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CHAPTER NINE

TRADITIONS AND CHALLENGES IN THE SPLIT

1950-1967
(i) **CONTEXT**

This chapter has a somewhat different emphasis from the preceding ones. It places the Union squarely in the context of the great divisions which characterised the labour movement in the 1950s. It explores the relationship between factional conflicts in the Union and the practice and structure of the Union. 'Policy' and 'Arbitration' are used in part to analyse how the Union was defined, how the nature of unionism related to the politics of the Split. In so doing, the themes and questions underpinning the thesis are discussed more explicitly, helping to link the previous chapters to the 'Summary and Conclusion'.

I

The years 1950-67 are central ones in the 'long boom' during which unemployment was negligible and economic growth was consistent. Manufacturing industry drew benefits from, and contributed to, this prosperity with unmatched increases in productivity. Of central importance were the security provided by the tariff and - both consuming and producing goods - a rapidly growing population. Immigration provided much of the increase, allowing immediate increases in labour power.1

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For unions and socialists this context had ambiguous implications. Immediate, economist aims might be readily secured but what of other demands? The problems posed by prosperity and the conservatives' political dominance were reflected in, and exacerbated by, divisions in the ALP and the unions as well as, from the mid-1950s, the revolutionary left. If the domestic economy was stable, the same could not be said of international politics. The dismantling of Europe's colonial empires and the rise of Chinese Communism fractured received ideas about foreign affairs and became integral to the 'Cold War' between the USSR and the USA. As independence movements arose from west Africa to east Asia and as conflict broke out in Korea, Australians were subjected to a barrage of misinformation in newsreels and the press. To long-held fears of the 'yellow peril' was added the 'red menace'. In this context, of new prosperity at home and conflict abroad, the left tried to find ways forward. The international context was of direct relevance because, for the conservative parties, their backers, and for many Catholics in working-class organisations, communism was not so much a feature of international conflict as it was its cause. Communism must be fought everywhere: in the fields of Korea and in the ranks of the trade unions.

In Australia, the anti-communist Industrial Groups went from strength to strength. By 1954 they had secured national control of the Ironworkers and the Clerks and, in Victoria, of the Australian Railways Union and the Waterside Workers. The major Trades' Halls - Melbourne and Sydney - were bastions of anti-communism. At the ACTU Congress in 1951, policies aimed at minimising industrial 'disruption' were carried and attempts to denounce the war 'against communism' in
Korea were defeated. The only relief for the anti-Groupers was the failure of moves to support the Menzies' Government's dissolution of the CPA. This perhaps owed more to concerns about the implications for others than to sympathy with the CPA. The divisions within the labour movement were highlighted by the MTHC's support for the banning of the Party. Conflict between unions increased when the dissolution issue went to a referendum - which rejected Menzies' policy. Nevertheless, the Groupers were apparently secure in the union movement and the policies of co-operation and 'moderation' were perhaps nowhere clearer than at the ACTU in 1953 when, in effect, the ban on incentive schemes was dropped. Their influence seemed also to reach to the heart of the state with Judge Kelly's pronouncements in the Arbitration Court in 1951-52 bearing many marks of the policy of the Movement.2

The position of the Groups was undermined with surprising suddenness. Late in 1953 there was a swing against them in the AEU and, as ALP division contributed to further electoral defeat, parliamentary leader Dr H.V. Evatt came out against the Groups in November 1954. In the following March, a special Federal ALP conference withdrew recognition of the Groups, but the Right for the Party would be resolved where it had begun - at a Branch level.

'The Split' developed State by State in conflicts of labyrinthine complexity. It began in Victoria in 1955 when eleven ALP parliament-

2. This account is drawn from R. Murray, op.cit.; J. Hagan, ACTU; T. Sheridan, op.cit.
arians defected to turn out the Cain Labor Government and to establish a new anti-communist party, the Democratic Labor Party (DLP). The ALP and the MTHC were re-shaped with 'left'-unions ending the monopoly of power by the Groupers. In NSW federal intervention was decisive in destroying the Groupers. Only a small number quit to form the DLP. Most Groupers elected to 'stay in and fight'. Finally, in 1957, the Queensland Labor government fell apart under the strain of divisions about labourism and, once more, a breakaway party, the Queensland Labor Party (QLP) was formed.

Even within the body of the pro-ALP unions, divisions remained. The lines of battle were neither consistent nor clear-cut but, increasingly, unions came to be categorised as left or right wing, the latter usually as 'moderates'. Despite the rhetoric of employers and the press, industrial militancy was not the sole index to the alignment of unions. The right retained a greater apparent faith in arbitration and piece-meal reform; the left saw these measures as acceptable tactics not sacrosanct principles. Left ALP-unions did not reject the traditions of or involvements with Australian communism and they tried to push out the boundaries of what was deemed proper and possible for a Labor Party to achieve.

Despite the destruction of the Groups and the limiting of the Movement's ideology, then, division remained. The DLP did significant damage to Labor's electoral hopes. In short, it is possible to see the post-War period as one in which options for the working class were reduced as its organisations became divided. The Cold War and a
'boom' bringing suburbanisation and the expansion of tertiary sector employment help to explain the continuing difficulties of the ALP.

This 'closing of the net' was also clear in relation to the paid work of women. The trends evinced in the late 1940s continued: all through the 1950s 'masculinity in factory employment' increased. A great part of the manufacturing boom was founded upon the kitchen and the home as an almost endlessly fruitful market-place. Equal pay as a defence for men was unnecessary in a boom economy and it almost disappeared from the agenda. Similarly, the boom encouraged the sexual division of labour between home and waged-work. Nevertheless from the late 1950s the number of married women in paid work began to grow and Equal Pay campaigning on genuine class lines revived. Agitation for a broader women's liberation began towards the end of this period but there were few signs of it in the CATU's activity by 1967.3

In Federal politics, the conservatives were able to hold on to office through and beyond this period. Industrial legislation was infrequent in, but very important to, the Split. In 1951 and 1952 changes made to the Arbitration Act made it easier for members to bring on Court-controlled ballots and regular elections. These changes could be central to a Union like the CATU whose officials had, for over a generation, been 'appointed at the pleasure of the Branch'. During

3. This summary draws on E. Ryan and A. Conlon, _op.cit._; A. Summers, _op.cit._
The Split, there was, in general, a very high degree of involvement by the rank-and-file in union affairs. The state's 'interference' was anathema to many unionists but could be a godsend to the well-organised Groupers.

The state's role in industrial relations was similarly important - and, to many, similarly unwelcome. In 1953 the Court acceded to employers' demands for the abolition of automatic quarterly cost-of-living wage adjustments. From then, the Court effectively 'froze' the Basic Wage until 1959. Thereafter, argument about the principles of wage-fixation became as important as the wages set. Employers particularly objected to the 'two rounds' of wage fixing, that is, of the Basic Wage and the margins for skill. They insisted that one wage should instead be set - the 'Total Wage'. The Commission - as the Court had become in 1956 - agreed.

Most unions were outraged by this assault on the central element of wage-fixation, the Basic Wage. It broke the nexus with 'needs' and fundamentally revised the principles of wage-fixing. However the change could well be turned to advantage for women workers. Some advances in equal pay had been won but they were in areas where it could be shown that men and women did the same work. Now, further change seemed possible. In June 1967, the Commission awarded both men and women a rise of $1 a week.4 Sixty years after Harvester, there was a bridgehead for equal pay.

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4. This summary draws on J. Hagan, ACTU; J. Hutson, op.cit.; E. Ryan and A. Conlon, op.cit.
The clothing trade was not a 'leading sector' of manufacturing but it steadily advanced, secure behind tariff walls. Changes in the international structure of the industry would be of more importance in the 1970s but, even in the 1960s, they were changes of some magnitude. In 1950, about 77 per cent of imported clothing came from the U.K. This had fallen to 27 per cent by 1967 whilst the combined total from Hong Kong and Japan had risen from a negligible share to 36 per cent. This switch had little impact because of the efficiency of the domestic industry. The value of the market share of imports actually declined in this period. Although employment in the Australian industry fell by about 8 per cent, the value of output rose by about 28 per cent at constant prices.

Table 1 Employment in the Major States by Sections of the Industry

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VICTORIA</th>
<th>NSW</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1949/50</td>
<td>1966/67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readymade and Tailoring</td>
<td>10642</td>
<td>9164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmaking and Millinery</td>
<td>13363</td>
<td>12896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirts etc</td>
<td>6586</td>
<td>8908</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VYB, NSWSR.

5. Calculated from CYB, No.39, 1953 and Overseas Trade Bulletins, 1966-67

6. Source: ibid.; comparing domestic output with the value of imports f.o.b.

7. Some categories are calculated.
Table 2 Clothing Trades Employment in Qld, South Australia and Western Australia: Total

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1949-50</th>
<th>1966/67</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>7790</td>
<td>7343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>4615</td>
<td>5351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>2693</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: QYB, SAYB, CYB, Secondary Industries

Dressmaking and millinery shed over 20 per cent of its jobs Australia-wide and became almost completely a Victorian industry. Conversely, 'menswear' continued the trend towards becoming more concentrated in NSW. Employment in the two main States was fairly stable but in the others it declined. The proportion of the industry's total employment located in NSW and Victoria rose from about 79 to almost 86 per cent. In both these States, the size of factories in menswear and shirts increased considerably.

If this immediately hints of economies-of-scale being enjoyed, other statistics confirm this. Output rose even where, as in dressmaking, employment fell. The value of machinery and plant rose by between a third and a half. The industry's growth was not spectacular when the massive increases in population are considered. Changes in fashion,

8. In all cases there are changes in the definition of factories such that classifications after 1964 are not comparable with those before. There is no option but to use the statistics provided. Western Australian figures were included in the Australian total for some sectors only.
particularly in the 1960s with the decline of formal wear, held demand back. Dressmaking and ready-made and tailoring reached all-time peaks of employment as early as 1950-51. In macro terms the period may well have seemed stable because in NSW and Victoria employment was fairly even over the years.

In the factories, as some of the more detailed figures suggest, the industry's work processes were being transformed perhaps as much as ever. During the 1950s a new term for an old process came into vogue. 'Sectionalisation' described changes in the division of labour and methods of control and payment. Sectionalisation involved so minute a degree of specialisation of tasks that new methods of payment were required. To compute piece-rates would have been time consuming and inefficient, so there was a switch to a range of bonus schemes. Changes in the Award, in 1957, allowed freer introduction of these methods. This is not to say that timing and control methods were relaxed. On the contrary, the stop-watch, anathema to many workers, remained a powerful symbol of the nature of the work in the industry. Incentive schemes - or 'payment by results' (PBR) as they became known - thus expanded in degree and kind from the bonus and piece-work systems of the past.

The industry was put on a supposedly more 'scientific' footing, in which a plethora of time-and-motion firms played a part. Union

9. See 'Arbitration' for the Award. This section also draws on interviews with K. Collins, M. Collins, P. McGarry and D. MacSween.
co-operation was sometimes sought by these firms - and refused. On countless other occasions, of course, it was not sought. Here too the Arbitration Court failed the Union: in 1957 clauses designed to restrict employers' rights to time workers were cut out of the Award.10

Throughout the industry work changed. Because of the advent of marked paper lays even the cutter was now threatened. Cutters in Victoria insisted upon maintaining a male apprenticeship scheme but the sexual division of labour was beginning to change, notably with more women on machine-pressing.11 After the unevenness of the 1940s, women's participation in the industry in aggregate terms was more stable, increasing slightly to match pre-War levels.

Table 3 Female Workers as a Percentage of the Clothing Workforce\(^\text{12}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VICTORIA</th>
<th>NSW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1949/50</td>
<td>1966/67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readymade and Tailoring</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>73.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressmaking and Millinery</td>
<td>87.2</td>
<td>87.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirts etc</td>
<td>87.1</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: VYB, NSWSR

10. Interview, K. Collins, for time-and-motion see especially SA Branch, Minutes, 30 June 1958; Vic Branch, Minutes, 19 June 1961.
11. Vic Branch, Minutes, 8 July 1957; 3 March 1958; 1 June 1964. NSW Branch, Minutes, 5 May 1958.
12. Calculated.
In the other States there were few changes, the proportion of women therein remaining at very high levels.

There were other consistencies. Outwork and subcontracting were intractable problems. PBR schemes caused endless disputes between workers and management. Overlap of work with textiles caused friction between the CATU and ATWU with, apparently, an increasing amount of clothing being made in textile mills. However, amalgamation of the two unions became even less likely in the political turmoil of the 1950s.13

Economic prosperity did not obviate the basic nature of the industry. In the 'long boom', then, the clothing industry became more concentrated, more capital intensive and, it seemed, more secure against the world economy. Basic conflicts about work and the division of labour remained to be fought over. Nor was the employer the only adversary. Not only did the state play a role in the internal affairs of Unions, but via the Arbitration Court, it gave its imprimatur to new incentives and work schemes.

At the very end of the period, ominous signs could just be discerned that the framework of tariff protection might be challenged. Reviews by the Tariff Board in 1966-67 followed a committee of inquiry into the performance of the Australian economy.14 The state had fostered

13. There are references to the ATWU at most Councils from 1959.
the clothing industry, helped make its union, and regulate work. Should the state begin to act differently, one could hardly imagine what the CATU would be like. What the union was like, 1950-67, we may now begin to explore.

(ii) GROWTH, STRUCTURE AND POLICY

For employment and union growth in the clothing trades, the 'post-War boom' was brief. Employment peaked in 1950/51 and, during 1951, the CATU's financial membership reached its apogee at about 50,000. In the ten years after 1949, membership fell by about a quarter - rather more than the fall in employment. Membership then declined sharply, to only 29,699 in 1961. This was the lowest enrolment since 1943. Thereafter, there was some growth to about 33,000 by 1968.15

Similarly, changes in the distribution of employment were mirrored in the Union. The Victorian and NSW share of total membership rose from 78 per cent in 1949-50 to about 84 percent by the mid-1950s. With their 16 per cent of membership, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia still dispatched seven of the 15 Branch delegates to


15. As in the previous chapter, these figure are based on so-called 'effective membership'. Source: FC, Federal Secretary's Reports, passim.
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each Federal Council. These issues were not resolved until 1960. Both the delay in, and the form of, resolution must be understood in terms of political conflict. In terms of the Union's internal development, the declining membership exacerbated problems of Federal office finance. In 1954 capitation rules were changed from a percentage basis to a flat rate but this actually led to less being paid to the Federal Office.

Just as the volume of employment varied between States, so the type of work - and its problems - differed, particularly as between the smaller and larger Branches. All three small Branches endured financial crises and inquorate meetings whilst the workers encountered new concerns in their declining industry. In South Australia, re-organisation of work led to stand-downs and new systems of PBR. In the 1960s, partly as a recruitment procedure, the Branch became involved in the dry-cleaning industry, finding workers without any experience of unionism.

Queensland members endured a period of extraordinary change, practically embracing the experience of industry and union since 1907. For members, relations with employers similarly changed in the 1960s. Until then, piece-work was almost unknown in Brisbane's

16. These details are extracted from a review of membership in FC, Federal Secretary's Report, 1961. Tasmanian members were counted within the Victorian Branch.
17. For the capitation change see FC, Minutes, 28, 29 April 1954.
18. SA Branch, Minutes, 31 March, 2, 30 June, 1958; 5 August 1963; 6 April, 4 May 1964.
clothing industry. From the early 1960s, firms borrowed ideas for PBR systems from the southern States and members occasionally resisted them. Shop committees, Boards of Reference, and ballots on the systems all followed. By 1967 the Branch Executive had decided to withdraw from a 'policing' committee at one of the major firms. Both the complexity of the systems and, for some, their satisfactory payment levels, inhibited workers' resistance.19

In both larger branches, there was more activity amongst the rank-and-file. This was especially true in Victoria. Nevertheless, the apparent trend away from direct action continued in the early 1950s. Neither official Union policy nor workers' actions dealt with changes in the nature of work, particularly sectionisation and new PBR systems. It was left to those already best placed to defend themselves to continue so doing - hence an OK card for male cutters and tailors in Victoria, or action by order-hands at the State Clothing Factory in NSW. There were only glimmers of activity from other workers, including two long strikes against PBR in Melbourne in the 1950s. Neither strike spread and neither led to any discussion of other trade issues.20

19. Qld Branch, Minutes, 3 October 1960; 2 April, 18 June 1962; 1 April, 1 July 1963; 2 July, 1 November 1965; 3 July, 4 December 1967; interview, P. McGarry.

In 1957, these limited responses were changed when a Commonwealth Award undermined previous gains. Apart from the universal wage cut of 1931 this sort of setback was unique. The 'Chambers' Award' led to unrest in all States. There were big, angry meetings in Town and Trades' Hall. Coincidentally or not, Union meetings were better attended and working conditions appraised more critically thereafter.21

At first, familiar patterns returned, with Victoria - and craftsmen - to the fore. There is no definitive trend in their resistance but cutters did, occasionally, resist new technology and dismissals. Part of their success still involved distancing themselves from other workers as much as opposing employers. Thus, in 1957, Victoria's cutters reiterated opposition to 'improvers' and re-emphasised that they would keep apprenticed exclusivism alive and 'only train male bound-apprentices'.22 Within the 'female union' - as officials called it - craftsmen tried to secure their bastion as had their predecessors. These men remained relatively unaffected by industrial change and their earnings remained high. For women, the years after 1957 saw battles over the specifics of incentive schemes, sectional work, time-and-motion studies and payments.

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21. For the Award, see below, 'Arbitration'. For responses, Vic Branch, Minutes, 1 July 1957; NSW Branch, Minutes, 22 May, 3 June 1957; SA Branch, Minutes, 3 June 1957; Qld Branch, Minutes, 28 May, 10 June 1957; Courier Mail, 29 May 1957 (Clipping in Qld. Election file, Federal Office); interviews, P. McGarry, J. Kenna, K. Collins, D. MacSween, L. Brewer.

22. Vic Branch, Minutes, 8 July 1957.
Having come formally to support PBR in 1949 the Union did not re-open the debate until the mid-1960s. Official policy was then reversed owing to the sheer impossibility of ensuring that the limiting clause of the old resolution worked: that such schemes be under the control of the Union. In Victoria there were some strikes against particular incentive schemes and there were disputes with every major employer about the details of such schemes. The usual resolution was that work was done management's way but at a higher rate than originally proposed.23

Substantial redress lay elsewhere - in trying to secure equal pay for women, challenging employers' control of PBR systems and, perhaps, re-thinking PBR itself. The Union's 'total' response was, as ever, a synthesis of immediate reactions of members and more or less 'official policies' in negotiations in the Court. Unusually, these 'industrial' issues now became entangled with explicit political conflicts. Both the structure and policy of the Union developed in a context of unique factional disruption. This must be examined in some detail before we can answer questions about the nature and aims of the Union from 1950 and about the relationship between those aims.

23. ibid., 21 September 1959; 18 July 1960; 3 July 1961; 18 February, 21 October, 1963; 22 March, 7 July, 6 September 1965; several references throughout 1967. NSW Branch, Minutes, 5 May, 12 October 1959; 1 April 1963 for less well reported disputes.
Who should lead the Union became a singular problem after Federal Council's meetings in 1950. Although no charges were laid against him, Federal Secretary Callard was irredeemably tainted after the corruption in his office. For two years, there was no full-time Federal Secretary. NSW Secretary, Fallon, became Acting-Federal Secretary and from January 1951, the Victorian Secretary Ted Smith took on the post without relinquishing his State job. With neither of the large Branches seemingly willing to propose a full-time candidate, it fell to South Australia's Secretary, David Fraser. At Council's meeting in 1952 he was elected unopposed. This unanimity did not last long, partly because of conflicts within each Branch.

Fraser's own Branch had a substantial tradition of eschewing political engagement but it had usually been aligned with the Victorians. Political change began to overtake this alliance, an alliance formed by similar wage-board structures, inter-State competition and, perhaps the memories of the strikes of 1922. The first sign of change was the Victorian backing of Organiser Nielsen in 1950 and, more importantly, Peter Fallon's support - during a visit to Adelaide - of the officials against Nielsen. When members engaged with political issues, the distinctions became clearer. By August 1951 the South Australians had decided that Victoria would no longer provide proxy ACTU delegates for them. They 'had no confidence that the Victorian Branch would' share their views at Congress.

24. SFC, Minutes, 26, 27 January 1951; FC, Minutes, 1 May 1952.
25. See Chapter Eight and SA Branch, Minutes, 13 March 1950.
26. ibid., 13 August 1951.
The majority view was not without challenge. Through procedural conflicts, some members made life difficult for Fraser, as he sought leave-of-absence and for his successor B. McNamara, who held office for only two years. McNamara confirmed the move towards 'Grouper' politics, pulling the Branch out of the Trades' and Labour Council and announcing his support for the Conservative Government's anti-communist legislation. On 21 June 1954, Muriel Dosa succeeded McNamara and became the first female Branch Secretary in the Union's history. She adopted South Australia's more traditional 'low profile' on politics and its concentration on policing the Award but the 'alliance' with Victoria was not immediately re-built.

The Queensland Branch remained stable until the late 1950s partly because of the later development of the Split in that State. Having survived two communist rebellions in the 1940s, the Sparks regime presided over a declining trade by 'Red-baiting', nepotism - and self-glorification in the Branch Minutes. Meetings were poorly attended and then not held at all. By the mid-1950s, the Branch's officers and Federal delegations were beyond the command of the declining and scattered membership. In the late 1950s the Branch

27. ibid., 12 May 1952.
28. ibid., 16, 30 June 1952; 1 September 1953.
29. Sparks' son Mervyn was an organiser; his daughter at various times a Council delegate, committee-member and officer. Their appointments aroused great suspicion; interviews P. McGarry, E. Austin, W. Claringbold. See J.J. Neal, 'Special Report to Federal Council', [n.d. but 1958], filed in miscellaneous material at Federal Office. From late 1954, see Qld. Branch, Minutes, for lengthy testimonials to the work of Bill and Mervyn Sparks.
was practically a 'dead letter'. The sort of Union it was indicated, perhaps, by its reasoning in leaving the unions' Trades' Hall for a venue favoured by the 'professions' where the general atmosphere would have a tendency to encourage people to come to the Union office more so than in the past.

The Branch resolved, in 1956, to have nothing to do with the Trades' Hall, but to treat it 'with the utmost contempt'. Bill Sparks, with thirty years of unionism behind him, remained unchallenged - not least because members could not usually find him. The Branch's alignment with NSW remained intact and was, at first, enhanced by changes in that State.

At the very climax of the Split, the long-standing contradictions within the NSW Branch were resolved. A more active unionism was established as the 'Old Guard' quite literally died away. Organisers Gibb and Murphy (both appointed with the Branch's re-formation in 1917) died in 1952. Their replacements were almost all Catholics: Jack Kenna, who was deeply concerned by what he saw as the communist threat to Australia, and Sid Milne, a subsequent opponent of Kenna's but, in 1952, sympathetic to the Groups. Both men were then members of the ALP. Two years later, when veteran organiser Gerretts retired, Jack Mooney, of, or close to, the Movement, defeated a fellow Catholic, Jim Collins, in the ballot for the post. Finally, in August 1954 after 31 years as Secretary and at 72 years of age, Peter

30. There are Queensland Minutes 1950-54; for this period, see ibid. and a letter, F.J. Waters (Postal Workers' Union) to J.J. Neal, 29 April 1958, which is discussed further, below.

31. Qld Branch, Minutes, 1 June 1956.
Fallon was forced by ill-health to stand down. After a series of confused meetings, claims and counter-claims, Jack Kenna outmanoeuvred Branch President Clarrie Egan to become Secretary. The success of the 'new right' was sealed when Jim Collins became an organiser and when another pro-Grouper Catholic sharing Kenna's concerns, Ken Collins, joined officials as the final organiser. Only two officials survived the years 1952-1955: organiser Devane (then sympathetic to the new men) and industrial officer, President Egan (opposed to them). No anti-Groupers were elected and, amidst the apparent transformation of the Branch, neither women, nor male representatives of the 'stock' section, came to the fore. The communist presence — drawing from these groups — was quickly overcome despite the fact that no official Industrial Group operated in the Branch.

There are some paradoxical aspects of the turnover. The 'Kenna team' secured power at the height of the Split in NSW and Victoria, 1954-55 — after the Groupers' industrial apogee. In 1954 their only other main success was in the Australian Railways Union. More typical of the industrial movement was the anti-Grouper success of Ray Gietzelt in the Miscellaneous Workers' Union (a success with some implications, as will be seen, for the CATU). A final curiosity was

32. I am indebted to J. Kenna, K. Collins, J. Collins for interviews on this period. The NSW Branch Minutes are a full source; see, for particular changes: 30 June, 25 August 1952 (Kenna and Milne); 20 April 1954 (Mooney); 5, 26 July, 2 August 1954 (Fallon's retirement and replacement); 26 July 1954 (J. Collins); 30 May 1956 (K. Collins).

33. See R. Murray, op.cit., p.102.

34. J. Hagan, ACTU, p.246.
that despite Groupers' persistent calls for Court-controlled ballots, the right in the CATU actually succeeded through ballots at general meetings - an irony also apparent in the AEU.35

The structural development of, and conflicts within, the Union were pre-figured at meetings of Council when Organiser MacSween attacked Fallon for his handling of Federal business.36 In the estimation of delegates from NSW, South Australia and, no doubt, Queensland, MacSween had established himself as a prickly customer. Their view had immediate structural implications when NSW and Fraser moved for a rule to exclude from nomination as Federal Secretary, members without five years of trade experience. This rule, which would have excluded MacSween from the post, was rejected on a technicality by the Industrial Registrar.37

There was also a general hostility to the Victorians due in part to the long succession of Federal Secretaries from that State. Such hostility was hardly reduced by the Victorian attempt in 1952 to reduce the Council representation of the smaller Branches.38 Increasingly, the affairs of one Branch affected others. One of Fraser's first acts on becoming Federal Secretary was to inquire into the running of the Queensland Branch. The interests of that State's


36. SFC, Minutes, 27 January 1951.

37. FC, Minutes, 12 April 1951; FC, Minutes, 23 April 1952; Vic Branch, Minutes, 2 July 1951; 19 May 1952.

38. FC, Minutes, 30 April 1952.
workers ran a poor second to the political and structural imperatives of some officials. Fraser silenced talk of inefficiency in the Queensland administration — although Victorians were not convinced — and he aligned himself with Kenna in 1955 by loudly lauding Sparks' work.39

Fraser was the first Federal Secretary to come from a small Branch and as such he was obliged to 'play politics' more keenly than his predecessors. To secure control of the Union and make his own position safe he became increasingly wary of Victoria's influence and less strident in his 'anti-Grouperism'.40 The apparent aberration of the 'political' Federal Council of 1947 might, in these conditions and in the context of the Split, remain. Fraser's anxiety was clear by the end of 1952. When he was notified that MacSween was not in Victoria's Council team for 1953 he wrote to Fallon that it would 'be a weak, or perhaps a more workable, delegation from Victoria this time'.41

Under external and internal pressure, Branch hostilities became explicit, although expressed in still routine ways at first — as in

39. SFC, Minutes, 28 September 1953 — for especially strident criticism by Victorian Organiser Eric Austin; FC, Minutes, 18 April 1955.

40. Fraser was, evidently, close to figures like Evatt and Ward — but also to the 'moderate' anti-Groupers like Tripovich in Victoria. See Correspondence, D. Fraser to E. Ward, 8 October 1954; D. Fraser to H.V. Evatt, 26 October 1954; D. Fraser to Tripovich, 31 June 1956. (Correspondence files, Federal Office.)

41. Correspondence, D. Fraser to P. Fallon, 11 December 1952. (Federal Office).
disputes about Minute-taking at Council. In 1954 NSW delegates demanded the inclusion of words which they claimed MacSween had uttered:

You'll be sorry, the day will come, when we will have the numbers and you will be under the table.42

The vocabulary of The Split had emerged, then, in the CATU. Similarly (and tellingly) symbols of labour movement discourse were under challenge. In a NSW Branch meeting in 1954 there was a complaint at the use of 'comrade'. A member suggested that, from Council's Minutes, 'you would think we were in Russia'.43 At the following Federal Council, that traditional designation 'comrade' was replaced by 'delegate'.44 In their very language, then, the Branches differed: the Victorians had earlier resolved to retain 'comrade'.45

Traditional political differences between the Branches were reinforced. Changes in the Union and the labour movement made political conflict more likely. The continuance of an anti-Grouper line in Victoria and, finally, conflict within that Branch brought the changes to a head. As the other Branches and the Federal structure changed, there was, though, little change in Victoria.

From its appearance in the Branch in 1946 until Secretary Smith's

42. FC, Minutes, 28 April 1954.
43. NSW Branch, Minutes, 5 July 1954.
44. FC, Minutes, 1955, passim.
45. Vic Branch, Minutes, 4 August 1952. More accurately, the Groupers' requests for change were simply ignored.
retirement in 1954, the Industrial Group made no headway at all. To some critics then and since this was not in the least surprising. D.W. Rawson called the Clothing Trades Group the 'least defensible of all the Industrial Groups'. He did so mainly because there were no communist officials in the CATU. The Union, was indeed, solidly ALP.

Although Rawson's view is, in that sense, incontestable, there was much to perturb Groupers in looking at Victoria. For although the Union never engaged in widespread industrial activity, it was still within the labour 'left'. In fairly heavily attended Branch meetings, the Executive's stance on a number of issues was endorsed: opposing conscription for Korea, opposing the 'Red Bill', freeing officers for special duties in the referendum, organising for Doctor Evatt and the ALP anti-Groupers, and supporting the conspicuous activities of Smith and MacSween in both the Party and the MTHC. In those forums, the CATU's voice was of some force, coming from one of the biggest Unions in Victoria. Only when the Executive itself was divided - on outright opposition to Korea - did a 'pro-Grouper line' succeed at a General Meeting and even then only by one vote in sixty-one.

46. D.W. Rawson, 'The ALP Industrial Groups', in J.E. Isaac and G.W. Ford (eds.), Australian Labour Relations (Melbourne, 1971 edition), p.208. None of this is to contest the thrust of the article which suggests (at p.216) that the Groupers 'inability to distinguish [radical ALP members] from Communists' was a fault shared by Santamaria.

47. Vic Branch, Minutes, 27 March, 1 May 1950; 2 July, 6, 10, 13 August, 24 September, 5 November 1951 (the 'Red Bill' and Referendum); 15 January 1951 (Conscription); 28 March, 2 April 1951; 29 September 1952; 4 October 1954 (Evatt and the Groups); the Branch's policy on the Groups was consistent - more so, perhaps, than Evatt's.

48. ibid., 28 August, 4 September 1950.
Whatever arguments there may be about the incentive for a Grouper assault on the Union, there was no possibility of success by 1954, when a terminally-ill Smith retired. As the election of a new Executive Committee took place, Evatt's denunciation of the role of the Movement and the Groups in the labour movement could only worsen the Groupers' plight. Don MacSween, who had duly taken over the Branch as Acting-Secretary, did not at first expect opposition in the Secretary's ballot but one of his fellow organisers, William Bradley, stood. As the Branch's 'country' organiser, Bradley could draw upon a fairly wide pool of support there.

In fact, his support was rather more broadly-based, with David Fraser taking a keen, if secretive, interest. This was the first Secretary's ballot for which the evidence of such intrigue is incontestable. Bradley had also secured the support of a major employer. He had contacted Mr Sackville who ... was very helpful and [was] getting literature done in Italian as he thinks this would be a winner.49

MacSween won narrowly but, due to changes in the Arbitration Act and to a technicality in the registration of the Union's Federal rules, he had to face another election in November 1955.50

49. Correspondence, letter to D. Fraser, 10 August 1954. The letter is unsigned but it is almost certainly from the Federal Office Clerk, A. Newsham. About 12,000 leaflets were printed. Newsham had been addressing envelopes for Bradley. (Letter in loose files at Federal office.)

50. Vic Branch, Minutes, 3 May 1954 for interim arrangements; 2 August 1954 for nominations; 30 August 1954 for the ballot result: MacSween : 4580; Bradley : 3241 (116 informal); 6 December 1954 for Executive elections in which Groupers were well beaten; 3 October 1955 on the need for a further election. The Secretary's normal term of office was four years.
Despite the division apparent in 1954, the ballot had ended with a pledge of loyalty from the loser. The next contest ended in the Courts, with the Union split. There were procedural arguments during the campaign and Bradley strongly criticised the use of Union resources in MacSween's campaign. Activity behind the scenes was more important than in 1954 largely because the political crisis in Victorian labour had become more acute. In that conflict, MacSween remained conspicuous. Early in 1955, he became Treasurer of the re-vamped, anti-Grouper, ALP and in April, he was one of those urging the expulsion of ex-Groupers members from the Party. That the Groups had been disbanded did not reduce the significance of the CATU's election. In general, the struggle was still open in 1955. In the CATU itself a conservative bloc could be built in the three Eastern states.

Bradley was MacSween's only opponent. Again, he was supported by Fraser who kept NSW's officials closely informed of proceedings. The only noticeable impact of the apparent resolution of the ALP-Split was that the number voting was less than half that for 1954. MacSween won again, although more narrowly than in the previous year.

Bradley laid five charges against MacSween at an Executive meeting on

51. ibid., 15, 21 November 1955.

52. R. Murray, op.cit., pp.221, 239, 240.

53. Correspondence, D. Fraser to J. Kenna, 8 November 1955.

54. Vic Branch, Minutes, 5 December 1955; MacSween : 1868; Bradley : 1673 (61 informal). MacSween won 52.8 per cent of the valid vote as against 58.6 per cent in 1954.
5 December. 55 Fraser had proposed this step - and an appeal to Council - at least a month earlier. 56 The Branch dismissed the charges and Bradley began the complicated process of appealing to the Federal Council which was due to meet in Coolangatta in April 1956. Fraser informed Kenna that he was 'experiencing some frustration over Bradley's case' but he remained confident and looked forward to the charges being widely publicised, believing that that would make matters 'very much easier' for them. 57

Of the five charges which Bradley laid before council, some were minor and even spurious. Three important allegations were made: that, when working with the Returning Officer, MacSween had opened envelopes containing nominations. MacSween did not deny the charge. He asserted such procedure was standard. Bradley also charged that MacSween had induced others to stand in the hope that Bradley would withdraw. This was not denied. He further charged that MacSween had delayed the issue of postal ballots. 58 The truth and significance of the rival claims would be of far less significance than the balance of forces at Council.

There was little doubt about how this would lie after the Branch and Federal developments since 1950. Of the sixteen delegates all four

55. ibid., 5 December 1955.
56. Correspondence, D. Fraser to J. Kenna, 8 November 1955.
57. ibid., 17 January 1956.
from NSW and the three Queenslanders were opposed to MacSween. Federal Secretary Fraser had played a central role in Bradley's challenge. Eight votes were counted against MacSween before a word was uttered. The South Australian officials had no affinity with the Groupers but they could scarcely support the Victorians against Council because their own positions were under threat because of factionalism. 59 When Bill Sparks was elected Federal President, on the opening day of Council, the balance of power was quite clear. 60 MacSween later told the High Court that delegates were 'politically biased' against him. 61

Almost all the deliberations of Council in 1956 were taken up with the hearing of the charges and with MacSween fighting to stop or delay the proceedings and challenging Council to 'try' him before the Victorian membership. He failed and was, unsurprisingly, found guilty of all the charges. The punishment was more of a surprise - a four year suspension from office and from the Union. (If, in that time, the rules were tightened it would be possible to exclude him - as a 'non-trade' official - from the Union altogether). 62

59. See SA Branch, Minutes, 3 April, 11 June 1956; FC, Minutes, 18 April 1956. Secretary Dosa, like MacSween, had been recruited from 'outside the trade'.

60. FC, Minutes, 9 April 1956.

61. D. MacSween's affidavit, 1 May 1956, Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration. He also recorded Western Australia's Ern Phillips telling him 'You're gone' - as Council opened. (Federal Office file, 'Victoria, 1956'.)

62. FC, Minutes, 17 April 1956. On 19 April a rule to limit membership to those working in the industry was discussed.
MacSween believed that he was beaten but, during a stopover in Sydney, his personal struggle was worked into the wider conflict over the control of the labour movement. He met the leader of the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, Ray Gietzelt, who, in turn, brought in an anti-Grouper lawyer, Lionel Murphy. Murphy promptly set about beginning a legal challenge. MacSween was able to remain in office by securing an injunction restraining Federal Council's decision. Meanwhile the majority of the Branch Executive stood by him. Fraser's attempts to intervene pending new elections failed. The Union, though, was utterly split.

At first, divisions became clearer. When the DLP was formed in NSW, Kenna became a prominent member. Ken Collins and Mooney also joined. For Victorians, the political underpinning of the Union's crisis was now laid bare. Their Executive called on Council to oppose 'this Group which has at last emerged in its true anti-Labour colours'. There was, then, no immediate hope of reconciliation; indeed there were all the hallmarks of earlier conflicts with locks being changed, offices guarded, spiteful abuse and a war of words in pamphlets - and a drawn-out series of Court cases. A meeting of Council in July merely exacerbated tensions as President Sparks pushed rule changes through without time for discussion. The meeting itself was bizarre. Victorians claimed it was unconstitutional, but...

63. Interviews, D. MacSween, F. Peterson.

64. R. Murray, op.cit., p.305; interviews, J. Kenna, K. Collins, D. MacSween.

65. Vic Branch, Minutes, 1 October 1956.
attended. Their opponents reiterated that MacSween was not Victorian Secretary, but allowed his attendance 'without prejudice' to their claim.66

The immediate resolution of the dispute lay in the High Court. The Court found that Federal Secretary Fraser was not entitled to move motions. Because it was he who had formally moved MacSween's suspension, the resolution was 'null and void'. The Court ruled that Council was empowered to suspend officers but all the technicalities had to be observed. Fortunately for MacSween, Murphy's work showed that they had not been carried out.67 Because the Victorian Branch remained behind its officers, there was no hope of Fraser and the Federal intervention succeeding.

At Council 1957, South Australia voted with Victoria to elect J.J. (Jack) Neal, a Victorian organiser, as Federal Secretary. A NSW candidate was defeated. Fraser received only one vote. Sparks was replaced as Federal President by Western Australia's Ern Phillips. Political and structural changes followed. Ten years after the move to support the Groups, Council now voted that only the ALP should be backed. The NSW and Queensland delegates voted against this proposition.68 The Union remained divided but by virtue of Fraser's

66. SFC, Minutes, 23, 24 July 1956.

67. 27 FLR 10. There were great legal and technical complexities to the dispute and the Union sources are very helpful. However there is insufficient space here to deal in detail with the Victorian 'resistance'.

68. FC, Minutes, 29 April and 16th Session, 1957.
failure, Neal's elevation and South Australia's unambiguous alignment with the ALP, the pro-Group Branches - or the right as they could now be called - were in a minority. The extent of South Australia's change was underscored when it voted with Victoria and Western Australia to reduce its own, and Queensland's, Council representation to two each (as against NSW and Victoria's four each).69 This did not alter the factional balance of the Union. Only wholesale changes in one Branch would do that. The only Branch likely to so change seemed to be Queensland.

That Queensland assumed such a pivotal role was somewhat ironic.70 The welfare of the Branch had been ignored since Fraser's tame inquiry in 1953. Suddenly it became the centre of Union attention for all and sundry. This interest coincided with the shift of the labour movement's conflict to Queensland - a factor which intensified the struggle within the CATU. It also arose at the same time as the stirrings of organised local opposition to Sparks. At first this consisted of little more than the activity of one man, P.D. (Pat) McGarry. On 28 May 1957, he was offered an organiser's post in a bid to 'buy him off'. Believing the meeting and most of the Executive to be unconstitutional, McGarry declined.71 There was some feeling that McGarry was a communist. In truth he supported the breakaway QLP,

69. ibid., 16th Session, 1957.

70. There is a good range of sources for the Queensland dispute but the saga is a difficult one to reconstruct. Long interviews with J. Collins, M. Collins, J. Kenna, P. McGarry and D. MacSween were most helpful. Neither the passions nor the details of the conflict are fully recorded here.

71. Qld Branch, Minutes, 28 May 1957. Interview, P. McGarry.
which had been formed only a month before. At first, it was thought in other States that McGarry would work with Federal Council, or at least Victoria, but it was not only his politics which made this unlikely. Like Kenna and many of the NSW Branch officials, he was a devout Catholic and as he became aware of the broader aspect of the Union he might well have looked forward to support from the NSW Branch.

NSW’s initial role was, however, to help maintain the status quo. Because Sparks’ son Mervyn had left the Branch, a new organiser was required. On inquiry, Neal was told that nominations had been called for. In fact, Sparks had asked Kenna to send him a temporary organiser. Ken Collins was accordingly dispatched. Queensland was now clearly the scene for the conflict about the nature and politics of the CATU. At the same time - August 1957 - the State was overrun with Victorian and Federal ALP figures campaigning in the first ‘post-Split’ election in that State.

Neal promptly held a Federal ballot to select a candidate as an ‘official’ organiser. Ron Cooper, who was the appointee, and Neal spent much time in Queensland - where Sparks stalled them and where

72. Interviews, P. McGarry, D. MacSween, F. Peterson; Correspondence files (at Federal office) include some letters between J. Neal and R. Cooper.


74. Qld Branch, Minutes, 5 August 1957; NSW Branch, Minutes, 5 August 1957. J. Neal, ‘Special Report ...’.
McGarry became increasingly suspicious of their motives. Neal and the Victorians wanted a thorough reform of the Branch. As happened throughout the Split, unions became more clearly involved in each other's affairs. In this case, it was F.J. Waters, of the Postal Workers' Union who wrote to Neal from Queensland that he had managed to get news of Branch 'irregularities' into the local press. He believed that Federal intervention would 'for the first time in years' give 'the membership a fair deal'. He hoped the Branch would become 'as it should be, an integral part of the organised Trade Union and Political Labor Movement'.

This view implied a basic set of assumptions about trade unionism. Note Waters' sequence - a fair deal inside the Union and then industrial and political action. Not all the protagonists shared this belief. To alter the Branch's politics, having revived the Union, was precisely the aim of the intervention which took place after Federal Council met in Perth in April 1958. Sparks resigned his post, after - on several accounts - some persuasion. On 8 April, in Brisbane, McGarry had successfully moved 'no confidence' in Sparks. This action was central to the claims made by McGarry that the Queenslanders, not Council, had brought Sparks down. On the other hand, it could be suggested that Queensland had had its chance when,
five months earlier, the Branch censured, but did not sack, Sparks.78 These claims to a kind of moral superiority were important in the looming conflict.

At Council, only Kenna and Ken Collins opposed intervention. The majority favoured the dismissal of the Branch Executive and the holding of an early election.79 For about nine months there was a campaign more complex and divisive even than the Victorian dispute. MacSween and Dosa joined Neal and Cooper in visits to Queensland but McGarry stalled the elections, began to organise support, prepared legal challenges to the intervention and, indeed, to the rights of 'non-trade' officials (Dosa and MacSween) to be in the Union. The elections were finally held in January 1959. By this time Neal was dismayed at the quality of the 'Federal team'. McGarry won comfortably.80

The Federal campaign was not over. Council, resolved that the Queensland Branch would not be admitted because it was not financial.81 Thus, NSW was the only right-wing Branch at that year's

79. FC, Minutes, 17th Session, 1958.
80. McGarry 599 votes, J. McAtamney 397 (20 informal); reported by Commonwealth Industrial Court, noted in Queensland box 'Elections' at Federal Office. As early as 4 August 1958 McAtamney had reported in a letter to Neal 'everything's gone awry', and on 24 September 1958, that the best they could do with one of their inept comrades was to 'shoot him'. (Correspondence, loc. cit.)
81. FC, Minutes, 9 February 1959.
Council. Kenna was unusually reticent and did not move to support McGarry. The reason lay in changes within NSW. A significant schizophrenia had developed there. Members applauded the Executive's vigorous policing of outwork and overwhelmingly agreed to a considerable increase in fees in order to fight the Chambers Award. However, a few months later, members opposed Kenna's view that Federal Council should not intervene in Queensland.82 By the middle of 1958, two leading officials, Tom Devane and Jim Collins, had become 'anti-Queensland'. Finally, in November, against Kenna's wishes, the Branch supported Federal intervention.83 On 'non-industrial' matters, then, Kenna could not carry the Branch. As internal disputes intensified, with arguments about control of meetings and the eligibility of many members of the Branch Executive,84 Kenna's position in NSW became rather more tenuous than was MacSween's in Victoria. It is probable that, by trying to help McGarry in 1959, he would have increased the ire (and the number) of his opponents.

By 1960, when Council did admit Queensland, Kenna's position was even more difficult. At a general level, the deterioration of the DLP's position in NSW possibly undermined his extra-union support; at a more immediate level, a Branch election was imminent. His opponent, Jim Collins, had received official ALP sanction and was running his campaign with the considerable advantages which that brought. It was

82. NSW Branch, Minutes, 1 April, 22 May 1957.

83. ibid., 2 December 1957; 2 June, 3 November 1958. See also reports of the 'Special Federal Meeting', ibid., 27 September 1957.

84. ibid., 2 April, 13 October 1958.
precisely the congruence of 'official' ALP and 'Grouperism' which had helped others like Kenna a few years earlier. The ALP 'tag' was equally important in undermining DLP officials. It has been suggested that it was State ALP Secretary Colbourne who encouraged Collins to oppose Kenna. Colbourne was an ex-Grouper himself, a 'stay-in-and-fight' man. Thus far had support for the DLP 'team' declined.

As the NSW campaign began, Federal Council assembled in Melbourne. Kenna did not go and Ken Collins was there only briefly. Untried rank-and-filers made up the delegation. This was a grim prospect for McGarry. Arriving with his legal challenges and charges ready, he found no support. His opponents survived. The threat of charges - on both sides - would continue for many years but would grow fainter all the time. Federal Council, 1960, saw the structural conclusions to the political conflicts played out since 1947. Victoria was dominant because two NSW delegates and almost all the others were opposed to the Groupers' legacy and wary of a right-wing recovery. As MacSween was supposed to have said in 1954: 'the day will come when we will have the numbers'.

Council almost completely re-wrote the Rule Book such that, in short, more power was given to the Branches, rule changes made more difficult and Federal intervention less likely; the representation of the

85. Interview, K. Collins.
86. FC, Minutes, 14th, 16th Sessions, 1960.
87. ibid., 28 April 1954.
Queensland and South Australian Branches was reduced to one each. By the time the Branches considered these amendments, the ALP team had triumphed in NSW and most of the changes were endorsed. McGarry's success in Queensland was not, then, the signal of a DLP resurgence.

This restructuring was a moment of discontinuity in the history of the Union. In general, if any Branch had pushed for a more centralised Union it was Victoria. Even though Federal intervention failed in two diverse Branches, many officials felt that Branches were not safe from their political opponents. In particular, the Victorians may well have feared that, after McGarry's success, the DLP might survive in NSW and that the tables would, again, be turned. Ironically, the ALP victory in the NSW Branch rendered such a strategy redundant. After that election there was, for the first time since the mid-1920s, some ideological unity between NSW and Victoria. Political traditions and industrial structures limited the likelihood that this would endure. For similar reasons, another 'politicisation' of Council did not occur. How these changes were reflected in the policies of the Union will be examined in the next section.

To conclude, we should briefly discuss the changes which followed the 1960 Council. In all States there was a return to the stability which


had characterised most Branches before the Split. In NSW there was an immense turn-over of personnel but the new officials were of a similar mould to their predecessors. In 1967, after Jim Collins’ early resignation Peter Watkins became Secretary at 37 years of age. In 1966, Neal's similarly abrupt departure had led to the youngest ever full-time Federal Secretary being elected - Fred Peterson. He was also the first NSW officer to become full-time Federal Secretary. These inexperienced men were perhaps fortunate to come to office in a period of economic prosperity and political stability. They quickly fitted into traditional moulds. The NSW Branch's political activities declined and the Federal office became conspicuously neutral.

If NSW officers had few mentors to guide them, the reverse applied in Victoria. There, a 'line of succession' was mapped out and 'apprenticeships' served. When MacSween retired in 1969, a clear succession was envisaged, through, in order, Eric Austin, Frank Lovegrove and Wally Claringbold. (Lovegrove would die fairly young but the 'order' was otherwise unimpaired with Claringbold succeeding Austin in 1978.) Any period of disruption inevitably creates problems - especially in large 'arbitration' unions - in securing able successors.90 Curiously, both the absence from NSW, and presence, in Victoria, of continuity resulted in the survival of traditional politics and structures.

90. For observations on this, see T. Sheridan, op.cit., p.29.
Nowhere was stability more clear than in relation to women's participation. Women retained about half of the available places on Branch Committees although they had been a little more to the fore in the 1950s. When the Union's conflicts came to a peak in 1956, slightly more than half of all Committee members were women. The aggregate change was substantially due to the Victorian Branch where nine of the sixteen members were women as against five out of fifteen in 1949.

Even in Victoria, changes in the structuring of the Committee did little to create a structure which reflected the nature of the industry. Thus, although delegates for industrial clothing and tie-making had been added by 1967, the survival of craft divisions was indicated by the addition of delegates for shirt-cutting and dry-cleaners' pressing. This meant that the guaranteed minimum representation of craftsmen remained at about a third of the committee. Women achieved more representation because of industrial, not Union, change: by 1967, women were representing the fur section and the dressmakers'-cutters. In the other Branches, the structural bases of representation were less clear because the industry was less well organised. Committees were smaller and therefore the important relationship was between officers - who were correspondingly more powerful against fewer sectional delegates - and the Committee, not so much within the Committee.

The other positions which, with the Committee, made up the Executive - the officers, Presidents and Vice-Presidents were usually held by men. Until 1967 only one woman, Muriel Dosa, had been a Branch
Secretary. There were only two other female Federal Council delegates from 1907 to 1967. From the mid-1920s, the number standing for such posts dropped. Many women, notably May Francis in the Union and Muriel Heagney on its fringes, had believed that women workers would appreciate the appointment of female organisers.

The nature of the male leadership was significant. Of the twenty-two men who were Branch Secretaries from 1907 to 1967, we may be certain of the background of eighteen. Eleven were tailors, three were cutters, two pressers and two were from outside the trade. Cutters and pressers were more heavily represented from the Second World War. As the male craft base of the Union contracted, the men came from increasingly exclusive parts of the industry. In and after the Split, then, there were conservative and, in the short run, stabilising influences within the Union. We may now discuss the relationship between the Union's structure and politics and its definition and defence of the members' interests. This is examined here and in the next two sections.

In the response of workers to industrial change and in the factional and structural changes in the Union there was a certain continuity in that traditional differences between the Branches' rank-and-file activism and politics were sustained. Since the craft unions' period, workers and their officials had dealt with problems of control which might be understood in two ways: the supply of labour and the nature of work.
The supply of labour, broadly considered, presented three questions: immigration, outwork and the labour of overseas workers, that is, imports. Immigration was a central concern of unions in the 1950s and 1960s, particularly in the manufacturing sector where, by 1966, 30 per cent of the work-force was foreign-born. Most union and, indeed, ACTU pronouncements sought to emphasise that immigration should be related to employment levels. Nevertheless there was no denying an element of racism in at least the language of response. This was exemplified in the AEU which at first declared that 'no Balts [are] to be employed on work covered by engineering awards' but within a few months was admitting Europeans 'where found on a job'.

In Victoria, where the clothing industry attracted more immigrants than elsewhere, a similar trend may be discerned. At first, officials suggested a quota, limiting the number of 'New Australians' who could work in clothing factories. This was never officially taken up by Council but officials saw a threat to Union conditions from non-English-speaking workers.

The Branch's attitude was mixed from the outset because there were discussions about publishing multi-lingual pamphlets about the Award

91. Figure quoted in J. Hagan, ACTU, p.212.
92. ibid., p.320.
94. Vic Branch, Minutes, 5 November 1951; 29 January 1952 (quota); 21 July 1952 (housing and employment of migrants); FC, Minutes, 29 April 1952 (quota).
in 1950. More substantial change came in 1956 with the establishment of a 'New Australians' advisory panel and the appointment of Mr F. Cafarello as a temporary organiser for Italian workers.95 It is not at all unlikely that these changes were related to the struggle for the 'hearts and minds' of members as against the Federal intervention.96 Not until the 1960s was there a further advance. Branch officers began to work more closely with migrant groups, engaged full-time translators, funded Greek and Italian newspapers and, finally, began to work for rule changes such that non-trade, multi-lingual employees could become organisers. This transformation, which by no means overturned the male Anglo-Celtic dominance of the Branch, took about 17 years.97

The only other Branch much affected by immigration was NSW where the only recorded discussion was quite clearly related to the factional conflicts of the Split. Left-wingers moved that the Branch call for an end to German immigration but officials secured support for 'tighter screening ... on all immigrants regardless of their nationality'.98 This was the only debate to reflect concerns about the politics of immigrants. There was no discussion about such workers' needs.

96. See ibid., 2, 14 November 1955 for criticism of the interpretation being placed upon the officials' attitudes.
97. ibid., 30 April 1962; 26 April 1965; 23 January, 5 June, 31 July, 4, 18 September 1967. The newspapers were Il Progresso and Syndikalist; the translators, Bob Basso, George Philopoulous and Conn George.
98. NSW Branch, Minutes, 2 April 1951.
In dealing with the implications of imports there was less division. There was some professed concern in Victoria about the dangers of 'communicable diseases' in Japanese imports99 but most attention was given to the volume, not source, of imports. This was especially important to the Federal office during a long period of Conservative rule when a good hearing for union demands was by no means assured. The link with the employer was therefore as important as at any other time. In the mid-1950s, Federal Secretary Fraser claimed that some manufacturers were becoming extremely anxious that Government policy might lead to 'big imports of cheap clothing'.100 Under these circumstances they might fund the ALP. The same employer who had helped Fraser and Bradley against MacSween had, Fraser said,

hinted fairly plainly that [he] would be prepared to back the party ... whose tariff policy suited [him].101

Unlike the discussions of protection in the 1920s and 1930s, this news did not lead to any consideration of the implications for the Union of continued alliances with capital. The implications were, however, extraordinary. A few months after these discussions, this particular employer played a central role in the most divisive election ever held in the Victorian Branch. In general, the employer's role in answering or confining questions about 'what sort of union' was as clear then as in protectionist Victoria. Yet there was also change, because the


100. Correspondence, D. Fraser to P. Fallon, 30 March 1954.

101. ibid.
alliance was, in a sense, directed against the state not in subjection to it. If this re-emphasised the closeness of the Union to employers during this period, it should be emphasised that it remained a difficult relationship.

Protectionism had failed to make all employers 'fair' - by any definition. Nowhere was this clearer than in relation to outwork. In vain, familiar solutions were offered to the old problem: deputations, Award variations and demands for legislative redress. Outwork, unlike protection, was primarily a Branch problem. There was little to choose between Branches insofar as attitudes to it were concerned.

In Victoria and NSW new secretaries took up the challenge with all the enthusiasm of newcomers. Thus when Don MacSween became Secretary, the Branch's energy was directed to tracking down 'givers-out'. Similarly, the turnover of officials in NSW in 1954/55, saw Secretary Kenna lead a zealous assault upon illegal outwork. Indeed, Kenna was almost obsessed with outwork, seeing threats to the women concerned and the Union itself. In the 1960s, all Branches paid less attention to the problem as, perhaps, officials found just how intractable it was. Equally, in 'boom' conditions, their members' own interests were less directly threatened. Although fanciful calls for abolition of outwork died away, some statements indicated that there

102. FC, Minutes, 11, 13 April 1951; 22 April 1955; 19 April 1956; 6th Session, 1961; Vic Branch, Minutes, 2 March 1959; 29 April, 6 November 1961.

was little appreciation of why some women (as outworkers usually were) would need or want to work at home - or of the challenges this might pose to ideas about work and unionism.  

All these 'labour supply' problems were, generally, less acute than at any other time but issues of control arising from the nature of the industry were as bewildering as ever. Thus, the Union's 'policy' consisted, as was usually the case, of 'reacting' - be it to new machines, new work processes or new schemes of payment. Continuity in the Union was here most marked, in restrictive policies limiting women's working of pressing-machines and in seeing equal pay as a means to protecting jobs traditionally done by men.  

These strategies aimed at limiting the mobility of women compared with men. Some others, in 'all female areas', sought to enhance it. In 1951, Council resolved to demand a re-definition of a 'coat-tailoress' such that those women making only part of the garment would still secure the full rate of pay. Typically, this aimed to defend earnings rather than deal with changes in the labour process itself. These problems - and a range of disputes from apprenticeship, machinery, and demarcation - were all directed to the arbitration system for resolution.

104. For an indication of tracking work back to the company see Vic Branch, Minutes, 22 February 1954. Similar practices were adopted elsewhere; interviews J. Collins, K. Collins, P. McGarry, D. MacSween.

105. FC, Minutes, 30 April 1952.

106. ibid., 9 April 1951; 71 CAR 11, 59.

107. The ATWU was discussed at almost every Council in this period.
Response to these problems was not noticeably divided — apart from arguments about detail. Overall structural changes, like the implications of South Australia organising in dry-cleaning and automatic laundries,108 might involve a Branch in difficulties with which others would have little knowledge or sympathy but the major 'industrial issue' which did cause division was the one most clearly (and traditionally) related to basic notions about unionism: the question of incentive schemes.

Although the Court had placed some limitations on the use of stop-watches in timing work, the order had proved ineffective by the late 1950s.109 New methods of measurement and new incentive schemes had particularly concerned many women in Victoria. However, supporters of the Industrial Groups in that Branch insisted on full support for incentive schemes.110 The CATU had, in 1949, decided to back such schemes where the Union had 'complete control' of them111 but enforcing this condition had always been difficult even to imagine. It became impossible after changes in the Award made it easier for employers to introduce new incentive schemes. Council's immediate opposition to the changes of 1957 presaged a reconsideration

108. SA Branch, Minutes, especially from 6 April 1964. The issue also caused some concern in NSW; see Branch Minutes 2 December 1963; 3 February, 7 December 1964.

109. Following the dispute recorded at 64 CAR 240 see the Award, 1950, 66 CAR 495 and Findlay's remarks in 1960, 95 CAR 549 at 566.

110. Vic Branch, Minutes, 4 June, 6 July 1953.

111. FC, Minutes, 29 April 1949; see Chapter Eight.
of the whole question of incentives. Groupers and ALP-left were united in opposition to the threat to control of the trade posed by the changes. Piece-rates themselves were a central question for the left Branches and, as long as Victoria 'had the numbers', for Council.

It was the Victorian Branch which pushed for the most change. In 1962 a plan to secure greater control of PBR was discussed at Council. A claim went before the Commission in 1963 but was not resolved until 1970. Even then, the issues were not satisfactorily defined nor the problems controlled.

Few Branches shared the sustained zeal of the Victorians. After all, the ACTU had effectively lifted its ban on incentives and the only conspicuous opposition to PBR came from unions best placed and historically conditioned to resist it. In the Queensland Branch of the CATU, the familiar policy of accommodation was enacted. In South Australia and NSW, there was little discussion of PBR in the 1960s - but the Victorians began to move away from the other Branches. In 1967 the Branch placed 'on record as a matter of principle its opposition to all payments by results systems'. It remained true that opposition to them would not be universally welcomed. Thus, the resolution further stated that the Union would secure the best

112. FC, Minutes, 8th Session, 1958.
113. ibid., 6-8 March 1966. For the outcome, which is not discussed in this study, see 133 CAR 743
115. Vic Branch, Minutes, 3 July 1967.
possible conditions should members favour incentive schemes. This neatly encapsulated both this specific problem and the general conundrum faced by unions in attempting at once somehow to make the most of and to resist the imperatives of capital.

(iii) ARBITRATION

In the 1950s, the previous progress which the Union had been making with the arbitration system was checked. This was as unique as the internal division of the period. For many officials, then and since, the two factors were related. Despite both setback and division, the Union remained committed to federal arbitration. This consistency was matched in the themes of Union demands and in equal pay campaigning.

I CLAIMS AND AWARDS

In the early-1950s, when the Basic Wage was practically frozen by the Court, there were specific disappointments for clothing workers. The industry's new Conciliation Commissioner, E.A. Chambers, disallowed a full flow-on of margins from the metal trades, thereby breaking the recently established parity between fitter and tailor. Women did not get an increase at all.\textsuperscript{116} On appeal the Court struck out the

\textsuperscript{116. For the metal trades, T. Sheridan, op.cit., p.190; for the CATU, 80 CAR 943. The Union did receive the same treatment as the AEU in that the formula of increasing 1937's margins by 'two-and-a-half' times was adopted but this destroyed the relationship set by the 1950 Award. See Correspondence, D. Fraser to J. Kenna, 7 December 1954; 10, 18 March 1955.}
preference clause. By 1951, employers' groups had begun to discuss an attack on the outwork clauses of the Award.117

A consequent employers' log of claims in 1954 caused 'amazement and disgust' in the Union.118 In addition to demanding a restriction on the Court's supervision of outwork, employers wanted women's Basic Wage reduced below the '75 per cent rate'.119 This seemed to be part of a generalised attack on women's wages - first noted by Victorian officers in regard to the small-goods industry in 1953.120 When the case came on before Chambers there was further disquiet. Sparks heard that Chambers intended to allow sub-contracting agreements between respondents and to drop Findlay's and Drake-Brockman's clauses which prevented small firms from acting as sub-contractors.121

Chambers refused to accept that these changes would make the Award more difficult to police. Similarly, he ignored Union concerns about new incentive schemes. To the standard piece-work and 'task-and-bonus' systems mentioned in the PBR section of the Award he added 'Clause C' permitting 'the operation of a bonus scheme not directly

117. For preference, SFC, Minutes, 25 January 1951. For reports on employers, Vic Branch, Minutes, 28 May 1951; FC, Minutes, 21, 22 April 1952.

118. Vic Branch, Minutes, 6 December 1954. See also FC, Minutes, 19 April 1955.

119. FC, Minutes, 19 April 1955.

120. Vic Branch, Minutes, 4 June 1953. This was described therein as 'an evil omen'.

121. Correspondence, W. Sparks to D. Fraser, 13 December 1955.
related to task or piece-work'. Thereafter, so-called 'C Systems' became as problematic and as varied as the 'Chambers Award' was unpopular. Other changes in wording made it a disastrous Award for workers.

It was, indeed, a peculiar Award, in that in this 'boom' period, the Union received its worst-ever treatment. Chambers had impressed unionists in other trades, but CATU officials could not work with him. Officials suspected that their own infighting contributed to the poor Award and that family connections between employers and the Commissioner were at work. Some were also critical of the zeal with which Victoria had enforced the contract clauses, claiming that this had alienated employers and, in turn, the Commissioner. Whether or not these analyses were valid is, for the moment, less important than considering the responses to which they led - in this case a series of protests against the Award and, from 1960, a re-emphasis on arbitration and unity at Council. When the clothing trade was returned to Findlay's jurisdiction, the Union officials became more optimistic about change. In short, the apparent reasons for the set-back of 1957 were overcome and the principles of arbitration were not challenged.

The Award made in 1960 radically improved tailors' margins and re-introduced compulsory apprenticeship in order-tailoring. However,

122. 87 CAR 327 at 338.

Findlay did not alter the 'C Systems' clause and acknowledged that 'timing schemes' had over-run his earlier attempts to control them.124 The Union had similar difficulties in its battle against sub-contracting. Claims intended to increase control were drawn up at Council in 1963 but, in the following year, delegates admitted to the failure after years of effort by the Union to obtain effective provisions to restrain harmful outdoor work.125

In making the 1964 Award, Commissioner Findlay built upon some of the ground recovered in 1960. He strengthened the outwork clauses but outwork remained largely unquantified, let alone controlled. Findlay again increased margins for skill such that the tailor remained not much behind the fitter. Women's rates varied little as a proportion of men's. No more was heard of plans to cut the Basic Wage but, with PBR and growing productivity employers could be more subtle in the 1960s.

There were few advances on the Award of 1950. Familiar problems of delay and legalism plagued the Union but no Branch demanded wide changes in the system or new ways to achieve old ends. After the failure of post-war demands for a new tribunal, the Union accepted the status quo. New officials experienced arbitration as received tradition. This structuring of their world-view was sustained by the increasingly 'automatic' nature of arbitration, with national wage cases and metal trades precedents.126 Arbitration provided the only

124. 95 CAR 549 at 566.
125. FC, Minutes, 15th Session 1964.
126. Interview, M. Collins, emphasising the metal trades aspect. See also T. Sheridan, op.cit., passim.
moments of unity in the Split, when appeals against the Chambers' Award were discussed. It was in relation to equal pay that deeper questions about the Union and arbitration were suggested.

II EQUAL PAY

The most substantial change in earnings for which most members could hope would come through equal pay for the sexes. During the 1950s this remained barely that - a hope. Margins for skill were varied in 1965 after the advances of the Award in 1964. Female trouser and vest-machinists now received 34s 6d weekly, over double the margin of 1950. Tailors too had advanced by more than double, enjoying a margin of 107s. With women's basic wage remaining at 75 per cent of men's the overall relationship between men's and women's wages was little altered. These rates meant that, in 1965, women were receiving 64 per cent of the 'total' male wage.

There was no Federal office initiative on equal pay. As South Australian Secretary, David Fraser had warned employers not to discriminate against married women, but as Federal Secretary he did not try to secure action on this or any related issue. Such action as there was came from the Branches, beginning with hostility in NSW and

127. FC, Minutes, 8th Session, 1957.

128. For the 1965 variations, see 111 CAR 55.

129. The male base was £15 8s, the special loading 3s, the tailor's margin £5 7s : total £20 18s; the trouser machinist earned respectively, £11 11s, 2s and £1 14s 6d for a total of £13 7s 6d.

130. SA Branch, Minutes, 17 March 1952.
Victoria to Chambers' refusal to increase women's margins. No national policy followed these denunciations of the decision but the Victorian Branch helped to re-establish a committee to fight for equal pay.

The ALP included equal pay in its policy speech in Victoria in 1955. Public agitation followed, with, at first, small meetings at the Trades' Hall and, by 1958, rallies and marches. Victorian officials and executive members were conspicuous in these activities and through the journal of left-ALP unions - Scope. Edited by MacSween, the journal reflected changing values and conditions on its 'women's page' where cooking and beauty tips gave way slowly (but never completely) to features on equal pay, politics and prominent women activists and officials.

By the end of the 1950s all Branches had become more or less involved in the equal pay campaign. The issue remained dormant at Council. The only specific mention of 'women's role' was in traditionally paternalistic terms. Thus when employers mooted changes to working hours, Council rejected them.

131. NSW Branch, Minutes, 7 March 1955; Vic Branch, Minutes, 4 April 1955.
132. Vic Branch, Minutes, 7 March, 4 April, 2 May, 6 June, 5 September, 28 November 1955 for the Branch's re-commitment to equal pay. References are legion thereafter.
133. Scope began publication in 1962. (See Mitchell Library holdings).
134. NSW Branch, Minutes, 5 August 1958; Qld Branch, Minutes, 7 September 1959; interviews M. Collins, D. MacSween.
because of the fact that young girls and married women are the majority of persons working [in the industry] and it should interfere as little as possible with ordinary family life.135

The official's perception of the implication of the CATU's being 'a woman's union' seemed neither weaker nor better thought-out in 1958 than earlier. Equal pay and the right of women to secure and equal employment had been put aside from the Federal agenda for perhaps ten years. This did not prevent officials criticising what they saw as ACTU torpidity. MacSween became especially unhappy with the ACTU in the early 1960s.136 Such advances as did take place afforded no grounds for optimism. The NSW Teachers' Federation's equal pay case of 1959 came under the category of work 'of a like nature and equal value'137 - a useless prescription for the clothing trades where work had for years been sex-typed.138

Nevertheless Council did resolve to draw up a claim. With claims for equal pay being dismissed out of hand, it was agreed to claim equal margins.139 These would give trouser machinists over 80 per cent of the tailors' wage.140 After relying upon the ACTU or, sometimes,

135. FC, Minutes, 10th Session, 1958.
138. A point made by MacSween - echoing earlier officials and Heagney; Vic Branch, Minutes, 19 January 1959.
139. FC, Minutes, 6th Session, 1961.
140. Based on the 1965 Basic Wage and margins. Just which of the men's margins the various female categories would be measured against was, of course, problematic.
hoping for legislative redress this change of tactics was important. The claim, which was part of the 1963-64 hearings, was set aside for separate treatment and was dealt with from September 1965. Nineteen months passed before a decision was given. Employers successfully demanded that a full panel hear the case. Chief Justice Kirby and Justice Moore joined Findlay.

The claim for all-round equal margins was dismissed. The arguments in the Commission came to centre on the question of skill and not, as some officers had expected, on the cost implications. The majority of the Bench was prepared to accept that there was little skill in the work of the machinist. The Union's counsel tried to understate the extent of sectionalisation and the advances of machines. This was, to say the least, a difficult position because, in previous dealings with Findlay, the Union had been concerned about the implications of the spread of sectionalisation. The Bench seemed to agree with the assumptions of employers - namely that sectionalisation and division were synonymous with 'de-skilling'.

The case concluded in 21 April 1967 with a decision which meant more in terms of long-run principle than immediate gain. Both parties and the Bench agreed that it was 'industrially unjust that women performing the same work as men should be paid a lower margin' but

141. Ibid, Federal Secretary's Reports, 1967, 1968 for this and other difficulties.
142. Ibid. The case is reported at 118 CAR 286.
143. Ibid., at 290.
there was no agreement on what constituted 'the same work'. This was particularly difficult in the clothing industry, as Muriel Heagney had suggested thirty years earlier. In the Commission a problem which would confront other unions was raised: why should it be assumed that men's rates would be paid if margins or wages were to be equal? The Bench handed down some increases but only at an average of about 17 per cent. Trouser and vest-machinists now received a margin of $4.40 (44s compared with 34s 6d in 1965). Tailors now received $11.60 (116s). The ratio between men's and women's wages as between these two categories barely changed as against the rates paid in 1965. Now that the Union had moved away from emphasising equal pay as a device to preserve 'crafts', the only women to secure equal margins were previously unclassified cutters and women working heavy pressing-machines.

Federal Secretary Peterson emphasised that new and far-reaching principles had been laid down. The Bench's emphasis on 'the value of the work' of men and women attracted Federal Council's attention in 1968. The judgment seems to have encouraged the ACTU to act with

144. See Correspondence, M. Heagney to A.R. Wallis, 11 January 1939.
145. 118 CAR 286 at 290.
146. The increases for stock machinists were about 4 per cent but male margins had also increased since 1965.
147. 118 CAR 286 at 301.
149. 118 CAR 286 at 290; FC, Minutes, 20 March 1968.
more vigour. Despite the disappointing result for the members themselves, the case had made an impression. In June 1967, in accepting the concept of the Total Wage, the Commission noted that 'the Clothing Trades' decision affirmed the concept of equal margins for ... equal work'. When, in 1969, other unions' test cases were decided, there seemed little advance on the decisions of 1967. Indeed, the Commission fell back explicitly to de-barring from equal pay work 'usually performed by females'. Clothing trades' unionists would still have a long battle against arbitration precedents and not infrequent union apathy before they won even nominal equal pay.

(iv) POLITICS

Despite the explicit politicisation of Council in 1947 and during Fraser's term, Councillors only pronounced upon 'party politics' twice. The first occasion was the narrow vote of 1957 in favour of the ALP. The second was in a fulsome declaration of support for that party in the Queensland elections of 1963. This was, perhaps, the final 'pay-back' for 1947 - and an attempt to embarrass Secretary McGarry whose sympathies remained with the DLP.153

152. ibid., p.150.
Other debates were implicitly political or otherwise acrimonious, be they over industrial tactics, amalgamation with the ATWU, arbitration or Branch contributions to the funding of the ALP. However, many other matters were raised in some Branches but not at Council: the CPA Dissolution Bill, the CPA referendum, wars in Korea and Vietnam, nuclear testing or, closer to home, the ALP's continued internal problems. Not all the Branches discussed all these issues but, because it was a direct and often apparently threatening concern, all discussed the role of communism.

Here, there was division within as well as between Branches. When the Victorian Executive recommended an 'emphatic protest' against the Government's attempts to ban the CPA, Industrial Group supporters declared that they agreed 'with certain clauses in the Bill'. The Executive's position won a narrow endorsement.\textsuperscript{154} By contrast, the South Australians opposed any action, whilst in NSW the discussions were overtaken by questions about links with overseas communism. Attempts from the floor to raise the issue of foreign troops in Malaya and Korea were thwarted by officials. The Executive backed the Labor Council against claims that it had not done enough to defend the CPA. In South Australia, Secretary McNamara urged support for secret ballots as a means of overcoming Communist leadership of unions.\textsuperscript{155} The Victorian Branch supported Secretary Smith's view that for the ALP

\textsuperscript{154} Vic Branch, Minutes, 1 May 1950.

\textsuperscript{155} SA Branch, Minutes, 26 June 1950; 30 June 1952; NSW Branch, Minutes, 3 July 1950; 3 December 1951.
and unions to equivocate on this matter would be a 'sacrifice of long-term principle to political expediency'.

Faced with such a divergence of views, no 'CATU position' emerged. President Fallon articulated what was, in effect, the Union's 'apolitical' tradition when he told Federal Councillors that the communist controversy was a matter for Branches, not Council. That this was a complete turnaround from the position adopted by the majority (including Fallon) in 1947 reinforces the point that the politicalisation of that year arose from specific conflicts within the Union and the needs of embattled leaderships.

Other Unions had experienced similar divisions. These were institutionalised in a body like the AEU with different committees adopting different policies. For the Printers there were differences as between the States - although none came out in defence of the CPA. Similarly, 'peak councils' were divided, notably as between the narrowly 'anti-dissolution' ACTU and the anti-communist MTHC. Nationally, the CATU’s silence spoke volumes for the labour movement's division. In Victoria, the CATU was, yet again, out of step with the Trades' Hall.

156. Vic Branch, Minutes, 2 July 1951.

157. Quoted at an unofficial meeting of Federal delegates reported in Vic Branch, Minutes, 3 September 1951.

158. See T. Sheridan, _op.cit._, p.211, 225; J. Hagan, _Printers and Politics_, pp.282-5; R. Murray, _op.cit._, pp.81, 2. The AEU's ruling body came down against the Government. It was one of the Unions to challenge the legality of dissolution.
In the CATU, differences remained. Thus when Britain's Labour leader Clem Attlee visited Australia in 1954, the Victorians had extended him a 'hearty welcome' but the NSW Branch expressed its disagreement with his visit to the leaders in Red China, who are responsible for the death of ... Australians ... in Korea.159

In 1957 both major Branches protested against the testing of atomic bombs. Significantly though, the NSW protest came from the floor and was underpinned with the respectability of a statement from the United Nations organisation. Neither feature applied to Victoria's protest.160

Branches were, however, divided not only by different sorts of responses to an issue, but by the sort of issue to which they responded. In 1959 Victorians called for 'genuine' disarmament and gave MacSween leave to accept an invitation to travel to Europe for a world peace conference.161

MacSween's visit, and the publication of his booklet *The Berlin Powderkeg*, encouraged further peace activities in the Branch. Conferences, participation in 'Atomic Weeks' and protest rallies followed.162 On the Executive, interests became at once broader and

159. NSW Branch, Minutes, 6 September 1954; for Victoria, Vic Branch, Minutes 5 July 1954.

160. NSW Branch, Minutes, 6 May 1957; Vic Branch, Minutes, 4 March 1957.

161. Vic Branch, Minutes, 3 March, 19 May 1958. The conference was the 'Stockholm Conference on Disarmament and International Friendship'.

more immediate: the former, in concern that Middle East tension could lead to world war; and the latter in a not unrelated call, in March 1962, for 'a far more independent foreign policy' for Australia. Giving force to words, members were urged to join protests against the presence of US Bases in Australia.163

On issues like this, Branches 'talked past' each other. In Queensland, 'political' declarations were rare but the Branch's alignment was quite clear from Secretary McGarry's involvement with the Combined Industrial Unions' Committee, a grouping of right-wing, non-Trades' Hall unions. Silence on other matters gave way to a conservative alignment on issues like 'reciprocal visits' between Australia's and Eastern Europe's unionists. Similarly, Queensland opposed Chinese nuclear-testing and invited other Branches and the ACTU to emphasise their opposition to this as to French and American tests.164

Some of these statements were designed to identify political alignments in contradistinction to other groups or Branches. This partly explains the decline in the number of such discussions in NSW after the Split and their generally lower level in South Australia. The explanation is completed when the Union's traditions are

163. Vic Branch, Minutes, 4 August 1958 (Middle-East); 19 March 1962 (Foreign Policy); 19 November 1962 (Bases).

164. Qld Branch, Minutes, 5 September 1960 (visits); 3 July 1961 (Combined Unions): 2 November 1964 (tests). Similarly, the Branch ordered a stock of pamphlets by J.P. Maynes (Clerks' Union) on the dangers of communism (see 7 September 1959; 13 March 1961).
analysed. NSW had, more often than not, displayed less interest in political discussion than had Victoria and it had been less conspicuous in its local labour movement. The ALP officials who came to office after the Split saw that both internal division and reverses in the Arbitration Court had coincided with factional conflict. In Victoria, not only did a different tradition survive: it expanded. The 'official' position in the ALP-left survived, in demands for the destruction of the DLP and its successor, the National Civic Council, assertions of the primacy of the industrial wing, backing 'unity tickets' with communists in union elections, and joining a 'Trade Union Defence Committee' set up to continue the work of the 'pro-Evatt' unions in fighting the right.165

For the Victorians, these arguments remained grounded in the need to build campaigns which could defend the immediate interests of workers. Thus, throughout the long reign of conservative politics, calls for price control were maintained.166 Similarly, to deal with unemployment, an increase was required in 'socialist, educational and [ultimately] economic planning activities'.167 Equally members raised the interests of other workers and oppressed people. The Branch protested against political killings in Greece and the Congo and

165. Vic Branch, Minutes, 22 June 1959 (unity tickets); 5 December 1960; 7 August 1961 (DLP etc); 11 September, 2 October 1961 (Parliamentary Labor); 21 May 1962 (Defence Committee); 23 October 1961 (National Civic Council).

166. ibid., 2 October 1950; 2 February, 7 September 1953; 6 December 1954; 1 July 1955; 23 January 1961; 3 October 1966

167. ibid., 2 April 1962.
against the persecution of South African trades' unionists. There was opposition to apartheid and growing concern at the plight of Aborigines.168

'Foreign policy' and local politics became - clearly - as one in April 1965 when Australian troops were committed to Vietnam. The issue was not raised at Federal Council. In the Branches, it did not re-kindle interest in 'foreign policy' declarations. This was not uncommon. In the FIA it was seen as too 'divisive' an issue whilst, in general, unions agreed with ACTU President Monk that industrial action was inappropriate. As early as May 1965 the Waterside Workers' Federation was keen so to act, some four-and-a-half years ahead of the ACTU.169

The Victorian Branch of the CATU was not in the vanguard of the anti-war movement, but, by 1966, it was strongly against the War. Similar hostility was directed at what the Branch saw as ALP indecisiveness.170

This, if not other international crises, lead to conflicts within the ALP and the Union. The failure of the Party to win Federal elections caused concern about both strategies and leadership. Evatt's

168. ibid., 20 February 1961 (Congo); 1 May 1967 (Greece); 4 August 1952; 5 June 1961; 23 September 1963; 24 August 1964; 7 November 1966 (all South Africa including the visit to Australia of a unionist, Solly Sachs); 4 June 1951; 24 April 1961; 4 March 1963 (Aborigines).

169. For the FIA, see R. Murray and K. White, op.cit., p.286; for other unions and the ACTU see J. Hagan, ACTU, p.275.

170. Vic Branch, Minutes, 1 March, 5 April 1965. From 7 February 1966 there are numerous references to Vietnam.
successor, Arthur Calwell, did not inspire much faith amongst officials of the CATU in NSW or South Australia. Following electoral defeat in 1966, Calwell's stocks fell still further, with both those Branches calling for the promotion of Calwell's deputy, Gough Whitlam. The Victorians found Whitlam's general outlook unappealing, his views on Vietnam weak and his public attacks on the Left unhelpful. In how Branches defined 'union business' and how they saw 'their Party' there remained immense differences.

In the Victorian labour movement there were the first signs of similar divisions (and a break in the Left's dominance) when Mick Jordan became MTHC Secretary in 1964. In May 1967 a group of officials from, mostly, left and large unions met to discuss what they saw as their under-representation at the Trades' Hall. The Victorian CATU, which was one of the unions, resolved that 'the antiquated system of representation' must be changed. Until his retirement in 1969, MacSween played a role in this that was similar to the ones Wallis and Smith had played in earlier disputes with conservative leaderships in the Trades' Hall.

This continuity matched other Branches - where stability was also a feature. NSW and South Australia supported Whitlam, had little

171. SA Branch, Minutes, 7 March 1966; NSW Branch, Minutes, 7 March 1966.


difficulty with their local trades' councils and did not have much to say on other issues. In Queensland, there was no comment on the merits of Calwell or Whitlam. NSW officials' claims in the mid-1950s that outwork campaigns must have precedence over ALP funding look disingenuous given the faith of the leading officials in the DLP. In Queensland, though, McGarry could well feel as disenchanted with that party as with the ALP, following his isolation in 1959 and 1960. The ALP remained, though, the only party to be criticised by the Branch. McGarry told members in 1966 that the ALP's defeat and divisions vindicated his opposition to funding the Party. For the Victorians, political activity remained a central part of their trade unionism. In the other Branches, and for Federal Council, less interest was similarly familiar. There was less political discussion after the DLP's defeat in NSW. But there, as elsewhere, this de-politicising of the Union can be seen, when set against Victoria, as merely a different kind of politics or, rather, a different view of the nature of trade unions.

(v) SUMMARY

There is a central contradiction between the way in which the Union emerged after the Split and the earlier course of the conflict. The

174. NSW Branch, Minutes, 5 December 1955.
175. Qld Branch, Minutes, 28 November 1966.
right-wing had suffered defeat everywhere except Queensland. Despite a concomitant shift in the balance of power at Federal Council, the policies and politics of the Victorians did not come to dominate the Union, unity between Victoria and NSW was short-lived and, at Council in 1960, the Union's structure had been altered in ways at odds with Victorian traditions.

To summarise and explore this outcome we should first address the timing of the CATU's own split. There had been interventions by the Groupers in Victoria as early as 1946 but with very little effect. In NSW, illness and death precipitated changes in 1954-55, as a new right emerged triumphant. Earlier rules allowing, in effect, for life-time appointments had helped to contain opposition teams. The CATU's split was, then, 'delayed' because of its own rules and structure.

Second, as to 'significance'. In the performance of most functions there seemed little to choose between factions but they had different views on what it was that unions should do. Some Victorian officers kept political and international affairs to the forefront. This tradition was enlivened from 1965 by the Vietnam War protests. This is an important point to be made as opposed to observers who see these kinds of policies in left-unions as mere 'ideological' chatter.176

Third, to try to understand the differences between the Branches and the nature of the Union itself. While external determinants may

account for different reactions to industrial issues, they do not appear to explain differences in equal pay campaigning or political issues. The received traditions of each Branch were important. Even in the years 1950-67 there was continuity.

The outcome of the Split may now be considered. The years 1957-60 are especially important. Similarities between the NSW and Victorian Branches in response to changes in work conditions were notable. In both States, the Chambers Award itself, and its effect on payment by results systems, caused a great rise in militancy, union consciousness and the number of shop-floor disputes. Political implications flowed from this. It was in 1957 that Kenna and the DLP began to lose control of the Branch whereas in Victoria, the left's hold grew firmer. In both these Branches and in Queensland, rank-and-file participation was consistently high.

After the DLP's defeat in 1960, there was no change in the nature of Federal Council. The only unity between NSW's new leadership and the Victorians was in their opposition to the DLP. Thus, the alliance between NSW and Victoria quickly dissolved177 when the DLP disintegrated.

The nature and implications of these years of division were complex. At Federal Council in 1957 the declaration of support for the ALP alone gave the Union an explicit political commitment. The DLP was

177. In 1964, MacSween opposed J. Collins for Federal President, signalling the end of uncritical co-operation (FC, Minutes, 2 March 1964).
formally exorcised although conflicts in NSW and Queensland continued. A longer view suggests that something else happened. Although the declaration was clearly directed against the right, it also revealed a withdrawal from earlier positions where, in turn, the VSP, the OBU, the CPA and other radical parties had won support. Indeed only thirteen years earlier, the Victorian Branch had defended an organiser who had defied the MTHC and the ALP by demanding recognition of the CPA as a legitimate workers' party. An irony of the left's success in 1957 was that the language and terms of victory denoted a narrowing of options. Similarly, after the Split, the limitations to the differences between Branches remained. There were no challenges to arbitration and reformism.

In 1960 the dismantling of the Union's Federal power ran counter to much that the Victorian Branch had done since 1907. It was a moment as paradoxical as the political declaration of 1957. The Union would remain a Federal alliance, not a true amalgamation. Further rule changes would be more difficult. Thus, in an apparent moment of triumph, the Union's left gave away hopes of a more central union and, indeed, hopes of controlling it. If there were winners from these years, it is not just a matter of looking at ballots to find them.

In 1960 the whole tradition of Victoria's aims came apart. The words of Bert Carter in 1923 were an apt description of those aims and a reminder of how little the Union's structure had changed. Carter had believed the Branches should amalgamate as old craft unions had,
that the loose organisation of Federation is no good, and that amalgamation is the only way to consolidate the whole trade. The whole trade could then be controlled by one central body.178

The resolution of the Split saw Federal Council weakened and rendered apolitical whilst, within the Branches, there were more signs of consistency than change. Other possibilities had existed and had been fought over but the formal victors were unable to change the structure and outlook of the CATU to their liking.

178. Quoted, Labor Call, 7 June 1923.