The corrosive acid of commercialism has bitten into our life': commodification and the rise of popular political economy in Australia 1900-25

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'The corrosive acid of commercialism has bitten into our life': Commodification and the rise of popular political economy in Australia 1900-25

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The term ‘commercialism’ started to appear in Australian popular and political discourse in the decades that spanned 1900. On one hand, its appearance reflected the qualitative change in commodity relations in Australia in that period. On the other, the use of the term was also part of the reconstructed conceptual apparatus through which working class and popular anti-capitalist stances were articulated. This popular political economy was a vernacular expression of social knowledge about the dehumanising effects of the commodification process. It also expressed popular resistance to bourgeois attempts to represent capitalist institutions such as the market as natural and inevitable.

In 1923 Arthur Rae commented in the socialist paper Common Cause that

Every dept of the business and social life of the community - sport, religion, philanthropy, education, and culture - is permeated and blighted at its source by the unholy desire for profits. Everything has become more or less commercialised.

The term ‘commercialism’ was also used by other left wing commentators. Correspondents and journalists in Common Cause spoke in critical terms of the ‘commercialism of the day’, and variously asserted: that ‘Capitalism contaminates everything it touches and commercialises everything from sport to a woman’s honor’; that the professionalisation of sport meant ‘what should really be a means of athletic exercise and enjoyment becomes commercialised and degraded’; and that ‘Capitalist commercialism is a curse which corrodes common humanity’. Emblematic of this usage was a story about a man who paid those who had rescued him. This story was used to comment allegorically on how deep the corrosive acid of commercialism has bitten into our life ... every deed of common humanity is reckoned to have its market price, when a money value is instinctively set upon every decent act of fellowship.1

It might be possible to dismiss these statements as predictable rhetorical flourishes of socialist ideologues, were it not for their presence in other non- or anti-socialist locations. A.C. Willis, the moderate president of the New South Wales ALP commented in 1924 that ‘in the past the Church dominated commercialism, but now commercialism dominates the church’. The Age railed against ‘the purblind commercialism callously dissipating our natural heritage’, and a similarly mainstream newspaper condemned ‘Commercialism’ as ‘having the morals of a shark’.2 By the 1920s, the term had become popularised, appearing in letters to mainstream newspapers. A letter to Sydney’s Evening News advocated compulsory art and music in public schools because ‘it lifts the mind above sordid commercialism’. A letter-writer to The Age, more interested in sport than politics, wrote to protest against the rise of sporting professionalism, commenting that

The chief incentive of sport should not be money. All our interests should not be based on the thoughts of what they will bring. It is a stunted life that tries to commercialise everything.3

As anti-capitalist idioms, the term ‘commercialism’ has a beguilingly universal feel. Yet the term did not appear in English until the mid-nineteenth-century, and only seems to have been adopted more widely in Australia in the decades spanning 1900.4 That this was the case is interesting, for Australia was already well equipped with a rich anti-capitalist vocabulary. The adoption of ‘commercialism’ thus suggests that the term provided a way of articulating a specific contemporary experience of capitalism. Yet the sense that ‘commercialism’ contained of a non-commodified life destroyed, sits uneasily within the dominant narrative of Australian historiography. The almost universal assumption within that historiography is that - with the large exception of indigenous societies - Australian commodity relations were established by a relatively unproblematic process of expansion into an economic tabula rasa; a zone that because of its vacancy was already available for occupation by the commodity form.5

One purpose of this paper is to question this approach, which has performed for capital the important ideological function of naturalising and de-politicising the commodity form. Even leftist historians have done little to contest this view. While legitimately focussing on relations of production and class struggle, the effectiveness of our attack has been blunted by the fact that we have consented far too readily to the ahistorical assumptions in capital’s view of the commodity form. The paper’s second purpose, then, is to indicate how a focus on the history of the commodity form in Australia can sharpen our attacks on conservative historiography. For, as I try to sketch out, establishing the hegemony of the commodity form was far from a neutral economic
process, as it involved the destruction of other forms of economic and social existence of the labouring poor. The
third purpose of the paper is to present some of the ways that working class awareness of this process was
displayed. In particular, I argue that working class consciousness expressed an anti-capitalist anger that was
deeply-rooted in the lived experience of commodification, and articulated in practical and ideological
contestations that were popular political economy.

The commodity form and everyday life 1850-1925

It is only possible to outline summarily here four main characteristics of alternative economic, social and labour
history that is gained by focusing on the history of the commodity form.

1. Beneath the overarching structures of an international commodity economy, the non-commodity form and
semi-commodified relations were important factors in the popular lived experience of capitalism in nineteenth
century Australia. Whether from practical necessity or as a strategy to preserve economic independence, the lives
of sections of the population were only partially organised around commodity relations. This was most
prominent in rural areas, especially regions of agricultural selection. In the Darling Downs in the 1880s 'at least
one third of the population were farming families who usually produced their own subsistence requirements';
and this phenomenon was also evident in other areas, especially but not only those of recent selection. Selectors
also relied on access to official and unofficial common lands and the public domain for collection of firewood,
grazing of stock, provision of fodder and building materials. The existence of poorly regulated common and
Crown lands were refuge for indigenous people, swaggies and others who refused to submit to commodity
relations. For example, the gaining of credit and employment often depended on local

Daily life in towns and cities also contained non-commodity relationships. Households often provided some
of their own food requirements. In the Riverina, for example, many town workers 'combined a regular skilled
trade with farming' to supply their own needs. Even in large towns 'most people had their own cows' and in the
cities, wage workers 'managed to supplement their wages by growing fruit and vegetables, and raising poultry.'
In mid-nineteenth century urban households, bread was still often baked in homes and food provided by 'ones'
own cow', and other small animals, a practice that persisted in some places until late in the nineteenth century. In
country towns firewood was often obtained from the public domain, water from wells, ground tanks and creeks,
while in the city children of the urban poor gathered firewood in the streets, docks, and railway yards. For both
rich and poor rural dwellers, in towns or on farms and stations, the non-commodity form of leisure prevailed. As
Cannon has argued, through such means 'numerous working class families managed to survive the manifold
perils of life in a laissez-faire society'.

It is important to neither overstate the extent of non-commodity or semi-commodity relations, nor to
romanticise them - the poor women of Bathurst who were still lugging the household water from the Peel River
to their homes in the late 1870s, may well have welcomed the arrival of reticulated, semi-commodified water in
the town. Yet, the persistence of the non-commodity form was important because it provided a space within
which it was possible for people to manoeuvre within the overarching structures of the market economy. Its very
existence was a significant factor in shaping popular lived experience of, and responses to, capitalism in the
second half of the nineteenth century.

2. The localised and face-to-face character of relationships organised around the commodity form buttressed
this capacity to manoeuvre. As rural and local historians emphasise, a relatively direct relationship existed
between consumption and production for many of the most basic consumption items. This was most pronounced
in rural areas, where small-scale economies often supported a range of industries that supplied local populations
with many of the necessities of life. In many country towns the market was not yet an abstraction, but a physical
space where exchange was a direct face-to-face relationship between producers and consumers. And although
the cash nexus predominated, other non-monetary mechanisms such as barter persisted until late in the
nineteenth century. Moreover, economic relations were often mediated by non-economic relationships, such as
kinship, religious, ethnic and sociability networks. These too provided mechanisms for manoeuvring within
commodity relationships. For example, the gaining of credit and employment often depended on local
individual and family reputations and networks. And although this mediation of the economic by the social was
more pronounced in country areas, it also existed in urban areas. Here the corner store, as well as the local
provision of basics such as bread and milk, projected closer connections between producer and consumer into the
cities. The localised character of work and living in urban space, combined with the generally small scale of
production units, also supported a more intimate and mediated relationship between employers and workers.

Once again it is important not to romanticise or exaggerate this texture to commodity relations. The
important point is that the mediation of economic relationships by the social provided mechanisms for
manoeuvre. Moreover, in this context, economic relationships could still be seen as human relations, and
commodities were not yet socially presented in a fully fetishised form, nor were market relations
comprehensively reified: their genesis in living labour was manifest.

3. The 'incomplete' hegemony of the commodity form indicated in 1 and 2, presupposed the existence of
semi-commodified or non-commodity labour forms. Within households, and in agricultural and pastoral
enterprises the labour of women, children and indigenous people was often undertaken with no or partial wage

payment. The persistence of indentured and semi-slave labour strengthened this feature. A counterpart to the
element of compulsion required to maintain these states of semi-or non-commodified labour was the fact that
wage labour was not yet compulsory. The independence of many a male selector from wage labour was secured
by extracting compulsory labour from family members. Nevertheless, the period to 1890 presented real
possibilities for men to escape from wage labour, not only as small holders, but also by becoming self-employed
or small employers. In addition, in areas as diverse as Lithgow, the Illawarra, Dungog and Broken Hill 'Many
small family businesses were run by female family members, while male family members engaged in outside
waged work.' Indeed, as Strachan puts it, one of the long-lasting appeals of selection was 'the possibility of
wage labour was not yet compulsory. The independence of many a male selector from wage labour was secured
by extracting compulsory labour from family members. Nevertheless, the period to

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eradicated the possibilities for manoeuvre within and outside the commodity structure. Some necessarily
compressed statements indicate key aspects of the process.

By 1890 'many of the pre-industrial activities carried out in the home had been or were being, removed to the
market place', so that by the 1920s the market was the exclusive mechanism for satisfying basic needs in
household economies, and had started to colonise new areas of private life, such as appearance, personal hygiene
and leisure. The 'move from credit to cash trading in the 1880s and 1890s', and the reconstruction of credit on a
commercial basis from 1900, decreased possibilities for manoeuvre. The effects of monopolistic retail and
distributing practices led to the abandonment of many of the localised sites of production, and the distance
between sites of production and consumption increased markedly. These same changes meant that possibilities
of self-employment were being closed down by the increasing capitalization of mining, manufacturing,
distributing and retailing sectors. Economic exchange was losing those earlier aspects of intimacy, 'the market'
increasingly being experienced as an impersonal reified abstraction, a 'force' beyond human control. In rural
areas the lives of the poor were made even more marginal as commons were massively and rapidly closed down
from 1890, the lands being transferred to private ownership. Simultaneously, activities on Crown Land were
more closely regulated and elements of non-market self-sufficiency eradicated in townships and suburbs ruled by
'improving' local councils.13

Crucially, because of these changes permanent wage work became increasingly compulsory in city and
country. On this basis, the commodity character of some wage work [white, adult, male] was intensified, as
arbitration courts successively broke down labour into its component parts, and through the 'minimum wage'
inducted new generations of workers into 'commodity culture'.14 It was thus only in the late nineteenth and
early twentieth century, that the Australian working class was formed, comprehensively immersed in commodity
relations.

Class ideology, social knowledge and commodification

To read Australian labour, economic and social history through the history of the commodity form, is thus to
recover the historic theft through which modern capitalism was created. Instead of expanding into economic
terra nullius, capitalism in Australia was deepened by breaking up those older economic and social relations that
had existed in the interstices of the market, and successively eradicating the possibilities for manoeuvre and
independence that they had allowed. The significance of these changes was evident to those who lived them
from 'the other side of the commodity frontier', but because '[h]istory is at its least automatic when it is the
consciousness of the proletariat that is at issue', this awareness was reflected in the variegated rather than
homogeneous character of popular and working class responses.15

One important strand of response, emanating from a variety of class locations, sought to resuscitate the more
intimate character of economic relations, by reuniting 'producer' and 'consumer'. In the 1890s farmers' groups
advocated the restitution of human interaction in exchange relations, the Queensland Farmer Alliance included
as one of its objects in 1891 ‘To secure markets in all the large towns for the distribution, exhibition and sale of farm and dairy produce direct to the consumers’. In 1917 The Age also sought to recapture the intimacy of economic exchange when it advocated the resuscitation of ‘small local markets’ throughout urban and rural Australia ‘where the producer could sell direct to the producer, and the consumer pay direct to the producer’.

The aim in these proposals was to eradicate the ‘middleman’, who increasingly stood as the personification of the abstract forces of the market to which he was so intricately connected. In doing so, it was thought that economic relations would return to their former transparency, and that a greater control over the cost of living would be secured. This analysis sometimes took a more radical edge. In 1917, for example, a political activist, Don Cameron, advocated to his audience of ‘residents and unionists’ in a coal mining town that they could only ‘effectively control the cost of living [by] combined action on the part of the workers that would make holding up food [i.e. merchants stockpiling it to artificially create high demand] impossible, and compel its sale to the workers at its legitimate cost.’ A correspondent to The Australian Worker was more specific about how such popular control of prices could be achieved. He advocated

the people in the cities and country towns holding great public meetings with a view to taking some action in regard to the greatest enemies we have ... persons who ‘corner’ the people’s food supplies. [...] I see nothing for it but for the people to meet and themselves fix the prices that they will pay for commodities.

Indeed, this was more than just rhetoric. At the outbreak of the First World War the Master Bakers in Broken Hill so ‘trembled in their shoes ... in expectation of bread raids’ that they reduced the price of bread from ‘fear ... of the crowd’. When Sydney publicans attempted to add an extra penny to the price of a glass of beer in 1914 ‘No real riots resulted, but so violent was the opposition’, that the price rise was defeated. In Melbourne in August 1917, demonstrations by 5000-15000 people over food prices turned riotous and spread to the surrounding suburbs. According to one contemporary observer ‘serious food riots ... had occurred throughout the Commonwealth [of Australia]’ in the period.

**The development of popular political economy**

The reunification of producer and consumer, and the possibilities for popular control over prices, represented one way that contemporaries expressed hostility to the way popular lifeworlds were being torn apart by commodification. Such responses were shaped by notions of moral economy, and the populist visions of capitalist economic processes as a collection of ‘predatory monopolies’. However, the counter-hegemonic potential of these approaches was limited, because the very changes they sought to contest were eroding their social and economic base in the world of petty commodity producers and semi-commodified labour power. As class lines became more distinct, working class life was increasingly enmeshed in commodity relations: dependent workers were forced to exist on the sale of their increasingly fragmented and commodified abilities. In this context, the populist vision of a farm or craft independence, or the moral economy of reunited production and consumption, held less and less appeal. Yet far from submitting to the ascendancy of the market, what developed was a popular working class political economy that worked towards denaturalising the market itself.

Formal anti-capitalist political economy had first appeared in Australia in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Its most important idea was the notion of surplus value, which had focussed attention on exploitation within the sphere of production. In the early twentieth century this analysis was extended into a less formal populist critique of commodity relations and the commodity form. This populist critique drew its strength as much from the lived experience of commodity relations as from socialist doctrine. Its most important achievement was to successfully contest the legitimacy of the increasingly strident claims capitalists were starting to make about the market.

As the ascendancy of the commodity form pushed capitalist market relations to the forefront of economic life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, so colonial capitalists and their political representatives set about constructing economic, social and ideological relations consonant with intensified capitalism. One of their most important projects was to popularise the *laissez faire* approach to market relations that had by now come to dominate bourgeois social and economic thinking in Australia. In order to do so, it was necessary to go beyond the earlier form of legitimation, which had been based on infusing market discourse with ideas of human nature, moral progress and civilization. Although these ideas still had valuble currency - in 1917 Prime Minister Hughes could still assert that there was no way ‘by which human nature could so immolate itself as to sell anything anywhere except in the best market’. The innovation in bourgeois market legitimation was the assertion that the free market was an outgrowth, not of human nature, but ‘a law of nature’ itself. The key objective in this ideology of the market was to impress on popular consciousness that supply and demand, the mechanism of the free market, operated with the same inviolable power as any law of nature.

Of the many ways that bourgeois ideologists tried to popularise the idea of supply and demand as a natural force, one of the most effective was by analogy with other natural processes. The most persistent of these was the conceptualisation of commodities as fluids. This idea was communicated in the recurrent use of this imagery
in bourgeois descriptions of contemporary market operations. Thus, monopolies were criticised for abrogating
this famous thing [sic] which we call the law of supply and demand", controlling the supply of commodities
just as they would control a body of water by building a dam, deflecting it through this or that channel to
suit their purposes instead of letting it flow naturally down the valley where it belongs.27

The commercial columnists of The Sydney Morning Herald advised that prices of commodities set by
governments should be ‘governed by all the elements of competition ... throughout the world ... In order to allow
trade to flow in healthy competitive channels.’ and that restrictions on the supply of demand and demand would
make it impossible for ‘trading to continue in its normal channels’. A country correspondent to the Herald wrote
that ‘The Labour government are again trying the experiment of endeavouring to make water flow uphill’ by
fixing the selling price of wheat below world market price. A columnist to The Newcastle Herald also reported
this view of government price fixing, noting that ‘the mercantile community is not too sure that the authorities
are not trying to make water run up hill. The price of wheat ordinarily speaking is regulated by the law of supply
and demand’. And, of course, the ultimate synonym for capital was ‘liquidity’.28

Because its logic could be universally appreciated, the metaphor of water and fluidity was well suited to the
task of popularising the idea of supply and demand as a force of nature. However, its capacity to do so was
limited by a number of factors. Firstly, radical political economy now provided an array of resources to combat
these attempts to naturalise the market. As The Worker put it, ‘in the Labor movement ... political economy has
become an exact science’.29 This was an implicit reference to the abandonment of populism and moral economy
as a basis for critique of capitalism. The development of scientific and rationalist stances within labour
movement thought encouraged direct engagement with the bourgeois efforts to naturalise market forces. An
illustration of this engagement is the remarkable series of articles in The Worker in 1914 and 1915. The
immediate context was the fierce struggle over the free market that was provoked when Holman’s Labor
government set in place war-time price regulation in New South Wales. In that struggle, the ideas of the free
market as a natural institution and supply and demand as a force of nature were mobilised extensively. Against
these assertions, The Worker set out to demonstrate that ‘The law of Supply and Demand - the Tory wiseacres to
the contrary - is not a natural law.’ Rather, while ‘the dry as dust Tory political economists’ - these ‘false
economists’ - asserted that any non-market price was ‘artificial’, they had forgotten that ‘There was a time in the
social development of the race when men didn’t trade’. This was an alternative rendition of human history,
referring as it did to a time when people satisfied their needs outside market exchange. Food, for example, was
provided when people ‘hunted and killed, or located and dug and plucked what they needed.’ When exchange
developed ‘it was essentially and unmistakably an artificial development’. The lesson to be drawn from this
alternative human history was that ‘all our social, political and financial systems and institutions are artificial ...
none of them came to us as eternal verities, like the sun and the moon and the stars, and the seasons’.30

The Worker was not content to stop with these rather lapidary historical statements. The article ‘Can We
Make Water Flow Uphill’ challenged head-on the ‘prevalent fallacy’ of the natural market that was sustained by
the fluidity metaphor of bourgeois political economy. The argument was relatively straightforward. Where the
‘economic dogmatist’ argued that state control of prices was ‘impossible’ - ‘it can’t be done; you cannot make
water flow up-hill’ - The Worker sought ‘in the light of science’ to indicate the flaws in the argument. Rather than
examine the operation of markets, it took instead the terms of the metaphor, and examined the relationship
between ‘water’, and its multiplicity of behaviour. The Worker pointed out that it was only in very specific
conditions that water would flow downhill - where its temperature was above freezing point and below boiling
point, and where gravity was left to operate freely, such as in a waterfall. Although under the influence of gravity
water in general flowed downhill, ‘under the influence of [other] natural laws [boiling and freezing] ... [it] may
... refuse to flow... may flow downhill, or it may soar to the very heavens’. Similarly, although capillary action
within trees was invisible, nevertheless, under this force of nature ‘over the whole continent ... [a] colossal
volume of water flowing upwards’. These were the ‘very obvious facts of everyday life’ that were ignored in the
metaphor of fluidity and the free market. Moreover, humanity had harnessed these features of fluidity to make
water behave in ways that satisfied human needs. The lesson here was that if nature had been made to serve
humanity, so it could when it came to the market. The market was not an instrument out of human control - no
matter how supra-human it may appear to be through the ‘innumerable financial codes and credos ... [the]
uncountable labyrinths of commerce’ erected to disguise the fact of its human origins.31

It is difficult to gauge how effective arguments such as these were in combating bourgeois attempts to
disseminate a naturalised view of the market. They may have helped make more evident the ideological
character of bourgeois claims about supply and demand and the free market. In any case, it was precisely such
observations that informed popular comments such as those made by J. J. Griffiths, who wrote from the
industrial city of Lithgow amidst these debates. After studying the arguments presented by retailers in the
Necessary Commodities Commission, Griffith wrote to protest at their ‘howling about the commission fixing
prices too low and contending that supply and demand warrant a higher rate.’ If supply and demand was to be
the basis on which prices were determined, he argued,
why should not wages rise also? The demand for higher wages was never greater than it is today -- the supply of work is not nearly equal to the demand. But of course that argument is not economics, as capitalists understand it ... when work is scarce and cost of living high wages must be lower so that more people may starve. Truly a noble ideal, but quite in keeping with capitalistic traditions. [emphasis added]

If few correspondents could play so skillfully with bourgeois economic categories, there was nevertheless a consistent contestation in the same vein. For example, a country correspondent who wrote to The Sydney Morning Herald, decried how readily the bourgeois had abandoned their war patriotism when the free market was apparently set aside by market regulation. 'The cry of "we must all make sacrifices" is replaced by a cunning excuse -- "we want the price of supply and demand".' A similar opposition to supply and demand ideology can be detected elsewhere. In Wagga Walter Martin applauded the government's control of prices against those who 'declare it is an unjust thing to take away what they deem [sic] is the farmer's right, namely to charge what he likes for his product'. Also in the Riverina, Mr Field got into hot water with the local Farmers and Settlers Association [FSA] when he argued in favour of the State government's proposal to regulate doctors' fees. Field's stance against supply and demand was indicated by the President of the FSA, who said that the proposal was 'Socialistic ... we had always fought for freedom of contract, and opposed the fixing of prices in any shape or form, and thought that the natural law of supply and demand should rule'.

These attitudes to the free market indicate some of the vehemence with which contemporaries contested bourgeois naturalisation of the market. They were articulations of the movement against the market that was also developing in the labour movement. Workers and some petty commodity producers in New South Wales had rallied around the anti-monopolistic and anti-market policies that appeared in the state Labor platform in the early twentieth century. The arguments at the 1914 South Australian Labor Party Conference in favour of a motion calling for comprehensive government price fixing 'was preached to an already converted audience and was passed unanimously.' The representatives of the United Laborers Society on the NSW Labor Council successfully moved a motion calling on the State government to suspend the operation of laws of supply and demand in regard to rent and meat. A mass meeting in February 1915 organised by the Trades Hall council in Melbourne similarly called for increased government action to curtail the spiraling impact of the market. The Newcastle 8 Hour Committee passed a motion requesting the state's Labor government 'to pass a law preventing vendors of food supplies from raising prices.'

Conclusion

Through a combination of popular lived experience of market relations, and the ideological contestations that these generated, the project of naturalising the free market was a spectacular failure. A Grenfell carpenter who in 1914 described how in that town 'the prices of everyday necessaries are going up while at the same time those responsible are throwing thousands out of work thus reducing many families to starvation', probably summarised the attitudes to the market of the majority of the working class. That this was the case is attested to by overviews of Australian popular attitudes to the market that started to appear. In 1917, the Editor of The Age, which had been a long time critic of the free market, stated that the 'ordinary Australian consumer' was 'not a great believer in the infallible dictum of supply and demand'. The Editor considered that Australians knew that the market was not a natural institution, and that 'the bulls and bears of trade can artificially increase or diminish both supply and demand, and give a false value to anything upon the market.' This attitude continued to flourish. In the mid-1920s L.F. Giblin, [Professor of Economics], attempted to ridicule those in Australia who believed that 'the wicked law of supply and demand was to be destroyed', and reluctantly admitted that 'laissez faire has never been popular in Australia'.

It has been the argument of this paper that the contestation of bourgeois market ideology, and the widespread adoption of an anti-capitalist stance amongst workers, was a response to the increasing domination of everyday life by the commodity form. Indeed, it would be no exaggeration to extend this argument and say that beneath the explosive class relations in the period, lay a profound working class knowledge of the destructive and dehumanising effects of commodification. Aspects of this almost subterranean anger were registered in the idiom of 'commercialism', and the critiques of the free market. In these contestations contemporaries expressed both their knowledge of, and their opposition to, the historical effects of commodification. Those who lived it, knew that the commodity form had a history in Australia.

1 A.R.[ae], 'Church and Labor', Common Cause, 17 October 1923, p.3. And consecutively: Common Cause, 27 November 1924 p.10; 13 March 1924, p. 16.
2 Respectively, The Age, 18 May 1923; and quoted in A.R.[ae], 'Knowledge is Power', Common Cause, 7 July, 1922, p. 7.
3 The Evening News, 6 December 1922; 'Veteran', The Age, 28 April 1923.
4 R. Williams, Keywords, Flamingo, 1985, p.70.


For suggestive aspects of credit, see Kingston, *Basket, Bag and Trolley*, p. 43, 62.


Lukacs, *Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat*, p. 208.


*The Age*, 28 July 1917.

'Belly Rule', *The Socialist*, 5 October 1917.


*Our Sydney News* ['One Pint-Fourpence'], *Newcastle Herald*, 11 December 1914, p. 4.

Smart, J, *'Feminists, food, and the fair price: the cost of living demonstrations in Melbourne, August-September 1917, Labour History*, No 50, May 1986. For the final remark see Argus, 21 September 1917, p. 7.


Argus, 9 August 1917, p.8

Reported in *Worker*, 24 December 1914, p. 5.

*Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 September 1914, p. 13, and 19 September 1914, p.15; 18 September 1914, p. 5 respectively.

'Our Sydney Letters', *Newcastle Herald*, 21 September 1914, p. 4.

*Worker*, 14 January 1915 p. 13

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*Transforming Labour: Proceedings of the Eighth National Labour History Conference* - 207
31 'Can We Make Water Flow Uphill', Worker, 1 October 1914, p. 5.
32 Worker, 14 January 1915, p. 12; Mr V. Molesworth, 'Farmer and Speculator' Sydney Morning Herald, 28 November 1914 p. 11; Wagga Wagga Advertiser, 29 March 1915, p. 3; ibid. 2 June 1915, p. 4.
33 Worker, 19 October 1914, p. 12; Newcastle Herald, 28 January 1915, p. 10; Worker, 3 April 1915, p. 16; Newcastle Herald, 7 August 1914, p. 5.
34 'One Affected', Worker, 15 October 1914, p. 12.
35 Age, 28 July 1917; 16 August 1917