trained nurses with some knowledge of both venereal disease, and with the treatment of so called 'delinquent girls' but the dearth of surviving records makes this suggestion difficult to confirm.¹⁸ The existing records do confirm, however, that the state authorities agreed to the appointment of women police in response to the perceived need to protect Australian soldiers and 'future generations' from 'amateur' prostitutes and 'clandestine traffickers' and that this goal took precedence over the protection of women and girls from assault.

The appointment of women police was debated in the press and within the police force for several months prior to the announcement. The WA Police Association debate in the *Police Review* reveals a strongly sexist attitude towards women and a powerful defence of the masculine sphere. The editor claimed that the suggestion was dangerous and that there would be nothing for women to do in 'the ordinary curriculum of police duties', and that although morals policing was necessary it should be carried out by voluntary organisations rather than by the police. But more than this, he also suggested that 'the best policeman a woman could have was her mother'.¹⁹

The role of the new recruits to the police force was rigidly restricted to that of moral welfare policing, and was confirmed by the appointment of middle class women, regarded as 'the right type' of women, to police the morals of women and girls who failed to attain the ideal of the good woman. In order to gain the confidence of women and children the women police were prevented from wearing uniforms. This, as the women's organisations were

aware, also symbolised their lack of power and authority.²⁰ They were actively discouraged from policing crimes committed by men against women and children, instead they were specifically instructed to:

... keep a separate file for all young women and girls, whom they endeavour by their assistance to put on the straight path, such file to record their movements and behaviour until the officer is satisfied that they have either reformed or have become incorrigible.²¹

Throughout the interwar period, Connell, the Commissioner of Police, reiterated that the Women's Police were 'merely welfare officers', members of an auxiliary of the police force under his control, appointed not to engage in prosecuting suspects but to prevent 'misconduct' amongst women and children. He claimed that the women lacked the education and training to enable them to investigate crimes or to be promoted. He also implied that no male constable could be expected to take orders from a senior female officer.²² Often throughout the interwar period the women's organisations challenged him. They called for an increase in the numbers of women police, an extension of their duties to enable them to take statements from women and children assaulted by men, the removal of the Women's Police from the Commissioner's control and the appointment of a senior woman to lead the Women's Police as an autonomous body.²³

The commissioner fiercely resisted these demands and during the early 1930s he led many attempts to disband the Women's Police altogether.²⁴ Unable to do so, he had, nevertheless, been able to keep their numbers small. From 1917 to 1939 there were no more than six or seven women working at any one time and their numbers were not increased until 1940 when renewed fear of venereal disease and 'promiscuous' women brought the number to eight.²⁵

The increased surveillance of women and girls was not merely the result of the appointment of Women's Police. It took place not only within the context of the moral panic relating to 'wayward girls', and venereal disease, which peaked during the 1930s, but also within the context of the rise of the influential science of eugenics and of professional and 'scientific experts' who advocated progressive reforms to promote the health and welfare of the nation's population.

As the mothers of a race of future Australians, those young women, who were referred to in the eugenic and professional discourses as 'clandestine traffickers', or 'amateur prostitutes', 'wayward girls' and 'incorrigibles', became the targets of increased control. As Jill

Matthews points out, middle-class opinions of women not living in accordance with the ideal of the 'good woman' were seen to be in need of control, reformation or institutionalisation both for their own good and in the best interest of the community.²⁶

There is now no trace of the separate files the women police were instructed to keep but each year they provided information relating to their work to the Commissioner of Police to edit and insert in his Annual Report of Parliament. While the Commissioner stated that women police were 'very effective among young women' and that this was 'of benefit to the State', each report is very generalised and inconsistent in the presentation of figures.²⁷ They reveal little about the actual work undertaken by the women's police or about those under surveillance. For example, the 1929 report in part read as follows:

2315 visits were paid, embracing the following inquiries: Alleged misconduct of women, girls, and children, absconders, neglected, uncontrollable and destitute children, lost children, girls and women assisted, situations found for men, women and girls, women and girls cautioned re drink and immorality, girls and women without visible means of support, mentally deficient, aged and destitute persons, women who have left their homes, houses of ill-repute, wine shops, foreign eating and boarding-houses kept under observation, girls returned to their parents, inquiries for other departments, Supreme and Police Courts attended with women and girls, trots, races, White City, endurance dancing, pictures, railway stations, beaches, City Beach till 1am and streets patrolled, summons served.²⁸

This list was almost identical each year and was accompanied by a breakdown of the number of cautions issued to women for 'neglecting their homes', women and girls 'persuaded to return to their homes', girls and children 'removed from immoral surroundings', and the committal of persons deemed to be 'mentally deficient' to institutions or referred to psychologists.

The Women's Police worked in close co-operation with welfare authorities, and the Children's Court, using the State Children's Act 1907, to increase surveillance and control of women and girls.²⁹ The Commissioner of Public Health justified this in evidence provided to the 1918 Select Committee inquiring into the effectiveness of the Health Act Amendment Bill, 1915. In support of his claim for greater power to enforce compulsory examination of those suspected of carrying venereal disease, he claimed that, despite a higher incidence of disease in adult men than women, there was a much higher incidence of disease amongst girls than boys. He asserted that a much higher incidence amongst very young girls could be attributed to 'accidental' contamination through sleeping in their mothers' beds rather than to any evidence that they might have been interfered with.³⁰

Arthur Lovekin, an ardent eugenicist, owner/editor of the *Daily News* until 1926, and an influential parliamentarian who dominated the Children's Court, he said, as a Special Magistrate throughout the interwar period, also provided evidence to the Select Committee. He joined the Children's Court, he said, because of his special interest in venereal disease, and gave to the Committee evidence of 'depravity and disease ... amongst children'.³¹ He advocated compulsory examination of children (by which he meant girls or young women) and admitted charging and institutionalising them over minor issues because, in his opinion, they were diseased and could more easily be examined by the Government Medical Officer. Lovekin also presented secondary evidence from overseas which proved, to him at least, that the protection of men from promiscuous women and girls was essential for the future of the white race.³² Evidence to the 1918 Select Committee from those opposed to the amendment of the Bill, such as Bessie Rischbieth, was ignored.

Blanche Helen Dugdale, one of the two newly appointed women's police, however, supported the Commissioner and Lovekin. She argued that venereal disease could be spread through the sharing of clothing and that what she called 'young girls, amateur prostitutes' were increasing in numbers. The most important of her duties, she affirmed, was to look after these girls, 'persuade' them to undergo treatment and if they were under the age of eighteen to make them wards of the State. The authorities, she claimed, would then have to examine them and report to the Board of Health.³³

The appointment of the Women's Police during this hysteria about racial degeneration and venereal disease inevitably led to an increase in the numbers of women and girls being brought before the Children's Court on charges of being destitute, neglected, or uncontrollable, and in the numbers of young women being labelled as delinquents being sent to institutions. Mothers were also brought under surveillance if their ability to control or care for their children, especially their daughters, was questionable. A 'particular class of girl' became the object of police and welfare concern and such a girl could be made a Ward of the State until she turned eighteen or 21, removed from her home, or taken into care on the grounds that she was 'living under conditions from which she was likely to lapse into a life of vice or crime'.³⁴ These attempts to control girls and young women were also applied to victims of sexual assault or to young women striving to lead independent lives.

In one instance a young woman told Lovekin in the Children's Court that she hated boys, that her parents disapproved of her intention to be a nun and that she had run away from home to find employment. He declared her to be neglected and had her escorted to the Home of the Good Shepherd where she kicked a policeman in a 'vital part'. Lovekin

subsequently described her as a 'venomous tongued vixen' and recommended her transfer to Fremantle prison.³⁵

In 1920 Blanche Dugdale reported that in Perth women police had dealt with 57 children under the age of thirteen and, of those, 52 were committed to the care of the State Children's Department. The women police working in Fremantle reported that they had dealt with 22 girls whom they brought before the court and made State Children, and that 27 other girls between the ages of thirteen and 21 had also been dealt with. Policewomen Austin and Fogarty in Kalgoorlie reported that they had been instrumental in having an unspecified number of children committed to the care of the state and that, during the two months since their appointment to the goldfields in 1920, "they had dealt with 19 girls for various offences; embracing bad company, indecent behaviour, pregnancy, stealing, attempted rape, frequenting houses of ill-fame, and girls accosted by drunken men".³⁶ Plainly young women who were pregnant or victims of sexual crime were also regarded as offenders requiring surveillance.

The most useful source for revealing the details of this process of protection, surveillance and control are the evidence books of the Children's Court. These reveal how social class structured the nature of the welfare duties carried out by the Women's Police and their involvement in State intervention in families. They also show how both the police and the Court tried to impose such values as cleanliness, appropriate housing, constructive leisure, frugality and sexual morality were imposed on girls and young women.³⁷ The Evidence Book for 1920/21, covering almost twelve months, contains approximately 200 cases brought before the bench with the police being concerned in about one third of them.³⁸ In more than half of these cases policewomen were witnesses for the State Children's Department or the Police Department. It is obvious from some cases that the Women's Police followed up inquiries they themselves had undertaken, but it is impossible to arrive at an exact number of these. Cases for the Police Department were presented by the prosecuting sergeant of the Metropolitan Branch of the Police Department as, according to the Commissioner, the Women's Police did not have the authority or training to enable them to present cases themselves.³⁹ Nevertheless, in most of the cases their evidence carried a great deal of authority, but occasionally they were challenged by the bench, witnesses, defendants, officers of the State Children's Department and even policemen, on the grounds that their evidence was insufficient.⁴⁰

Generally cases involving the Women's Police fell into two groups: those in which parents were alleged to be neglectful, and those relating to the behaviour of older girls or young

women. The distinction was, however, blurred by the emphasis placed on the policing of morals and the role expected of mothers. Some of the young girls brought before the court were single mothers and daughters, and were amongst the 'children' alleged to be neglected by immoral mothers. Of the 22 cases in 1920/21 relating to child neglect, fourteen questioned the mortality of the mother, in five of these cases despite allegations by the mother, of an abusive or neglectful father. Indeed a women who complained about their husband's neglect or abuse frequently found their own conduct being questioned. Children living in homes where it could be shown that the mother was dirty, poor, sick, swore in front of children, drank or was 'immoral' were most likely to be committed to care. Few children were removed if the father was abusive and in only two cases, which involved separated fathers challenging custody rights, were the men's drinking habits or morality questioned.⁴¹

The Women's Police kept working-class parents, especially mothers, under surveillance, sometimes claiming in the court to have known them for several months or up to twenty years. Although there is little evidence of sympathy for women living in poverty in these cases, individual policewomen expressed concern for children with a neglected appearance. They described such children as 'neglected looking' or in a 'sad state', as 'hungry', having no clothes or bedding, having 'sore eyes', sores on their legs and 'bugs'. Children like these were taken into care on the grounds that their mother was 'very dirty' and 'not a fit and proper' person to care for them. The Children's Court rarely took an interest in the father apart from questioning him about how much he could pay the state for the maintenance of his children.⁴² Men whom the Court claimed could not pay were accused of being drunkards or lazy and idle despite the assertion of witnesses that they had tried to get work or had been employed spasmodically in the casual labour market during the previous years. Such men faced imprisonment for default. The actions of the Women's Police in these cases reflect the attitudes of a dominant middle class which expected the mother to be the moral guardian of the family and the father the breadwinner and provider of food and shelter.⁴³

However in the majority of cases of child neglect it was the mother who was on trial. Her 'crime' was that she was considered to be a bad woman'. Mothers who had failed to secure the support of a male breadwinner, who were not employed or were married to working-class or unemployed men, they were accused of socialising with men who were not their relatives or spending time with them for the purpose of prostitution. Some parents acknowledged their own inadequacies and asked the state to take over the care or control of their children. Sometimes, widows requested this as a temporary measure. Others resented

intervention in their lives and openly expressed their anger towards individual policewomen.⁴⁴

It is clear that accusations of neglect could be used as an excuse to keep women and girls under surveillance but there is also evidence that, since the Women's Police lacked power and authority in the area of policing sexual crimes committed against women and girls, that declaring girls to be neglected could be the only means of protecting them. In the cases of complaints of sexual assault, the role of the women police was further restricted by the fact that investigations, the gathering of evidence and the laying of charges, were undertaken by the Criminal Investigations Branch. There is evidence that some women and girls approached the Women's Police voluntarily for assistance and advice but that women police had difficulty convincing magistrates that they needed protection from the men in their own homes. Women's Police Margaret Fogarty, Helen Blanche Dugdale and Ruth Dunlop were all involved in cases where accusations were made of incest, sexual assault or rape by a father or step-father. On some occasions using the accusation of neglect through the Children's Court was the only way that the Women's Police could attempt some form of redress.

'Emma's' case is one example of this. In January 1932 Fogarty came across a tearful sixteen year old girl, standing on a street corner in the city. Fogarty asked her what the matter was and she replied that her mother had given her a few shillings and sent her out of the family home to live with a woman who was her mother's friend. Fogarty assisted the young girl by finding her employment and also asked the mother why she had sent her daughter away. She discovered that both the mother and the girl were afraid of the girl's step-father, a returned service pensioner on whom they relied as the breadwinner. He, she claimed, had been obsessed with the girl for years, followed her about the streets when she was out, moved his bed so that he could observe her in her own bed at night and, since she had reached the age of fourteen, had persistently raped her. He had also threatened both the girl and her mother, with a razor which he kept under this pillow. The mother's fear, and her dependence on her husband caused her to send the girl away 'for her own good'. 'Emma' was unaware, at the time of her first meeting with Fogarty, that she was pregnant. When the girl and her mother came before the Children's Court they affirmed that they had laid complaints with the Criminal Investigation Branch about the step-father, but that the investigating officers had accused the girl of changing her story and claimed that there was insufficient evidence to lay charges. From the evidence book it appears that the only course of action open to them was for Fogarty to take the step-father to Court on an 'affiliation'

[paternity] charge. This action took twelve months, during which period Fogarty assisted the girl as best she could.⁴⁵

At the time of the trial the girl and her baby were living at Hillcrest Hospital where single mothers, and their babies who were classified as state wards were sent. The bench cross-examined Fogarty on her evidence because she had been unable to get the defendant, to admit that he had had intercourse with the girl. She told the bench that she accused him of 'ruining the girl', and that he had merely responded by saying 'so you say ...'. The defendant was represented in the Children's Court by a solicitor, and the case was adjourned on the grounds that the girl had been absent from home for a period of about one month and could have been 'intimate' with someone else.⁴⁶

More than six months later the girl reappeared in the Children's Court and the mother's friend testified that the mother had sent 'Emma' to her when she was pregnant. She claimed that she herself believed that the girl was well behaved and had run away from 'old pop'. She said that she had protected the girl from the step-father who had gone to her home to retrieve her. The defendant did not appear in court on this occasion and the case was found for the complainant who was now aged eighteen. He was ordered to pay the confinement costs, 12/6 per week maintenance, and the solicitors' and witnesses' fees. It had taken four years for the girl to obtain redress, and then it was only in the form of money which would save the state the cost of caring for her and her child.⁴⁷ Fogarty's pursuit of such cases may explain the fact that she was transferred more frequently than any other member of the Women's Police appointed during the interwar period. In 1929 the Commissioner of Police declared her to be redundant.⁴⁸

Dugdale was involved in the case of a thirteen year old girl who had run away from a father who continually harassed and attempted to sexually assault her. On one occasion she fled to her grandmother, and on another to an older woman. Rather than being questioned on her allegations of assault she was cross examined on her association with this woman who was considered to be immoral. Despite the evidence, the mother denied the allegations against the father and was herself charged with neglecting the child.⁴⁹

In another case Dunlop saw a young girl running down the streets of Subiaco at 10 o'clock at night, screaming and wearing torn and alcohol stained pyjamas. Dunlop confronted the girl's belligerent and drunken father, and had the child medically examined and kept overnight at the Government Receiving Depot. The mother of this child was also charged with neglect by leaving the child at home alone with the father.⁵⁰

The only case brought before the Children's Court concerning a boy was presented by Dugdale who had herself observed his behaviour in a picture theatre. He had been harassing young women, one of whom Dugdale had spoken to because she was in tears in the foyer of the theatre. The Magistrate accused Dugdale of blackmailing the boy into giving self-incriminating evidence and dismissed the case.⁵¹

These cases not only illustrate the underpolicing of men's sexuality, but they also show that for mothers to be regarded as 'good women', they had to be responsible for policing the behaviour of both their husbands and their daughters. And daughters, even if they were the victims of sexual assault, were assumed to be 'seductive' or immoral.

There was a smaller number of Children's Court cases involving the Women's Police in the 1930s. This may have been due to the fact that, unlike the war years, Australian troops were not at risk from supposedly promiscuous women, and it is possible that the depression caused the authorities to be more tolerant of people in poverty. The women police, then, became increasingly involved in more general welfare work such as providing assistance to the poor and needy, and referring destitute people to charitable organisations, sometimes even providing them with food or money from their own pockets.⁵² The CIB still handled charges of sexual assault or domestic violence and the Child Welfare Department, with its increasing use of trained welfare workers, dealt with increasing numbers of unmarried mothers and maintenance cases.

It was in the mid-1930s that the Commissioner of Police threatened to disband the Women's Police and replace all female staff of the Police Department with male cadets.⁵³ This was not only a sign of his hostility to the women police but was also undoubtedly due to competition for work during the depression and the widely held belief that women, especially married women, were taking men's jobs. It may also have been a way of forcing charities and the state welfare authorities to pay for 'welfare policing'.

The restriction of the role of women police to that of welfare officers, their continuing exclusion from cases of sexual assault, the threat to disband the Women's Police, and the dismissal in 1929 of the women justices who had struggled for a presence in the Children's Court as honorary magistrates, all provide evidence that a 'masculine fraternity' was closing ranks against women. And yet, at the same time, a moral panic about 'wayward girls' was developing. Police reports constantly referred to young women 'let out for a run at night',

who were like dangerous animals and ought to be controlled, restrained and even 'disposed of'.⁵⁴

Further evidence of this can be found in the newspapers of the day and was undoubtedly influenced by Arthur Lovekin. As a Member of the Legislative Assembly in 1929 he was a vocal supporter of compulsory sterilization of people labelled as 'mentally deficient' in a proposed Mental Deficiency Bill.⁵⁵ Both in Parliament and his paper he used cases coming before the Children's Court to publicise the problems facing magistrates dealing with 'wayward' girls.

One case which Lovekin used concerned a girl who, at the age of fourteen, had been seduced by a married man. It was claimed in court that the girl's father was 'at his wits end' as to what to do with his daughter, who was then sixteen, and had refused to stop seeing the man.⁵⁶ The police advised the father to charge her with being a neglected child. As there was no probation officer available, the Children's Court felt that the only legal course of action was to send her to gaol but there she would 'mix with undesirable types'. This the court felt was unacceptable, so the co-operation of a clergyman was sought and she was released on probation in the care of the minister and his wife. The press stories on the episode implied that the women in this family carried a genetic strain of immorality, whilst the father, whose wife and daughters were 'uncontrollable', was an 'honest, decent man'. There was no suggestion of any action being taken against the other married man.

Over two days at least five articles appeared in the press which focussed on this case and referred to the problem of delinquent girls.⁵⁷ Lovekin believed no useful purpose would be served by the incarceration of the girl in a place where she could not engage in useful employment. He pointed out how much time and effort he and the women justices had to put into such cases, and how much a probationary officer would benefit the State.⁵⁸ The press repeatedly pointed to what it believed to be the absence of parental control, which caused the streets to be filled with 'girls who wander at large without any restraint'. Such girls, the press stated, needed to be protected against themselves, as they were 'amongst the future mothers of the race'. The editor of the *Daily News* knew what was needed:

If the people were aware of the numbers of girls who come before the Children's Court and of the sort of lives many of them lead, there would be a public clamour for the appointment of, at least, two experienced women with motherly attributes and tact, capable of standing between them and moral degradation.⁵⁹

These statements not only illustrate Lovekin's belief that 'wayward girls' were depraved and ought to be watched, they also reveal the extent to which, the 'right type of woman' was still expected to carry out the role of moral guardian. When writing to the Secretary of the Child Welfare Department regarding the girl mentioned above, Lovekin not only pointed to the savings a probationary officer for women would make, but also claimed that the use of such a 'scientific reform' was necessary in order to prevent the 'existence of deficients'. He also claimed that intellectually disabled girls were 'prolific in begetting illegitimate children'.

I know of one case in which a girl has brought to the Court six illegitimate children. She is undoubtedly mental and irresponsible. Yet we must take the children and allow the mother to proceed on her way to breed more, unchecked and unhindered.⁶⁰

He believed not only that 'girls with a tendency to immorality' must be prevented from breeding, but that a woman's probationary officer could prevent them from doing so.

During the same month that Parliament debated the Mental Deficiency Bill, the Women's Branch of the Primary Producers Association in a deputation to the Minister of Police called for a Royal Commission to inquire into methods of preventing sexual offences against women and children.⁶¹ One member of the deputation expressed the belief that many of the men who committed such crimes were 'mental deficients and degenerates' who deserved capital punishment. Another stated that the women police understood cases of neglect and deserted mothers much better than policemen did and should take their cases through the Court themselves. The deputation also called for more women police, an extension of their duties to enable them to investigate crimes against women, and the appointment of a woman's probationary officer. The Minister used the occasion to restate his Police Commissioner's view that there was no need to appoint more women police nor train them to investigate such crimes. He also pointed out that it was not necessary to appoint a woman's probationary officer because the Women Inspectors of the Child Welfare Department were doing that kind of work.⁶²

There was no Royal Commission into crimes against women and children but the Commissioner had an investigation carried out over a period of two years and found that there were 106 reported cases relating to offences against women and girls. Only twelve, he claimed, were of a 'serious nature' and included, rape, attempted rape and incest, but the majority involved girls under the age of sixteen who had been unlawfully dealt with but were consenting parties. He also claimed that in many of these cases, the girls were not injured in

any way because offenders did nothing more than putting their hands under the child's clothes'.⁶³

In concluding his briefing to his Minister on the matter, the Commissioner claimed that the absence of parental control and religious training was the cause of most of the offences. He stated that the police were doing their share in endeavouring to suppress offences of this kind, but it was not reasonable to hold either the Government or the Police Force responsible for the morals of the community.⁶⁴

Clearly the Commissioner supported the policing of the morals of women rather than those of men. Equally clearly, men committing serious sexual crimes, were viewed as 'sick', and their offences in the less serious category, while underage girls were not regarded as innocent, rather as consenting parties.

The women present at this deputation expressed an awareness that the Women's Police were restricted by the conditions of their employment, and in line with a growing interest in the application of science to social problems, they claimed that the policewomen were limited by the absence of training in psychology, social or probation work. Women's organisations were also concerned since in 1929 re-organisation of the Children's Court had resulted in the replacement of voluntary women justices acting as magistrates with a male Special Stipendiary Magistrate. They strongly believed that it was essential for a woman to be present in both police investigations of sexual assault and subsequent court cases.⁶⁵

While police and welfare authorities denied the need to increase the numbers of policewomen or appoint a women's probationary officer community concern about the public behaviour of young women continued throughout the 1930s. Girls labelled 'uncontrollable' and 'delinquent', especially those with venereal disease continued to be regarded as a major problem even though their numbers were actually very few.⁶⁶ The *Daily News* and the *West Australian* continued to sensationalise Children's Court cases involving girls regarded as sexually precocious or promiscuous. In July 1932 the officer responsible for inspecting institutions for children reported that fourteen girls aged fifteen and eighteen (at least three of whom were suffering from venereal disease) had absconded since the previous December. The author pointed out the futility of Women's Police putting in long hours searching for absconders, returning them to the Receiving Depot and having to hunt for the same girls again a few days later. The Women's Police reported that such girls were very defiant and insisted they would run away again. The welfare inspector acknowledged that it was

impossible to charge them all with absconding from legal custody and commit them to prison because there would be 'too great an outcry' from the women's organisations.⁶⁷

The major women's organisations responded to community concern in March 1933 by calling a conference which they referred to simply as the conference on 'incurrigibles'. The Women Justices, the WCTU, the LWO, and the WSG drew up recommendations for reform and control of these girls and held a meeting with the Secretary of Child Welfare, the Premier and the Minister for Health. The recommendations which came out of this meeting included the increased use of psychology in the treatment of such girls, the appointment of a woman's probationary officer and the establishment in the country of an advanced State Training School for girls.⁶⁸ A sub-committee, referred to as the State Training Hostel Committee, was formed and its members lobbied successive governments on the issue for over twenty years.

Despite their interest in more appropriate care and control of 'wayward girls' the language the women's organisations used in relation to 'incurrigibles' implied a belief that such girls were depraved. However, immediately after the conference they attempted to clarify this classification. The welfare authorities advised them that there was no separate arrangement made for girls considered to be backward or subnormal, that all delinquent girls were housed with the industrial schools of the Salvation Army or the Home of the Good Shepherd, and that the venereal disease cases who were Wards of the State were held in a section of the Fremantle Old Women's Home under the jurisdiction of the Children's Court.⁶⁹ This arrangement, made possible through the co-operation of the Commissioner of Public Health, Atkinson, provided a cheap alternative to the expenditure involved in providing a separate institution. The staff at both homes claimed they could not keep 'uncontrollable' girls who were a 'source of contamination'.⁷⁰

Although there were only three to five girls held at Fremantle at any one time during the 1930s they created a great deal of concern by continually absconding. On more than one occasion they cut through the bars of their upstairs room, went down the drain pipe and into Fremantle. The Fremantle Council and the Fremantle branch of the Australian Labor Party complained that it was an indignity to put 'refractory girls ... with ... malignant disease' with older women, especially as they escaped into the port 'to contaminate the public'.⁷¹ The women's organisations argued and claimed that the girls disrupted the life of the older residents, and they were not provided with 'training necessary to the girls becoming self-sufficient supporting citizens'. The Minister claimed that as finance was limited the only alternative was gaol itself.⁷² The Secretary of the Child Welfare Department supported the

provision of a modern state run institution on the grounds that a 'certain form of punishment' would be effective for girls who were 'over-sexed' and 'look upon any kindness as a weakness'. However, no further action was taken in this direction during the interwar period.⁷³

The state government eventually gave in to the continuing agitation by the women's organisation for a woman's probationary officer in the Welfare Department. It is clear that the woman's groups believed that a women's probationary officer could prevent recidivism and assist young women to find employment which, it was also acknowledged by the Women's Police, was difficult for a girl who had 'fallen'.⁷⁴ The call for the appointment of a probationary officer was also linked to the women's belief that it was inappropriate for police to be involved in welfare issues. Despite the assistance of Lovekin, the women's constant lobbying, was continually resisted, although at one point, Harold Millington, the Honorary Minister representing the Child Welfare Department, suggested to the women justices that the need for a women's probationary officer should be created by 'encouraging a greater number of girls to be brought before the Court'.⁷⁵

In response to a deputation to Millington from the Labor Women in 1933, the Secretary of the Child Welfare Department, Brodribb, sought an opinion from Horgan, the Stipendiary Magistrate in the Children's Court. Horgan admitted having difficulty with cases of girls coming before him since the women justices' services had been officially dispensed with in 1929, so Brodribb recommended the appointment of a women's probationary officer.⁷⁶ He had changed his mind, he claimed, because there was now a 'greater number of problem girls to handle'. His report also reveals a change of official attitude towards the Women's Police. He stated that it would be preferable for 'delinquent girls' to be handled by a probationary officer because many mothers felt that consulting with the police would stigmatise their daughters. He also pointed out that it was preferable for a probationary officer to deal with unmarried mothers.⁷⁷

Brodribb also felt that the number of unmarried mothers was becoming an increasing concern, not only from a moral point of view but also because of the cost of State support. Pencilled in the column of his report to the Minister was the comment: '27 new cases of unwed mums in 5 months'. He used this to support his argument.⁷⁸ His file notes also show his concern about absconding girls, especially those in Fremantle suffering from venereal disease.⁷⁹ Only a few weeks prior to putting up the proposal for a probationary officer, Brodribb and his assistant Meacham had discussed the necessity to appoint a woman to care for them. Jean Beadle of the LWO and WSG had been commended for acting as a

friend and visitor to the girls. They therefore suggested that the women's organisations consider taking on voluntary after-care.⁸⁰ Brodribb also discussed this work of the Women's Police, noting that, although he would not deny the value of their work, he would suggest that they pass information to the women's probationary officer so creating a link with his department 'without the Police coming into the matter officially at all'.⁸¹ Plainly Brodribb regarded the Women's Police as welfare workers, with whom the department officers could work. Appointing a woman's probationary officer would assist the Women's Police, and permit the Child Welfare Department to deal with social problems more effectively. The Minister agreed to the recommendation in July 1933.⁸²

Following the government's decision the press, the Women's Service Guilds, Labor Women's Organisation and Justices of the Children's Court lobbied to have 'the right type of woman' appointed. The author of a *West Australian* article urged that she would be experienced in charitable work, acquainted with delinquent children, and a professional, psychologist, criminologist and trained social worker, a scientific expert.⁸³

Florence Boneham was the woman appointed to the job. She, an Inspectress with the Children's Department since 1929, was appointed on 1 November 1933. Like the first women police, Boneham was a trained nurse and had experience with 'delinquent' girls.⁸⁴ To this extent she was an expert in her field. But she could be no more because professional social work training was in its infancy in Australia at this time and there was no formal training in Western Australia.

Following the appointment, Brodribb advised the Minister that the Women's Police and the probationary officer should work together to eliminate the work of the police in children's cases.⁸⁵ Brodribb was apparently hoping to dispense with the services of the Women's Police in the protection and control of girls and Boneham's list of duties and instructions were virtually the same as those issued to the Women's Police. Her duties, more clearly spelt out in this area than those for the women police, included instructions to visit and report on industrial institutions for delinquent girls, and the girls held there, and to assist pregnant unmarried women. In addition, the Women's Police were to keep her advised of any carer that came to their attention.⁸⁶

Boneham's appointment, although it followed persistent lobbying by women's organisations, was not an acknowledgement of the rights of women to enter the public sphere. She was already employed as a welfare officer and her duties were simply extended to cover increased surveillance of so called wayward girls. But the decision to extend her

duties to that of a women's probationary officer was not made just in response to lobbying from women's organisations. Rather her appointment was a response to young women's resistance to the control of their sexuality and the concern of the state about what it believed was an increase in illegitimate births and venereal disease. Its aim was to increase control over Wards of the State, and decrease the involvement of the police in child welfare. The Police Department offered no opposition and it and the Child Welfare Department from then on worked in closer co-operation. The decision re-inforced the perception that 'wayward girls' were inherently depraved and a menace to society despite the fact that there was a total of only five girls listed as suffering from venereal disease during the 1930s. In 1933 there were only 24 girls who were State Wards in institutions and only three of these had venereal disease.⁸⁷

Throughout the 1930s the women's organisations continued to lobby for a training hostel and for increase in numbers of women police. They claimed that young women required education, training and employment, protection from the prostitution harassment by visiting militancy forces, and the stigma associated with illegitimacy.⁸⁸ The government did not respond to the demand for more women police until 1941 when there were renewed calls for closer surveillance of women and girls. Troops in the Northam area were reported to be in danger from 'promiscuous' women.⁸⁹ The Vice Squad was formed in the same year and it was assisted by Boneham and the Women's Police in its surveillance and control of women. It subsequently came under criticism for the overzealous policing of women during World War II.⁹⁰

Boneham, by this time, had become an expert in dealing with delinquent girls and V.D. Because venereal disease increased during World War II she set up temporary clinics at the Salvation Army Girls Home and at the Home of the Good Shepherd and she also played a major role in the funding of the Perth venereal disease clinic. She frequently expressed her appreciation of the Police Department, especially the Women's Police, for their collaboration with the health and welfare authorities.⁹¹

In Western Australia throughout the interwar period the eugenicist fear that venereal disease would contaminate the white race, re-inforced the belief that women not conforming to the ideal of the morally pure were sexually depraved. Members of the press, the police, welfare and other prominent members of the community expressed such opinions which implied that 'dangerous' women and girls were contagious animals requiring surveillance, containment and control. The primary function of the Women's Police was the policing of women's sexuality. This was not only a result of the desire to protect men from venereal disease and

ensure the well-being of future generations of Australians, but a response to women's resistance to control. However, as Allen points out, the period must also be seen as one in which the desire to control women's sexuality was accompanied by backlash against women who tried to enter the male, public sphere. Perth's 'masculine fraternity' closed ranks against women and against women seeking redress for gender based crimes.

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- 3 Sheila Jeffreys, *The Spinster and Her Enemies: Feminism and Sexuality 1880-1930*, London 1985,
pp.52-100.
- 4 Jill Radford, 'Women and Policing: Contradictions Old and New', in Hanmer, Radford and Stanka
(Eds), *Women, Policing and Male Violence*, London 1989, pp. 13-45.
- 5 The Women's Police was an auxilliary and minor branch of the Police Department. For a full account
of the restriction and control of this branch see Leonie Stella 'Women's Police in Western Australia
1917-1943' in *Papers in Labour History*, 7 (1991).
- 6 Judith Allen, *Sex & Secrets: Crimes Involving Australian Women Since 1880*, Melbourne 1990,
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research has therefore been supplemented by the use of Children's Court records, Child Welfare
Department Files, newspaper reports and records of major women's organisations.
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- 13 Bessie M. Rischbieth, *March of Australian Women. A Record of Fifty Years' Struggle for Equal
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PF6875BL.
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AN5, ACC.430BL.
- 22 Annual Report, *ibid.* Correspondence between Commissioner and Women Justices' Association, 30
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- 23 National Council of Women, Minute Books, AN187, Acc.1389BL. Women's Service Guilds papers,
76/77 MN393, Acc. 1949ABL, General Meeting 14 March 1919, MN585, Acc.2530BL.
Commissioner to Minister, 21 November 1927, PF6875BL. 'Conference of Commissioners' 1928,
PF7680, AN5/3, Acc. 430BL.
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- 26 J. Matthews, *Good and Mad Women: The historical construction of femininity in twentieth century
Australia*, Sydney, 1984.
- 27 Annual Report 1919, PF2718, AN5, Acc. 430BL.
- 28 Annual Report 1929, WAPP, 1929.
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women's organisations connected to the Children's Protection Society, was amended frequently
throughout the interwar period. It resulted in the formation of the State Children's Department, which
later became the Child Welfare Department. Such changes also affected the terminology such as 'state
children' or 'wards' of the state. See Mary Bosworth 'Child Welfare and the Law' in Penelope
Hetherington and Phillipa Maddern (eds) *Sexuality and Gender in History*, Perth 1993.

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- 31 Kingsmill referring to Lovekin's evidence, *WAVP* 1918, p.v. Statement made by Lovekin to *Daily News*, April 11, 1929. Part 4, section (7) of the State Children's Act 1907.
- 32 *WAVP*, 1918, p.v.
- 33 Dugdale to SCD, 16 August 1917, DCS File No. 851/22, AN145/1, Acc.1031BL. Report to Select Committee on Health Act Amendment Bill, 28 February 1918, *WAVP*, 1918.
- 34 Section (7) State Children Act 1907.
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- 43 *Ibid.*
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- 57 *Daily News*, 11 April 1929, *West Australian*, 12 April 1929.
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- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 Commissioner of Police to Millington, 16 October 1929, PDF6875.
- 64 'List of Offences Against Females' 30 June 1927 to 1 July 1929, in PDF 6875. Commissioner of Police to Millington, 16 October 1929, PDF6875.
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"Kicking Like Hell" The Industrial Workers of the World in Western Australia

Tom Scutt*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
This war is one of them you know
Don't worry o'er your kids and wives
You must go there and chance your lives
I know you'd say I ought to go
and take a gun and fight the foe
But listen brethren while I sing
The good news that I'm going to bring
What would Kalgoorlie say if I
went sending men to bye n bye
With what they call the bayonets point
And with their blood the ground anoint
My flock would surely go astray
if I dare should go away
With no one here to take my place
I'm best off here where it is safe
I was there for a little while
But oh the noise it was so vile
No place for Bishops Oh No No No
Tis dangerous too Oh Oh Oh
So you who have the strength to fight
are cowards if you do not fight
But I'm not like other men
I cannot fight so there Amen

Poem displayed in the window of the local I.W.W. office in Boulder, WA, in 1915. It was accompanied by a caricature of a clergyman knelt in prayer.¹

In early 1916, Sub-Inspector Walsh of the Fremantle CIB forwarded information to Military Intelligence regarding the existence of an office of the "Independent Workers of the World" in Phillimore Street, Fremantle, next to His Majesty's Hotel. He reported that a placard was exhibited in the window, which read:

Don't scab on the unemployed. Slow work means more jobs. More jobs, less competition – Less competition, higher wages. Fast workers die young, some one has to be slowest, let it be you. Get wise to the IWW tactics, organise on the job. Put the boot in – Sabotage. Kick like hell".²

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Despite seeming police ignorance as to their name at the time, Military Intelligence would have known who these people were: members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) – the Wobblies. Described by historian, Ian Turner, as "the most significant revolutionary movement the Australian working class had yet known",³ the IWW was an extremely influential group of activists whose actions during the First World War and afterwards earned them a permanent place in the history of class-struggle in Australia. Whilst much of the IWW activity took place in the East (especially in New South Wales), they maintained a presence in Western Australia, being involved in the anti-conscription struggle, strikes and attempts to create One Big Union (OBU). Two Wobblies prominent nationally, Monty Miller and Mick Sawtell, were based in Perth. Any study of Westralian IWWism must of course look to the national context, where much of the drama was played out, but this article is aimed towards illustrating that drama with the story from WA.

Historiographically, Western Australia has traditionally been seen to be a state where industrial and class struggle was minimal. This is understandable, given that many of the histories of struggle in other parts of Australia take as their starting point the great strikes during the depression of the 1890's: a decade, as Vanden Driesen claims, in which by contrast, Western Australia's "rate of economic growth ... surpassed the expectations of even the most optimistic and converted a colonial backwater into a new El Dorado".⁴ Whether this has been a factor or not, historians have certainly seen WA's resounding 'yes' vote to the conscription referenda of 1916 and 1917 as evidence of conservatism. Robertson argues that the key to the WA vote was the attitude and 'moderation' of the labour movement.⁵ This historical paradigm has only recently been substantially attacked, by Oliver, who argues for the existence of deep political and class divisions in Western Australia during the war years and afterwards.⁶ If Oliver is correct, and I suspect she is, then these divisions, and the existence of a class of itinerant labourers working in WA's predominantly rural economy, might be expected to provide fertile ground for IWWism. B. Beattie, A NSW Wobbly, writing in *Labour History* 50 years later, remembered that "[t]he bulk of our membership was composed of bush and construction workers who travelled by necessity".⁷

Indeed it was among itinerant workers in the USA in the first years of the twentieth century that the IWW had its roots. A syndicalist grouping, it had parallels with similar, larger movements in Europe, most notably in France and Italy. In the USA, it was born out of the vicious repression of western copper miners, unparalleled in scale by any Australian experience.⁸ To an extent then, Ernest Scott is correct, when he asserted that the IWW "was not a natural growth from Australian trade unionism; it was a foreign invention".⁹ Despite

this, it survived transplantation and flourished in Australia from 1912 onwards, after inauspicious beginnings in Adelaide.

Fundamental to IWW ideology was the primacy of class struggle, made clear in the Preamble to the organisation's rules, which stated in part that: "[t]he working class and the employing class have nothing in common ... [b]etween these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system".¹⁰ Whilst the existence of a conflict of interest between classes was understood by many on the Left the Wobblies differed on their platform; direct action and industrial unionism. These tenets were founded on a profound belief in the primacy of industrial struggle over the political. That is, "the Australian administration of the IWW ... opposed political action on revolutionary principles as a waste of the energy of the workers".¹¹ In Perth, Monty Miller wrote in 1916 to Annie Westbrook (the most prominent woman Wobbly in WA) to say:

"F.W. [Fellow Worker] Johnson notifies me that the Trades Hall has been secured at Fremantle for Sunday night and Mick Sawtell and I are to speak on 'Industrial and Political Evolution'. Of course the two have been co-existent since their common inception but never co-equal – and our attempt to bring the industrial power up to the point of supremacy over the political is really what all the trouble is about".¹²

Certainly, such attempts created trouble with the traditional labour hierarchies such as the craft-based unions and the ALP, which the IWW saw as divisive and useless, indeed part of the problem for the industrial working-class. It recognized even then, the internationalization of capital, "the One Big Union of the master-class" against which the craft unions – "wrangling with each other for the right to do certain kinds of work; one section 'scabbing' on another and each scabbing on the working class as a whole" – were no match.¹³ State arbitration, which played such a central role in Australian industrial struggle was merely a smoke screen, and in itself sanctified the right of the employer to exploit workers. But the IWW's most vitriolic attacks were aimed at Labor politicians, who it argued sapped the energy from, and betrayed, the workers. In a fine example of Wobbly panache and iconoclasm, Tom Barker wrote in the IWW newspaper, *Direct Action*.

"After God made the rattlesnake, the toad and the bug, he had some stuff left, out of which he created a scab. After he had finished the scab, he used the last rubbish in the place and created the politician".¹⁴

Salvation for the workers, according to the IWW, could only come through organization on industrial lines, throwing aside union sectionalism and the parliamentary facade. All

workers in any factor or on any job would form a local which would fall under one of six Industrial Departments. These would elect a Central Committee – a "cabinet of the working class".¹⁵ Briefly, this One Big Union (OBU) would, in its development ensure that an injury to one worker would be an injury to all, and at the climax of industrial struggle would call a general strike, and seize the State. The OBU in itself would then form "the nucleus of the future society that will follow the fall of Capitalism the gradually growing form of the Industrial Commonwealth".¹⁶ Thus the IWW sought to create a new society from within the shell of the old.

The first IWW local in Western Australia was formed in late 1914, after two Wobblies by the names of Tom McMillan and Daly arrived in Fremantle from Broken Hill.¹⁷ After the 1909 lock out, Broken Hill had become a centre of radical unionism in Australia and there seems to have been a good deal of movement between Broken Hill and Wobbly outposts like Fremantle.¹⁸ From the beginning, Perth Wobblies clearly believed that the Eastern Goldfields held the most promise for followers, and Daly and McMillan were soon in Boulder where they organised IWW local no. 6.¹⁹ Late in 1915 another local was established in Perth and a fourth, later still, at the Corinthian mine (the location of which I have been unable to establish).²⁰ In Perth, at least, the Wobblies picked up their recruits from radicals without an organisational base, people, who, as Monty Miller called them were "rebels who have been with me through the pre-IWW dark ages in this sleepy hollow of the Far West".²¹ True to their North American antecedents, the local Wobblies were travellers. Reports of their movements in *Direct Action* locate them on the move from coast to Kalgoorlie, in the far reaches of the Eastern Goldfields, at places like Gwalia and Laverton, in South West timber towns like Mornington, on the Kalgoorlie woodlines and the interstate railway camps, and at all points in between. At all these places they spoke to local workers, left copies of IWW propaganda; doing what Wobblies did well, "spreading the dope", (that is, the IWW message).²²

Life was hard work, too, for those who stayed in one place. In mid 1915 the Boulder IWW was running educational classes on Wednesday evenings, propaganda meetings outside the Boulder Post Office on Fridays, more meetings in Kalgoorlie on Saturday mornings and, on Sunday mornings, a business meeting, followed by lectures and propaganda meetings in the afternoons and evenings. And this was in addition to their paid work.²³ It is not clear whether these wandering organisers were paid by the IWW as were some later Communist Party organisers. Probably they were members of the casual labour force which worked around the mines, or miners, because there are plenty of references in *Direct Action* to dismissals from mine sites. Thus Charlie Reeves, another Sydney Wobbly who would later

be sentenced to 10 years goal in the trial of the Sydney 12, came to W.A. from Sydney in 1915, travelled over much of the state picking up work on mines until he returned to Sydney in 1916. Mick Sawtell, labourer and philosopher, travelled from job to job and place to place until after the first Wobbly trial in Perth, after which he went east to Broken Hill. In 1918 he was in gaol, probably a victim of the "mopping up" of the IWW towards the end of the war.²⁴ Back on the coast, Jack O'Neill, one of the leading Wobblies, was a journalist on *The Truth* and Monty Miller, perhaps the best known of all local Wobblies, did not have to work. He was 85!²⁵

Undoubtedly the element of IWW thinking which attracted most attention, and condemnation, was sabotage. In France in the early years of the century, Parisian syndicalist electrical unions had conducted an effective campaign of sabotage against their employers,²⁶ and the tactic was taken up the IWW internationally. Represented symbolically by the black cat or the wooden shoe (from the French 'sabot') the sab-cat was both a symbol of, and a call to, sabotage. But what the Wobblies meant by sabotage is rather confusing. More extreme acts were often mooted. For example, a WA Wobbly wrote to his son in Perth from the small Great Southern town of Gnowangerup, at the time of the 1917 waterfront strikes: "You should have done the same as they are doing in Buenos Ayres [sic], ripped the Railway up from Perth to Fremantle and destroyed the three bridges, two at Fremantle and one on the Canning ... Yours for the revolution, P. Candish".²⁷ In 1919, during the Perth Tramway Strike, IWW agitation by Mick Sawtell followed a similar line,

"when he told the men that they would have got a rise within twenty-four hours, and any other concession they might have demanded, if they had gone back to work, taken the cars out in the ordinary way, *but have left a dozen or so strewn round the streets en route*. Tip top advice was also given to the conductors, who were told to forget to collect fares or issue chits". (italics added)²⁸

One of the most remarkable attempts to incite sabotage to come to the attention of Perth authorities was when Arthur Copley, who, on board the ship 'Suffolk' docking at Fremantle, addressed the men. He reportedly declared himself as an IWW, and that "the men on board were all a pack of fools and not men to go home and make munitions that had to be fired at other workers ... It is a pity there is not a dynamite cartridge on board so that it could be dropped in the stokehold". Unfortunately for Copley, those on board (war-workers destined for Britain so likely to be patriotic and hostile to IWWism) gave him a less than cool reception. The telegram from on-board ship alerting Fremantle authorities read in part: "COPLEYS STATEMENTS MOST VIOLENT (STOP) MEN ATTACKED HIM

WITH VIEW THROWING OVERBOARD (STOP)".²⁹ He was sentenced to six months imprisonment under the War Precautions Regulations on arrival in Fremantle. Following the first imprisonment of Tom Barker (IWW) in Sydney in 1915, Mick Sawtell wrote to *Direct Action*: "Some of the Federal Senators have large farms in this State. Nuff sed".³⁰

These threats and claims seem to make pretty clear what the Wobblies meant by sabotage. Yet when Mick Sawtell was being cross-examined by Monty Miller in the 1916 Perth Wobbly trials, he described sabotage in these terms:

(To Sawtell): Do you connect the scope of the IWW with violence and destruction and consider it to be right and proper?

(Sawtell): No. Our literature distinctly states that the workers' sabotage was not aimed at human life. The master class movement is anti-social and aims at the workers' lives. Both classes practise sabotage.

(To Sawtell): Then you repudiate the contention that the destruction of life and property is included in the term sabotage – Yes there are, of course, extenuating circumstances when, to my mind, the workers would be justified in using violence, as, for instance, when the workers are attacked by scabs.

And later, sabotage,

means the conscious withdrawal of the workers' industrial efficiency. Labour is a commodity and the employing class use sabotage to suit their ends. Remember the trusts and the rings? The employing class would restrict the output of sugar and put up the price of beef, and we workers are forced to organise our labour power to make it scarce so the price of labour will increase ... We would organise the workers on our lines – that is sabotage. We would GIT THE MEN TO GO SLOW.³¹

Plainly sabotage had more than one meaning. Perhaps Mick Sawtell's court room definition was what the Wobblies really meant. On the other hand he might have been trying to impress the Court.

In the atmosphere of militant patriotism and jingoism that was prevalent in Australia during the war years, the traditional trade unions took every opportunity to exclude foreign workers from their ranks. The IWW was, by contrast, stridently internationalist, and there were significant IWW sympathies among migrant workers in Western Australia. The Italian community in Fremantle contained such activists as Fiocco Ignarjio, who according to police reports, was "the Italian head of the IWW and everything goes to prove he has great influence over the countrymen ... he used to attend all the meetings conducted here by Charles Reeves [prominent Wobbly] ... he used to bring the other Italians along with him".³²

In fact the IWW seemed to find willing listeners among Italian workers, particularly those working on the Lakeside and Kurrawang woodlines on the outskirts of Kalgoorlie. This is hardly surprising considering working conditions on the 'lines'. Paid by the piece, the men had to work appallingly long hours for low wages. Conditions were primitive, to say the least, in these bush camps. Those who boarded, did so with the woodline companies at inflated rates, whilst those who lived with their families or batched bought their food at extortionate prices from the woodline company store. Italians on the woodlines were also the victims of Australian ethnocentrism (as were their fellows on the mines) despised and exploited by the companies, ignored by the Kalgoorlie unions and actively resented by Australian born miners, particularly, as the war dragged on, by returned soldiers in the mines and the so-called nationalist unions.³³

To the Wobblies, however, Italians and other foreign workers were a part of the international working class, compajos (Italian for fellow workers) as one story in *Direct Action* put it. They were hampered in their work, however, by the absence of Italian speakers in their ranks and the lack of Italian language literature. They got over the latter by having literature sent from the USA and the former by the work of "Compajo lavatore de la monde", Alex Boggis and a colleague named Maggi who addressed Italian workers in Italian on the Goldfields and the coast. One report in *Direct Action* described a Fremantle meeting.

F.W. Boggis, being in Fremantle for a few days, Local no. 5, took the advantage of the occasion and held on November 13th a propaganda meeting for the Italians. FWs Alex Boggis and Maggi addressed the meeting first, in the Italian language, followed by a short address by FW Reeves. It was an inspiring meeting, the first working-class meeting of a true international character ever held in Fremantle. The meeting sustained a spirit of intense enthusiasm. The Italian fellow workers, with the usual excitable and enthusiastic temperament of the Latin races, punctuated the different speeches with a fund of applause. Boggis, in explaining the uses of 'sabotage', related his jail experiences in the strikes and free-speech fights in America...³⁴

Boggis seems to have been a truly international Wobbly.

The IWW locals in Fremantle, Perth and Boulder were, like those in the Eastern States, primarily "propaganda centres, financed their activities by dues, which were very light, and by sales of their newspapers and pamphlets".³⁵ In early 1916, Reeve sent to *Direct Action* what it described as "a very inspiring report of activities in the Perth and Fremantle districts ... excellent sales of *Direct Action* and literature continue, while the membership of both locals are on the increase." Similarly, another report in January 1916 stated that the

"Boulder local is showing signs of renewed activity ... [m]ost of the old members are over at Corinthian [mine] where they have got *about four-fifths of the workers interested in the IWW dope* [ie doctrine]" (italics added).

Yet the optimistic tone of such reports concealed difficult times for the Western Australian IWW. There are plenty of hints in *Direct Action*, to show how hard their road was. As early as June 1915 the Boulder local was calling for more speakers for its meetings, and in 1916 there seems to have been a shortage of "speaking talent" in Perth, where the "stumps" seem to have been left to Monty Miller and Mrs Westbrook. In both 1915 and 1916 there are references to lagging memberships. The records do not give information on membership except in one or two instances.³⁶ By the beginning of 1914, for instance, Mick Sawtell claimed to have signed up 19 members in Boulder. Membership does not equal influence of course.³⁷ The Wobblies sold many more copies of *Direct Action* than they had members. *Direct Action's* circulation at its peak seems to have been about 15,000 but it is not known how many were sold regularly in Western Australia.

While it is possible to attribute the Wobbly's modest size to the moderation of local workers, there can be no doubt that repression played a substantial part. Even before the IWW trial in late 1916 and the passage of the Commonwealth Government's Unlawful Associations Act in 1917 which effectively suppressed the organisation,³⁸ local Wobblies were subject to a variety of kinds of harassment. Their meetings were invariably disrupted by returned soldiers in Perth and Kalgoorlie. Plain-clothed and uniformed police were a constant presence at meetings, silent, watching, taking notes.³⁹ In 1915 the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council banned street meetings and mine owners sacked, then blacklisted anybody they suspected of Wobbly sympathisers.⁴⁰ R. Yates, one of the Wobblies taken from Kalgoorlie to Perth in 1917 to answer conspiracy charges, found himself on the blacklist when he returned, acquitted of the charges. He later wrote:

I can tell you, they have got me hard up against it. I haven't earned a penny since Nov. 8th, the day of my arrest. I have a wife and six little kiddies to keep. My eldest child is a girl 11 years of age. The others range from six years down to six months. This is a nice position for a man to be in, who has been nothing else but a working bullock all his life.⁴¹

Then late in 1916 the Perth City Council banned meetings as well.⁴² If, however, the Wobblies struggled to maintain a reasonable presence in the Western Australian labour movement, were they able to actually involve themselves in industrial action? There is practically no evidence of them doing so in *Direct Action*, other than a brief reference to a

'timber' strike at Boulder in 1915 which, observed the paper, capitalists blamed on the IWW, but which, the tone of the report suggests, the IWW might have had little to do with. Nor is there much evidence how successfully in these early years, the IWW entered or agitated within any trades unions, although there are references during the 1918 conspiracy trial to conflicts in the Carpenters' Union between Wobblies and their opponents, to agitations by Wobblies in the Boulder Perseverance Mine for a shorter working week and a "go slow". And Alfred Callanan at least was a delegate to the ALF Kalgoorlie District Council.⁴³ A full analysis of the influence of the Wobblies on existing working class organisations must await a more detailed analysis.

Whatever their progress, the Wobblies were being watched with unease by the police and Military Intelligence, and it probably would not have surprised them when, shortly after similar arrests in Sydney, twelve of the most prominent among them were arrested.

The arrests and imprisonment of the Sydney Twelve, and the subsequent campaign for their release has been well documented by historians. Much of the fame of the IWW arose from their prominent, consistent and virulent opposition to the war, and to Prime Minister Hughes' attempts to introduce conscription – the forcing of "men recruited from the social depths to fight for the continuance of the system that put them there", as Beattie put it.⁴⁴ The arrests, many on framed charges of arson, were timed by Hughes to coincide with the 1916 Conscription referendum, thereby associating in the public mind a 'No' vote with arson. The ploy failed, and, as if in revenge, Judge Pring, presiding, imposed sentences of between five and fifteen years.

In WA things turned out somewhat differently. In 1916, in a case closely linked to the case in Sydney, 12 local Wobblies were arrested. Monty Miller, Jack O'Neill, Mick Sawtell (arrested on a Gascoyne property and charged with the extra offence of threatening to burn down the property of Senator Lynch), two Fremantle lumpers named Billy Johnstone and George Auscombe, Mick Horrocks, a Kalgoorlie miner, two Russians, Alex Auweit and Alick Saaran, a German, John Goller, an Italian fisherman from Fremantle named Frank Sedotti, and Frederick Lunn, eventually faced the court and were all charged with seditious conspiracy. O'Neill, Saaran and Sedotti were acquitted and the rest waited their trial in Fremantle Prison, where, wrote Annie Westbrook, "[e]veryone is wanting to know what is this IWW."⁴⁵

When tried, Sawtell and Miller, defended themselves in such a passionate way their speeches were used in pamphlets written in defense of the Sydney Twelve. Much to their

surprise, the WA Wobblies were not gaoled but released on recognizances by Justice Burnside. According to Scott, the WA Wobblies "walked out of court ... chastened, though by a gentle hand".⁴⁶

While it is doubtful that they were chastened, they were certainly not deterred. While many accounts of the IWW see its demise as being heralded by the introduction in 1917 of the amended Unlawful Associations Act (which made IWW membership in itself a crime) and the IWW organisation seems to have collapsed at this point, it seems that *IWWism* continued in WA after the local IWW branches closed up, despite continuing repression. Ten more Westralian Wobblies were charged with seditious conspiracy under the War Precautions Act in November 1917. This case was based, according to military intelligence, on "IWW communications and sympathies".⁴⁷ These men were mostly different from those involved in the earlier trial (although Billy Johnstone appears in both): Edward Bolt, Thomas Hawker, Alfred Callanan, Montague Candish, Patrick Armstrong, Richard Yates, Sydney Campbell and Thomas Candish. All but one were acquitted.⁴⁸ And there is further evidence of activity in a letter a local Wobbly wrote to a fellow Wobbly in Melbourne in August 1918. In this he indicated continuing IWW activity in Perth, and observed for good measure that "the Allied capitalist Governments are doing their best to overthrow the Socialist Republic of Russia. I hope they never succeed till the workers of all lands will join in against the common enemy of humanity".⁴⁹

There is considerable evidence in police files of IWW involvement in the turbulent events of 1919 in Fremantle. At this point, IWW activists were pushing hard for the One Big Union, a cause being increasingly taken up by other militant groups on the left. Detective Inspector Harry Mann, who undertook much of the investigations into IWW activity in WA, wrote a quite extraordinary report to the Police Commissioner, excerpts of which are worthy of quoting at length:

"there are a number [of men], running into several hundreds, who are inclined to be extremists and rebellious under the present forms of Government and unfortunately they have won many converts from the ranks of those who are suffering hardship from want of employment and the high cost of living. At their meetings extreme propositions have been discussed, viz., to help themselves to food and the necessities of life for their wives and families, to raid Parliament House, stop work strikes as a protest, etc."

He goes on to directly quote from a letter from one of "the leaders of the extremist party" as saying:

"The Revolution has started in Australia; strange that it should be in Conservative Fremantle, but then unexpected things happen in Revolution ... [but] Capitalist Governments don't give in so easily. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if the Federal Government don't send a gunboat to Fremantle and declare martial law, or they will boycott the port and try to starve the workers into submission ... [t]he returned soldiers turned out as I thought; they were on the worker's side, but intelligent ... [t]he OBU sentiments are growing in WA".⁵⁰

The Commissioner responded by immediately organising a force of 500 Special Constables. The 'revolution' referred to was no doubt the heady days surrounding the Battle of the Barricades at the Fremantle Wharf, during which time lumper Tom Edwards was killed by police, but the date on the file indicates the unrest must have continued for some months, and was probably unprecedented in WA history before it died down.

Perhaps the last episode involving IWWism took place at the height of the post-war tensions on the Goldfields. Oliver and Murray have explained how the labour movement on the coast and in Kalgoorlie had become bitterly divided between the mainstream unions centred around the AWU, right-wing returned soldiers organised in the Coolgardie Miners' Union and the radicals, the remnants of the IWW who were still promoting the cause of the OBU. In 1919 the AWU and CMU fought out their differences in what became known as the "Fimiston" riot, and much more serious race riot, between Australian and Italian miners, took place some months earlier. Alfred 'Bull' Callanan, one of those arrested and acquitted in 1917, and up to 30 OBU allies had been organising amongst Italian workers on the woodlines, not just against the companies, but also against the rural colossus, the conservative Australian Worker's Union. A strike ensued, but with combined opposition from the AWU, the Australian Labor Federation, the press, employers and even the local Italian Consul, it was bound to fail. That it did was a reflection not just of the isolation of the radicals on the woodlines, but more of the determination of an increasingly right wing labour movement, to crush the remnants of industrial radicalism in the State. It succeeded according to Murray. "The [ALF] finally won office in 1924: syndicalism was vanquished".⁵¹ And the radicals fled the Goldfields, that is all except 'Bull' Callanan who in 1923 took a gun and held up the Great Boulder Goldmine. It was, he said "propaganda by deed". A Court sentenced him to seven years jail.⁵²

There is a tendency in the literature to see the Western Australian Wobblies as something of a sideshow to the main event in the East. Certainly the Wobblies were a minor part of the labour movement before 1917 and the repression, which hit the western locals just as much as it did those in the east, made certain that the local organisation would not survive the War.

It obviously worried Governments which went to extraordinary lengths to crush it. However, perhaps the IWW's most lasting legacy was, ironically, to be found after it was crushed. The labour historian, V. Gordon Childe, thought it had a major impact in shifting the labour movement to the left after the war, by popularising the need for industrial unionism.⁵³ That may be so, but OBUism's impact was as short lived as Wobblyism. It was not the state which crushed that idea, nor the craft unions the Wobblies despised so much, but the ALF and its ally the AWU.

- 1 Described in Department of the Army, General Staff, Intelligence Section, *Intelligence reports – First World War.*, Australian Archives (Perth) Accession No. PP14/1, File No. 17/1/10. (Henceforward these files will be referred to as M.I. File No...
- 2 M.I. File No. 16/1/54.
- 3 I. Turner, *Industrial Labour and Politics: the dynamics of the labour movement in eastern Australia 1900-1921*, Sydney, 1965, p. 64.
- 4 I.H. Vanden Driesen, 'The Evolution of the Trade Union Movement in Western Australia', in C.T. Stannage (ed), *A New History of Western Australia*, Nedlands, 1981, p. 358.
- 5 Robertson cited in B. Oliver, 'Rats', 'Scabs', 'Soolers' and 'Sinn Feiners': a re-assessment of the role of the labour movement in the conscription crisis in Western Australia, 1916-17', in *Labour History*, No. 58, May 1990, p. 48.
- 6 B. Oliver, *War and Peace in Western Australia*, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Western Australia, 1990, passim.
- 7 B. Beattie, 'Memoirs of the I.W.W.', in *Labour History*, No. 13, November 1967, p. 35.
- 8 I. Bedford, 'The Industrial Workers of the World in Australia', in *Labour History*, No. 13, November 1967, p. 41.
- 9 E. Scott, *Australia During the War*, Queensland, 1936, p. 695.
- 10 From IWW Preamble in *Direct Action*, January 8 1916, p. 2.
- 11 Bedford, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
- 12 M.I. File No. 2/1/183.
- 13 *Direct Action*, January 8 1916, p. 1.
- 14 *Direct Action*, March 25 1916, cited in P.J. Rushton, 'The Revolutionary Ideology of the Industrial Workers of the World in Australia', in *Historical Studies*, Vol. 15, 1972-3, p. 437.
- 15 Beattie, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
- 16 *Direct Action*, January 8 1916, p. 3.
- 17 *Direct Action*, 1 October 1914 and 1 November 1914.
- 18 See B. Kennedy, *Silver, Sin and Sixpenny Ale: a social history of Broken Hill, 1883-1921*, Melbourne 1978 for history of the labour movement in Broken Hill.
- 19 *Direct Action*, 15 January 1915.
- 20 *Ibid*, 30 October 1915, 4 December 1915.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 4 December 1915.
- 22 See for instance *Ibid*, 15 August 1915, 23 October 1915.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 15 July 1917.
- 24 On dismissals, see *Ibid.*, 9 October 1915. On Reeves and Sawtell see I. Turner, *Sydney's Burning*, Sydney, 1969, pp. 30-31 and pp. 72-76, and *West Australian*, 13 January 1918.
- 25 V. Williams (ed), *Eureka and Beyond. Monty Miller. His Own Story*, Willagee, 1988.
- 26 Beattie, 'Memoirs', p. 33.
- 27 M.I. File No. 2/1/271.
- 28 *Solidarity*, 15 February 1919, p. 1.
- 29 M.I. File No. 1/12/89.
- 30 Cited in Turner, 'Sydney's Burning', p. 44.
- 31 *Direct Action*, 23 December 1915 and 13 January 1917.
- 32 M.I. File No. 1/9/54.
- 33 J. Murray, 'The Kalgoorlie Woodline Strikes, 1919-1920: a Study of Conflict Within the Working Class', *Studies in Western Australia History*, 5 December 1982.
- 34 *Direct Action*, 15 August 1915 and 30 October 1915.
- 35 Beattie, 'Memoirs', p. 34.
- 36 See for example *Direct Action*, 1 January 1915, 1 June 1915, 15 June 1915, 1 July 1916.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 1 January 1915.
- 38 V. Burgmann, 'The Iron Heel. The suppression of the IWW during World War 1', in Sydney Labour History Group, *What Rough Beast. The State and Social Order in Australian History*, Sydney, 1982.
- 39 For instance *Direct Action*, 1 April 1915, 15 August 1915, 18 March 1916.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 9 October 1915.
- 41 Cited in L. Layman and J. Goddard, *Organise. Labour A Visual Record*, Perth 1988, p. 145.

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- 42 Turner, 'Sydney's Burning', p. 46.
- 43 *Direct Action*, 1 June 1915. *West Australian*, 11 January 1918.
- 44 Beattie, 'Memoirs', p. 36.
- 45 The *West Australian* reports their names somewhat differently (George Hanacombe, Alexander Saar, Alexander Anwert) and make a point of giving place of origins, none of which was Western Australia, 10 November 1916.
- 46 Scott, 'Australia During the War', p. 694. See also Turner, 'Sydney's Burning', pp. 44-6.
- 47 M.I. File 2/1/344.
- 48 Thomas Candish was charged with conspiracy not under the War Precautions Act, but under the Criminal Code. He was committed and sentenced to six months in prison. *West Australian*, 11 January 1918. See also B. Oliver, "For Only by the OBU Shall Workman's Wrongs be Righted. A Study of the One Big Union Movement in Western Australia, 1919 to 1922", *Papers in Labour History* No. 5, April 1990.
- 49 M.I. File No. 2/1/344.
- 50 W.A. Police Correspondence Files, Battye Library Acc. No. 430, A.N.5, File NO. 3261/1919.
- 51 Murray, 'The Kalgoorlie Woodline Strikes', and Oliver, 'A Study of the One Big Union Movement'.
- 52 Oliver, 'War and Peace', p. 273.
- 53 Cited in G. Patmore, *Australian Labour History*, Melbourne, 1991.

Communists, Catholics, and the Labor Party: Western Australian accounts of the Spanish Civil War

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Adrian Schubert ended a recent article on the Spanish Civil War with the observation that the massive numbers of works on the conflict and its continual attraction as a subject for historical study and debate, was because 'this incredibly complex struggle has continually been made relevant to the present'.¹ In 1992, however, *The Economist* published a 'Survey' of Spain which mentioned the war just once, suggesting that perhaps the relevance of the civil war to the Spanish present has vanished.² *The Economist* also implied that Franco was an integral (even necessary) condition of Spain's spectacular progress towards 'modernity'.³ The thesis that dictatorship is the best path to industrialisation for economically and socially 'backward' societies, is not new or peculiar to Franco's regime, it has been applied to most dictatorships, including Hitler's and Mussolini's.⁴ My concern in this article, however, is not to find present parallels for the Spanish Civil War but to examine the Western Australian response to the conflict, by analysing coverage of the War in the Communist paper *The Worker's Star*, the Roman Catholic paper *The Record* and the mainstream Labor paper the *Westralian Worker*. This article will show that, as the Second World War approached, significant conflicts were developing in Western Australia between Catholics, Communists and the moderate labour movement which prefigured that post-war disarray which led to the rise of the D.L.P. and did so much damage to Labor as a whole.

In the 1930s Spain was notable for its great disparities in wealth. On the one hand, it had a high proportion of peasants living a subsistence existence, and on the other, a small proportion of wealthy, very traditional elites; large landowners, aristocrats, industrialists, and the Catholic Church. The issue which symbolised this inequality and the inability of the then political system to resolve it was land reform. Every politician of note in the Republican Government had, since 1931, acknowledged land reform as crucial, but none had realistically addressed it.⁵

Working-class industrial politics in Spain was dominated by two major union organisations. One was the anarchist National Confederation of Labour (the Spanish acronym is CNT), which was predominantly comprised of peasants.⁶ The Spanish Anarchists' ideology was not so much inherited from Bakunin, as from federalists such as Pi y Margall.⁷ Their primary aim was the abolition of the state and the formation of autonomous collectives.

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They had a strongly theoretically informed anarchist leadership core, called the Spanish Anarchist Federation (FAI), but in general their voluntarist ideology led to lack of organisation which meant that their power did not reflect their numerical strength.

The other large workers' organisation, the General Union of Workers (UGT), was of socialist persuasion and like the CNT, nearly half its membership were peasants. Though the UGT was more influenced by Marx's ideas than anarchy, few were Communists until the outbreak of the Civil War which encouraged a militancy and radicalisation amongst the Left in general and the socialists in particular. The UGT was more strongly organised than the voluntarist CNT.

The Second Republic's First government, was formed in 1931 (after the King, sensing a hostile political climate, fled to France) and drew ministers from the socialist left and the catholic, moderate right, though the Prime Minister was a centre-left Republican. This government lasted until the 1933 elections which saw an increase in the power and influence of the right. The policies of the more conservative new government led to political and social unrest and strike action in 1934. This destabilised an already unstable coalition, leading to fresh election at the end of 1935. With increased anarchist support the left won the election quite convincingly over the right, and the centrist Republican vote was reduced.⁸

The Spanish Left celebrated with a series of seemingly endless massive 'victory parades in the major cities, featuring both revolutionary Marxist and anarchist slogans.⁹ It was in this context that the ruling elite could see that their hegemonic position in society was seriously under threat. Their response was the formation of a diverse coalition of the Spanish Right, including various factions of Monarchists, differing types of Catholic religious fundamentalists, the Foreign Legion, complete with imported Moorish troops, rightwing elements of the Military, and Spain's national brand of fascist, the Falangists. The main faction which provided the Spanish Right with leadership was naturally enough the army with its hierarchical organisation and discipline. The Spanish Civil War began with the declaration of a Nationalist state by the Spanish Right on July 18, 1936 and it was to continue until the collapse of the democratically elected Republican Government on the 1st of April, 1939.¹⁰ Estimates of the deaths during and after the Civil War range as high as one million. That the figure is so high is due to the Francoist repressions after the conclusion of the war.¹¹

Australia experienced the war in ways which might be expected of an isolated outpost of the British Empire. The Australian working class had long been politically and industrially

organised but the dominant and moderate Labor Party had clearly situated itself comfortably as a reformist party in a capitalist economy. As Connell and Irving contend,

Having taken over the colonial liberal rhetoric of progress and prosperity for all, Labor came to claim in effect that it was better at development than the conservatives. Where Labor held office, this could make it a party of boasters, very strikingly so in the case of the Collier government in Western Australia in the 1920s and 1930s...¹²

Labor had lost the political initiative after World War I. Conservative politics won it and held it for at least a quarter of a century, by harnessing what Stuart MacIntyre calls the 'new valency of Australian nationalism.'¹³ This nationalism had its most spectacular embodiment in the nationalist and right-wing grass-roots organisations, such as the All for Australia League, and clandestine rightwing organisations like the N.S.W. New Guard and the Victorian White Army.¹⁴ Nationalism was the mobilising ideology of the lower middle class which the conservatives used to galvanise support for the Australian Right. All for Australia, particularly its Melbourne branch, supported ex-Labor, United Australia Party leader Joe Lyons to become Prime Minister.¹⁵

In fact, it was the Lyons government that was in power federally for the duration of the Spanish Civil War. Australian foreign policy at the time toed the British line and Lyons, who was a Catholic, did just that without question. This meant that like the conservative British Government, the Australian government's policy of 'non-intervention' in the civil war amounted to support for the rightwing rebels. Lyons himself 'urged Australians not to contribute funds to Spain and appealed from Parliament to the public asking people to refrain from partisan measures',¹⁶ while members of his ministry investigated ways to prevent volunteer nurses from going to Spain.¹⁷ Lyons seems in many ways to have been more sympathetic to Franco's cause than the British Prime Minister Joseph Chamberlain despite the reservations expressed by the Australian High Commissioner in London, Stanly Melbourne Bruce.¹⁸

The federal Labor Party's position was similar to that of the conservatives, if for somewhat different reasons. The main reason for its non-interventionist stance was the memory of the first world war. Taking sides on Spain might precipitate a European wide conflict which would involve Australians and which would raise once again the issue of conscription which had already split the Labor Party once and to which the Labor Party was opposed.¹⁹ However, there was the pragmatics of unity, and many compromised on Spain, as Inglis suggests 'as a price for unity at the ALP Conference in 1936 which readmitted the expelled New South Wales branch.'²⁰

John Curtin, who from 1935 was the federal parliamentary leader, it seems pressed the unity case with regard to the Spanish Civil War and along with J.J. Keneally, the conservative and Catholic W.A. State and Federal Executive President, was an important federal-state link that ensured W.A.'s position dovetailed with that of the federal party.²¹ This is ironic because federal Labor's case against intervention was that, being in opposition, they had nothing to gain except division, because they could not change the government's policy. Of course the Labor Party was in power in W.A. and could have made some sort of response, but then the Collier Government was as paranoid about communism as many conservative governments.²²

Yet, not all Australians or even Western Australians subscribed to the isolationism that characterised the Labor Party or the chauvinistic nationalism that characterised the conservatives. Some Australians rejected these dual ideologies in the most profound way, they went to Spain as volunteers to fight or to save lives. Amirah Inglis suggests that the number of Australian volunteers who went to Spain to support the republicans could have been as high as eighty-two.²³ A recent study of the impact of the war in Wales by Hywel Francis has shown how important political affiliation and class-consciousness was in determining who volunteered to fight. He suggests that Welsh miners saw the Spanish Conflict 'in terms of their own bitter experiences' and their action as a logical 'extension of a long-standing extra-political tradition in Wales'.²⁴ He also documents the fact that 95 percent of volunteers were Communists.²⁵ Thus it is not surprising that there were few Western Australian volunteers, given the moderation of the union movement and extremely small size of the Communist Party in this state. Furthermore, W.A. did not have a Spanish-Australian community, like in Innisfail in Queensland from where many volunteers went.²⁶ However, May McFarlane, a volunteer nurse and niece of the editor of the women's section of *The Westralian Worker* did go. Charles McIlroy and P.J. Lynch, of whom little is known, were also Western Australian born International Brigadists.²⁷

Those who went to Spain mainly came from the trade union movement, where they had experienced the class struggle. They saw the war as an extension of this struggle, as international in scope. The trade unions themselves were more parochial, although it must be said this depended on their leadership. The Australian Workers' Union (AWU), for example, with its strong links to the leadership of the ALP, took no stance on Spain. Left unions particularly those with Communist links or leadership did take stances. In July 1937 a special conference of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), passed two resolutions, one against the policy of isolationism and one in support of the Spanish Republic.²⁸ Thus, the ALP was somewhat out of step with the union movement.

However, these considerations were not so crucial in W.A., where there were no strong unions supporting the Communist line as there were in N.S.W. and Victoria, and the W.A. labour movement was not affiliated to the ACTU.²⁹

It was the Communist Party which influenced the trade unions to take an internationalist pro-Republic stance. Communism was of course an internationalist ideology, which emphasised the links between workers the world over, regardless of national, ethnic and religious differences. The Communist position called on workers to see the class struggle as global. The Catholic Church in Australia was not parochial in outlook either. The Church actually took up a collection for the repair of Spanish churches, monasteries and schools, though it was not supported very generously. As union and communist appeals to action relied on workers seeing the class struggle as global, so the Catholic Church in Australia attempted to provoke horror at the persecution of the Church by relying on Catholics seeing religious experience as universal and international. There was also a small group of internationalist liberals in W.A. who saw fascism as a threat to world peace, but were not associated with the union movement or the Communist Party. Such people were represented in the predominantly middle-class intellectual organisation, The Western Australian League of Nations Union,³⁰ though they were not overly concerned with the specifics of the Spanish Civil War.

The time has come to examine the three specific Western Australian responses to the Spanish Civil War, in *The Worker's Star*; *The Record*; and *The Westralian Worker*. Their views derive from explicit ideological positions which had their equivalents in the Spanish conflict. They were partisan observers, more prone to engage in commentary and polemic, than the more pedestrian mainstream press, which was concerned more to report than to expound a particular point of view.³¹

The Western Australian Catholic Church's position expressed a solidarity with the Catholic institutions and clergy of Spain who, it believed, were being persecuted by the 'satanic' Communists.³² To Catholics, the Spanish Communists were not a peculiar national form of Communist, rather they 'were openly selling the country to the Russian Comintern.'³³ This position was common among rightwing apologists of Franco at the time and in academic discussion immediately following the war, though the recent consensus is that for reasons of foreign policy Stalin supported the creation of a liberal democracy.³⁴ According to *The Record*, 'the Left Wing Radicals won the [1935] general elections ... by terrorism and the "framing" of votes'.³⁵ Yet, that the conflict was between Fascism and democracy was consistently denied, rather it was 'between the Catholic Church and her enemies'.³⁶

Once the Communists had gained control of the Spanish Government, so *The Record* argued, 'they set to work attacking the most vulnerable side of the established order - the Church'.³⁷ *The Record* painted the conflict as one between theists and atheists:

Love of God has driven half of Spain into one camp; hatred of God has driven the other half of Spain into the other camp. On one side, camps turned into temples of God; and on the other thousands of priests assassinated and temples gutted, with the ruthless destruction of religion.³⁸

According to *The Record* the Republican Government was the result of 'a Masonic and Communistic conspiracy';³⁹ a conspiracy of international dimension which sought the wholesale destruction of the Catholic Church.⁴⁰ The Spanish Left's destruction of the Church was therefore deliberate and inhumane. It also inflicted 'rape, arson, and murder' on a population of innocent men, women, and children.⁴¹ The insurgents of the Right, it seemed, did nothing of the sort, according to *The Record*. Indeed they were the defenders of 'Christian civilisation against barbarism'.⁴²

The statements in *The Record* regarding fascism suggest that part of its support for Franco had more to do with an acceptance of the general fascist principle, rather than a belief in Franco's independence from Germany and Italy. It clarified the difference between Hitler's Germany and the 'genius' Mussolini's Italy in the following terms;

Fascism is a purely nationalist and secular system. With slight modification of its principles it can be made either Catholic or non-Catholic. In Italy a modus vivendi with the Church prevails; in Germany, Nazism - which is Fascism minus Italian common sense - is definitely pagan in outlook.⁴³

Again and again, the important principle *The Record* espoused was the adherence or otherwise to Christian values generally and Catholic values more specifically.

This fellow-travelling with Fascism was accompanied by some almost anti-semitic articles on what the paper called the 'Jewish Problem'.⁴⁴ For example, *The Record* quoted some questionable and offensive statistics;

The situation is creating hardships among the Jews, which naturally drives them into Communist activities, so that 95 per cent of transgressions connected with Communism are perpetuated by Jewish elements.⁴⁵

The Catholic position, then, was both emphatic and impassioned.

The Communist position was similarly trenchant. According to *The Worker's Star*, the evil in Spain was clearly Fascism. The rebels were often given the ascription of 'fascist' or sometimes 'Spanish Nazis'.⁴⁶ For the Western Australian Communists, the Republican Government was legitimately and fairly elected, so the Republicans were called the 'forces of democracy'⁴⁷, and *The Star's* position was that 'democracy must triumph'.⁴⁸ To the W.A. communists, the struggle was between democracy and fascism.⁴⁹ It also denied any suggestion of a Comintern plot and claimed; 'The policy of the Comintern is defence of the democratic Spanish Government against the fascist attack and none other'.⁵⁰ To *The Worker's Star* International Fascism represented by Franco, Mussolini, and Hitler, was conspiring to destroy Spanish democracy, and this was the real danger.⁵¹

The Catholic Church rarely enters the reporting of *The Star* and then it is in response to claims of Communist persecution of Catholics. *The Star* argued that "churches have been burnt and priests killed" but excused this by observing: 'If this is so it means that the priests have fought on the side of the fascist murderers against the people, and have used the churches as arsenals from which to attack the workers'.⁵²

It alleged that Churches were also used as 'fascist fortresses'.⁵³ However, military endeavour was not the Church's only crime, it was also 'the biggest landowner and capitalist' in Spain making the Church a class-enemy of the ordinary peasants and workers.⁵⁴ If the Catholics got involved in the conflict and the Leftists shot them, then according to *The Star*, that was justified, 'but the Government [was] not opposed to their religion'.⁵⁵ It was the Fascists who, in *The Star's* view, were doing the shooting; 'slaughtering men, women and children'.⁵⁶

The Star consistently emphasised the vital and positive contribution of the Communists to the Republic, even in its early stages when Communists were still rare compared with Socialists and Anarchists. The Communist Party, according to *The Star*, was 'working energetically in all the villages, leading the action of the masses'.⁵⁷ By contrast it balanced the Anarchists for most of the Republic's failings;

Churches have been destroyed, but this has been the work of anarchists who are still strong in Spain, and who, through their putsches and provocative acts, are a source of serious weakness to the forces of democracy supporting the government.⁵⁸

It is true that the anarchists were generally more hostile to the Church and more prone to act on this hostility. However, hostility to the Church seems to have been widespread in Spain, particularly amongst the poor, irrespective of their ideology.⁵⁹

In addition, to its general hostility towards Anarchists, *The Star* also made the far-fetched claim that Leon Trotsky was in league with the Nazis.⁶⁰ Certainly in Spain, Communist opposition to the Anarchists, their voluntarist ideology and their belief that social change could accompany war, led to serious divisions within the Republican forces. The most serious of these was the suppression of the Anarchists and the Trotskyist POUM in Barcelona in 1937. By early May 1937 this conflict had become an open war between Stalinist Communists aligned with small land holders and the Anarchists aligned with the Trotskyist Communists.

This is not to say that *The Workers' Star* was totally blind to certain Anarchist virtues. Durruti was by far the most famous anarchist military leader and his anarchist militia came to be known as the Durruti Column. On the 14th of November 1937, he led his men to Madrid to demand a dangerous mission so as to display Anarchist bravery.⁶¹ A week later he was killed while attacking enemy lines, though he mysteriously seems to have been shot from the direction of his own line.⁶² The high regard with which he was held percolated even to Western Australia where he was described by *The Star*, as being a 'brave Spanish Anarchist' and 'universal sorrow' was expressed at his death.⁶³

The tone of *The Star's* commentaries then was exceptionally forceful. They also convey an all-pervading optimism. It denied stories, in what is called the 'war-monger's Press', of Government defeats and other set-backs. Instead assured its readers that 'such reports as are allowed to leak through from the battlefields of Spain are all of loyalist [left] victories.'⁶⁴ This was at a time when the Government was losing ground to the rebels. Its optimism was blind.

The Westralian Worker, the paper of the mainstream labour movement, was sure of the moral rightness in its rejection of Fascism, and was certain of the links between Hitler's, Mussolini's, and Franco's regimes. It suggested that,

the sword of Fascism is sweeping through Europe reeking devastation and ruin on its path. From Italy to Germany has this doctrine spread, and now in its violent, relentless advance, and in its most horrible form, it is attacking Spain.⁶⁵

Yet, this concern, was not matched by space devoted to coverage of the war. The odd item was reported from the cable news services, in a column entitled, 'Matters and Men.'⁶⁶ The women's page seemed to have as much interest in Spain, not surprisingly perhaps since the editor's niece was a volunteer nurse.⁶⁷

One of *The Workers'* few substantial articles mocked the Communist's request, that Australia and Britain support the Spanish Republic, suggesting instead that the Communists should,

send a demand to Stalin to save the Spanish Government, but perhaps they realised that he, too, was busy killing off the dinkum Communists in Russia - for every Marxist must admit that there were men among those shot recently in Russia who held a purer Communism than that practised by Stalin - to intervene in Spain.⁶⁸

The Worker then attempted to negate *The Star's* monopoly on the moral capital associated with its support of the Republic, not by regularly publishing its own analysis but rather by attacking *The Star's* position. The conservative grip of the AWU, and the inclination of men such as Curtin and Kenneally, meant that the potentially divisive issue could not be approached from a fully proactive position. Instead *The Worker* tried to undermine the potential appeal of the Communist position.

W.A. Labor's position on Spain has already been noted, yet its isolationism needs further examination. In the early part of this century the ALP was not properly a centralised national party but was rather comprised of quite disparate branches, each of which was itself factionalised along traditional ideological and more complex personal lines. As a consequence the ALP since the end of the First World War had experienced dramatic and damaging splits; over conscription in 1917, and over the policies with which it would deal with the Great Depression, in 1931 and 1932.

Against this recent history John Curtin was attempting to rebuild the ALP and this required steering it away whenever possible from divisive issues. Curtin and his ally, Kenneally's, motives may have been different to the extent that Kenneally was a conservative and Curtin a pragmatist, but their positions on Spain coincided. Thus Curtin sought to maintain the 'fragile unity between Catholic right and Communist left by expressing policy in terms of detachment from remote European quarrels.'⁶⁹ To this end, the W.A. branch shunned debate on international issues in general, and the Spanish war, in particular. So the editor of *The Worker* in 1932, had been asked by the W.A. State Executive to concentrate on state politics.⁷⁰ W.A. Young Labor was closed down after the Left passed motions in support of

the Republic.⁷¹ W.A Labor's Peace Committee was almost strategically muted and inactive and at one point W.A. Labor banned ALP representation at pro-Republican rallies and on local peace committees.⁷²

If Western Australian Labor indulged in the unity of nationalism and the safety of parochialism, the Catholics and Communists were not so content. Their publications display an internationalism of quite awesome depth and scope. It is a tribute to the strengths of their international links that their message could be so uniformly and fully enunciated in the remoteness of Perth. In itself this suggests something about these institutions though their publications did not solely contain international issues and analysis. There was a good deal of localised content, for example, *The Record* regularly discussed 'The Aboriginal Problem'⁷³, and published non-political distractions such as recipes.⁷⁴ Similarly *The Star* had a section covering local theatre.⁷⁵

The Star and *The Record* provide highly dogmatic, mordant accounts of the civil war, admitting no faults in the sides they supported. Both publications espoused a very didactic 'truth'. In their world, the correct line emanated from the top of a highly structured, rigid hierarchy of power. For instance in *The Record*, the Rev. Dr. Rumble's column, a question and answer column reprinted from his Sydney-based talk back radio show, frequently cited the Pope's position as a defense of a position. For example, when asked about cremation he replied, 'our rejection of cremation comes back to the fact that the Catholic Church forbids it we submit to that authority.'⁷⁶ *The Star's*, suggestion that Trotsky was allied with the Nazis is analogous.⁷⁷ The correct line, dictated from above, resulted in a too simple homogeneity being repeated endlessly through out both publications.

The aim of each of the three publications was to attract and retain adherents to their respective organisations; to ratify, reassure, indoctrinate and recruit. Their target was mainly, though not exclusively, the working class. The ALP was clearly ideologically located between the other two but the divisions between the three were often clouded. The Communist position faded into the ALP's left and Catholics were well represented in the ALP's right. Yet, despite these grey areas there was a good deal of tension between the three groups, illustrated by their responses to the Spanish conflict and the related issue of the incompatibility of Communism and Catholicism. Thus, it is probably timely to refine our understanding of the dynamic between the three groups as it was mediated by the Spanish Civil War.

The relationship between the ALP and the Communists was improving by the late 1930s, even if the Communist's position was a pale reflection of the policy adopted by the Seventh Communist International in 1935, which ratified a trend in many national Communist organs; the creation of a 'united front' with social democracy against fascism.⁷⁸ Of course, in France and Spain such fronts were a reality by 1935. However in Australia the Communist Party first approached the ALP to form a united front, in 1933. It was done, though, with the expectation of rejection, and was laced with a desire to allocate blame for past disunity.⁷⁹ After 1935 *The Worker's Star* vigorously promoted the 'united front' policy arguing that it would increase 'the possibilities for the Communists to exert real influence in determining Labor Party policy.'⁸⁰ Such a proposal was somewhat optimistic given the long history of conflict between the ALP and the CPA. Ralph Gibson's account of the incident in which Victorian trade union leaders called in the police (who were hidden in union offices) to baton members of the Unemployed Worker's Movement who were protesting outside Trades Hall, illustrates the tension between the ALP and the CPA during the early years of the Depression.⁸¹ This episode had its equivalent in W.A. when the ALP pressured the unemployed to leave their Communist lead union in favour of the conservative AWU.⁸² Furthermore, the ALP, fearing 'red subversion' in its ranks, promoted 'witch-hunts against militants' which further hampered the building of a united front.⁸³

It was such conflicts that led Communists in the early 1930s to label social democracy, particular the leftwing of social democracy, as 'social fascism'.⁸⁴ This terminology drew from the Sixth International which 'virtually identified social democracy with fascism.'⁸⁵ *The Workers' Star* contained many attacks on right wing ALP figures, such as the former New South Wales Premier Jack Lang, and a similar number of criticisms of the influence of 'organised' Catholics in the ALP. For example, *The Star* decried what it believed was the Labor right's 'fascist-like control' of the Labor Party.⁸⁶ While some sections of the Labor Party clearly sympathised with the Communists, the mainstream, moderate and right wing of the ALP distanced itself from the CPA and ignored calls for a united front. The ALP also distanced itself from the Communists at election time, to defend itself against accusations from conservatives that it was merely a front for Communism.⁸⁷ A good illustration of this was one of the few statements of position by W.A. Labor on the Spanish Civil War. It served only to differentiate the ALP from the Communist position.⁸⁸

What of the relationship between the Catholics and the ALP? In this regard the view of Connell and Irving is pertinent;

The alliance of the Catholic hierarchy with Labor over conscription never extended to socialism, militant unionism, or even fiscal radicalism and in

the later 1930s, a militant anti-communism emerged in Catholic circles in response to the Spanish Civil War.⁸⁹

If any individual embodied it was Melbourne's Archbishop Mannix whose passion for anti-conscription in World War One, was largely responsible for the defeat of Billy Hughes' conscription referenda. In the 1930s, Mannix became a leading anti-communist in the Catholic Church and opponent of the Spanish Republic.⁹⁰ The working class background of the majority of Catholics in Australia, and their Irishness which set them against the more numerous and prosperous Anglo-saxon Protestants meant that there was a certain common interest between the ALP and the Church, but the Church opposed anything radical which might undermine its own position.⁹¹

So *The Record* consciously attempted to influence the ALP. It warned the ALP of the dangers of disillusioning Catholic supporters by associating too closely with the Communist Party.⁹² In an article entitled 'Marxism on Three Fronts' it suggested that Marxism had as good as failed on the Spanish and Japanese fronts. It argued the only possible means of survival for the ALP was by a 'crusade against Communism', and 'internal reforms ... to hold the full allegiance of Catholics.'⁹³ The letters pages and editorials of *The Record* make it clear that for Catholics, Spain was a test of ALP support of Catholic and non-Communist principles.⁹⁴

However, while *The Record* was stridently anti-communist it still stressed the need for social justice and reform.⁹⁵ The CPA, on the other hand, seemed comparatively unconcerned with the Catholic Church and though critical of it in certain ways, the unquestioning hostility which characterised *The Record's* view of Communism was absent.

If the Spanish Civil War served as an analogy to differentiate the appeals of the three institutions to their potential working class memberships, it was also mobilised to distinguish them from and to berate the conservatives. Both *The Worker* and *The Star*, quite liberally applied the term fascist to the Lyons Government, particularly in the lead up to the 1936 Federal Election. John Rankin wrote an article entitled, "'It Can't Happen Here" - - - I Wonder?', in *The Worker*. He argued that without Laborite policies, Fascism, like in Spain, was a very real possibility, in Australia.⁹⁶ *The Worker* also characterised the Australian 'anti-Labor' conservatives as being, 'parrot-phrasers of those magnificent Fascists ... in Germany.'⁹⁷

The CPA was particularly hostile to the Lyons Government because of its persecution of Communists. Lyons had, for instance, banned importation of so-called seditious material, (three men had been jailed for smuggling lantern slides of Russia into Australia), had refused the CPA permission to use Australia Post, had persuaded employers to sack Communists, had encouraged groups not to hire halls and rooms to CPA, and had prosecuted editors of national CPA publication under the Crimes Act.⁹⁸ In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that *The Star*, linked the Crimes Act to international Fascism's policies, and drew the conclusion that the defeat of Hitler, Mussolini and General Franco is bound up with the defeat of Lyons. This is an important lesson to be learnt from the events in Spain.⁹⁹

Perhaps that linkage between European Fascists and Australian Conservatives explains in some small way John Curtin's eventual rise to power, at a time when Australia was fighting the European Fascists in the Second World War. If this so it is ironic given Curtin's avoidance of the issue, which certainly played a part in retaining Catholic links to the party. The Spanish conflict then played a part in distinguishing Labor and anti-Labor, mobilising working class support for Labor.

In the late 1930s a colourful war of words erupted in the pages of W.A.'s partisan press over the Spanish Civil War. But in a very important sense this local conflict over the rights and wrongs of the War represented a battle for positions in Western Australian working-class politics. What *The Record*, *The Worker's Star* and the *Westralian Worker* did or did not say about the War were not, therefore, just expressions of their positions on Spain, nor of their more general ideologies. When *The Record* attacked the Communists in Spain, it also attacked the Communists in Perth. When *The Worker's Star* attacked the Spanish Fascists it also attacked the Lyons Government in Canberra, and asserted for itself a leading place in worker's politics in Western Australia. And when the *Westralian Worker's* regular readers could find little copy on the War they were, in fact, reading the politics of pragmatism, the avoidance of anything too divisive which might once again split the Labor Party. The colour and heat in the partisan press over the War then, can be seen as a crucial early stage in the conflicts which erupted in the 1940s and beyond as Catholics, Communists and Laborites fought out that much bigger battle for control of working-class politics.

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- 1 Schubert estimates that over the 50 years since the war ended there have been 15,000 different volumes
published on the conflict. A. Shubert, 'The Spanish Civil War: New Questions For Old?', *Peasant
Studies*, vol. 18, no. 4, Summer 1991, p. 289.
- 2 *The Economist*, April 25th, 1992, p. 3.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 Henry Turner gives a sympathetic review of the academic literature which advances this dubious thesis,
see H.A. Turner Jr, 'Fascism and Modernisation', *World Politics*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1972.
- 5 G. Jackson, *A Concise History of The Spanish Civil War*, London 1986, pp. 19-22.
- 6 Hugh Thomas estimates that its financial membership was around 350,000, but it could rely on the
support of 1 million more sympathisers, see H. Thomas, "Anarchist Agrarian Collectives in the
Spanish Civil War", in R. Carr (ed.), *The Republic and the Civil War in Spain*, London 1971, p.239.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 700,000 anarchist who had traditionally abstained from voting, supported the Socialists. See Jackson,
Concise History, pp. 30-5
- 9 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 10 Carr (ed.), *The Republic*, pp. 111-3.
- 11 Jackson, *Concise History*, pp. 175-6.
- 12 T. Irving and R.W. Connell, *Class Structure in Australian History*, Melbourne 1980, p. 283.
- 13 S. MacIntyre, *The Oxford History of Australia, Vol. 4, 1901-42*, Melbourne 1986, p. 190.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 264-9; The Western Australian equivalent was the Argonauts Civic and Political Club. See
J. Williams, *The First Furrow*, Perth 1976, p. 96.
- 15 MacIntyre, *History of Australia.*, pp. 268-9.
- 16 A. Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War*, Sydney 1987, pp. 30-2.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 35-6.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 21 M. Brown, *Western Australians and the World: Anti-War Organisations as a Case Study, 1919-1939*,
M.A. Thesis, History Department, University of Western Australia 1981, pp. 118-9
- 22 See MacIntyre's suggestion that Phillip Collier significantly delayed the police response to the unrest
in the Eastern Goldfields because 'of intelligence reports that Kalgoorlie was a hotbed of communism',
MacIntyre, *History of Australia*, p. 308.
- 23 Inglis, *Australians*, pp. 219-21.
- 24 H. Francis, *Miners Against Fascism: Wales and the Spanish Civil War*, London 1984, p. 23.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 216.
- 26 For an account of the Innisfail Spanish Community's contribution to the Spanish Civil War, see
Inglis, *Australians in the Spanish Civil War*, pp. 115-6.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- 29 Brown, *Western Australians and the World*, pp. 118, 121.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- 31 I am not suggesting that the mainstream media was bias free.
- 32 This was the Pope's own clear position, see *The Record*, 31 October 1936, p. 7.
- 33 *The Record*, 25 July 1936, p. 14.
- 34 Primarily Stalin used Spain to show 'good faith' to the Western powers such as France and Britain and
to attempt to embarrass them into an anti-Fascist (that is, anti-German) pact. The USSR contributed
little aid to Spain, in deed, it actually probably gained from the gold transactions, see A. Vinas, 'Gold,
the Soviet Union, and the Spanish Civil War', in M. Blinkhorn (ed.) *Spain in Conflict 1931-1939:
Democracy and its Enemies*, London 1986, especially p. 234.
- 35 This was the election which precipitated the civil war after the Popular Front won convincingly with
the support of the Anarchists, see *The Record*, 25 July 1936, p. 14; 8 August 1936, p. 9.
- 36 *The Record*, 7 November 1936, p. 28.
- 37 *Ibid.*, 14 November 1936, p. 4.

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- 38 *Ibid.*, 27 March 1937, p.13.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 8 August 1936, p. 9; 10 October 1936, p. 13. Franco, himself seems to have had 'a vision of the world based on a gigantic and obsessive fantasy of a masonic conspiracy', see Schubert, 'New Questions for Old', p. 285.
- 40 F. Sheen, 'The Church and the World' in *The Record*, 8 August 1936, p. 6.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 17 October 1936, p. 5.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 *Ibid.*, 24 October 1936, p. 8.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 19 September 1936, p. 20.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 27 March 1937, p. 13.
- 46 *The Worker's Star*, 28 August 1936, p. 2
- 47 *Ibid.*, 7 August 1936, p. 1; and 14 August 1936, p. 1.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 14 July 1936, p. 1.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 7 August 1936, p. 1.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 7 August 1936, p. 1.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 14 August 1936, p. 2.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 31 July 1936, p. 2.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 4 August 1936, p. 4.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 14 August 1936, p. 2.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 28 August 1936, p. 1.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 28 August 1936, p. 3.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 24 April 1936, p. 4.
- 58 *Ibid.*, 21 August 1936, p. 1.
- 59 Jackson is able to discuss the 1931 church burnings without reference to political groups except to say that the Socialists and the UGT publicly denounced the burnings, see G. Jackson, *The Spanish Republic and the Civil War, 1931-1939*, Princeton 1972, pp. 32-6.
- 60 *The Workers' Star*, 18 September, 1936, p. 2.
- 61 Jackson, *Concise History*, p. 96.
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 *The Worker's Star*, 18 December 1936, p. 4.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 10 December 1937, p. 1; Cf *Westralian Worker*, 10 December 1937, p. 2 'Franco likely to win'.
- 65 *The Westralian Worker*, 21 August 1936, p. 8.
- 66 See for example, *Ibid.*, 12 November 1937, p. 2.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 14 May 1937; 28 May 1937; Brown, *Western Australians and theWorld*, pp. 136-7; see note 27.
- 68 *The Westralian Worker*, 4 September 1936, p. 6.
- 69 Brown, *Western Australians and theWorld*, p. 118.
- 70 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- 71 Inglis, *Australians*, p. 67.
- 72 Brown, *Western Australians and theWorld*, p.140; p. 175.
- 73 *The Record*, 12 September 1936, p. 8.
- 74 *Ibid.*, 24 October 1936, p. 25.
- 75 *The Worker's Star*, 10 December 1937, p. 3.
- 76 *The Record*, 24 October 1936, p. 3.
- 77 *The Worker's Star*, 18 September 1936, p. 4.
- 78 See Ralph Gibson's account of this development in R. Gibson, *The People Stand Up*, Melbourne 1984, pp. 63-4.
- 79 *Ibid.*, p. 55.
- 80 *The Worker's Star*, 11 June, 1937, p. 5.
- 81 Gibson, *The People*, p. 53.
- 82 Williams, *The First Furrow*, pp. 148-9.
- 83 These quotes refer specifically to W.A. but a similar situation pertained around the country, *ibid.*, p. 155.
- 84 For an account of the use of the term 'social fascist' see, Gibson, *The People*, pp. 50-6.
- 85 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 86 *The Worker's Star*, 18 September 1936, p. 2.
- 87 *The Westralian Worker*, 1 October 1937, p. 6.

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- 88 Compare earlier discussion of this statement (note 67); *The Westralian Worker*, 4 September 1936, p. 6.
- 89 Connell and Irving, *Class Structure*, p. 288.
- 90 See Inglis, *Australians*, pp. 42-4.
- 91 The Catholic commitment to the plight of the worker is encapsulated in the title to article 'Christ, The Worker's Brother', *The Record*, 23 January 1937, p. 20; See also its most "sympathetic treatment" of communism, that is it had brought to the world's attention the problem of poverty, *The Record*, 30 January 1937, p. 1.
- 92 *Ibid.*, 5 June 1937, p. 7.
- 93 *Ibid.*, 27 February 1937, p. 14.
- 94 They also show that there was quite a diversity of opinion on Spain particularly amongst Labor members, also among Catholics. Interestingly much of the debate centres around the well argued position of a correspondent referred to only as 'Young Labor'. See *The Record*, 17 October 1936, p. 13; 24 October 1936, p. 12; 7 November 1936, p. 13; 31 October 1936, p. 15; 6 February 1937, p. 5; 5 December 1936, p. 10; 19 December 1936, p. 8; 21 November 1936, p. 8.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 7 November 1936, p. 9.
- 96 *The Westralian Worker*, 21 August 1936, p. 8.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 1 January 1937, p. 7.
- 98 This just an example of the Lyons Governments all pervading anti-communism, see MacIntyre, *History of Australia*, pp. 307-10.
- 99 *The Worker's Star*, 28 August 1936, p. 2.