

Chapter 6

'Commos', 'Groupers' and 'Good Labor Blokes': the Impact of Ideological Differences in the Local Union Movement in the Post-War Period

From its peak in 1945, the popularity of communism and of its advocates among Australian trade unionists began to decrease progressively over the ensuing decade. Even in Rockhampton where their following was never particularly strong at the best of times, communists found their fortunes waning. This decline stemmed from two separate factors: another change of policy by the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) and the emergence of well-organised anti-communist forces to purge the labour movement of opposing ideologies. From 1946, a Moscow-dictated return to opposing traditional unionism and hostility towards the Australian Labor Party reduced mainstream support for communist union leaders and for the CPA as a political force.¹ Once again, communists derided the reformist Labor Party whose industrial measures they believed hindered the advance to a workers' revolution. This hard-line approach alienated many erstwhile supporters in the unions just as it had done during the former confrontationist era between 1928 and 1935.²

At the same time, other forces worked tirelessly to eliminate what they perceived to be the dangerous growth in communist influence in the union movement over the preceding years. Whereas the fight against anti-labourist ideology had previously come from within the movement itself, the post-war battle also drew support from outside the

1. Alastair Davidson, *Communist Party of Australia: A Short History*, Stanford, 1969, p. 134.

2. Denis Murphy, 'The 1957 Split: "A Drop in the Ocean in Political History"', in Denis Murphy, Roger Joyce and Colin Hughes, *Labor in Power: The Labor Party and Governments in Queensland, 1915-57*, St Lucia, 1980, p. 482.

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traditional working-class power base. This wider quest to root out all vestiges of communism proved to be the most divisive factor in the history of Australian unionism and politics. The ideological battle which dominated the post-war decade ruptured the traditional link between the industrial and political arenas which labourism held sacred, and brought down the Queensland Labor government in 1957 after an almost unbroken rule of almost 40 years. Labor would not return to power in Queensland until 1989.

Anti-Communist Forces: ALP Industrial Groups and the Movement

In response to what seemed to be the ever-rising power of communists, some unions set about ridding their ranks of suspected elements through their own internal efforts.³ The potential communist threat equally concerned the Labor Party of which the unions were an integral part. Consequently, the ALP in New South Wales and Victoria established special Industrial Groups whose task was to promote Labor policy on the shop floor and to win back lost positions for Labor-supporting union leaders.⁴ In Queensland as well, communist successes in union elections worried many incumbent leaders and disturbed the state ALP. Labor saw communist agitators not only as an immediate threat to the government's policy of industrial peace but also, by way of the unions, as a danger to the control of the party machine and of the government itself.⁵ Following the 1946 meat strike, the Queensland Central Executive's (QCE) Inner Executive decided to create official ALP Industrial Groups to coordinate anti-communist activities in Queensland unions.⁶ The 1947 Labor-in-Politics convention sanctioned the strategy and the following year formally organised an Industrial Groups Committee of the

3. *ibid.*, p. 485.

4. J. Paul Ormonde, 'The Industrial Groups and the Labor Party', *Voice, the Australian Independent Monthly*, Mar. 1955, p. 17.

5. Douglas Blackmur, 'The ALP Industrial Groups in Queensland', *Labour History*, No. 46, May 1984, p. 101; Frank G. Clarke, 'Labour and the Catholic Social Studies Movement', *Labour History*, No. 20, May 1971, p. 47.

6. Blackmur, 'ALP Industrial Groups', pp. 88 and 94.

ALP to oversee local groups throughout the state under the direction of the AWU secretary, Joe Bukowski.⁷

Even before union and ALP leaders had taken these steps, elements within the Catholic Church were worried by what Pope Pius XI identified as the 'imminent danger [of] bolshevistic and atheistic Communism'. In his encyclical, *Divini Redemptoris*, the Pope had warned that communism 'aim[ed] at upsetting the social order and at undermining the very foundations of Christian civilisation'.⁸ Catholic bishops further warned that communists wanted to dominate the trade union movement as the means of overthrowing the government and eventually destroying all political, social and religious freedom.⁹ Thus, trade unions were the key to preserving democratic liberty but some Catholic laymen believed that up to half the nation's unionists were already under communist control.¹⁰

In 1942, the crusading Melbourne lawyer B.A. (Bob) Santamaria established a clandestine lay group, the Catholic Social Studies Movement, to tackle the early but growing influence of communists in trade unions.¹¹ The following year, small groups of Catholic unionists were actively working in unions to prevent any possible communist infiltration.¹² By 1945, 'The Movement', or 'Catholic Action' as it was more commonly known then, had been sanctioned by the Church hierarchy, especially by Melbourne's Archbishop Mannix.¹³ Even at that early stage of its battle against communism, the Movement's annual budget from the Church was £10,000.¹⁴ The post-war atmosphere of Cold War politics and McCarthyist witch-hunts in the United States, as well as several

7. Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', p. 482.

8. Catholic Church, *Peace in Industry: Official Statement of the Standing Committee of Catholic Bishops of Australia*, Carnegie, Victoria, 1947, p. 1. UQFL Hayes Collection

9. *ibid.*, p. 14;

10. Davidson, *Communist Party of Australia*, p. 126.

11. Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', p. 485. As Murphy points out, Santamaria also wanted to rid society of 'freemasonry, industrial urban capitalism, liberalism, Protestantism and agnosticism'.

12. James Murtagh, *Australia: The Catholic Chapter*, Sydney, 1959, p. 194; Clarke, 'Labour and the Catholic Social Studies Movement', pp. 50-53. This organisation originated in 1931 in the form of the Champion Society which sought to put forward alternative Catholic social theories to both capitalism and Marxism.

13. Archbishop Daniel Mannix to Cardinal Norman Gilroy, 27 Aug. 1956, quoted in Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', p.486;

14. Andrew Moore, *The Right Road: A History of Right-Wing Politics in Australia*, Melbourne, 1995, p. 98.

major strikes in Australia in the late 1940s, magnified the communist threat and the perceived need for the Movement to step up its work.

Membership of the Movement only consisted of between 5,000 and 10,000 nationally and the organisation remained secret from many Catholics even when exposed in the mid-1950s.¹⁵ Like other lay organisations established by the Church at the time, the Movement particularly attracted the devout young laity through its dual focus on the religious and temporal spheres: it provided an opportunity to strengthen religious convictions and develop Catholic social principles and then to apply them in the working world through personal example, influence and leadership.¹⁶ It recruited from the many working-class Catholics in trade unions who comprised the 'consistent backbone' of the Labor Party.¹⁷ Some recruits were already active unionists and ALP members but many had little previous involvement with unionism apart from compulsory membership nor any interest in politics even if, like most Catholics at the time, they consistently voted Labor.¹⁸ The Movement also attracted support from the expanding younger generation of Catholic lower-middle class who no longer maintained their working-class parents' traditional sentimental bond with the ALP.¹⁹ Many of these recruits were clerks in state government departments which, in Queensland at least, were dominated by Catholics.²⁰ On the other hand, some Catholics pressured to join the secret organisation resisted

15. *ibid.*, p. 101; Paul Ormonde, *The Movement*, Melbourne, 1972, p. 16.

16. *ibid.*, p. 21; Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History*, Kensington, 1985, p. 395; Naomi Turner, *Catholics in Australia: A Social History*, Vol. 2, North Blackburn, 1992, pp. 161, 162, 166 and 167. As Turner points out, there were many forms of Catholic Action undertaken from the 1930s to stimulate greater participation of the laity in the work of the Church. There is still some disagreement about whether the Movement was part of Catholic Action but it followed the organisational pattern of Catholic Action and had definite links with it.

17. Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, pp. 161, 174 and 181.

18. Editorial, *Voice*, Mar. 1955, p. 3; O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 378; Ormonde, *The Movement*, p. 4.

19. *ibid.*, p. xv.

20. Thomas P. Boland, *James Duhig*, St Lucia, 1986, pp. 143-144; Bill Ford, 'Work' in A.F. Davies and Sol Encel (eds), *Australian Society: A Sociological Introduction*, Melbourne, 1970, fn. 46, p. 109. Ford argues that Catholic schools encouraged pupils to enter the public service to avoid discrimination by predominantly Protestant employers in the private sector. Boland discusses the frequent allegations made against Catholic schools in light of their disproportionate success in exams. It has been claimed that Rockhampton's Christian Brothers' College 'coached' their pupils for public exams on information leaked by Catholics in the State Public Service and Department of Public Instruction. Evan Schwarten, interviewed 10 May 1996; Bob Cole, interviewed 28 Apr. 1995.

because they believed that it was not in the Church's best interests to meddle in politics nor should the ALP be subject to any religious interference.²¹

Outwardly, the goals of the Movement and the ALP Industrial Groups were similar in their desire to purge unions of communism. Inwardly, the purpose of the Movement was far more than—to quote a contemporary editorial—'simply to carry out the mission of their Church in its holy war against communism'. Its ultimate aim was to bring to fruition Santamaria's plan to dominate the labour movement and thereby re-orientate Labor Party ideology and policies to align with the Catholic Church's social principles and programmes.²² Catholic ALP members already involved in the Movement had applied much of the pressure on the QCE to introduce Industrial Groups as a cover for their own organisation's activities.²³

It was neither mandatory to belong to the ALP nor to be a Catholic to join an Industrial Group. All one required was a committed opposition to communism. Industrial Groups also attracted members of the Returned Soldiers' League (RSL), Masonic Lodges, various Protestant groups or those with no religious affiliations at all.²⁴ Like some Catholics, these supporters did not know of the existence of the Movement and sometimes did not even know the exact identity of those who directed the anti-communist activities in their particular union.²⁵ Many traditional Labor-supporting unionists willingly joined the campaign to do battle against communists in their own union through an Industrial Group and continued to do so until questions began to arise from 1953 about the real purpose of and the driving force behind the groups.²⁶ Nevertheless, Catholics and especially Movement members provided the nucleus for

21. Ormonde, *The Movement*, p. xix.

22. Editorial, *Voice*, p. 3; Paul Ormonde, 'How Evatt Scuppered Santamaria's Religious Vision', *Overland*, No. 142, 1996, p.63; Edmund Campion, *Australian Catholics*, Ringwood, 1987, p. 167; Patrick O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 39

23. Blackmur, 'ALP Industrial Groups', p. 89; James Murtagh argues that Santamaria was 'invited' by Labor officials to organise support for Industrial Groups from amongst Catholics. Murtagh, *Australia: The Catholic Chapter*, pp. 195 and 207.

24. Jack Treacy, interviewed 28 June 1995.

25. Blackmur, 'ALP Industrial Groups', pp. 89 and 100.

26. Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', pp. 485 and 489.

Industrial Groups—in some cases the latter comprised up to 25% of the membership—and dominated their activities.²⁷ As the *Sydney Morning Herald* commented following federal Labor leader Dr Evatt's denunciation of the clandestine organisation in 1954, the Movement provided both 'the brain and the backbone' of Industrial Groups.²⁸

Whether part of the secret inner sanctum of the Movement or merely the outer guard of loyal Laborites, members of ALP Industrial Groups and their supporters were lumped together as 'groupers' by those who opposed any outside intervention in union affairs. Similarly, groupers branded unionists who did not openly support their cause as communists or 'fellow travellers' even if they were not amongst the 100 or so in the local CPA branch in 1946.²⁹ One meatworker during those years considers:

As far as communists were concerned, it was exaggerated a lot. If you stood up to say something, they'd say 'Ah, he's a Commo!' Anybody who spoke out was a communist...They'd class you as a militant if you were just a pretty strong union joker.³⁰

The epithet of fellow traveller also included moderate union leaders and ALP members who objected to the existence of Industrial Groups and even those who tried to stay neutral.³¹ Some of these were also practising Catholics. Because of the secretive, exaggerated and sometimes fabricated background, it is difficult to determine with accuracy the true extent of communist and Movement activity in Rockhampton unions. Even 40 years later, some alleged Movement members deny any association with the religious organisation and admit only Industrial Group participation or a 'sympathy' with anti-communism.³² In the hostile atmosphere of the time when fears and suspicions became magnified, the union movement polarised into a battle between 'the commos' and

27. Robert Murray, *The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties*, Melbourne, 1970, p.52; O'Farrell, *Catholic Church and Community*, p. 393. Bradley Bowden, *Driving Force: The History of the Transport Workers' Union of Australia, 1883–1992*, Sydney, 1993, p. 210, fn 15 points out that Santamaria claims Movement content was as high as 90% in some unions.

28. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 Oct. 1954, quoted in Turner, *Catholics in Australia*, p.171.

29. Pat Pastourel, interviewed 21 May 1996.

30. Joe Underdown, interviewed 7 June 1996.

31. See, for example, ALP Industrial Group Executive Committee's Report to Convention presented by Joe Bukowski and subsequent debate by Frank Waters, *Official Record of the Twenty-First Labor-in-Politics Convention Held at Rockhampton, 1953*, Brisbane, 1953, pp. 53 and 57. UQFL

32. Treacy interview; Ted Cook, interviewed 10 May 1996.

'the groupers', and the notion of 'a good Labor man' was temporarily lost. Not until the Queensland political split of 1956 and 1957 did those who held the best interests of Labor in their hearts again become clearly apparent.

Doing the Bishop's Work: The Movement in Rockhampton

Locally, the Movement received the patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Rockhampton, the Most Reverend Dr Andrew Tynan. At the civic reception on his arrival in mid-1946, Bishop Tynan promised the citizens of Rockhampton:

It will also be my duty to fight against the horrible evil of Communism, because it is anti-God, anti-social, and because it is anti-democratic...It is for the whole people, the Press and the Government to be behind the trade union movement in fighting this which is trying to undermine everything which has been built up by our forefathers.³³

In his fight against communism, Bishop Tynan expressly transferred Fr John Leahy to Rockhampton in 1948 and appointed him the Diocesan Chaplain of Catholic Action and the Lay Apostolate.³⁴ This position included responsibility for the Movement. Unlike the former coordinator, Fr Howe, who had not been very effective in this role, Fr Leahy had demonstrated 'great energy' in that direction in Bundaberg.³⁵ Bishop Tynan also invited B.A. Santamaria, whom he greatly admired both intellectually and personally, to address the 1949 Diocesan Clergy Summer School on the subject of Catholic Action.³⁶ The same year, the bishop inaugurated a local Catholic Social Studies Institute to promote amongst the laity 'a fuller knowledge of the Church's practical teaching' on matters relating to political ideologies and industrial relations.³⁷ Tynan publicly denied any connection between the Church and ALP Industrial Groups,³⁸ but his confidential

33. *Central Queensland Herald*, 4 July 1946, p.11.

34. Bishop's Office files of deceased priests. Catholic Archives (CA), Rockhampton.

35. Bishop Tynan to Monsignor Rowan, 13 Dec. 1947. Bishop Tynan's correspondence. CA, Rockhampton.

36. Karel Duivendoorden, Andrew G. Tynan D.D., Sixth Bishop of Rockhampton, 1946-1960, unpublished undergraduate research paper, Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education, 1978, p.12; *The Review*, Vol. 15, No. 10, Oct. 1949, p. 7.

37. *ibid.*, Vol. 15, No. 5, May 1949, p. 14.

38. For example, his letter 'ALP Groups and the Church'. *MB*, 30 Mar. 1955.

1954 circular to diocesan clergy reveals his knowledge of and relationship to the intermediary Movement at least. The Bishop clearly instructed that the letter was for the eyes of priests and curates only and that, after reading, clergy were to burn it or 'kept [it] under lock and key'.³⁹ He wrote:

In the present critical situation facing both the Church and the Nation as it concerns the vital fight against atheistic Communism our course is clear. Our organised opposition to this heresy...must be intensified in anticipation of greater difficulties. This means that the Social Studies Movement to which has been entrusted the grave responsibility of seeking out Communism wherever it is to be found and of destroying it, has my unqualified support.

Aware that a Communist cell exists in every town in this Diocese it is my anxiety that Movement Groups match these everywhere.

Priests need to have no qualms that I am personally unaware of any policy decisions made by this Movement. Through the machinery operated on by it all decisions are made known to me by the full time Regional Officer, and their import defined. All questions of policy emanating from him have my authority.⁴⁰

When internal episcopal divisions forced the Church to formally disassociate itself from the Movement in mid-1956 and placed the onus on individual bishops to sanction lay work in their jurisdiction, Dr Tynan was among those who gave permission for his diocese to affiliate with the replacement body, the Catholic Social Movement. This organisation soon after became the National Civic Council.⁴¹

Notwithstanding the driving force of Bishop Tynan in fostering Movement activities in Rockhampton, the establishment of secret anti-communist cells in local unions pre-dated his episcopate. A Communist Party publication, *Catholic Action At Work*, revealed that the Movement had conducted covert activities in Rockhampton unions for at least a year before the bishop's arrival. The 1946 publication claimed it was based on Movement material which had inadvertently fallen into CPA hands. It discussed the work of the national organisation and assessed the situation in individual unions including those in Rockhampton. According to Movement sources in

39. Circular, 20 Dec. 1954. Bishop Tynan's circulars to priests, CA, Rockhampton

40. *ibid.*

41. Murray, *The Split*; Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', p. 484.

Rockhampton, the TWU was safe from communist threat because its secretary, Frank Conlon, was a 'definite anti-communist'. More revealing, however, was that this position was supposedly 'strengthened' by Movement 'efforts'. Other unions in which the Movement had supposedly been active were the AEU, AMIEU, WWF and SPU. The Movement's activities also extended beyond traditional working-class unions to include two white collar unions, the Queensland State Service Union (QSSU) and the Federated Clerks' Union (FCU). Finally, the list claimed that the Movement had penetrated and, in some cases, dominated local ALP sub-branches.⁴²

More enlightening about the comparative strength of communist and Movement forces locally was that Rockhampton was the only Queensland city included in the publication while Brisbane and places of more notable communist activity like Townsville were omitted. As well, there were inaccuracies and exaggerations about the degree of communist control which, together with the sole focus upon the city, indicates that Rockhampton was probably far less a hive of communist activity than it was a hot-bed of Movement enthusiasm, even without Dr Tynan's encouragement. This observation bears out the views of other historians that Rockhampton was a key Movement centre in Queensland.⁴³ Because of the vast disparity in numbers on opposing sides, zealous Movement members often created imaginary enemies against whom they could wage their holy war. As critics of Santamaria and his cause have pointed out, it was a case of making facts fit the ideology, rather than ideology reflecting the reality of the time.⁴⁴

For example, *Catholic Action at Work* claimed that both branches of the AEU had communist secretaries who were likely to be deposed as a result of recent Movement efforts. A later secretary, Jack Treacy, rejects as 'ridiculous' any allegation that these men—Morgan Lander and Dick Thomasson—were communists. Treacy claims he

42. *Catholic Action at Work* (2nd edn), Sydney, 1946, p.36. CCQC Foreman collection. Admittedly, the publication could have been a CPA fabrication but that is considered unlikely by several former unionists.

43. Murray, *The Split*, p. 51; Blackmur, 'ALP Industrial Groups', p. 88.

44. Robert Murray, 'One Minute to Midnight', *Dissent*, No. 14, Winter 1965, p. 51.

belonged to an Industrial Group in the railway workshops when they were established in the late 1940s and therefore would have known if either man was a communist.⁴⁵ In other railway and predominantly-railway unions, the document declared the ARU, FEDFA, Vehicle Builders and ASCJ were completely under communist control while the situation with AFULE was 'In the Balance'. The ARU may have contained what one rank-and-file member—a Freemason—thought were a few 'red hot commos'⁴⁶ but former ARU secretary Frank Campbell considers they were merely communist 'sympathisers' and includes himself in this category. Certainly the district chairman at the time, the devout Catholic John D. (Jack) Ryan, was not a fellow-traveller as later discussion of his activities in the ALP demonstrates. Where the sectional unions were concerned, Campbell is adamant that all of them were dominated by 'Labor right-wingers'.⁴⁷

The publication also claimed that with the exception of the full-time officials, Len Haigh and Gus Power, local AMIEU office bearers were also communists. The union's senior officials at the time were Jack Illott, Danny Driscoll and Frank West, all of whom had held their positions for many years and were certainly not communists.⁴⁸ Of the five councillors whose names appeared on subsequent 'progressive' election tickets, and were known to be union activists though not necessarily communist influenced, two were from the Gladstone meatworks and another ran as a non-communist in later years. Moreover, known communists such as Charlie Collins and Jack Daley polled very poorly indeed in the 1945 election, indicating a clear lack of support for their cause. Only on the Lakes Creek Works Board of Control was there a likelihood of communist sympathies with the moderate Danny Driscoll being defeated by G. Macdonald.⁴⁹


45. Treacy interview.

46. Bob Cole, interviewed 28 Apr. 1995.

47. Frank Campbell, interviewed 1 July 1995.

48. Colin Maxwell, interviewed 20 June 1996.

49. Union Ballot Returns, 1945, AMIEU Cutting Book. CCQC J19/945.1



A.M.I.E. UNION

(Queensland Branch)

District Councillors	C.Q.M.E. Works
(10 Wanted)	PRESIDENT (1 Wanted)
<input type="checkbox"/> BAKER, A. C. 427	<input type="checkbox"/> DRISCOLL, D. J. 363
<input type="checkbox"/> BARGETON, J. 483	<input type="checkbox"/> MACDONALD, G. F. 534
<input type="checkbox"/> BARNES, G. D. 387	VICE-PRESIDENT (1 Wanted)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAMERON, A. 631 (1)	<input type="checkbox"/> IRELAND, D. W. 499
<input type="checkbox"/> CATERSON, T. 568	<input type="checkbox"/> McKENNA, R. 392
<input type="checkbox"/> COLLINS, C. A. 353	SECRETARY DRAPER, J. (Unopposed)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DALE, J. 676 (6)	BRANCH PRESIDENT FIELD, H. (Unopposed)
<input type="checkbox"/> DALEY, J. 395	BRANCH VICE-PRESIDENT MANSFIELD, E. E. (Unopposed)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DARLING, J. G. 623 (8)	BRANCH TREASURER THORNTON, J. (Unopposed)
<input type="checkbox"/> DOBBINS, F. 487	BRANCH SECRETARY NEUMANN, A. J. (Unopposed)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DRAPER, J. 842 (3)	C. D. PRESIDENT ILOTT, E. W. (Unopposed)
<input type="checkbox"/> DUMAS, A. R. 264	C. D. VICE-PRESIDENT DRISCOLL, D. J. (Unopposed)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IRELAND, D. W. 677 (5)	C. D. TREASURER WEST, F. A. (Unopposed)
<input type="checkbox"/> LIDDELL, D. 480	C. D. ORGANISER POWER, A. J. (Unopposed)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> REYNOLDS, W. 610 (9)	C. D. SECRETARY HAIGH, L. G. (Unopposed)
<input type="checkbox"/> RYAN, N. 355	C. D. FEDERAL COUNCILLOR HAIGH, L. G. (Unopposed)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SCHUTZE, W. 874 (1)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STENHOUSE, J. 842 (2)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> VOCK, P. M. 588 (10)	
<input type="checkbox"/> WOOD, C. R. 456	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORTHINGTON, C. A. 680 (4)	

A Cross X to be placed in the square in front of the name of the Candidate you wish to vote for.

Ballot slip "A" January-June, 1945 ticket to be attached to Ballot Paper.

Ballot closes 3rd July, 1945, at 4.30 p.m., at the District Office, Rockhampton.

GEORGE DUNBAR,
Returning Officer.

Fig. 47: 1945 AMIEU Central District Election Ballot Paper
CCQC

Where the WWF was concerned, *Catholic Action at Work* assessed the situation as 'Control in Balance'. According to former WWF members, at the time there was a distinct interest in communist ideas by some members who were regarded as 'pink' but, here again, most members were simply 'Labor blokes'.⁵⁰ Pat Pastourel who looked after local CPA records in the William Street office from the mid- to late-1940s supports this view. She dismisses allegations of any significant communist strength in Rockhampton

50. Melvyn Guley, interviewed 13 Dec. 1998; Harry Boyd junior, interviewed 6 Jan. 1999.

unions at the time and adamantly denies that any prominent union leaders belonged to the Communist Party in post-war 1940s. In her opinion:

They were mostly Labor Party blokes...some influenced by militant ideas but not communism. If you asked them about the fundamentals of communism, they had no idea what Marxism was.⁵¹

The source of much local Movement literature, prospective membership and coordination of activity was almost certainly the Catholic men's sodality, the Holy Name Society, of which most parishes maintained a branch. In 1949, the society invited Dr Paddy Ryan, the director of Catholic Social Studies in Sydney, to speak at its annual convention during his anti-communist public speaking tour.⁵² Prominent members of this society were J. (Arthur) Dunn and Pat Fitzgerald, both members of the QSSU and secretary and union delegate respectively to the Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council in the 1950s.⁵³ In 1944, Fitzgerald had written an article entitled 'Devitalizing the Communist Party' for publication in his union paper, *State Service*. He wrote urging all Australians to 'join the hunt' to remove 'every Communist...from every position of authority in every trade union'.⁵⁴ Fitzgerald also contributed to the diocesan monthly newspaper which Fr Leahy edited and both spoke at a huge public RSL-organised anti-communist rally in 1949, Fitzgerald as the Trades and Council representative.⁵⁵

Another likely member of the Holy Name Society was E.B. (Ted) Cook, ARU delegate to Trades and Labour Council, its secretary from 1949 and president from 1952 to 1956. Cook extended an invitation on behalf of the religious body to the ARU to have an official union representative at an address by Bishop Tynan on 'Communism in Australia'.⁵⁶ He was probably hoping to be that representative himself. Other notable

51. Pastourel interview.

52. *Review*, May 1949, p. 3; Dr Ryan also toured the following year and held another well attended meeting in Rockhampton on 2 May 1950.

53. *MB*, 11 Nov. 1948.

54. *State Service*, May 1945, quoted in Jim Beatson, *Communism and Public Opinion in Queensland, 1939–1951: An Explanation of Queensland's Vote in the 1951 Anti-Communist Referendum*, BA Thesis, UQ, 1974, p. 33.

55. Minutes of Meeting of Anti-Communist Sub-committee, RSSAILA, Rockhampton Sub-branch, 17 Aug. 1949; *MB*, 3 Sept. 1949, p. 1. Returned Services League, Rockhampton

56. *ibid.*, 16 Nov. 1948, 5 Mar. 1949, p. 7, 22 Apr. 1949; The ARU rejected the invitation.

**FIFTH COLUMN IN ROCKHAMPTON—
AND
IN
EVERY
MAJOR
TOWN IN
AUSTRALIA!**



Rev. Dr. P. J. RYAN, Tonight's Speaker.

**The Communist Party And Its "Australian"
Peace Council! — Direct Agents of Soviet
Imperialism On Our Soil!**

**HEAR THE TRUTH OF THESE CHARGES
FROM AUTHENTIC COMMUNIST SOURCES**

TONIGHT—SCHOOL OF ARTS—8 O'CLOCK
(Doors Open 7.30 p.m.)

**BANS AND OTHER MEASURES
ALONE CANNOT DEFEAT THE
RED MENACE TO OUR
COUNTRY**

HEAR THE REASON WHY!

Fig. 48: Advertisement for Dr Paddy Ryan's 1950
Anti-Communist Crusade
MB, 2 May 1950

union leaders who were also members of the Holy Name Society were Jack Treacy (AEU), Frank Dunn (WWF) and Len Haigh, Arthur Worthington and Pat Meehan of the AMIEU.⁵⁷ Whether they were also active members of the Movement remains a matter for speculation. Certainly not all Holy Name Society members defected from Labor when the political split occurred. The 1973 funeral notice of AEU and Trades Hall Board stalwart Jimmy Damm, for example, mentioned both Holy Name Society affiliation and his life membership of the ALP.⁵⁸

57. *Review*, Jan. 1951, p. 20. Frank Dunn was Arthur Dunn's father.

58. *MB*, 21 Aug. 1973, p. 10.

As in other cities, the parish cell was the basis of Movement organisation.⁵⁹ A key centre of support was Park Avenue parish where Arthur Dunn was a staunch member of the congregation and where, from 1955, Fr Leahy was the priest.⁶⁰ St Mary's in Nobbs Street had a similar reputation with some 300 parishioners signing a petition protesting Dr Evatt's federal ALP leadership after the official disendorsement of Industrial Groups in 1955.⁶¹ Fr Greene from St Nicholas' at Lakes Creek also allegedly played a role in organising strong-arm tactics amongst young meatworkers keen to take on anyone suspected of being 'pink'.⁶² Recipients of such treatment could expect 'to attend the Ambulance Unit at least or maybe spend a week in a hospital'.⁶³ Unionist parishioners readily acted on Bishop Tynan's pastorals and on his and Archbishop Duhig's public statements about their Catholic duty in the unions.⁶⁴ They also willingly accepted the virulent anti-communist propaganda in the monthly column, 'The Industrial Front', written under the pseudonym of Xavier McMahon, which was published in the diocesan newspaper, the *Review*.⁶⁵

Notwithstanding the occasional physical violence, the chief forms of Movement action against suspected communists were clandestine literature, personal persecution, subversive election propaganda and condemnatory letters to the local newspaper. The latter form of exchange particularly featured from 1953 to 1955 when the connection between the Movement and Industrial Groups and their intrusion into Labor politics

59. Murray, *The Split*, p. 53.

60. Park Avenue Parish Golden Jubilee Committee, *Our First Fifty Years, 1942-1992*, Rockhampton, 1992, pp. 15 and 43;

61. *MB*, 30 Mar. 1955, p. 5.

62. C. Maxwell interview.

63. In a letter to 'Jim' in Rockhampton, Fr John Joseph Daly of St Patrick's, West Bundaberg, warned the recipient to pay up money he owed the priest or he would have meted out to him 'the form of treatment for which you may remember my friend Fr Greene was well known ' and added such treatment usually resulted in ambulance attendance or hospitalisation. J.J. Daly to 'Jim', undated, AMIEU records, Rockhampton.

64. See, for example, 'The Church and the Unions: Menace of Communism' (Duhig), *MB*, 3 Oct. 1947; 'ALP Groups and the Church' (Tynan), *ibid.*, 30 Mar. 1955, p. 5; and 'Bishop's Warning' (Tynan), *ibid.*, 15 Nov. 1955, p. 6;

65. See *Review* from Jan. 1949 to June 1954. Fr Leahy, who was the editor during this time, informed readers that Xavier McMahon was a prominent person who wished to remain anonymous. Enquiries have failed to identify his true name.

became clearer. This was when many genuine Labor men decided to discontinue their grouper associations.

At the meatworks, a man named Patterson reputedly delivered literature for on-the-job distribution.⁶⁶ Leaflets also circulated in the railway and on the wharves and some found their way into public toilets around the city.⁶⁷ Unionists who considered themselves loyal Labor men but opposed to Industrial Groups often found their names included in Catholic Action's national publication, *News Weekly*, together with details of their supposed affiliations and activities. The deeds and utterances they were alleged to have committed often amused them but there was nothing funny about the malicious anonymous letters and telephone calls unionists' wives often received, insinuating their husbands were indulging in extra-marital affairs when out at night on so-called union business. There was also taunting and bullying of their children both at and after school.⁶⁸ The topic of atheistic communism caused heated arguments and even long-standing rifts within individual families, especially amongst Catholics where some members followed the urgings of the Church and others refused to comply with the dictates of the pulpit.⁶⁹

One well-publicised instance of local Movement action was the rowdy disruption of a street rally in support of the CPA candidate for Capricornia in the 1949 federal election, ASCJ member Ted Robertson. Key participants in the fracas were Allan ('Pewee') Reynolds, a meatworker, and Frank ('Kalka') Ryan, a young Catholic public servant who was always keen for a punch-up.⁷⁰ Evidently the crowd of some 2,000

66. E. Maxwell interview. Spelling uncertain. In 1946 a T.G. Patterson, member of the TWU and later on its committee of management, questioned Frank Conlon about union details published in *Catholic Action at Work*. Whether he is the person mentioned in relation to Lakes Creek is not clear.

67. Campbell interview; Cole interview.

68. Evan Schwarten, interviewed 10 Mar. 1996. Children riding home from Allentown State School were regularly showered with stones and abuse as they passed St Peter's School in Dawson Road—and often returned the treatment. Cole interview.

69. Myra Rowling, personal communication, 4 July 1997.

70. C. Maxwell interview; Pastourel interview; Roberta Harreveld, personal communication, 27 Aug. 1998.

people anticipated some good entertainment on that occasion. Robertson's daughter, Pat Pastourel, graphically recalls the incident and the police complicity in the demonstration:

As the speakers started, they heckled and threw eggs, green tomatoes, pumpkins, flour bombs, stink bombs—all sorts of things. Then they rushed the truck. Dad was tipped off the back; I was pushed into the gutter and kicked, so were other women. The police did nothing but arrested my [future] husband. The last I saw of Trevor was being hauled down the laneway behind the hotel by a couple of those toughs. The police arrested him and he ended up in court charged with disorderly behaviour. The other people were never charged. The police broke up the rally and said we'd better go home.⁷¹

Following the street violence, the small communist band retreated to their headquarters a few blocks up William Street but soon found a crowd of hecklers outside. Their telephone call to police drew no response and they had to escape through the rear exit to Alma Lane. The next morning, CPA members discovered to their dismay that someone had entered the office, wrecked the furniture and equipment and burned all their books and pamphlets. The police neither investigated nor laid any charges and denied receiving any phone call from the besieged communists.⁷²

Not all the Movement's activities were engineered at the parish level. In 1955, when former Industrial Group Executive Committee member Joe Bukowski revealed the true function of the Movement, he admitted that 'a man named Wassell', a former clerk in the Public Curator's Office, had been specially employed behind the scenes to coordinate industrial and political activities in Rockhampton on behalf of the Movement.⁷³ No doubt this person was the 'Regional Officer' to whom Bishop Tynan referred in his 1954 circular to priests. Indeed, some former unionists recall a character of similar name who presented himself at the Trades and Labour Council with forged credentials. He claimed to be a delegate of the Australian Postal Workers' Union (APWU) which, at the time, did

71. Pastourel interview. Two other members of the CPA, including David Cousins, and another unnamed man who 'had a grudge against the police', were arrested during the *melée*. All three failed to appear in court, forfeiting £1 bail each, and were never prosecuted. In his defence, Trevor Pastourel claimed he was attacked by a character known simply as 'Murphy'. Pastourel was found guilty and fined £1. *MB*, 30 Mar. and 28 Apr. 1949.

72. *ibid.*, 29 Mar., p. 1 and 1 Apr. 1949, p. 4; *Guardian*, 31 Mar., p. 1 and 13 Apr. 1949, p. 3;

73. *MB*, 29 Jan. 1955, p. 1; David Hamill, *Industrial Group Activity in Queensland: A Case Study of the Electrical Trades Union*, BA Thesis, UQ, 1978, p. 56.

not have a local branch. Wary delegates from other unions contacted the state secretary of the APWU, Frank Waters, who confirmed their suspicions. They immediately rejected the bogus delegate.⁷⁴

'Groupers' in Rockhampton Unions

With the ALP's adoption of Industrial Groups in 1947, local Labor Party branches became the front line in planning the new strategy against communism in unions. Trades Hall sub-branch led the crusade to eradicate communists and all opposition to traditional labourism. Not surprisingly, its secretary was Ted Cook who had a close association with the Movement and provided a strong voice for anti-communist views in the ARU. In 1948, Cook expressed his concern about communists making 'cheap political capital' out of the current railway strike and he successfully moved that his ALP sub-branch support the idea of setting up Industrial Groups.⁷⁵ Five months later, Cook reported that the Rockhampton Electorate Executive proposed to form such groups in local unions and forwarded to the executive a list of party members and their respective unions. Presumably these people would act as nuclei for the groups.⁷⁶ How many of them were also Movement men is not known.

Trades Hall ALP consistently condemned any support for or tolerance of communism and encouraged its suppression by both legal and political means. During the protest against the Menzies' government's briefly lived *Communist Party Dissolution Act, 1950*, members resolved to pressure their respective unions' federal executives not to expend any funds in the ensuing High Court appeal.⁷⁷ Moreover, they demanded that if the ALP resumed office after the next federal election, a new Labor government would

74. E. Schwarten interview; C. Maxwell interview. Both men refer to this person as 'Wasson'. They may have confused the name 'Wassell' with Richard J. Wasson who was district secretary of the FCU at the time.

75. Rockhampton ALP (Trades Hall) Minutes, 10 Mar. 1948. JOL OMEQ 25/8/6.

76. *ibid.*, 11 Aug. 1948.

77. Communist Party Dissolution Act (No. 16 of 1950), *Acts of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia*, 1950, pp. 27-41.

also 'outlaw the evil' of communism.⁷⁸ Thus, when the South Australian ALP banned Industrial Groups in 1952, shocked Trades Hall members carried a condemnatory motion by Cook:

That ALP industrial groups are necessary not only for the purpose of defeating Communism in unions but also for furthering the ideals, principals [*sic*] and policies of the Labor Party in the Trade Union Movement.⁷⁹

Following the motion, members called for the expansion of Industrial Groups in Queensland rather than their removal. By mid-1952, they congratulated ALP leader H.V. Evatt for supporting groups which were doing a 'magnificent job of clearing the Trade Union Movement of the menace of Communism'. The seconder of the latter motion was Jack Treacy, then a rising AEU committeeman and who had joined Trades Hall ALP in 1949.⁸⁰

Not all ALP members agreed with political intervention in union affairs. Secretary of Fitzroy Electorate Executive Committee Jack Ryan contacted the QCE in 1951 seeking a ruling on the legality of groups because their presence was proving to be 'a very contentious matter' in his branch.⁸¹ Ryan, who was also district chairman of the ARU and secretary of the outlying Balmoral sub-branch of the ALP, supported the formation of Industrial Groups to fight communism in unions and party branches. However, he firmly believed these groups should be under the strict control of the QCE or of the combined electoral executives in Rockhampton and not subject to any other influence.⁸²

The following year, Ryan complained to the Industrial Groups Committee of a change that reflected the dominance of sectarianism in national political and industrial

78. Rockhampton ALP (Trades Hall) Minutes, 12 Dec. 1950.

79. *ibid.*, 12 Dec. 1951.

80. *ibid.*, 11 June 1952.

81. J.D. Ryan to S.J. Bryan, Secretary QCE, 16 Nov. 1951 and 24 May 1952. ALP Industrial Groups, reports and correspondence, 1952-54. JOL OMEQ/60/11.

82. *ibid.*

spheres by 1952.⁸³ The timing of his complaint was most likely a reaction to the expansion push by Trades Hall sub-branch. Ryan claimed:

The majority of good ALP Branch members as members of affiliated unions... expressed the view that the present arrangements for setting up groups and the issuing of charters to individuals to plan the formation of industrial groups are most unsatisfactory.⁸⁴

Instead of unifying Labor support against communism as intended by the 1947 ALP convention, Ryan wrote, the change was actually creating disagreement and discontent in both the political and industrial wings. He quoted the example of the establishment of a new Industrial Group by certain unnamed private individuals.⁸⁵ Most likely it was Ryan's complaint which triggered the formation of a separate Rockhampton ALP Industrial Group Committee in late 1952 to coordinate local anti-communist activities.⁸⁶ Trades Hall ALP sub-branch warmly welcomed this new body and willingly assisted its work by offering free use of a duplicator to produce its propaganda.⁸⁷

In contrast to the unqualified support of the Trades Hall ALP and the qualified support of the Fitzroy executive, the members of Koongal ALP near Lakes Creek strongly opposed Industrial Groups on any basis. Secretary Colin Maxwell voiced his disapproval and publicly communicated to the president of the Rockhampton ALP Industrial Group committee, Robert T. Brown, that the groups were 'wrecking the great Australian Labor Party...causing disunity among workers and throwing away members and finance'.⁸⁸ On the south side of the river, Wandal ALP also opposed the groups. Secretary Albert Watts protested to the QCE's committee about the continuation of the group system and stated that there were no supporters of it in his sub-branch.⁸⁹ Their opponents in the Trades Hall ALP condemned a circular on the matter as being 'in line with Communist policy to split

83. Ian Campbell, 'ALP Industrial Groups—A Reassessment', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 8, No. 2, Nov. 1962, p. 182; Clarke, 'Labour and the Catholic Social Studies Movement', p. 54; Blackmur, 'ALP Industrial Groups', pp. 94-95; Ormonde, *The Movement*, p. 17.

84. J.D. Ryan to S.J. Bryan, Secretary QCE, 24 May 1952, QTLReferendum File, UQFL 118 Box 143.

85. *ibid.*

86. Rockhampton ALP (Trades Hall) Minutes, 11 June 1952. JOL OMEQ 25/8/6

87. *ibid.*, 12 Dec. 1952.

88. *MB*, 14 Feb. 1953.

89. A. Watts to Secretary, QCE, 29 July 1954. ALP Industrial Groups, Reports and Correspondence, 1952-54, JOL OMEQ 60/11.

the Labor Party'.⁹⁰ Ironically, the Movement claimed to have purposefully formed the Wandal sub-branch in 1945 to combat communism.⁹¹

Unions and the Battle against the Communist Party

While many ordinary unionists were keen to remove communist elements inside unions through ALP Industrial Groups, they did not necessarily extend this opposition to communist activities outside the union or workplace as Movement supporters did. In response to the 1949 CPA street rally ructions, three major unions voiced their disapproval to the peak union body in the state, the Queensland Trades and Labour Council (QTLC). In an urgent telegram signed by their secretaries, members of the AMIEU, WWF and ARU requested the QTLC to 'consider most vigorous protest' against the perpetrators of the bashings and the subsequent 'organised wrecking' of the Communist Party office. The QTLC decried 'such Fascist acts' but its call for police investigation was in vain.⁹²

Similarly, at another CPA street rally addressed by Brisbane barrister and noted communist, Max Julius, a cordon of burly wharfies, visiting seamen and other unionists ensured there was no repetition of violence. According to Pat Pastourel, it was not that they were CPA members or came to defend communism: they came chiefly to defend free speech.⁹³ The WWF also allowed the CPA to take up a collection to help fight the recent Communist Party Dissolution Bill which they believed denied freedom of both speech and association.⁹⁴ Their view drew support from the enlightened Anglican Bishop of Rockhampton, the Right Reverend James Housden. In marked contrast to his

90. Rockhampton ALP (Trades Hall) Minutes, 8 Sept. 1954. JOL OMEQ 25/8/6

91. CPA, *Catholic Action at Work*, p.36.

92. QTLC Minutes, 30 Mar. 1949. UQFL 118/A12/6

93. Pastourel interview.

94. WWF Minutes, 19 Apr. 1950. NBAC Z387/33/2

Catholic counterpart, the bishop warned his diocese about the new legislation that 'in fighting totalitarianism we may well become totalitarian ourselves'.⁹⁵

Most unions could see that the legislation and its power to disqualify communists from holding union office was also an attack upon the freedom of unions to elect their own leaders.⁹⁶ In a criticism of the bill in the national union paper, local WWF secretary Jack Curtin warned fellow wharfies about the 'smoke screen' legislation. He urged:

We cannot afford complacency in this regard, and, above all, we must not be deluded into the attitude: 'Oh, they're only after the Coms.' Any militant worker, be he Communist or not, will be in the gun and will be removed from office unless he turns himself into a blanc-mange and plays ball with the powers that be.⁹⁷

The wharfies backed up their convictions with a one-day stoppage and protest—even if it was on a day when there was not a ship in port.⁹⁸

In the weeks preceding the national referendum that followed the High Court's overturning of the Communist Party Dissolution Act, the local major unions immediately established the Rockhampton and District Vote 'No' Referendum Campaign Committee. According to the committee's coordinator, ARU secretary Frank Campbell, the unions took up the task themselves because the Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council, which right-wing unions by then dominated, had 'failed to set up any organisation around this vital issue'.⁹⁹ The union 'No' committee also intended working in unison with the local ALP 'No' campaign committee but the latter body proved to be a much less enthusiastic opponent of communism than did its union counterpart. Former CPA state secretary Ted Bacon believes that Rockhampton ALP's reluctance to openly advocate a 'No' vote was because of its grouper domination whereas the AWU controlled the party in

95. *MB*, 2 Oct. 1950. Bishop Housden visited the Peoples' Republic of China in the early 1950s and called for its recognition in 1956. *MB*, 15 Dec. 1956, p. 3.

96. Communist Party Dissolution Act 1950, para. 10, section 1c.

97. *Maritime Worker*, 10 June 1950, p. 3.

98. *MB*, 19 Oct. 1950.

99. F. Campbell to M. Healy, Gen. Sec. QTLC, 8 Sept. 1951, QTLC Referendum File, UQFL 118 Box 143.

most other places.¹⁰⁰ It was the ALP-led committee which an equally reluctant Trades and Labour Council agreed to 'assist' just a week or so before the referendum. It seems that a more pressing matter at the fortnightly meeting which made this decision was the choosing of three delegates to the St Vincent de Paul Society's Queen of Charity appeal committee.¹⁰¹

Thus the unions carried the referendum campaign largely on their own shoulders. Jack Ryan (ARU) chaired the committee with Jack Curtin (WWF) as secretary. Other notable participants were Jack Esdale of the Vehicle Builders' Federation as treasurer as well as Eric Browne of the AEU and the WWF's Harry Boyd junior. The AFULE, BWIU,¹⁰² APWU¹⁰³ and Painters and Decorators also joined the effort. Members held on-the-job meetings and collections, conducted street-corner addresses and arranged press and radio advertisements.¹⁰⁴ Even the AEU supported the campaign in spite of its insistence on the exclusion of the CPA from Labour Day marches.¹⁰⁵ AEU members conducted their own campaign within the workshops, donated two guineas to the campaign and prepared a five-minute broadcast on the union's stance on the referendum.¹⁰⁶ The referendum campaign clearly demonstrated that, when faced with an attack upon the union movement, complacency was cast aside and the old spirit of unionism again flared.

The result of the referendum in Rockhampton was a modest victory for the union 'No' campaigners. In addition, it was a sweet revenge for the 1946 defeat of Labor's popular Frank Forde after almost 30 years of representation. Many unionists believed

100. Ted Bacon, interviewed by Jim Beatson, cited in Beatson, *Communism and Public Opinion in Queensland*, p. 130.

101. *MB*, 19 Sept. 1951, 3.

102. The Building Workers' Industrial Union was formed from the ASCJ in the late 1940 but regulations in the Trade Union Act prevented the registration of this new name. Schwarten interview.

103. A local sub-branch was in existence at the time.

104. F. Campbell to M. Healy, Gen. Sec. QTLC, 8 Sept. 1951; J. Curtin to Rockhampton unions, 3 Sept. 1951, QTLC Referendum File, UQFL 118 Box 143; *MW*, 27 Oct. 1951, p. 8.

105. AEU Minutes, 24 Feb. 1949. NBAC E162/33/3

106. *ibid.*, 23 Aug. 1951 and 6 Sept. 1951.

that the Movement had played a major role in his defeat.¹⁰⁷ Paradoxically, one of the ARU's street-corner speakers in the referendum campaign was Ted Cook.¹⁰⁸ While he certainly opposed the Menzies government interfering in internal union affairs,¹⁰⁹ his public call for opposition to the anti-communist legislation must have caused great inner conflict with his personal desire, and that of his colleagues in the Trades Hall ALP, 'to outlaw the evil' of communism.

The Battle in Local Unions

In the day-to-day running of individual unions, ideology had little role to play, yet union meetings became forums for intense political propaganda and activity. The struggle between the polarised forces of right-wing/Movement/grouper and left-wing/communist/fellow traveller reached its most fierce between 1948 and 1952. This was the period in which Industrial Groups, backed by the Movement, set about regaining for Labor those unions which had supposedly fallen to communist forces and strengthening those which had not yet succumbed. However, as *Catholic Action at Work* indicated, the Movement had begun the battle in 1945—well before the formation of ALP Industrial Groups. The communist newspaper, *Guardian*, reported the Movement's early success in Rockhampton as observed by Tom Bencke, the president of the local Chamber of Commerce and a Protestant. Bencke rejoiced:

Practically every form of Communist control in Rockhampton had been smashed... [after]...a campaign lasting nearly three years had been launched by a small body of determined unionists.¹¹⁰

107. *Guardian*, 28 Feb. 1947, p. 3.

108. *MW*, 27 Oct. 1951, p. 8.

109. Cook interview

110. *Guardian*, 28 Feb. 1947, p. 3.

The article also reported that the Movement had control over a number of small unions in Rockhampton by 1947. But in the two largest unions, the AMIEU and the ARU, waging war on suspected communists proved a difficult and long-drawn-out battle.

Movement activists believed the AMIEU had succumbed to the enemy by 1946 but that the situation 'should soon change as a result of [their] efforts'.¹¹¹ Yet the only significant change in the next union election was in Jack Stenhouse replacing the aging

A.M.I.E. UNION
(QUEENSLAND BRANCH)
Branch and Central District Ballot

Branch President (1 Wanted)	Q'land Trades & Labour Council (8 Wanted)
<input type="checkbox"/> FIELD, H. 845	<input type="checkbox"/> BAILEY, H. 966
<input type="checkbox"/> RYAN, P. 787	<input type="checkbox"/> BRUNFLETT, R. 639
Branch Treasurer (1 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> COSTIGAN, J. 870
<input type="checkbox"/> FARRELL, J. 670	<input type="checkbox"/> DOWD, J. 785
<input type="checkbox"/> THORNTON, W. 962	<input type="checkbox"/> FIELD, H. 1045
Branch Secretary (1 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> HAYLOCK, L. 637
<input type="checkbox"/> NEUMANN, A. J. 1038	<input type="checkbox"/> HODSON, W. 1138
<input type="checkbox"/> WEIR, W. 592	<input type="checkbox"/> LITTLE, H. 897
District President (1 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> LODER, N. 797
<input type="checkbox"/> BURNHAM, W. J. 231	<input type="checkbox"/> NEUMANN, A. J. 1158
<input type="checkbox"/> DRISCOLL, D. J. 1111	<input type="checkbox"/> RIDSDALE, G. 763
<input type="checkbox"/> GUTHRIE, W. R. 284	<input type="checkbox"/> RYAN, P. 1109
District Treasurer (1 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> THORNTON, W. 1077
<input type="checkbox"/> GRAY, C. 468	<input type="checkbox"/> WALKER, S. 986
<input type="checkbox"/> STENHOUSE, J. 1152	District Councillors (10 Wanted)
District Secretary (1 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> BARGETON, J. J. 730
<input type="checkbox"/> DRAPER, J. 312	<input type="checkbox"/> BARNES, G. D. 635
<input type="checkbox"/> HAIGH, L. G. 1142	<input type="checkbox"/> CATERSON, T. 910
<input type="checkbox"/> STAFFORD, G. 167	<input type="checkbox"/> CLARK, J. B. 581
District Organiser (1 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> COLLINS, C. A. 508
<input type="checkbox"/> MURPHY, J. J. 1169	<input type="checkbox"/> DALE, G. 737
<input type="checkbox"/> POWER, A. J. 1150	<input type="checkbox"/> DALE, J. 917
District Federal Councillor (1 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> DARLING, J. G. 732
<input type="checkbox"/> DRAPER, J. 488	<input type="checkbox"/> DOBBINS, F. 700
<input type="checkbox"/> HAIGH, L. G. 1137	<input type="checkbox"/> EMSLIE, W. 536
Committee of Management (3 Wanted)	<input type="checkbox"/> GARVEY, J. M. 528
<input type="checkbox"/> CATERSON, T. 897	<input type="checkbox"/> GRAFF, W. A. 611
<input type="checkbox"/> DRAPER, J. 860	<input type="checkbox"/> HOGAN, R. J. 530
<input type="checkbox"/> DRISCOLL, D. J. 1060	<input type="checkbox"/> LIDDELL, D. 655
<input type="checkbox"/> HAIGH, L. G. 1186	<input type="checkbox"/> LYONS, W. G. 536
<input type="checkbox"/> SCHUTZE, W. J. 795	<input type="checkbox"/> REYNOLDS, A. J. 765
	<input type="checkbox"/> RICHES, S. 557
	<input type="checkbox"/> ROSS, C. R. 505
	<input type="checkbox"/> ROWLAND, J. H. 666
	<input type="checkbox"/> RYAN, H. W. 832
	<input type="checkbox"/> SCHUTZE, W. J. 892
	<input type="checkbox"/> THOMPSON, M. 391
	<input type="checkbox"/> WILLIS, C. 349
	<input type="checkbox"/> WORTHINGTON, C. A. 812
	C.Q.M.E. Works, Board of Control President (1 Wanted)
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEAN, R. T. A. 86
	<input type="checkbox"/> DALE, J. 227
	<input type="checkbox"/> DRISCOLL, D. J. 625

A Cross X to be placed in the front of the name of the candidate for whom you wish to vote.

Ballot Slip "A" January-June, 1947 ticket to be attached to Ballot Paper.

Ballot closes 19th August, 1947, at 4.30 p.m., at the District Office, Rockhampton.

G. COWLEY,
Returning Officer.

Q. C. E. REPRESENTATIVE
NEUMANN, A. J. (Unopposed)
BRANCH VICE-PRESIDENT
BOLT, G. (Unopposed)
DISTRICT VICE-PRESIDENT
VOCK, P. (Unopposed)

Fig. 49: 1947 AMIEU Central District Election Ballot Paper
CCQC

111. CPA, *Catholic Action at Work*, p.36.

Frank West as treasurer. In 1947, newspaper reports claimed 'Reds Retain Meat Control' at state level but again there was little change in Rockhampton with Danny Driscoll moving into the presidency on Jack Illott's retirement after 23 years.¹¹² Neither Stenhouse nor Driscoll were thought to be Movement men. On the AMIEU Central District Council there were only two reputed Movement members: Arthur Worthington who had been a councillor since 1940 and a new-comer, Michael (Bernie) Ryalls from Gladstone.¹¹³ Of those known to be communist—Tinker Emslie, Charlie Collins, Merv Thompson and Colin Willis—none succeeded in gaining a seat on the council.¹¹⁴

With the introduction of Industrial Groups in 1948, elections became highly organised affairs, particularly in the production of how-to-vote cards. These were probably as intentionally deceptive for voters at the time as they are confusing for the historian to interpret. To win rank-and-file votes, grouper agents sometimes 'piggy-backed' their candidates by placing popular non-communist union leaders at the top of their ticket. Sometimes these popular candidates appeared on opposing tickets in the same ballot. In other cases, reaction to grouper propaganda pushed 'militant ALP blokes' into an alliance with communist candidates who jointly canvassed for the good of the union itself rather than for or against communism.¹¹⁵ Because of the ambiguity about exactly who was actually a communist, who was merely a sympathiser, who officially sided with the groupers or had their name purloined for election purposes, the reality of the situation remains cloudy today.

For the 1949 AMIEU election, groupers mounted a concerted campaign in which 90% of the 2,000 members turned out. Secretary Len Haigh considered it was the most keenly contested annual ballot in his 25 years with the union. The press caption of 'Reds Routed in AMIEU Ballot' reflected the success of the grouper-backed majority on the

112. Undated newspaper clipping, circa Aug. 1947. AMIEU Cutting Book. CCQC J19/945 3

113. C. Maxwell interview.

114. *Meat Industry Journal of Queensland*, Vol. 12, No. 9, Sep. 1947, pp. 1-2; Progressive Ticket, 1947, insert in AMIEU Cutting Book. CCQC J19/945 1

115. C. Maxwell interview; Underdown interview.

Central District Council, as they could proudly report at the following Labor-in-Politics Convention, and the dismal result of the 'known communists', Thompson, Willis and Dave Cousins.¹¹⁶

In the 1951 AMIEU poll, held in the heat of the referendum to ban the Communist Party, the adoption of unity tickets by the Queensland AMIEU both encouraged, and was encouraged by, polarisation of opinion. These joint tickets reflected the common purpose of those loyal ALP supporters, who opposed the continued interference of Industrial Groups, and of the CPA which, in a renewed period of 'united front' tactics in the early 1950s, tried to win back positions from grouper-backed leaders. The unity ticket ensured that both parties would maximise their chances of defeating the groupers by not opposing each other for individual positions.¹¹⁷

The combined 'Militant AMIEU Ticket' promised 'to fight to restore the Union to an active, fighting body' and aimed 'to improve and protect the interests of all members in all departments.' Their flyer warned unionists not to fall for 'the "Groupers"' Red Bogey propaganda' and to remember their 'record of sell-outs, somersaults and bosses' policy'. The 'ALP Industrial Group Ticket', in contrast, claimed to supply the names of 'bona-fide Australian Trade Unionists' and urged voters to 'play safe' and not to elect 'Red Fascist Commos or Fellow-Travellers'.¹¹⁸ The militant ticket proved slightly more persuasive and, from a record field of 36 nominees, they gained six of the ten council positions even if grouper-backed candidates secured all the executive positions.¹¹⁹

116. *MB*, 26 Aug. 1949.

117. David Stephens, 'Unity Tickets and the Victorian Branch of the ALP', *Labour History*, No. 44, May 1983, 1982, p. 55.

118. AMIEU Militant Ticket and ALP Industrial Group Ticket, 1951, AMIEU Cutting Book. CCQC J19/945 1

119. Results of AMIEU Elections 1951, *MJQ*, Sept. 1951, p. 7.

A.L.P. Industrial Group Candidates

stand for :

**The A.M.I.E.U. for A.M.I.E.U.
Members**

not for

**Furthering the ends of the
Communist Party**

VOTE FOR ALL THE TICKET

**Don't trust the Red Fascist Commos or
Fellow-Travellers**

**Back Labor Candidates on all
Occasions and Play Safe**

Issued by the A.L.P. Industrial Group (A.M.I.E.U. Section)

ELECTIONS, 1951

We supply you with the names of Anti-
Communist candidates who seek your
support as bona-fide Australian Trade
Unionists

**Vote Solid for
This Ticket**

**Don't split the vote and help the
RED FASCIST COMMOS**

ELECTION

**SECRETARY
WEIR, W.**

**TREASURER
WALKER, S.**

**TRADES AND LABOUR
COUNCIL
(Eight required)**

**COSTIGAN, J.
ISELIN, J.
KEARNEY, M.
McARTHUR, A.
MACPHERSON, S.
MARTIN, W.
RYAN, P.
WEIR, W.**

**DELEGATES TO Q.C.E.
(Two required)**

**COSTIGAN, J.
MACPHERSON, S.**

**DELEGATES TO A.C.T.U.
CONGRESS
(Two required)**

**COSTIGAN, J.
MACPHERSON, S.**

CENTRAL DISTRICT ELECTIONS

A.M.I.E.U. - 1951

**PRESIDENT
DRISCOLL, D. J.**

**ORGANISER
POWER, A. J.
FEDERAL COUNCILLOR
HAIGH, L. G.**

**COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT
DRISCOLL, D. J.
HAIGH, L. G.
RYALLS, M. B.**

DISTRICT COUNCIL

CURRAN, B. R.	REYNOLDS, A. D.
LYONS, W. G.	SCHUTZE, W. J.
LAWN, S.	STEWART, F.
MEEHAN, P. F.	WOOD, C. R.
MORAN, G.	WORTHINGTON, C. A.

**BOARD OF CONTROL
SECRETARY
WORTHINGTON, C. A.**

THESE CANDIDATES ARE BACKED BY THE A.L.P. INDUSTRIAL GROUP

Fig. 50: ALP Industrial Group Ticket for 1951 AMIEU Election
CCQC

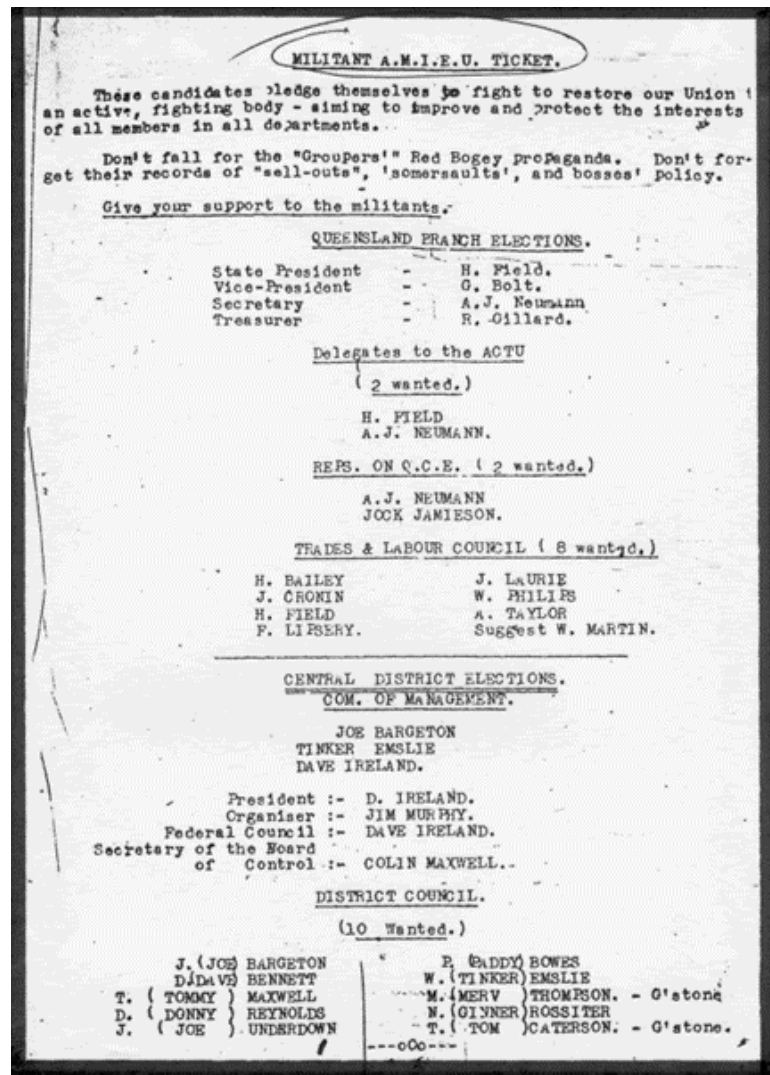


Fig. 51: Militant AMIEU (Unity) Ticket for 1951 Election
CCQC

Notwithstanding this setback in their fortunes, groupers again waged war in the 1953 AMIEU elections. By this time, their denunciation of all unionists who opposed them as communists—even loyal ALP members—began to reveal their true purpose in gaining control of the Labor Party. As union secretary-aspirant Colin Maxwell claimed, 'a small section masquerading under the title of "ALP Industrial Group" who falsely claim they represent Labor' was contesting the elections against genuine party supporters.¹²⁰ Another correspondent to the daily paper complained that Labor was being sabotaged by the groupers, a 'bunch' of whom were also trying to take over the AMIEU

120. MB, 31 Jan. 1953.

on the pretext of 'trying to get the Commos out'. Moreover, this letter explicitly connected groupers with the Catholic Church, a connection many loyal Labor men both outside and inside the Industrial Groups by then suspected but dared not openly voice.¹²¹ The influence of groupers in the AMIEU declined after 1953 as ordinary unionists came to believe that Movement elements did dominate Industrial Groups. Equally significant was the election of 'militant ticket' candidate and Koongal ALP secretary, Colin Maxwell, following Len Haigh's death in 1953.¹²² Maxwell would not tolerate any Movement men who, as he firmly believed, were out 'to smash the union'.¹²³

For all their activity in the AMIEU, only one alleged Movement member in Rockhampton, Arthur Worthington, served as a councillor and secretary of the Works Board of Control in 1948 and 1949.¹²⁴ Other candidates like Pat Meehan and Michael Fitzgerald failed to secure council positions. Most of the other successful office bearers whose names appeared on grouper lists, including Gus Power, Danny Driscoll, Frank Stewart, Donny Reynolds and Bill Schutze were, according to later officials Colin Maxwell and Joe Underdown, simply 'all solid union men...all good Labor blokes' whose popularity was exploited by the grouper cause.¹²⁵

The position of Len Haigh remains enigmatic. His untimely death in 1953 concealed affiliations and allegiances that the Labor split of 1957 would have revealed. Mark Hinchliff, the former works manager, believes that Len Haigh was not directly involved in the Movement—even though a practising Catholic—but he claims Haigh would have sympathised with its anti-communist activities.¹²⁶ Similarly, Colin Maxwell argues that Haigh 'wasn't always right-wing but leaned a bit to the right at the finish'.¹²⁷ A list of the 1951 union results published with the names of grouper candidates,

121. *ibid.*, 2 Apr. 1953.

122. Evan Schwarten, interviewed by Jeff Young, Aug. 1994.

123. C. Maxwell interview.

124. M. Ryalls and B. Curran, both from Gladstone Sub-branch, were believed to be Movement activists on the council. Schwarten interview.

125. C. Maxwell interview; Underdown interview.

126. Hinchliff interview.

127. C. Maxwell interview.

including his own, and annotated with a 'G' in Haigh's distinctive hand-writing, indicates that he supported ALP Industrial Groups at least.¹²⁸ Whether as a member of the Holy Name Society he was also part of the Movement conspiracy to dominate the ALP is, like many other issues in that turbulent time, a matter for speculation.

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Aust'asian Meat Industry Employees' Union Biennial Elections 1951

The following are the results of the Union Elections at which Officials and Officers were elected for the next two (2) years.

Queensland Branch Results:

President:
 C₁ J. Costigan (elected) 2008
 H. Field 1894
 F. H. Collie 481

Vice-President:
 C₁ S. MacPherson (elected) 2415
 G. Bolt 1173

Treasurer:
 C₁ S. Walker (elected) 2415
 R. Gillard 1093

Secretary:
 A. J. Neumann (elected) 2809
 W. Weir 1616

Q.C.E.:
 A. J. Neumann (elected) 2615
 S. MacPherson (elected) 2224
 J. Costigan 2064
 J. D. Jamieson 1572

A.C.T.U.:
 A. J. Neumann (elected) 2657
 S. MacPherson (elected) 2074
 J. Costigan 2009
 H. Field 1813

Trades & Labour Council:
 H. Bailey 2288
 C₁ J. Costigan (elected) 2661
 J. Cronin 1838
 H. Field (elected) 2410
 J. Iselin 1832
 M. J. Kearney (elected) 2675
 I. Laurie 1885
 F. Lipsey 1536
 S. MacPherson (elected) 2812
 W. E. Martin (elected) 2620
 A. McArthur (elected) 2378
 W. Phillips 1745
 P. Ryan (elected) 2341
 A. W. Taylor 1821
 W. Weir (elected) 2530

Southern District Results:

President:
 C₁ A. McArthur (elected) 931
 G. Ridsdale 551

Vice-President:
 E. F. Lipsey 455
 W. E. Mansfield (elected) .. 1023

Treasurer:
 R. H. Gillard (elected) 767
 P. Scarborough 700

Secretary:
 G. Bolt 367
 R. Dixon (elected) 1110

Organisers:
 M. G. Cooper 260
 G. F. Cottam (elected) 852
 J. Farrell (elected) 643
 J. Iselin 493
 M. J. Kearney (elected) 1174
 H. Little 371
 T. McFadyen 118
 P. Ryan 466

Delegate on Federal Council:

R. Dixon (elected) 1097
 G. Ridsdale 382
Export Rep. on District Council:
 T. W. Morgan (elected) 646
 W. G. Phillips 369

Committee of Management:
 G. F. Cottam (elected) 867
 R. Dixon (elected) 1190
 A. Dooligan 576

M. J. Kearney (elected) 1235
 W. E. Mansfield 537

Wool Scour Rep. on Dist. Council:
 G. S. Harding (Unopposed)

Retail Reps. on District Council:
 R. A. Smith (Unopposed)
 D. Wilson (Unopposed)

Central District Results:
President:
 D. J. Driscoll (elected) 986
 D. W. Ireland 867

Vice-President:
 M. B. Ryalls (Unopposed)

Treasurer:
 F. Dobbins (Unopposed)

Secretary:
 L. G. Haigh (Unopposed)

Organiser:
 T. Ahern 59
 J. J. Murphy 542
 A. J. Power (elected) 1248

Federal Council Rep.:
 L. G. Haigh (elected) 1149
 D. W. Ireland 698

Committee of Management:
 J. J. Bargeton 662
 D. J. Driscoll (elected) 875
 W. A. Emslie 607
 L. G. Haigh (elected) 1060
 D. W. Ireland (elected) 779
 M. B. Ryalls 696
 W. J. Schutze 396

District Councillors:
 R. M. Armstrong 413
 J. J. Bargeton (elected) 821
 S. E. Backhouse 171
 G. D. Barnes 271
 D. L. Bennett 560
 A. H. Bemsted 435
 W. H. Bentley 157

P. Bowes 429
 W. J. Burnham 148
 T. Caterson (elected) 650
 A. W. Campbell 290
 B. R. Curran (elected) 732
 W. A. Emslie 609
 T. Guinane 220
 J. M. Henery 450
 R. J. Hogan 192
 S. Lawn 596
 W. G. Lyons (elected) 662
 T. E. Maxwell (elected) 759
 P. F. Meehan 454
 G. Moran 553
 R. G. Munro 532
 J. J. Murphy 484
 A. D. Reynolds (elected) 1086
 J. H. Rideout 143

N. M. Rossiter 56
 E. M. Rothery 9

N. Ryan 331
 W. J. Schutze (elected) 78
 G. E. Stafford 33
 F. Stewart (elected) 69
 K. Thompson 28
 M. Thompson 32
 J. Underdown (elected) 78
 C. R. Wood 62
 C. A. Worthington (elected) 82

C.Q.M.E. Works:

Secretary:
 C. A. Maxwell 56
 C. A. Worthington (elected) 68
Gladstone Sub-Branch Secretary
 J. G. Darling (elected) 33
 R. G. Munro 217

Trades & Labor Council:
 A. H. Bensted (elected) 50
 B. R. Curran (elected) 42
 W. G. Lyons (elected) 50
 M. Thompson 162

Northern District Results:

Secretary
 J. Abraham (elected) 69
 V. C. Stevens 23

Organiser:

B. Bate 35
 T. G. Bowe 37
 H. Fay (elected) 49
 A. Summers 33
 B. H. Williams 131

Committee of Management:

J. Abraham (elected) 621
 J. Archer 230
 E. Barnes (elected) 410
 C. J. Bourke 106
 A. S. Brown 268
 H. Currie 246
 W. Elliott 158
 G. Holland (elected) 423
 G. W. Sing 354
 V. C. Stevens 304

Delegate on Federal Council:

E. Barnes 315
 H. Fay (elected) 398
 V. C. Stevens 330

District Councillors:

J. Archer (elected) 592
 C. J. Bourke 469
 T. G. Bowe (elected) 695
 A. S. Brown (elected) 490
 A. W. Campbell 456
 H. Currie 482
 W. Elliott (elected) 558
 H. Fay (elected) 657
 H. Hempinstall 453
 G. Holland (elected) 729
 W. R. Irving 391
 W. King (elected) 598
 G. McConochie (elected) 505
 F. W. J. Melchert 348
 G. W. Sing (elected) 662
 V. C. Stevens (elected) 589
 G. R. Welsh 410
 G. H. Whittle 413

Fig. 52: Len Haigh's Annotated 1951 AMIEU State Election Results

CCQC

Fig. 52: Len Haigh's Annotated 1951 AMIEU State Election Results
CCQC

128. AMIEU Cutting Book. CCQC J19/945 1

In the ARU, the grouper following was not as strong as in the AMIEU. The official 'progressive' policy of the ARU did not allow 'reactionary ALP industrial groups' within the union because it viewed their goal as 'to divide the workers when unity to protect the living standards of the workers was so essential.'¹²⁹ Perhaps they also regarded the ARU as a lesser field of battle because it had never re-affiliated with the ALP after the 1926 feud with Premier McCormack. Ted Cook from the clerical section of the railway played a leading role in advancing grouper interests in the local sub-branch. He opposed the ARU's calling for strike action in November 1947 and, in the Trades and Labour Council, he spoke and voted against the union's line on the court proceedings against the ARU state president and secretary after the strike.¹³⁰ Despite Cook's defiance of his union, a meeting of some 50 ARU members cleared him of the charge of misconduct brought by his fellow delegate, Frank Campbell.¹³¹ At a combined meeting of the ARU, AMIEU, WWF and BWIU in December, Cook proposed that the Arbitration Act be changed to enforce secret strike ballots conducted by the employer.¹³² Considering his attitude on ballots, he was most likely responsible for an ALP Industrial Group petition that circulated in 1949 to support government control of union ballots.¹³³

The following year, the ARU declared the annual ballot invalid because some candidates had openly canvassed on an anti-communist ticket. In the second poll, Jack Ryan defeated Ted Cook for the presidency but Cook retained enough popularity to win the positions of proxy delegate to the ARU State Council and delegate to the Trades and Labour Council. At the same time, however, the union rejected his invitation to attend Dr Tynan's address on the dangers of communism just as it declined one to hear noted British communist Arnold Lunn give a lecture in Rockhampton.¹³⁴ The ARU stood by its policy of political non-affiliation even though its own members overwhelmingly voted

129. ARU State Council Minutes, 7-10 Apr. 1949, p. 14. PTU

130. ARU Minutes, 18 Nov. 1947.

131. Campbell to Nolan, 18 Dec. 1947. PTU; Minutes of ARU State Council, 26-29 Aug. 1948. PTU

132. Minutes of Special Meeting of ARU with AMIEU, WWF and BWIU Representatives, 8 Dec. 1947. PTU

133. *MB*, 22 Apr. 1949.

134. *ibid.*, 19 May 1950 and 22 Sept. 1950

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1 Labor as individuals. On the other hand, as Frank Campbell replied to 'Anti-communist' in one on his numerous letters to the *Morning Bulletin*, groupers had never failed to use ARU meetings as ALP forums or to encourage union support at elections.¹³⁵ Despite all their efforts, according to Campbell, the groupers really 'never got a foot inside the door except in a very minor way'.¹³⁶ The irony of post-war elections for both the ARU and AMIEU was that most of the successful candidates were long-serving, popular and effective union leaders who would have won on those qualities alone. The propaganda, subversive activity, character assassinations, personal distress and the more-than-occasional punch-ups—instigated mostly by Movement men—could have been avoided with almost the same result.

Grouper activity also assisted in the formation of a Rockhampton branch of the Federated Ironworkers' Association (FIA) in 1951 during the Queensland tour of Newcastle grouper, Harry Hurrell. Hurrell apparently had the assistance of the Movement in his campaign.¹³⁷ The arrival of this new union, under secretary J. Franklin, angered the local branch of the Queensland Railway Traffic Employees' Union (QRTEU) of which it 'robbed' some 70 members. This piracy raised questions about the real purpose of Industrial Groups and their source of funding because the QRTEU was already affiliated with the ALP and was staunchly anti-communist. It also triggered calls for the abolition of groups from unions at the 1953 Labor-in-Politics Convention held in Rockhampton.¹³⁸ Robert Brown, president of the Rockhampton Industrial Groups Committee, defensively retorted that anybody who criticised Industrial Groups outside their union or branch was 'identifying himself with anti-Labor forces or [was] trying to wreck the Labour movement'.¹³⁹ In the vote to adopt the annual report on Industrial Groups—in essence to approve their continued use—three of the delegates who voted in the affirmative were also leading local union figures. They were Arthur Dunn (QSSU)

135. *ibid.*, 6 May 1955, p. 2.

136. Campbell interview.

137. *MB*, 26 Mar. 1953; Susanna Short, *Laurie Short: A Political Life*, North Sydney, 1992, p. 132.

138. *MB*, 26 Mar. 1953; ALP, *Official Record of the Twenty-First Labor-in-Politics Convention held at Rockhampton, 23rd to 27th March 1953*, , Brisbane, 1953, pp. 51-77. UQFL

139. *MB*, 26 Mar. 1953.

and Ted Cook (ARU), who represented Fitzroy and Rockhampton ALP respectively, and Frank Conlon representing the state branch of the TWU.¹⁴⁰

In late 1954, federal Labor leader H.V. Evatt's revelation of the connection between the Movement and Industrial Groups, and a further disclosure by Joe Bukowski of the situation in Queensland early in 1955, paved the way for the official disbandment of the controversial groups.¹⁴¹ The local AMIEU, which had experienced the greatest infiltration by the Movement, carried a motion to congratulate Dr Evatt on his efforts to rid the ALP of outside interference and invited both him and Joe Bukowski to address unionists in Rockhampton on the matter.¹⁴² Needless to say, those unionists who were deeply involved in the Movement strongly opposed removing the ALP tag from Industrial Groups as adopted in 1955. Rockhampton QSSU official Arthur Dunn complained bitterly that this move had rendered Industrial Groups 'practically useless' and that much of the good work of the previous ten years would be lost as communists and fellow-travellers would soon regain senior union positions.¹⁴³ With the loss of official sanctioning by the ALP, many unionists who had previously supported the Industrial Groups in Rockhampton abandoned their activities in line with official party policy.

Some communists certainly did secure executive positions as Dunn had predicted. Trevor Pastourel took on the BWIU secretary's position and Eric Browne became vice-president of the AEU where, according to fellow member and later state secretary, Austin Vaughan, he 'certainly gingered things up'.¹⁴⁴ The Waterside Workers' Ladies Auxiliary, which formed in 1954 to assist the union in its struggle, also developed links with the

140. ALP, *Official Record of the Twenty-First Labor-in-Politics Convention*, pp. 8,9 and 77.

141. Ormonde, *The Movement*, p. 59;

142. AMIEU Minutes, 4 Apr. 1955. CCQC J19/944 1

143. *MB*, 23 Aug. 1955.

144. Austin Vaughan, interviewed 22 Nov. 1995.

Union of Australian Women, a nationally based communist organisation promoting international peace, improved living standards for workers and equal pay for women.¹⁴⁵



Fig. 53: Officials of Rockhampton WWF Ladies' Auxiliary and Local Union of Australian Women Branch Greeting UAW Visitors, 1956
WWFLA secretary Kath Liddell (back, left) and president Gladys Mannion (front, left)
MB, 2 June 1956

Yet the majority of union leaders in the major unions remained, as they had always been: solid Labor men. Those with Movement associations, like Arthur Dunn, Ted Cook and Pat Fitzgerald, however, maintained their fight against atheistic communism in the Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council which they had successfully captured and were determined to defend.

Reactionaries and the Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council

The most overt manifestation of the ideological conflict which plagued the post-war era occurred within the inter-union arena of the Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council. Whereas in the case of the earlier Rockhampton Industrial Council the dominance of 'red-raggers' had brought about its demise as other unions disaffiliated,

145. MB, 2 June, 1956, p. 1; Barbara Curthoys and Audrey McDonald, *More Than a Hat and Glove Brigade: The Story of the Union of Australian Women*, Sydney, 1996, unpaginated preface.

grouper-controlled unions were not prepared to allow a repeat of that situation in the post-war era. On the latter occasion, the peak council did not collapse under the weight of one large blue-collar union as in the 1920s with the ARU. Rather, it fell into the hands of a few right-wing white-collar unions together with some minor working-class unions which were newcomers to the RTALC and which had little interest in the council as an industrial body. They saw it as a way of imposing their anti-communist ideology on other unions to complement their activities inside their own unions.

The dominance of militant unions which characterised the Trades and Labour Council during the war years waned rapidly from late 1945 with the election of Frank Conlon as president. Conlon's fierce anti-communist stance and approval of Industrial Groups, though owing nothing to Movement affiliation or Catholic conviction, nevertheless helped Movement-inspired delegates to wrest control from left-wing and moderate forces and substitute their own right-wing power instead. In 1946, the position of secretary passed to Bill Thursby of the Painters and Decorators' Union; Pat Fitzgerald of the newly affiliated QSSU was voted in as vice-president; and another white-collar union, the Federated Clerks' Union (FCU), affiliated with the council.¹⁴⁶ Shortly after his election to the vice-presidency, Fitzgerald represented the Trades and Labour Council at the public reception for Bishop Tynan.¹⁴⁷ Grouper support also gave Ted Cook one of the three ARU positions on the council where, as his 1947 motion condemning the ARU leaders indicated, he acted more upon his personal convictions than in the union's interests.

While white-collar unions worked their way into the council, existing blue-collar unions became disenchanted with the industrial programme adopted by the peak body, particularly the establishment of a disputes committee to which all affiliates had to hand over their industrial problems. If any union stopped work before consultation with the Trades and Labour Council, the matter was deemed not serious enough to require

146. *MB*, 17 Mar. 1947.

147. *CQ Herald*, 4 July 1949, p. 11.

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5 industrial action.¹⁴⁸ Such inverted logic and the fact that each union normally turned to its own hierarchy in times of dispute effectively allowed the council to abrogate its responsibilities—and abrogate them it certainly did in the eyes of many blue-collar unions. Claiming to support the Labor government's policy of 'peace in industry', the Trades and Labour Council tried to prevent inter-union support for the AMIEU in the 1946 meat strike.¹⁴⁹ When the ARU urged the council to back AMIEU opposition to management hiring scab labour, its reluctance to do so was interpreted as a tacit rejection of the principles of unionism. It was, as ARU state secretary Frank Nolan claimed, 'peace at any price', including the 'selling out of the labour movement'.¹⁵⁰ This anti-union attitude angered the AMIEU as well as the ARU and WWF, all of whom temporarily disaffiliated from the RTLC. The Queensland Trades and Labour Council (QTLC) noted with grave concern the marked lack of 'effective' leadership in Rockhampton and urged the main unions to re-affiliate with the RTLC in the interests of workers.¹⁵¹

During the 1948 rail strike, the Trades and Labour Council offered no support to railway unions at all. It busied itself instead with parochial matters like the city water supply. After this perceived betrayal, only the ARU remained on the peak body, as the Queensland Trades and Labour Council had also advised, to oppose what ARU considered was a right-wing executive with anti-working-class motives.¹⁵² A subsequent Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council resolution congratulating the government on handling the prolonged and bitter railway dispute clearly demonstrated the council's subordination of union interests to those of the employer. It also foreshadowed the path many of these delegates would take in Queensland's Labor Party split in 1957.¹⁵³

148. TWU Minutes, 10 Dec. 1945. CCQC P16/1954 1

149. *MB*, 5 July 1947.

150. *ibid.*, 19–29 May 1947.

151. QTLC Minutes, 30 Apr. 1947. UQFL 118/A12/ 6.

152. *MB*, 7 Feb. 1948.

153. *ibid.*, 7 Apr. 1948.

The Trades and Labour Council policy which proved most divisive in the local union movement was its determination to outlaw all vestiges of communism in Rockhampton, both inside and outside the workplace. Initially, the council banned communist floats in the 1946 Labour Day procession which it organised in conjunction with the ALP.¹⁵⁴ In the wake of the 1948 railway strike, and again contrary to his union's direction, Ted Cook tried to push through a constitutional change to exclude from the council any unionist with even the most remote of communist sympathies. The move was, according to fellow ARU delegate, Frank Campbell, 'a snide attempt to debar progressive and militant' unionists from the affairs of the council.¹⁵⁵ Even the AEU could see through this move in the last weeks of their affiliation and would not entertain such a proposal.¹⁵⁶ Cook's motion failed, but he did succeed in having the Trades and Labour Council pass another supporting compulsory court-controlled union voting.¹⁵⁷

Later in 1948, Bill Thursby, the Trades and Labour Council secretary and delegate to the Queensland Trades and Labour Council congress in Brisbane, was one of only two members who spoke against the QTLC's opposition to the proposed scheme of ALP Industrial Groups. Thursby gained further notoriety for the local council being out of step with other provincial bodies by being the only delegate to oppose a motion to congratulate militant unionists imprisoned in the rail strike.¹⁵⁸ The Rockhampton council also disregarded a complaint from the AMIEU, ARU and WWF about the treatment meted out to the CPA at the 1949 street rally and ignored a subsequent QTLC direction to seek out and punish those responsible for the 'storm trooper tactics'.¹⁵⁹ But perhaps the most conclusive evidence of the grouper sympathies of the local Trades and Labour Council was the nomination of Tom Rasey of the Industrial Groups Committee to

154. *ibid.*, 7 May 1946, p. 10.

155. Notice of Motion, RTLC, insert in THBM minutes; 'Central District Report', *Advocate*, Vol. 27, No. 7, 15 May 1948, p. 5.

156. AEU Minutes, 27 Mar. 1948. NBAC E162/33/2.

157. *MB*, 5 May 1948;

158. *ibid.*, 13 Nov. 1948, p. 1.

159. Len Haigh, Bill Hodson (AMIEU), Frank Campbell (ARU) and Jack Curtin (WWF) to A.J. Neumann; QTLC Minutes, 30 Mar. 1949. UQFL 118/A12/6

be Rockhampton's proxy delegate to the QTLC.¹⁶⁰ The state council rejected Rasey and when his replacement condemned the Communist Party Dissolution Bill in 1950, the Rockhampton body promptly disendorsed him as its delegate.¹⁶¹

During the industrial upheaval which accompanied the drive to ban the CPA, Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council refused to support the protest of the local WWF against the prison sentence recently passed on their left-wing federal assistant secretary, Ted Roach.¹⁶² In speaking against the motion, a delegate of the QSSU claimed the council had 'no sympathy whatsoever for traitorous officials who used their executive positions in trade unions as a shield for their fifth column activities'.¹⁶³ Considering these views, it must have galled the council's reactionary executive to be drawn into support for the 'No' campaign. The report of the council meeting held just before the referendum indicates that while the council dealt in length with other matters, it made only a brief comment about assisting in the campaign and what specific help was to be given was not discussed.¹⁶⁴

The final insult to Rockhampton unions came in 1953 with the attendance of the then Trades and Labour Council president, Ted Cook, and another ARU delegate, Stan Doolan, at a public reception for Liberal Prime Minister Menzies. The ARU had expressly forbidden their presence at the welcome. When fellow delegate Frank Campbell accused them of deliberately seeking to embarrass the trade union movement with their presence on stage with Menzies, Cook dismissed the criticism as 'an attempt by the Communist element to discredit the council in the eyes of unionists'.¹⁶⁵ Those ARU leaders opposed to Cook's actions, as well as the ARU state council, pushed for his

160. MB, 28 Sept. 1949; Ross Fitzgerald and Harold Thornton, *Labor in Queensland: From the 1880s to 1988*, St Lucia, 1989, p. 51.

161. QTLC Minutes, 3 and 10 May 1950. UQFL 118/A12/6

162. Margo Beasley, *Wharfies: The History of the Waterside Workers' Federation*, Sydney, 1996, pp. 147-148.

163. MB, 8 Mar. 1951.

164. *ibid.*, 19 Sept. 1951.

165. *ibid.*, 21 and 25 Apr. 1953.

removal as their delegate on many occasions but he always managed to drum up enough rank-and-file support to retain his position on the council.¹⁶⁶

It was not enough for the right-wing-dominated Trades and Labour Council to try to remove all communist sympathisers from amongst the delegates: they wanted to remove everyone with any semblance of opposition to their plans. Even president Frank Conlon had become an impediment to the Movement cause. While Conlon was staunchly anti-communist and always supported arbitration and the Labor Party, his antipathy towards any outside involvement in union affairs was well known.¹⁶⁷ Thus, the reactionaries deliberately removed Conlon from office because he was 'a solid trade union man' and would no longer 'stand for the rot they were putting up'.¹⁶⁸

It was an earlier move by the QTLC to stem the power of right-wing forces on provincial trades and labour councils which gave the Rockhampton right-wingers a legitimate way of dumping Conlon from their body. The QTLC had changed itself from a Brisbane-based to a state-based body in 1947 and consequently altered its constitution to exclude from provincial council membership any union not affiliated with the QTLC on a state-wide basis as well. At the time of this change, the Queensland TWU decided against affiliation because this would mean double capitation fees. The Rockhampton TWU sub-branch believed that it was still eligible to remain in Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council under local rules.¹⁶⁹ However, four years later when it suited the right-wing forces to remove Conlon, they changed the domestic rules to comply with those of the QTLC, thus forcing the TWU out of the local peak body. They had to expel the right-wing SPU and the FCU for the same reason but were prepared to sacrifice these allies to get rid of the by-then obstructive Conlon after ten years as a 'useful' president.¹⁷⁰

166. Cook interview; Campbell interview.

167. Cole interview.

168. Evan Schwarten, interviewed by Jeff Young, Aug. 1994.

169. TWU Minutes, 14 July and 11 Aug. 1947. CCQC P16/1954 1; QTLC Minutes, 29 Oct. 1947. UQFL 118/A12/6

170. TWU Minutes, 13 Aug. 1951. CCQC P16/1954 2; Schwarten interview.

From the removal of Conlon, the Trades and Labour Council moved even farther right in the political spectrum, with the election of Ted Cook as president and Arthur Dunn of the QSSU as secretary. In defence of its representation at the Menzies reception, Dunn publicly claimed that the council was not party-political.¹⁷¹ It then shirked any further political comment on those grounds. Sixteen unions, including the AEU, TWU, AFULE and all other sectional and craft railway unions, the BWIU and the AWU, had either disaffiliated over the preceding years or had never bothered joining the peak body at all.¹⁷² Twelve unions remained affiliated with the council, including the ARU, AMIEU and WWF, but with two of the three delegates of the railway union and at least one of the AMIEU being groupers, the body became increasingly dominated by right-wing elements. The 1955 election returned Cook and Dunn to their positions with other executive posts occupied by the FIA, Plumbers and Gasfitters, and Electrical Trade Union (ETU).¹⁷³

Many months passed between Trades and Labour Council meetings. The executive deliberately engineered most meetings not to progress beyond debating the minutes and filled other agendas with domestic issues such as food prices and bus routes or matters like aid to South-East Asian countries to fight against communism.¹⁷⁴ The council contributed nothing concrete to local industrial relations and seemed determined to prevent any individual unions doing so lest they put forward a communist line, particularly after the removal of ALP sanctioning of Industrial Groups. The risk of this magnified when the ARU membership finally dumped Ted Cook as a delegate and replaced him with Gordon Wickbold, a staunch non-grouper. Cook's position as president then passed to John Davey, secretary of the ETU and fellow grouper.

During 1956, the reactionary Trades and Labour Council committed two tactical blunders that triggered its downfall. First, it refused to accept the credentials of the

171. *MB*, 5 May 1953.

172. *ibid.*, 12 Feb. 1955.

173. *ibid.*, 9 July 1955.

174. AMIEU Minutes, 5 May 1954. CCQC J19/944 1; *MB*, 31 Mar. 1955; Schwarten interview.

ARU, AFULE, WWF and APWU for the annual elections in July. Delegates from those unions walked out of the August meeting in protest and, backed by the AMIEU, appealed to the QTLC which upheld their complaint.¹⁷⁵ Then in September, the Rockhampton council issued a controversial statement on the 1956 shearers' strike. It recommended that the union involved, the AWU, call off the strike and return to the court for a new award. This 'solution' seemingly supported the United Graziers' Association and not fellow unionists in the AWU. The Trades and Labour Council also falsely claimed it had backing for the recommendation from 18 local unions, including the AMIEU, ARU, WWF, APWU, BWIU, Painters and Decorators, Sheetmetal Workers' and Seamen's unions. Disgusted with this blatant lie, all immediately and publicly disassociated themselves from the council's action. The betrayal of fellow unionists in the AWU, even though from a union which had taken little active part in the local affairs, encouraged the alliance of these and other unions with the AWU and brought a concerted appeal to the QTLC for a full investigation into the operations of the Rockhampton peak body.¹⁷⁶

The October 1956 meeting of the Trades and Labour Council was the watershed in the struggle between opposing factions in the Rockhampton union movement. The spark which ignited a clash of forces was the refusal of the council to accept apologies from those unions which had walked out of the August meeting. The executive claimed these unions had then attended 'an unconstitutional meeting' at which they made attempts to circumvent decisions made by the Trades and Labour Council about the shearers' strike. This action against the AMIEU, ARU, WWF, AFULE and BWIU caused a heated outburst which culminated in delegates from those unions, being in the majority, returning from the gallery and resuming their seats. They claimed they were duly elected delegates of legally represented unions; they were 'not going to put up with this rot any longer' and had 'had enough of this dictatorship' which was designed 'to wreck Labor'.

175. QTLC Minutes, 24 July and 22 Aug. 1956. UQFL 118/A20

176. *MB*, 6-9 Sept. 1956; A. Dunn (RTLTC) to QTLC, 30 Sept. 1956, QTLC Minutes, 2 Oct. 1956. UQFL 118/A20

The 22 rebel delegates elected Colin Maxwell of the AMIEU as president in place of Davey. In its description of the proceedings as a 'coup', the *Morning Bulletin* article exaggerated considerably by claiming:

Police were summoned to the Rockhampton Trades Hall last night when, marching in a body down the centre of the hall, left wing industrial union delegates took over control of a Trades and Labour Council meeting to climax the most amazing scenes in the council's history.¹⁷⁷

Efforts by Jack Egerton and Alex McDonald of the QTLC to reconcile differences between the warring factions proved fruitless and in the ensuing months, the city was in the absurd position of having two bodies claiming to be the legitimate Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council. One side made allegations of 'clerical fanatics' and 'Santamaria dominated groupers' damaging unions and sabotaging federal elections; the other side hurled accusations of 'reds' and 'puppets' controlled by a QTLC 'communist junta'. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth Bank froze all assets pending settlement of the dispute and neither side had access to any funds.¹⁷⁸

Thirteen unions comprised what the press dubbed the 'new' or 'left wing' council which had the official backing of the QTLC in Brisbane. With the absence of white-collar unions like the QSSU and FCU, the new peak body signalled the re-unification of working-class interests in Rockhampton. Affiliated unions elected a broad-spectrum executive with Frank Campbell (ARU) as president, Colin Maxwell (AMIEU) and Trevor Pastourel (BWIU) as vice-presidents, Len Harris (BWIU) as secretary, Ted Warren (AWU) as treasurer, and members of the AFULE and AWU as auditors. Other unions affiliated or with committee members were the WWF, APWU, PIEU, Vehicle Builders, Sheetmetal Workers, Plumbers and Gasfitters, Painters and Decorators as well as the out-of-town Colliery Employees' Union.¹⁷⁹ Within a few weeks, the Boilermakers'

177. *MB*, 3 Oct. 1956.

178. *ibid.*, 13 Oct. and 29 Oct. 1956.

179. *ibid.*, 10 Oct. and 29 Oct. –7 Nov. 1956; RTLC Minutes, 6 Nov. 1956. CCQC D7/1655 12

Society and Federated Coopers' Union presented their credentials.¹⁸⁰ While the TWU could not join because its state branch had still not affiliated with the QTLC, the secretary who succeeded Frank Conlon, Noel Furzeman, sometimes acted as a representative to the peak council.¹⁸¹ The epithet of 'left wing', as even the conservative *Morning Bulletin* acknowledged, was clearly a misnomer because the new body also contained unions renowned for their moderate industrial outlook.¹⁸² Only the AEU remained outside the new council, not because it opposed the new body but because it had retreated into its traditional isolationism and only sought affiliations with other railway unions when specific workplace interests necessitated.¹⁸³



180. *MB*, 20 Nov. 1956.

181. *ibid.*, 13 Mar. 1957.

182. *ibid.*, 10 Nov. 1956.

183. Treacy interview.

The Trades Hall Board of Management quickly recognised the new council's legitimacy and reserved the large upstairs meeting room for its use on the first Tuesday of each month—as stipulated in the constitution—in place of its predecessor.¹⁸⁴ Nevertheless, ever keen to rent the hall and perhaps trying to be seen as non-political in the matter, the board set aside the second Thursday for the original council.¹⁸⁵ Indeed, the problem of two industrial bodies presented little conflict of interest to the Trades Hall Board. None of the unions which comprised the old council was a member of the board nor were the ARU and many of the smaller unions from the new council. All had been debarred from the Trades Hall Board by the constitutional change on membership in 1949. As well, two of the main unions on the board, the TWU and AEU, were members of neither the old nor the new Trades and Labour Councils. In essence, there was little conflict of interest to disrupt the affairs of the board at all.

The right-wing rump of the previous Trades and Labour Council battled on with the firm conviction that it was the legitimate body duly elected by unionists. Still dominated by Dunn, Davey and Fitzgerald, the council's only affiliates were the QSSU, ETU, FIA, Bricklayers and the FCU—the latter union promptly rejoining upon disaffiliation from the QTLC.¹⁸⁶ At the same time, and providing clearer evidence of the true source of their motivation and support, neither the QSSU, FIA nor ETU had the backing of their state bodies and had defied official instructions to participate in the conciliation meeting organised by Egerton and McDonald the previous year.¹⁸⁷ They were, in effect, renegades within their own unions, pursuing goals encouraged by religious convictions and affiliations rather than serving the interests of their union. These convictions must have been severely shaken when the Catholic Church severed its official connection with the Movement in July 1956, even if Bishop Tynan continued to sanction their anti-communist efforts locally.

184. G.L. Harris, sec. RTLC to H.M. Lander, sec. THBM, 11 Oct. 1956; Lander to Harris, 17 Oct. 1956. THBM Correspondence. CCQC U14/2064 6 and 7

185. *MB*, 12 Jan. 1957.

186. *ibid.*, 1 Nov. and 20 Nov. 1956. The FIA disaffiliated and remained neutral from May 1957. *ibid.*, 18 May 1957.

187. QTLC Minutes, 31 Oct. 1956. UQFL 118/A20; Schwarten interview.

In the combined face of changed Church policy, lack of support from their own union hierarchies, and rejection by the wider union movement in Rockhampton, the 'old' council continued to function—sometimes with only two unions attending—until its eventual demise in the heat of the political upheaval which split the Queensland labour movement in 1957. Without condoning their actions, one must admire in these men the courage of their religious convictions against such overwhelming futility, made all the more challenging by the ridicule from victorious delegates on the 'new' council and their smug taunts such as: 'Found any reds under the bed yet, Arthur?'¹⁸⁸

It was not until the eventual dissolution of this diehard body that its replacement received recognition from the local press as the legitimate Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council. After more that six months of referring to the 'new' and 'old' councils and publishing meeting reports of both, the editor of the *Morning Bulletin* conceded the absurdity of the situation and agreed to recognise the QTLC-backed body.¹⁸⁹ However, it took longer to gain official recognition from the Commonwealth Bank which held the frozen assets of the previous body. More than a year after the cataclysmic event, the bank would not release funds to the legitimate executive because the old signatures were supposedly still valid.¹⁹⁰ One tragic legacy of the Trades and Labour Council civil war was the disappearance of all records of the council from its establishment in 1938. According to a former delegate to the new body, Evan Schwarten, the books were kept and probably later destroyed by Arthur Dunn who believed his 'communist' successors were 'trying to rewrite History'.¹⁹¹ Dunn, it seems, did not intend to leave them any written evidence to that end.

188. *ibid.*

189. C. Maxwell interview.

190. *MB*, 14 Dec. 1957.

191. Schwarten interview.

The 1957 Queensland Labor Split

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The 1956 split in the Rockhampton Trades and Labour Council prompted a rapid response from local ALP officials in assuring the public that the split had no relation to, or ramifications for, the political wing of the labour movement. They claimed the council was in no way connected with the Labor Party and that it was 'purely an industrial organisation as distinct from a political organisation'.¹⁹² While this disclaimer may have been technically correct, it ignored the affiliation of many member unions with the ALP and the active party membership of many delegates. The two bodies could not be seen as separate when the same personalities dominated both. The ideological differences that underlay the division in the Trades and Labour Council reflected in microcosm the wider tensions in the ALP in the mid-1950s. These oppositional forces had rent asunder the Victorian Labor Party in 1955 and similarly ruptured Queensland Labor in 1957.

A full discussion of this event—in retrospect profoundly more than 'a drop in the ocean in political history' for Queensland¹⁹³—is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Several historians have investigated the event elsewhere¹⁹⁴ and only a brief outline of causation is needed to paint the backdrop for its impact on the union movement in Rockhampton. From late 1955, disagreement between the unions and the Parliamentary Labor Party (PLP) led to the unexpected alignment of the AWU with traditionally militant unions on the QTLC. There was a corresponding alignment of those unions and party branches dominated by Movement-inspired groupers with Premier Vince Gair.¹⁹⁵ The issues which provoked the unexpected union coalition included the shearers' strike of 1956, in which Gair sided with the graziers, and several pieces of controversial legislation about which the Premier failed to consult or take advice from the QCE.¹⁹⁶

192. *ibid.*, 15 Oct. 1956.

193. Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', in Murphy *et al.*, *Labor in Power*, p. 551.

194. See, for example, Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, and Murphy *et al.*, *Labor in Power*.

195. Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, pp. 141 and 144.

196. Murray, *The Split*, p. 319.

This dissatisfaction built upon prior union discontent that the government had introduced three weeks annual leave for public servants but not for other Queensland workers. This change benefited grouper-controlled unions such as the QSSU and FCU to the detriment of blue-collar unions. The government had also not replaced the AWU's 'traditional' representative in the Industrial Court bench after a vacancy in 1952.¹⁹⁷ The former complaint re-surfaced at the 1956 Mackay Labor-in-Politics convention where delegates adopted the proposal of three weeks annual leave for all Queensland workers as policy. Premier Gair was bound by his party pledge to implement this change at the first session when returned to office. Additionally, Gair, who was Rockhampton-born and educated, was personally known by several delegates from local unions and ALP branches and he gave them his guarantee on this matter in a private meeting.¹⁹⁸

Denis Murphy has claimed that ideological conflict was only a minor factor in the split when compared with the power struggle and long-standing personal antagonism between Joe Bukowski, the president of the QCE and state secretary of the AWU, and Labor Premier Vince Gair.¹⁹⁹ Yet the charges that accompanied the expulsion of Gair from the party and triggered the split in its ranks related directly to a contradiction of traditional labourist ideology. Unions, through their affiliation with the party and participation in Labor-in-Politics conventions, played a key role in formulating and directing the policies of the Labor Party which parliamentarians were pledged to support and implement. While the PLP was usually given 'considerable leeway' in interpreting and implementing these policies, it was always implicit that politicians would follow convention directions and deliver.²⁰⁰ Gair failed to do so.

Among other matters, the charges levelled against Gair were that, first, he had defied the convention and the QCE's interpretation of its decisions. Second, he had breached his pledge to uphold ALP policy and platform. Third, and tantamount to

197. Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, p. 142.

198. *ibid.*, p. 145; C. Maxwell interview.

199. Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', in Murphy *et al.*, *Labor in Power*, p. 515.

200. Fitzgerald and Thornton, *Labor in Queensland*, p. 142.

treason, he had threatened to form a breakaway party or join an anti-Labor party if he could not govern without the interference from the party structure.²⁰¹ The underlying objective of Gair in these moves was to break the traditional link between the union movement and the parliamentary leadership. He wanted to govern in what he personally considered was in the best interests of the electorate and not at the dictates of the party machine and rank-and-file unionists. Like his counterpart of exactly 50 years earlier—William Kidston—Vince Gair had committed the unforgivable: he had 'ratted on Labor' and was 'a traitor to his class'.²⁰²

'Good Labor Blokes' and the Split in Rockhampton

The 1957 Labor split had several outcomes for unionists and unions in Rockhampton. Most immediately, it disrupted the imminent Labour Day plans. Although the ALP had primarily organised this event in recent years, unions still played a significant role in its planning and execution. The majority of delegates on the committee believed that Minister for Agriculture Harold Collins, who defected with Gair, was no longer suitable as the guest-of-honour. Several members left the meeting in protest at this last-minute change—Arthur Dunn, his fellow QSSU representatives and delegates from the ETU. Dunn not only defended Gair's actions but again resorted to the convenient defence that the Labour Day committee, like the Trades and Labour Council and the Trades Hall Board, was a non-political organisation.²⁰³

The Labour Day Celebration Committee also revoked the invitation to the Labor members for Rockhampton and Keppel, Mick Gardner and Viv Cooper. Both men had sided with Gair, while the ALP had earlier suspended Gardner for publicly opposing the

201. Document presented at QCE meeting 24 April 1957, quoted in Murray, *The Split*, p. 322 and Murphy, 'The 1957 Split', in Murphy *et al.*, *Labor in Power*, p. 517.

202. Schwarten interview; C. Maxwell interview; Cole interview.

203. *MB*, 1 May 1957.

three-weeks-leave issue.²⁰⁴ The irony here was that both politicians were former officials of the local Vehicle Builders' Federation (VBF) of which Gardner was a foundation member, and both held current union tickets.²⁰⁵ Jim Clark, the member for Fitzroy and former AWU organiser who was the only local member remaining loyal to the ALP, stepped into the breach to lead the procession. As only to be expected, the march focussed upon the political crisis and the iniquity of Gair breaking his party pledge.²⁰⁶ But then, the days of placing the industrial cause central to Labour Day celebrations had long passed: it was now almost totally a demonstration of political protest.

Second, the political split forced individual unionists, both leaders and rank and file, to decide exactly where their true political allegiances lay. On the one hand, it revealed those who really were 'the good Labor blokes', remaining true to the principles of labourism and to party discipline and were prepared to stand by the party in crisis. On the other hand, it clearly showed those who placed a higher priority on the ideology espoused by Santamaria and the Movement and, as a consequence, followed Gair into his renegade Queensland Labor Party (QLP).²⁰⁷ For most Protestant Labor-voting unionists, there was never really any question of defecting to what was commonly seen as a Catholic party. However, for Catholics, the issue caused intense and passionate division just as the whole matter of Church intervention in politics and Movement membership had over the previous decade. Despite the condemnation of many fellow Catholics and even their own family members, a substantial minority did retain their loyalty for Labor.²⁰⁸

Among those union leaders who remained active and prominent within the ALP after the split were Jack Ryan and Frank Campbell (ARU), Colin Maxwell (AMIEU),

204. *ibid.*, 18 July 1957.

205. *ibid.*, 7 May 1957; Duncan Waterson and John Arnold, *Biographical Register of the Queensland Parliament, 1930–1980*, Canberra, 1982, pp. 18 and 32.

206. *MB*, 7 May 1957; Waterson and Arnold, *Biographical Register*, pp. 16–17. Reflecting the sectarian nature of the split, Gair, Gardner and Cooper (defectors) were Catholics while Clark (Labor) was Presbyterian.

207. Later the Democratic Labour Party (DLP).

208. Schwarten interview; Rowling, personal communication.

Evan Schwarten (ASCJ/BWIU), Morgan Lander (AEU and secretary of the THBM).²⁰⁹ Those defecting to the renegade party included Arthur Dunn (QSSU), Ted Cook and Stan Doolan (ARU) and Richard Wasson (AWU). They were among 80 former Labor supporters from Fitzroy electorate who attended a meeting in the School of Arts to form a branch of the QLP.²¹⁰ Others who left the ALP for the QLP were Pat Meehan (AMIEU), Jack Verney (ETU), Bill Thursby (Painters and Decorators).²¹¹ Most intriguing in the possibilities it raises about the political affiliations of former ALP stalwart and AMIEU secretary, the late Len Haigh, was the prompt QLP membership of his dentist son, Doug Haigh.²¹²

In the case of individual unions, the stance adopted generally reflected that of their leaders and the previous year's split in the Trades and Labour Council. Just as those in the new council had aligned themselves with the QTLC-AWU and the old council had supported Gair, so too did they adopt similar positions in the political schism six months later. In support of the QCE's expulsion of Gair, unions on the new council followed the line of vice-president Colin Maxwell and others who had spoken with Gair at the Mackay convention and who firmly believed the Premier had not only broken his pledge but had also betrayed their personal trust on the matter of the three weeks leave.²¹³ Unions adhering to the old council, in contrast, congratulated Gair on not introducing the extended leave which he claimed the state could ill afford. It extended this praise to those politicians who had 'upheld the basic Labor principles, both industrially and politically, particularly that of loyalty to the appointed leader'.²¹⁴ That so-called principle contradicted Labor's traditional pledge of loyalty to the party and the QCE, and not to the parliamentary leader of the day. It indicated that these men were not adherents to true Labor principles at all.

209. *MB*, 27 July 1957; C. Maxwell interview; Schwarten interview.

210. *MB*, 16 May 1957.

211. *ibid.*, 11 and 29 May 1957

212. *ibid.*, 16 May 1957.

213. *ibid.*, 8 May 1957.

214. *ibid.*

Unions associated with the legitimate Trades and Labour Council in the main supported the 'official' Labor Party led by former Deputy Premier Jack Duggan and turned out in strength to support the new deputy leader, Dr Felix Dittmer, at a mass meeting of unionists at Trades Hall.²¹⁵ In the subsequent election campaign triggered by the inability of Gair to continue with a minority government, Rockhampton unions overwhelmingly declared their allegiance with the ALP. Backed by the new Trades and Labour Council, secretaries and organisers of 19 local unions urged Rockhampton electors to vote for their endorsed ALP candidate and declared that the QLP was 'entirely without trade union support'. Even though two of its members, Mick Gardner and Viv Cooper, were again candidates, the VBF joined the chorus opposing the rebel party.²¹⁶ Only the TWU failed to offer its support, perhaps having lost interest in politics since the death in 1954 of its secretary and local ALP power-broker, Frank Conlon. And, true to their previous political colour, the QSSU, FCU and FIA abandoned the ALP which they denounced as the 'Red-endorsed Duggan-Bukowski Party'.²¹⁷

Leading unionists played a major role in the election by directing campaigns for local candidates. Colin Maxwell of the AMIEU organised the Keppel electorate challenge to Viv Cooper mounted by his engine driver brother-in-law, Mervyn Thackeray, while the ARU's Jack Ryan ran Jim Clark's campaign in Fitzroy.²¹⁸ Not unexpectedly, Arthur Dunn steered the attack for the QLP in Fitzroy for its candidate, John Norton. Norton, who was president of West Rockhampton ALP before defecting, criticised the 'power-drunk union officials who [were] under Joe Bukowski's thumb' and promoted himself as a former senior trustee of the SPU to reap the votes of any of its disaffected members.²¹⁹

215. *ibid.*, 1 May 1957.

216. *ibid.*, 2 Aug. 1957.

217. *ibid.*, 3 Aug. 1957.

218. *ibid.*, 2 Aug. 1957.

219. *ibid.*, 3 Aug. 1957.

Union leaders were also in the vanguard of a savage newspaper propaganda war. Each day in the lead-up to the poll, Colin Maxwell sparred with Arthur Dunn and Frank Campbell took on his old ARU foe, Ted Cook. Cook criticised the recent re-affiliation of the ARU with the ALP as 'the Reds extending their subversive programme in the union to include the ALP'. Yet, as Campbell and fellow ARU official Gordon Wickbold claimed at the time, there had been 'no more consistent advocate for ARU-ALP affiliation' than Ted Cook and he had pushed the idea with grouper support in 1954.²²⁰ Colin Maxwell preferred to cut right to the sectarian bone in accusing the QLP of parading 'in the guise of Christians [who] were engaging in a sordid unchristian whispering campaign against the ALP'. Under Jack Duggan, he claimed, the party would 'fight Communism, Fascism or any other "ism" which threaten[ed] the glorious heritage'.²²¹

Third, the impact upon internal affairs varied from union to union. In the AMIEU, where grouper influence had been the greatest, the split and subsequent election triggered a rejuvenation of activity after it had subsided somewhat with the removal of the ALP tag in 1955. Secretary Maxwell commented that, for the 1957 union elections, 'apart from working actively for the QLP, groupers gave more than serious attention' to that year's ballot. He added that an unnamed person who had been associated with Santamaria in Victoria had been active for the previous six months organising for various union ballots. Maxwell warned other unions that, because the ALP had officially abolished Industrial Groups, Santamaria followers were making a greater effort to infiltrate unions and to dominate the labour movement.²²²

There was little noticeable impact on other working-class unions, however. Both as the political crisis heightened and after the split, many railway clerks who had supported Industrial Groups withdrew from the ARU and joined the ranks of the right-

220. *ibid.*, 12, 15 and 22 July 1957.

221. *ibid.*, 22 July 1957.

222. *ibid.*

wing FCU.²²³ As Frank Campbell recalls, however, the groupers had never gained much of a foothold except for Ted Cook. Cook remained in the ARU and did so until his retirement in the late 1980s because he firmly believed in the principle of all-grade unionism.²²⁴ Weighted against this is Campbell's conviction that Cook stayed with the ARU because he was 'still some use to "them"', even after 1957.²²⁵ In the AEU, too, there was little repercussion of the political cleavage and 'things just carried on' as usual.²²⁶

Fourth, and from a fundamental perspective, the defeat of the most of the remaining ALP candidates under Jack Duggan in the 1957 election severed the nexus between unions and their government representation which unionists had come to accept as the norm. From the triumph of the Ryan government in 1915, with the exception of one term during the Depression, workers had experienced the benefits of successive state Labor governments legislating on their behalf. For much of the previous half-century their local political representatives were Labor men whom they lobbied with great effect. Foremost amongst these politicians was former union secretary, Jimmy Larcombe, the member for Keppel from 1912 to 1929 and member for Rockhampton from 1932 until his retirement in 1956. During that long period, Larcombe held the portfolios of Public Works, Railways, Mines, Transport, Public Instruction, Treasury and Attorney-General and thereby provided a powerful and effective voice for local workers in cabinet.²²⁷ In 1957, unions found this line of contact truncated with the triumph of a Liberal-Country Party coalition government. Even though Jim Clark retained Fitzroy and Merv Thackeray secured Keppel for the ALP, their seats on the opposition benches afforded local workers little material benefit. With the consignment of the union-backed party they supported to the political wilderness of opposition for the next 32 years, they were in a position of political ineffectiveness.

223. Campbell interview.

224. Cook interview.

225. Campbell interview.

226. George Beattie, interviewed 4 Nov. 1996.

227. *Queensland Parliamentary Handbook*, Brisbane, 1983, p. 275.

The End of an Era

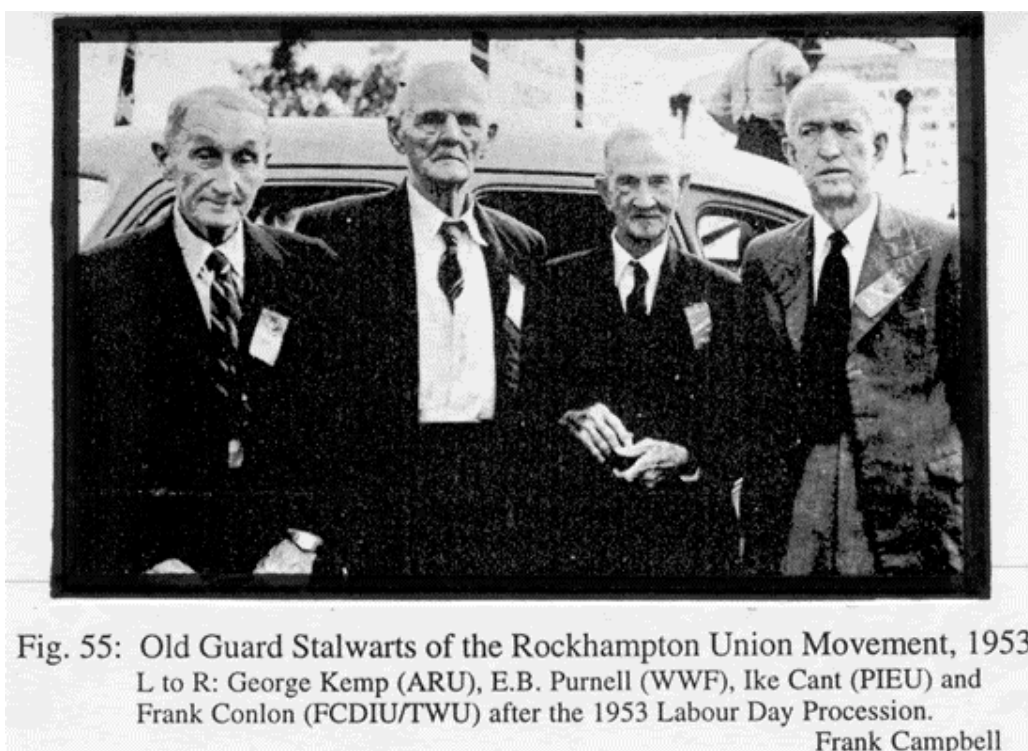
Fifty years before the 1957 political disaster brought an end to the symbiotic relationship between unions and government and the same year that Labor Premier Kidston similarly betrayed workers by defecting from the party, Rockhampton had witnessed its first significant public celebration of union strength and pride at the Waterside Workers' Federation procession. Over the intervening decades, local unionism had evolved into a strong movement serving its members' interests both inside and outside the workplace. Inspired by their collective vision of a better life for workers through union organisation, early leaders laid the foundations of local unions, pursued various forms of closer unity with kindred unions throughout Australia to empower their cause, and persevered with the establishment of local peak union bodies to better serve their members' needs. While not all of these wider endeavours proved successful, as Chapter 9 will reveal, the dedication and untiring efforts of these men inspired others to actively take up the cause in their wake, drew respect from the majority of rank and file, and, on occasions, even earned praise from traditionally anti-union quarters.

By the 1950s, not only had the union movement lost its long-standing link with government, but it had also lost many of the dedicated characters who had nurtured its early growth and development. This was, in many respects, the passing of the Old Guard. Len Haigh, secretary of the AMIEU from 1924, died in 1953 after having suffered a stroke at work the previous year.²²⁸ In 1954, E.B. Purnell, founder of the Rockhampton Waterside Workers Federation, father of the local union movement and inspiration for many unionists in the early decades of the century, passed away at the age of 87. He had devoted 38 years to union secretaryship and in the remaining years of his life he maintained a close interest in union affairs.²²⁹ Foundation member of the TWU

228. Ursula Barry, interviewed 4 Nov. 1996; *MB*, 18 Jan. 1953.

229. *ibid.*, 27 July 1954, p. 3; *MW*, 27 July 1954, p. 2.

and its secretary from 1921 to 1953, Frank Conlon, also died in 1954, aged only in his mid-sixties while George Kemp, who re-formed an all-grade union in the railway in 1914 as the forerunner to the ARU and served as its secretary until 1938, passed away in 1956, aged 78.²³⁰



While these men were without doubt the most influential and longest serving trade union leaders of their time, the union movement also lost other men who had served it well, even if not as conspicuously as Purnell, Haigh, Conlon and Kemp. Among those lesser publicised characters who died in 1957 were John (Jack) Worthington who had been president of the Storemen and Packers' Union from 1924 until 1949; Gus Power, aged 64, AMIEU organiser from 1942 until his death and a life member of the WWF; Isaac Cant, a prominent PIEU member and an original trustee of Trades Hall who continued in that position for some 40 years and who died at 88; and Jack Ryan, district

230. *MB*, 9 Mar. 1954, p. 3 and 7 Mar. 1957, p. 3.

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chairman of the ARU who tragically passed away suddenly at the early age of 50.²³¹ So too for the foundation secretary of the original Carters and Storemen's Union and local Labor politician since 1912, Jimmy Larcombe, whose death at 73 came less than a year after his retirement from active politics and just before Labor's disastrous electoral defeat. In honour of Larcombe, Rockhampton witnessed its first (and only to date) state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral after which a long cortege passed through streets lined with respectful constituents and police.²³² Also dying in 1957 was Andrew 'Lofty' Anderson, the local proprietor of the *Critic*, whose early admonitions to 'organise, organise, organise!' had done much to encourage the renaissance of unionism, the combined union celebration of Eight Hour Day and the establishment of a Trades Hall as a home for Rockhampton labour.²³³

Most of these union leaders had lived a reasonably long life, with the exception of Jack Ryan, and many had retired from active union affairs. Yet it is interesting to speculate that the ideological tension of the post-war era, with its divisive impact on the union movement they created and nurtured over so many years and the subsequent schism in the Labor politics most of them espoused, may have played some role in precipitating their deaths. If, as one union official recalls, the split 'made grown men cry',²³⁴ the event and the years of animosity preceding it may well have had a negative influence on their health.

A spate of retirements of other loyal and long-serving union leaders also marked the 1950s. Jack Ilott, president of the AMIEU since 1925 retired after 51 years employment at the meatworks; Tom Maxwell and George Thompson, former president and secretary respectively of the WWF, ceased work on the wharves; Jim Griffin, who had been one of the ARU delegates to the Trades Hall Board in the early 1930s and a union activist for most of his 35 years in the railway, took a voluntary retirement in 1957;

231. *ibid.*, 13 Apr. 1957, p. 7, 10 Oct. 1957, p. 10, 16 Dec. 1957, p. 6 and 18 Dec. 1957, p. 8.

232. *ibid.*, 22 June 1957, p. 9. Larcombe did not stand for re-election in 1956.

233. *ibid.*, 9 Feb. 1957, p. 7.

234. Beattie interview.

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Jimmy Damm, who filled most positions in the AEU over the decades and was a trustee of Trades Hall, finished his railway service the same year; and Frank Cole, also a trustee of Trades Hall and TWU president for many years, resigned his positions upon retirement in 1958.²³⁵

In marking the passing of these members of the Old Guard, and especially of Purnell, Conlon, Kemp and Haigh, a *Morning Bulletin* editorial entitled 'Unions Past and Present' observed that 'practically their only concern was the interest of their union members' unlike contemporary leaders whom it believed only 'exploit[ed] union office as a stepping-stone to Parliament'.²³⁶ Responding to these words, ARU State Secretary and former local union activist Frank Nolan concurred with the former observation. In his opinion:

The burning enthusiasm which characterised the early labour pioneers no longer exists, and particularly in the trade union movement there is a dearth of suitable trade officials offering, although there seems to be plenty of people willing to become Labour's representatives in Parliament...Having regard to the period in which we live, I believe that the [present day] men mentioned in your article will take an honourable place in Labour's history, along with those early pioneers...who lived in a different era.²³⁷

Certainly it was a different era. While the men who were part of the early union movement had struggled for recognition of unionism and over the ensuing decades fought for improved wages, hours and working conditions for members, the New Guard of union leaders in the years from the 1950s faced different challenges. New technology brought rapid changes in techniques, processes and materials in the workplace. Unions thereafter had to confront problems arising from, for example, automation, dieselisation, bulk handling and, in the meat industry, the introduction of the Can Pak conveyor system: all brought decreased labour requirements from employers ever keen to reduce their production costs.²³⁸

235. *MB*, 14 Jan. 1955; *MW*, 14 Jan. 1950, p. 7; *MB*, 31 Aug. 1957, p. 6; AEU Minutes, 19 Dec. 1957. NBAC E162/33/4; TWU Minutes, 8 Dec. 1958. CCQC P16/1954 2

236. *MB*, 5 Dec. 1957, p. 4;

237. *ibid.*, 15 Dec. 1957, p. 3.

238. AMIEU (Qld Branch), *One Hundred Years of Struggle and Change*, Brisbane, 1988, p.20.

More important than these industrial changes wrought by progress, however, were those induced by political change—particularly by the loss of government by the Queensland ALP for the next 32 years. Under successive Liberal-Country Party governments in both state and federal politics, the new era was increasingly one of forced movement into the federal arbitration sphere of what the AMIEU termed 'the Court of Pains and Penalties' with its less favourable awards and wide powers to impose fines and gaol sentences on unionists.²³⁹ Even those unions which remained under state jurisdiction after the mid-1960s faced severe new legislation.²⁴⁰ It was now a period when workers and their unions not only had to adapt to rapid change in the workplace but also had to fight to maintain the hard-won improvements in working-class conditions achieved by union organisation and action over the preceding half-century. The history of that earlier struggle—to serve workers' needs for industrial and social improvement through unionism—is the substance of the remaining chapters of this work.

239. *ibid.*, p. 19;

240. As David Hall points out, among other changes, *The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1961* placed the onus of proof on union officials that they had taken 'all reasonable steps' to avert a strike; changes under *The Industrial Law Amendment Act 1965* gave the state government 'draconian powers' to declare a state of emergency during a strike; and *The Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Act 1976* (No.2) removed protection from charges of conspiracy and breach of contract. David Hall, 'Strike Law in Queensland' in Denis Murphy (ed.), *The Big Strikes: Queensland, 1889–1965*, St Lucia, 1983, pp. 19, 23, 25 and 26.