



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

University of Wollongong
Research Online

University of Wollongong Thesis Collection
1954-2016

University of Wollongong Thesis Collections

1983

Labour and politics in New South Wales, 1880-1900

Raymond A. Markey
University of Wollongong

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

This work is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, no part of this work may be reproduced by any process, nor may any other exclusive right be exercised, without the permission of the author.

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

Recommended Citation

Markey, Raymond A., Labour and politics in New South Wales, 1880-1900, Doctor of Philosophy thesis, Department of History - Faculty of Arts, University of Wollongong, 1983. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/1423>

Research Online is the open access institutional repository for the University of Wollongong. For further information contact the UOW Library: research-pubs@uow.edu.au

NOTE

This online version of the thesis may have different page formatting and pagination from the paper copy held in the University of Wollongong Library.

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

COPYRIGHT WARNING

You may print or download ONE copy of this document for the purpose of your own research or study. The University does not authorise you to copy, communicate or otherwise make available electronically to any other person any copyright material contained on this site. You are reminded of the following:

Copyright owners are entitled to take legal action against persons who infringe their copyright. A reproduction of material that is protected by copyright may be a copyright infringement. A court may impose penalties and award damages in relation to offences and infringements relating to copyright material. Higher penalties may apply, and higher damages may be awarded, for offences and infringements involving the conversion of material into digital or electronic form.

LABOUR AND POLITICS

IN NEW SOUTH WALES

1880-1900

A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the award
of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

THE UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

RAYMOND A. MARKEY, B.A.(Hons.), Dip.Ed.

Department of History,

1983

This thesis is my own work.

R.A. Markey.

for my mother and father.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
List of Tables	i
Acknowledgements	v
Abbreviations in Text	vi
Reference Abbreviations	vii
A Note on the term 'Labo(u)r'	viii
Synopsis	ix
Introduction	xii
 <u>Part I. Social and Industrial Structure</u>	
Introduction	1
 <u>Chapter</u>	
1 Urban Industry	12
Industrial Structure	12
Workforce Structure	25
Wages	39
Unemployment and Underemployment	45
Working Conditions	53
Living Conditions	61
The Aristocracy of Labour, Social Mobility, and Productive Re-organization	65
2 The Primary Sector	79
Smallholders and the Pastoral Industry	83
Metal Mining and Broken Hill	101
Coal Mining	114
3 Transport	136
Maritime Transport	141
The Railways	161
4 The Role of the State	172
Public Works and Public Employment	175
State Welfare	188
The State As A Repressive Apparatus	196
 <u>Part II. Labour Organization</u>	
Introduction	211
5 Trade Unions	212
Membership	218
New Unionism and Industrial Strategy and Tactics	230
Joint Organization and the Development of a Class Leadership	242
The Holocaust of the 1890s	253

6	The Emergence of the Labor Party	264
7	Collectivist Organization From Below	319
	Trade Unions and Democratic Experience	319
	Co-operation	342
	Municipal Labor Organization	353
 <u>Part III. Ideology and Policy: The Emergence of Laborism</u>		
	Introduction	368
8	The Decline of Social Democracy	374
	Political Reform	374
	Industrial Legislation	392
9	Labor and Socialism	424
	Socialism in Labor's Platform	426
	A National Bank	430
	Socialists and Labor	438
10	Labor and the State	467
	State Welfare	467
	Working Class Distrust of the State	472
	Arbitration	480
11	The Populist Paradigm: Racism and the Land	505
	Labour and Immigration	505
	Labour Racism	510
	Land and Labour	529
	The Populist Paradigm	544
	Epilogue	546
	Conclusion	554
	Appendices	
	<u>Appendix 1. Workforce Statistics</u>	564
A1.1	Percentage Grades of Occupation by Industrial Classification, 1891-1901.	568-9
A1.2	Percentage Proportion of Male, Female, and Total Breadwinners in Industrial Classifications, NSW Census, 1871-1901.	570
A1.3	Number of Manufacturing Establishments and Hands Employed, NSW and Metropolitan District, 1881-1901.	571-2
A1.4	Employment According to Censuses in Industrial Class, NSW, 1891-1901.	573-5
A1.5	Number of Hands Employed in Principal Industries, NSW, 1881-1901.	576-7

A1.6	Comparison of NSW and Victorian Factory Employment and Size of Establishments Classed According to Number of Hands Employed.	578
A1.7	Percentage of Grades of Occupation within Industrial Class, NSW, 1891-1901.	579-80
A1.8	Membership of Principal Crafts, NSW, 1901.	581
A1.9	Juveniles in Employment in Industrial Class, 1891-1901.	582-3
<u>Appendix 2. Trade Union Formation, Membership, and Affiliation to Trades and Labour Council</u>		583
A2.1	Trade Union Formation, TLC Affiliation and Membership.	584-96
A2.2	NSW Total Union Membership, 1891.	597
A2.3	TLC Affiliation, 1871-99.	598
	Bibliography.	599

LIST OF TABLES

	<u>Page</u>
<u>Part 1 Introduction</u>	
Table 1: Percentage of Census Grades of Occupation of Total Breadwinners, NSW, 1891-1901.	4
Table 2: Percentage Proportion of Breadwinners in Census Industrial Classes, NSW, 1871-1901.	9
<u>Chapter 1</u>	
Table 1: Metropolitan Proportion of Manufacturing Employment and Establishments, Selected Years, 1881-1901.	13
Table 2: Number and Size of Factories in the Sydney and Newcastle Areas, 1900.	14
Table 3: Percentage of Grades of Occupation of Total Breadwinners in Census Industrial Class, New South Wales, 1891-1901.	15
Table 4: Number of Manufacturing Establishments and Hands Employed, NSW and Metropolitan District, 1881-1901.	16
Table 5: Average Hands per Factory, Sydney and NSW, 1881-1901.	18
Table 6: Employment and Factory Size in Metals and Machinery Industrial Sector, NSW, Selected Years, 1890-1901.	23
Table 7: Employment and Factory Size in Principal Factories, NSW, Selected Years, 1885-1901.	24
Table 8: Female Employment, 1881-1901.	27
Table 9: Percentage Proportion of Males and Females in the Workforce by Census Industrial Classification, NSW, 1871-1901.	28
Table 10: Percentage of Female Employment in Metropolitan Manufacturing, 1881-1901.	29
Table 11: Female Employment in Manufacturing and Works, 1882-1901, NSW.	32
Table 12: Females as Percentage Proportion of Workforce in Principal Industries of Female Employment, Selected Years, 1883-1901.	34

	<u>Page</u>
Table 13: Children Under 15 years in Employment.	36
Table 14: Percentage of Children and Juveniles (under 20 years) in Employment in NSW, 1891-1901, by Industrial Classification.	37
Table 15: NSW Unemployment in the Census Years of 1891 and 1901.	52
Table 16: Significant Unemployed Occupations at 1901 Census.	54
 <u>Chapter 2</u>	
Table 1: Breadwinners in Primary Industry by Census, 1881-1901.	80
Table 2: Percentage of Breadwinners in Grades of Occupation in Primary Industry, by Census, 1891-1901.	81
Table 3: NSW Workforce Engaged in Metal Mining, 1881-1901.	103
Table 4: Workforce Engaged in Silver and Silver-lead Mining in Albert Mining District in NSW, Selected Years, 1889-1901.	108
Table 5: Serious Injuries and Fatalities in Silver-Mining in NSW.	111
Table 6: NSW Coal Mining Workforce, 1880-1901.	120
Table 7: Number of Coalminers' Working Days per Fortnight, 1890-1902.	121
Table 8: Coalminers' Productivity Measured in Tons per capita per annum, 1880-1902.	122
Table 9: Serious Injuries and Fatalities in NSW Coal Mines, 1881-1901.	130
 <u>Chapter 3</u>	
Table 1: Percentage Grades of Occupation in Transport and Communications, 1891-1901.	137
Table 2: Breadwinners in Transport and Communications, 1891-1901.	138
Table 3: NSW Workforce in Sea and River Transport, 1901.	148

	<u>Page</u>
Table 4: Wrecks and Disasters to Shipping in NSW Jurisdiction, 1881-1901.	160
Table 5: NSW Railway Employment, 1881-1901.	162
Table 6: NSW Railway Employment in 1901.	164
Table 7: Accidents on Railways, 1884-1901.	168
 <u>Chapter 4</u>	
Table 1: Employees on NSW Railway Construction, 1883-1891.	177
Table 2: NSW Government Expenditure on Public Works, 1881-1901.	178
Table 3: Most Frequently Gaoled Persons in NSW in the 1890s Grouped by Occupation and in Order of Frequency.	199
Table 4: Number Charged under the Master and Servants' Act, Selected Years, 1887-1901.	202
Table 5: Seamen's Convictions for Work-Related Offences For Selected Years, 1887-1901.	204
Table 6: Some Charges for Offences Against Property With Violence, Selected Years, 1887-1901.	207
 <u>Chapter 6</u>	
Table 1: Geographical Distribution of Labor Seats.	310
 <u>Chapter 7</u>	
Table 1: Municipal Background of 1891 Labor Members.	357
 <u>Chapter 9</u>	
Table 1: Socialist Delegates to the TLC, 1890-1892.	441
 <u>CHAPTER 10</u>	
Table 1: Number of New Registrations Under the 1881 Trade Union Act by Year.	473

	<u>Page</u>
Table 2: Unionists as Militia Members.	477
Table 3: Union/Employer Attitudes on Conciliation/ Arbitration at 1891 Strikes Commission.	484-7

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thesis-writing involves fairly individualistic, often isolated, work. Nevertheless, I am grateful to a number of people who have made this task easier than it might otherwise have been. I have been fortunate in having Associate Professor Jim Hagan as a perceptive, knowledgeable, and patient supervisor, as well as a supportive friend and colleague. Dr. John Merritt, of the History Department, Australian National University, first opened my eyes to the nature of the AWU, and has been a constant source of advice and moral support, particularly in the early stages of my work. Dr. K. Macnab, of the History Department, Sydney University, offered advice at an early stage of the project, when it was conceived as an M.A. thesis at Sydney. Michael Saclier and the staff of the ANU Archives of Business and Labour were extremely helpful in the research stage. I also wish to thank the unions, particularly the AWU, whose records I consulted so extensively.

In the early stages of writing my dear friend Sandy Halley offered extensive moral support. The final stages of thesis madness could not have been endured without Maureen Dibden's unselfish support and companionship. Ann Webb was a long-suffering technical counsellor, as well as typist extraordinaire. Muriel Inglis, Anne-Maree Stewart, Marjorie Dibden, and Maggie Bronneberg gave generously of their time and patience in the final typing stages. Finally, Rob and Josie Castle, of the Economics and History Departments, Wollongong University, and Malcolm Cook, of the Australian Bureau of Statistics, offered advice and assistance beyond the normal call of duty for proof-readers.

ABBREVIATIONS IN TEXT

AA Co.	-	Australian Agricultural Company.
ALF	-	Australasian Labo(u)r Federation.
ALP	-	Australian Labor Party.
AMA	-	Amalagamated Miners' Association of Australia.
ASB	-	Active Service Brigade.
ASE	-	Amalgamated Society of Engineers.
ASL	-	Australian Socialist League.
ASN Co.	-	Australasian Steam Navigation Company.
ASU	-	Amalgamated Shearers' Union.
ATU	-	Australasian Typographical Union.
AUSN Co.	-	Australasian United Steam Navigation Company.
AWU	-	Australian Workers' Union.
BHP	-	Broken Hill Proprietary.
CRSN Co.	-	Clarence and Richmond Steam Navigation Company.
FSA	-	Farmers' and Settlers' Association.
GLU	-	General Labourers' Union.
HRNSN Co.	-	Hunter River New Steam Navigation Company.
ISN Co.	-	Illawarra Steam Navigation Company.
LEL	-	Labour Electoral League.
MP	-	Member of Parliament.
PLL	-	Political Labor League.
PLP	-	Parliamentary Labor Party.
QSS Co.	-	Queensland Steam Shipping Company.
SDC	-	Sydney District Council of ALF.
SDF	-	Social Democratic Federation.
STL	-	Single Tax League.
TLC	-	Trades and Labour Council

REFERENCE ABBREVIATIONS

- ANU - Australian National University.
- AR - Annual Report.
- cf. - compare with.
- CPD - Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates.
- HRDDM - Hunter River Miners' District Delegate Meeting Minutes.
- ML - Mitchell Library.
- n. - footnote.
- NSWPD - New South Wales Parliamentary Debates.
- NSWTA - New South Wales Typographical Association.
- RCIRA - Reports under the Census and Industrial Returns Act, 1890.
- RRCS - Report of the Royal Commission on Strikes, 1891.
- SOA - Steamship Owners' Association of Australia.
- SR - New South Wales Statistical Register.
- SRC - Special Report of the Conference Between the Steamship Owners' Association of Australasia and the Federated Seamen's Union of Australasia and the Stewards' and Cooks' Union of Australia (Federated) on the Subject of the Proposed Reduction in Wages, Sydney, 1886.
- SMH - Sydney Morning Herald.
- VPLANSW - Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of New South Wales.

A NOTE ON THE TERM 'LABO(U)R'

Contemporary spellings can be confusing. In general, I have used 'Labor' solely to refer to the Labor Party; and 'Labour' to refer to the labour movement as a whole, i.e. the Labor Party and the trade unions. However, the political organization established by the unions was usually referred to as the 'Labour Party' in its earliest years, 1890-4, and when referring specifically to that period I have remained faithful to contemporary usage.

The dropping of the 'u' from Labor's title reflects the urban unions' loss of control of the Party. ASU publications dropped the 'u' from all words normally ending '-our'. As it became the dominant force in the Party, its spelling, 'Labor', was adopted generally.

SYNOPSIS

This thesis studies the motivation and nature of working class mobilization from which the New South Wales Labor Party emerged in the 1890s, and the nature of that Party. It concentrates, in particular, upon the relationship between trade unions and the Labor Party, and the relationship between the Party leadership and its rank and file. The thesis is divided into three parts.

Part I 'Social and Industrial Structure' considers the material basis of working class mobilization. It examines the working and living conditions of the basic groups within the working class: urban workers, rural workers, coal and metal miners, and transport workers (marine and railway). For all of these groups, working and living conditions commonly fell short of colonial expectations of prosperity during the great economic boom from the 1860s to 1890. In many cases, working and living conditions actually declined in the 1880s. Furthermore, the opportunities for social advancement to independence from wage earning, which had been a powerful aspect of colonial expectations, were declining for most of these groups by the end of the 1880s. These trends were the result of economic problems in major industries, of economic restructuring from primary industry and building towards more large-scale manufacturing industry, and of related changes in productive organisation and workforce structure.

Part II, 'Labour Organization', analyzes the organizational response of the working class. Trade unionism spread rapidly amongst semi and unskilled workers in the 1880s. It was also characterized

by a heightened degree of class consciousness and joint organization which saw the Trades and Labour Council develop class leadership. Closer, and more militant, organization also occurred amongst important employers' groups. On the union side, these changes have been associated with the 'new unionism' of the shearers and miners. But it is argued here that the urban unions, especially the crafts, led in these developments, largely because of the changes in their work experience.

The decimation of the unions in the depression and great strikes of the 1890's, together with the hostile role of the state, hastened the unions' organization of the Labor Party. However, during 1892-5 the urban unions lost control of the Party to a coalition of utopian socialist intelligentsia and the Shearers' Union (AWU), which delivered a large number of country Parliamentary seats to the Party. This new leadership marked a change in the participatory democratic and collectivist nature of working class organization, which had been evident in the nature of union government, the growth of co-operatives, and the spontaneous outgrowth of municipal political organization. The Labor Party moved towards a more centralized form of organization, which emphasized a moderate Parliamentary strategy.

This change was reflected in Labor policy and ideology, the subject of Part III. As the new leadership consolidated itself, the emphasis on a class-based Party, with a social democratic policy of political reform and industrial legislation, shifted towards a populist Party, despite a short-lived challenge by socialists. Labor's populism derived from an electoral strategy aimed at 'intermediate social strata' as well as the working class, and from the dominant role of the AWU in the Party. The significance of the AWU in this regard

was that it was dominated by small landholders. Populism, therefore, was mainly responsible for the 'Laborist' policy which emerged at the end of the 1890s, and which concentrated on arbitration, White Australia, land reform, and a limited state welfare apparatus. As an ideology, 'Laborism' assumed the neutrality of the state apparatus. With this ideological basis and policy, the Labor Party became the vehicle for the deliverance of the working class to a National Settlement between the classes in the new Commonwealth, after the most intensive class conflict Australia had ever experienced.