



The New South Wales 1917 Strike in Retrospect:  
**Commemorating  
Past Struggles  
for Workplace Rights**

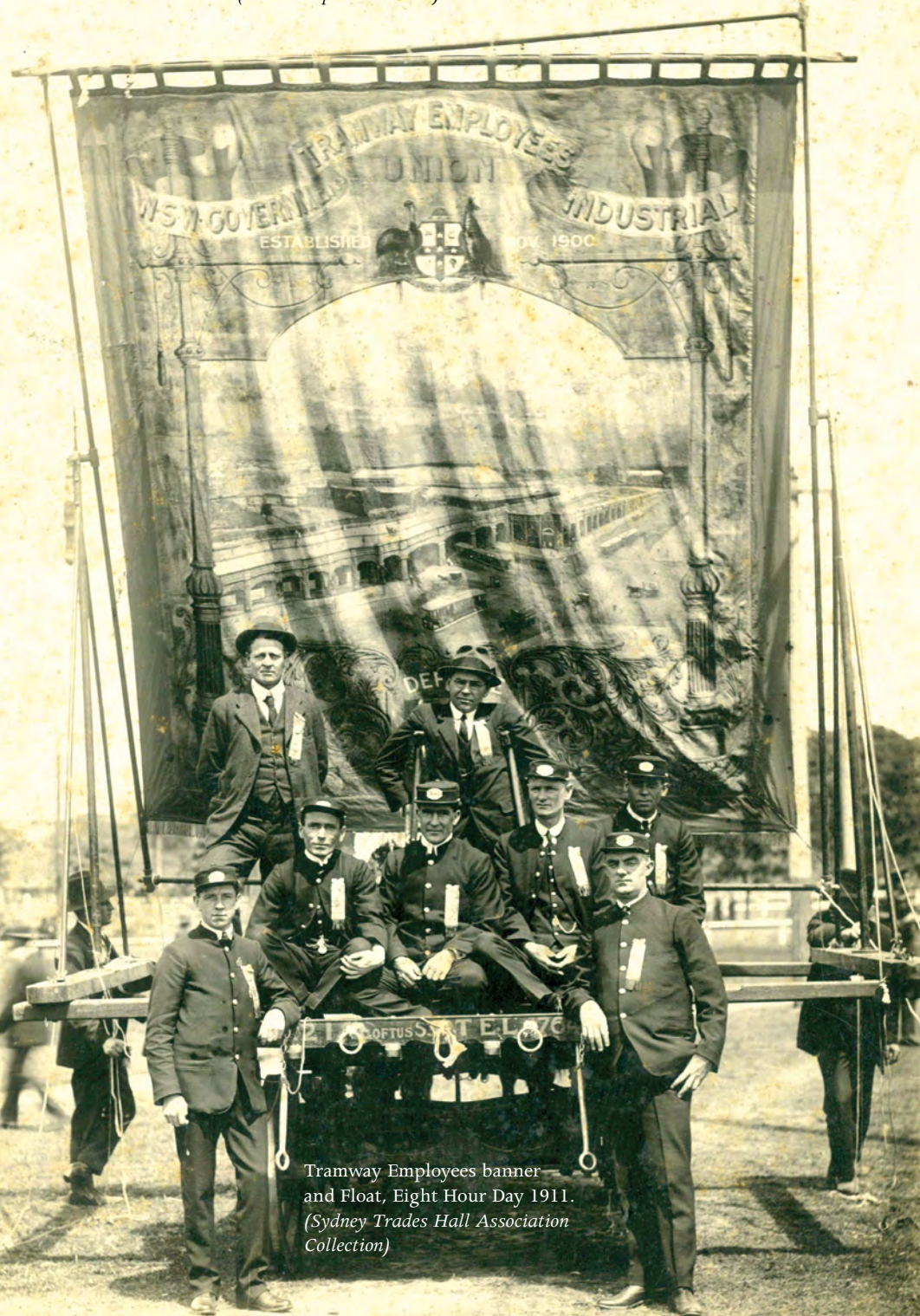
**Lucy Taksa**

*Professor of Management,*

*Faculty of Business and Economics Centre for Workforce Futures  
Macquarie University*



Cover: Outside Trades Hall. (Sun 12 September 1917)



Tramway Employees banner  
and Float, Eight Hour Day 1911.  
(Sydney Trades Hall Association  
Collection)

THE NEW SOUTH WALES 1917 STRIKE IN RETROSPECT:

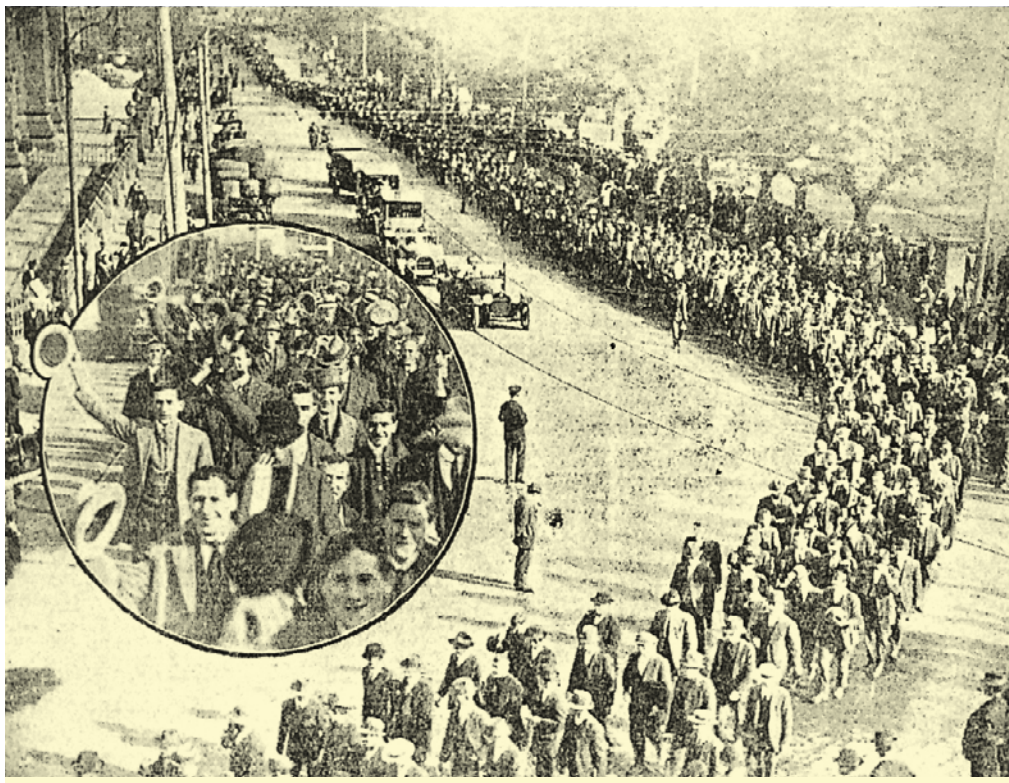
## Commemorating Past Struggles for Workplace Rights



Lucy Taksa

Professor of Management,  
Faculty of Business and Economics Centre for Workforce Futures  
Macquarie University





College Street procession. (*The Australasian* 18th August 1917)

The New South Wales 1917 Strike in Retrospect:  
**Commemorating Past Struggles for Workplace Rights**

Published with support from and in association  
 with Unions NSW.

© Lucy Taksa  
 ISBN: 978-1-64008-169-7

Lucy Taksa, PhD  
*Professor of Management*  
*Associate Dean (Research)*  
*Faculty of Business and Economics*

Macquarie University NSW 2109  
 Tel +61 2 98504811  
 Email: lucy.taksa@mq.edu.au

Unions NSW congratulates Professor Lucy Taksa for her ongoing scholarly work on the causes, conduct and aftermath of the 1917 Great Strike. Professor Taksa's research on this topic continues to be an invaluable resource for scholars, labor movement activists, historians and the general public.

The 1917 Great Strike was a pivotal event for the labour movement in both NSW and Australia which involved scores of unions, and tens of thousands of workers in NSW, Victoria and Queensland.

While the strike was defeated and thousands of workers faced retribution from both employers and the NSW and Federal governments, the experience and the bitter aftermath forged a more resolute union movement and gave rise to future leaders in the NSW and Federal parliaments.

Prime Minister Ben Chifley, dismissed from his position as an Engine Driver, referred to this experience of injustice as firing his determination to ensure that this would never occur again.

NSW Premier Joseph Cahill was also dismissed from the Railway workshops as a result of his activities in support of the strike.

Eddie Ward sacked from the Railways service, later became a long standing Member of Federal Parliament for East Sydney.

Unions NSW believes the story of the strike, and above all, the men and women who struggled against workplace injustice and the inequality

imposed by the policies of governments and employers remains an enduring example of the spirit and determination of male and female unionists who fought for the values of trade unionism.

It is a story of struggle and union values which will continue to inspire current and future union activists as we continue to fight for the rights of working people.

**Mark Morey**

*Secretary*

Unions NSW



Original Lily-White Badge.  
Sydney Trades Hall Collection.

*Special thanks to State Archives and Records NSW, State Library of New South Wales, the National Library of Australia and its online archive – Trove: <http://trove.nla.gov.au/>.*

These cultural institutions are national treasures that provide us with essential resources from the past.

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE AND STATEMENT ON SOURCES AND REFERENCING

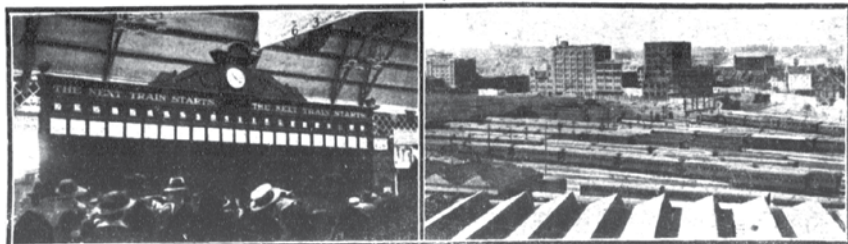
The research for this booklet began in 1983 with an Honours thesis on the 1917 Strike and continued with an investigation of the management system that caused the Strike for my PhD. I would like to thank Unions NSW, Linda Carruthers, Neale Towart, Nick Lewocki, Roger Jowett and Daryll Hull for the immense efforts that have been made by them to commemorate the centenary of the 1917 Strike so that its lessons can be understood and acted on. I fervently hope that this booklet will inspire vigilance among people involved with both the industrial and political wings of the labour movement and contribute to the training of the next generation of labour activists.

As this overview of the Strike and its enduring impact and significance has been written for a general rather than a scholarly audience, I have not employed a scholarly referencing style. To a large extent I have drawn on my own previous work and publications. Where I have relied on the work and words of others, be they scholars, biographers or oral history interviewees, I have acknowledged them by name in the text. References for most original sources can be found in my Theses or my publications, although a number of those I have named are in the Reference List at the end of this account, along with all other sources used.

I owe a great debt to my fellow labour historians, whose Honours and PhD theses, and publications have provided important information and interpretations of the events of 1917. I would particularly like to acknowledge the work of Robert Bollard, Dan Coward, Greg Patmore and Andrew Moore. I take this opportunity to also express my gratitude to the wonderful people who so generously allowed me to delve into their memories of the Strike and its impact on their lives.



## THE STRIKE IN PICTURES—SCENES AND INCIDENTS



The picture on the left shows the indicator at the Central Railway Station early in the week, with no trains recorded—a most unusual sight. The picture on the right gives a good idea of the lines of idle trains outside the station.—(Mirror Photos.)

## WHAT SHALL WE DO? MEN DISCUSS POSITION



These snapshots, taken by the Mirror photographer in connection with the strike, show, reading from left to right:—Top: (1) A group of strikers discussing the latest phase of the position; (2) one of the early trams taking up its eager load; (3) group of tramway men arguing the pros and cons of the latest developments. Bottom: (4) Outside the Trades Hall, in Goulburn-street, the crowd being so large that a force of constables was required to keep the roadway clear; (2) one of the trams with a policeman in front; (1) procession of tramway men marching from their headquarters to the meeting in the Domain.

## THE EVELEIGH WORKSHOPS IN COMPARATIVE IDLENESS



The picture on the left shows a long line of engines outside the Eveleigh sheds. On the right is one of the workshops, absolutely idle.—(Mirror Photos.)

Idle rail workshop and stations; Tramway Strikers procession to the Domain.  
(Mirror 11 August 1917)

## AN INTRODUCTORY GLIMPSE

On 2 August 1917, one of the greatest industrial upheavals in Australia's history formally began in the NSW Government owned Randwick Tramway and Eveleigh Railway workshops. A week later it had spread to other transport centres and from there to diverse industries in Bathurst, Broken Hill, Bulli-Wollongong, Goulburn, Lithgow, Newcastle, Orange and many other industrial centres and towns in New South Wales (NSW). It then also extended to Victoria and Queensland, where trade unions and workers provided support for the strikers.

Accompanied by massive union and community meetings, processions and demonstrations that brought hundreds of thousands of non-striking men, women and children into the fray, it lasted until 10 September in the railways and tramways and six weeks longer in the maritime, mining and other industries. Its impact on the lives of thousands upon thousands of individuals and their families, on Australian trade unions and the Australian Labor Party, as well as many communities, suburbs and towns was immense and long-lasting. By 22 October approximately 97,500 workers had been involved. Of these, about 77,350 were located in NSW; a figure which constituted approximately 14 percent of the State's workforce and 33 percent of its registered trade union membership. In total four million working days were lost in NSW at a cost of £2.5 million.

As Fahey and Lack also note: 'By the end of August 6,017 Victorian unionists were on strike or had been locked out, another 5,317 workers

had no jobs because there was no coal, or working materials, and thousands more (notably 3,815 in the boot trade) were working part time'.

The Strike had enduring repercussions. Striking railway and tramway workers were dismissed during the dispute and two thousand were not re-employed. Those who regained their jobs, lost their seniority and other accumulated benefits. A similar fate was experienced by strikers from a wide range of other occupations in the maritime and mining industries, among others. In total, 22 trade unions were deregistered for their participation in the Strike (*see Appendix*), and a number of Labor politicians, union officials and workers were arrested on a range of charges, including conspiracy.

All of those who participated in this gigantic dispute have passed away. For the most part, their stories have been buried with them. The interview recordings and transcripts of a very small number of strikers and their children, contained in the State and National libraries or in private collections, rarely see the light of day. There have been relatively few accounts of what became known as the Great Strike or the General Strike. A handful were produced by university students as Honours and PhD theses and a small number have appeared in scholarly articles. The remainder have been contained in histories of trade unions and the Labor Party, biographies and autobiographies of labour movement leaders. On the whole, this astounding rupture in the State's industrial life has fallen out of our society's collective memory. Luckily, there are extensive contemporary records of the event and its aftermath in parliamentary papers, government reports, Royal Commissions and other formal enquires, trade union minutes and newspaper articles. These sources, together with the theses, articles and labour history books, provide us with brief glimpses into an immensely turbulent time for working people and an enormously significant chapter in Australia's industrial, political and social life.

## COMMEMORATING DEFEAT?

**W**hy should we commemorate such a colossal failure? This question can be answered in a number of different ways. As most of us would admit, Australians have never shied away from recognising the importance of defeat. At annual ANZAC Day events we remember the tragic Gallipoli campaign and the volunteers who showed courage and perseverance in the belief that they were fighting for a just and principled cause. In a similar vein, it is vital for us to commemorate those who fought for a just and principled cause in relation to workplace rights, fair working conditions and justice in employment and who suffered immensely for their struggles. Through our remembrance we, too, stand up, not only in support of their efforts, courage and perseverance, but as significantly for those same rights and conditions today.

Our capacity to effectively commemorate this event and the people who participated in it depends on an awareness of the Strike's history. We need to be aware of the context in which it occurred in order to understand what was at stake for workers and their representatives, families and supporters, and also the convictions and life experiences that shaped their responses to employer, management and government actions. As importantly, our ability to stand up for those same rights and conditions today depends on an appreciation of the current relevance of the managerial innovations that caused the Strike and the massive public protests that accompanied it.

In telling the story of the dispute, this book highlights the principles that led so many people to fight against unjust employment practises and

government efforts to undermine the right to collective representation. My key aim is to extend understanding not only of this one historical event but also its longer term effects on workers and their labour organisations over the past century. It is a story of ordinary people who opposed increased workplace surveillance, work intensification, employment insecurity and unjust and coercive government action. It is also a tale about workers' solidarity and community mobilisation in a struggle against injustice. But as significantly, it is a story of workers' ability to reorganise following industrial defeat, to move on and to achieve improved conditions through the collective pursuit of shared interests. In short, this book is about unfinished business.

As Bollard has argued, 'the traditional view of the Great Strike as a disaster is ... not an accurate picture of what the strike and its defeat meant for the labour movement. Defeat can be demoralising and destructive, but it can also be a catalyst for change, for regroupment and resurgence'.

## BACKGROUND: TURBULENT TIMES

One hundred years ago, life was turbulent for most Australians. The stress of World War One increased anxieties, particularly among the families of soldiers who were stationed initially at Gallipoli in Turkey and later on the Western front in France and Belgium. The introduction of the Federal *War Precautions Act* restricted freedoms at home and when some in the labour movement began to oppose the War, tensions escalated further.

The War disrupted shipping to and from Australia and shortages increased the costs of goods and services, as well as the numbers of unemployed and underemployed. To rein in costs, a wage freeze was imposed in late 1914 and increasing numbers of employers and conservative politicians began promoting a national efficiency campaign and advocating management methods that they believed would increase production and productivity. At the same time, unemployment continued to rise from 6.5 percent in 1913 to 8.3 percent in 1914 and 9.3 percent in 1915, while the cost of living rose by 50 percent. Price inflation, increasing rent costs, lower wages and job losses worsened existing inequalities. Workers responded to the mounting threats to their livelihoods, their working conditions and pay with increased strike action. Dan Coward noted that in 1916 official figures showed a 41.95 percent increase in strikes over the previous year with most occurring in NSW, where they rose from 272 in 1915 to 336 in 1916.

For many employers and political conservatives, the blame for the escalating industrial militancy could easily be attributed to the growing

support for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), an organisation that was established in Chicago in 1905 but which spread to other countries, including Australia, in 1911. The IWW promoted the concept of 'One Big Union', solidarity and direct action, and it actively opposed the war and conscription in Australia. Its slogan of 'slow work means more jobs' resonated for workers facing demands for increased efficiency from Australian employers and managers who were particularly vocal in their support for 'scientific management', a system developed by F.W. Taylor in the USA. Taylor's system, with its time and motion studies and 'speed-up' methods, increased surveillance over work and gave rise to industrial action wherever it was introduced. Taylor was vocally opposed to workers' ability to organise collectively to limit their output to what they believed was fair for the pay they received. He was also trenchant in his opposition to trade unions, as were his followers.

In the face of intensified battles on the Western Front in 1916, further divisions were created by the Federal Government's promotion of compulsory conscription for overseas service. An Anti-Conscription campaign was launched on 23 September 1916 with a large demonstration in Sydney and on the following day Police raided IWW headquarters in Sussex Street. Twelve IWW members were arrested, charged with treason and later convicted under the *War Precautions Act*, on spurious evidence. This coercive action by the Government raised immense concerns for many working people, including those not particularly supportive of the IWW. Their growing opposition to the Government's prosecution of the war effort contributed to a massive campaign against the first conscription referendum in October 1916 by the majority of labour movement organisations. With support from Australian soldiers on the front, they helped to ensure that the referendum was defeated.

The impact on Australian society and on the labour movement was immense. The Labor Party split and some Federal and State Labor parliamentarians, including the Prime Minister (PM) William Hughes, the NSW Premier, William Holman and the NSW Minister for Labour and Industry, G.S. Beeby were expelled from the Labor Party. These men then

formed coalitions with conservative politicians in both the NSW and Federal Parliaments under the umbrella of the newly formed Nationalist Party. The first State and Federal Labor Governments, both elected in 1910, lost the ensuing elections on 24 March 1917 in NSW and on 5 May federally. According to D.J. Murphy, shipping companies, mine owners, the Colonial Sugar Refining (CSR) Company, pastoralists and newspaper proprietors began to urge these new governments to 'take the unions on'; as far as they were concerned the unions had been hijacked by the IWW.

These political developments reinforced workers' distrust of the Labor renegades and the newly elected conservative coalition governments; distrust that escalated further in July 1917, when the Labor 'Rat', Prime Minister Hughes, pushed through an amendment to the Federal *Unlawful Associations Act*, originally passed in December 1916, with the aim of destroying the IWW completely. Such actions foreshadowed the extremes to which these conservatives would resort to undermine the political and industrial rights of working people.



*Australian Worker*  
26 July 1917



## TURMOIL IN THE RAILWAYS AND TRAMWAYS

**D**uring the War, the NSW Department of Railways and Tramways began to suffer immense losses as a result of the costs associated with increased interest bills, the need to provide free transport for troops and war materials and a failed attempt to manufacture munitions in its workshops. Another problem was the reduced labour force that resulted from the enlistment of between five and six thousand railway and tramway workers. These conditions raised serious concern for the NSW Government because as Jack Lang, the NSW Labor Treasurer some years later in 1920, put it: 'the solvency of the State depended upon the state of the Railways finances'.

For the workers, poor administration gave rise to many grievances. Between 1915 and 1917, Eveleigh's employees engaged in extensive industrial action, mounting eight strikes in March-April 1916, the largest of which involved 442 employees. It was against this backdrop that the Department's management began trying to increase workers' productivity by introducing new ways to control the time spent on given tasks. Invariably, these focused on decreasing the power workers could exercise over time-keeping and performance. The first attempt to raise output through a new system of job records in the railway and tramway workshops was successfully opposed by unions in June 1915. Another attempt one year later, was again thwarted by the successful lobbying of the Labor Minister for Railways and other Labor politicians. At this stage, according to union sources, the Railway and Tramway Commissioner agreed not to make any changes to working conditions during the war as long as the

unions did not make any immoderate wage claims. This outcome relied on the existence of a sympathetic Labor Government, as workshop employees and unions were to realize in 1917 after Labor's electoral loss.

This inability to introduce a new timing system to limit worker's capacity to maintain what they collectively believed was a 'fair day's work for a fair day's pay', did not deter railway management from other efforts to increase productivity. One significant approach involved support for the public campaign then being mounted against what managers referred to as the 'go-slow' – that is, output restriction. As the *Australian Manufactures Journal* reported in August 1916, one strident opponent to 'go-slowism', particularly in the railways, was Justice Heydon, President of the NSW Industrial Court.

In response, workshop employees formed a rank-and-file vigilance committee, which was open to all union members, and its mass meetings in August and September 1916 vehemently protested against such claims from the Arbitration Court's judges and railway administrators. By November they had engaged in forty-eight small strikes and stop-work meetings over a range of grievances. At a meeting with Eveleigh workers, Deputy Chief Commissioner of Railways, James Fraser, said he was extremely concerned by this action and the fact that part of the works was still paralysed by a two-month long moulders strike, as well as about the inability to import some machinery and the escalating costs for that which could be obtained.

By the early months of 1917, the active promotion of scientific management in the *Australasian Manufacturer*, was being echoed in the *Railway and Tramway Budget*, a magazine produced by the Department and circulated to all its employees. Addresses by Eveleigh's Works Manager, J. Scouler and Commissioner Fraser, stressed the need to implement scientific methods in order to eradicate the 'microbe' of 'Slow Work', allegedly being caused by workers' 'misdirected effort', idleness, mistakes and careless operations. It was a fallacy to suppose that increased production led to unemployment, argued J.H. Dowling, a clerk with the Signalling Branch, in a subsequent Address in May. He therefore advised

managers that if they wanted to ensure 'properly directed effort' and reduced costs, they needed to study 'the number of motions' and to eliminate unnecessary motions. James Fraser, in his new role as Railway Commissioner from January, was emboldened by Labor's electoral loss and in a stronger position to pursue such managerial objectives. As a result, on 20 July 1917, workers were informed that a new 'card-system' was being introduced to the Department's workshops.

The image shows three time cards from the N.S.W. Govt. Railways & Tramways system. Each card has a header with the text 'N.S.W. GOVT. RAILWAYS & TRAMWAYS.' and a title. The first card is blue and titled 'TIME CARD - GENERAL'. It has fields for 'TALLY NO.', 'RATE', 'NAME', and 'GRADE'. Below these is a table with columns for 'CHARGE', 'HOURS', and 'AMOUNT'. At the bottom, it has 'LEADING HAND' and 'DATE FROM' to 'TO' fields. The second card is orange and titled 'TIME CARD - ROUTINE'. It has similar fields for 'TALLY NO.', 'RATE', 'NAME', and 'GRADE', but includes a 'QUANTITY' field next to 'CHARGE'. It also has 'ON DATE' and 'OFF DATE' fields with 'TIME' sub-fields. The third card is white and titled 'TIME CARD - JOB'. It has fields for 'TALLY NO.', 'RATE', 'NAME', and 'GRADE', and a 'DESCRIPTION' field. It also has 'ON DATE' and 'OFF DATE' fields with 'TIME' sub-fields, and 'HOURS' and 'AMOUNT' fields. All cards have a 'LEADING HAND' field at the bottom.

The three cards system. [NSW State Archives NRS12060]

The system involved the use of three cards, a white Job Time Card, a blue General Time Card and a red Routine Time Card for recording the time taken to perform work.

Unlike the time sheets which workers had themselves previously been responsible for, these cards were to be entirely administered by 'sub-foremen', a new classification for staff who were called 'taskmasters' by one Labor Member of Parliament (MP) because their role was to impose tight supervision over workshop labour. The employment of large numbers of these sub-foremen, eighty-odd at the Eveleigh shops alone, effectively represented an escalation of what Greg Patmore has described as a 'divide and rule' approach that had long been practised by the Department's managers.

Opposition to the card-system was immediate. On 24 July, affected engineers met and determined they would not work with it. As one Labor MP warned the Government in Parliament that evening: serious trouble was brewing. A meeting of rank-and-file workers appointed representatives from fourteen unions and two days later the Electrical Trades Union raised the issue with the Labor Council in order to enable a joint response from concerned unions. At this stage, a mass meeting of Amalgamated Society of Engineers members agreed to stay at work until a conference of all unions could be organised. Nevertheless, they confirmed their 'determination not to work under the new system' and sent a deputation to the Railway Commissioners a few days later to request the withdrawal of the cards. As Ian Turner put it 'the Commissioners would not budge'.

A conference attended by the two main railway and tramway unions, eight metal unions and four building unions on 30 July therefore determined that the Strike would begin on 2 August if the card-system was not withdrawn. This position was based on the recognition that the unions were unable to restrain 'their members from ceasing work'. The following day, Labor Council Secretary, E.J. Kavanagh, Member of the NSW Legislative Council (MLC), led another deputation to the Commissioner, to present the unions' settlement proposal, which agreed to forego strike action if the old working conditions were retained, while an independent tribunal investigated the system. The Commissioner's counter proposal for an inquiry after a 3-month trial was unacceptable to

the unions, and on 1 August an ultimatum was delivered to the Government: The Strike would commence on 2 August if the cards were not withdrawn.

Even at this late stage, union officials still tried to avert a strike at a meeting with the Acting Premier G.W. Fuller and the Minister for Labour and Industry, G.S. Beeby, but Beeby, described by Ian Turner, as a 'Labor renegade', was determined for a showdown. His position was in line with the view he had expressed in a letter to that other 'renegade', Premier, W.A. Holman on 20 June that: 'The Industrial position is becoming very critical. The "direct action" crowd seem to be getting complete control of everything'. A few weeks later, Beeby would reiterate this view publicly in the NSW Parliament by saying that the card-system provided a costing system that would help to overcome the acceptance of IWW ideas among a section of the Department's workers.

Not surprisingly, the unions' ultimatum was rejected. As Fuller declared in a statement in the NSW Parliament, the workers' complaints were 'not a legitimate matter for industrial dispute', and even at this early stage he foreshadowed that 'ample protection and reward' would be provided to those who remained at work. The showdown began the following morning when 5,780 of the Department's workers, 3,000 at Eveleigh and 1,300 at Randwick, struck. That day and the next, they were joined by railway firemen and locomotive engine-drivers, some staff in the signalling shops and some 'car-shed men' in tram depots and the Clyde Repair shops. According to Coward, nearly '85 percent of the workers affected by the cards left work in Sydney, Newcastle, and Honeysuckle Creek, Port Waratah Hamilton and Goulburn workshops, leaving roughly 1,000 craftsmen (or 15 per cent of the total) at work. At this stage the Strike involved fourteen unions: eight metal-working, four building trades and two general unions'. In Goulburn 400 came out and in Bathurst 250 by 6 August.

In the meantime, a joint conference of the major unions involved in the dispute transferred control over industrial and political action to a Strike Defence Committee (SDC) made up of delegates from all these unions and the Labor Council. By the end of the week the number of strikers had

grown to 10,000, and a week later to 30,000, including 21,000 railway workers. Two weeks later still the number had reached nearly 50,000 as the strike spread to other unions. Only 15,000 of the NSW Railways and Tramways Department's 48,000 employees did not strike.

Labor politicians took up the issue in the NSW Parliament. Protesting against the Government's failure to settle the rapidly escalating dispute, they urged Members of the Government to remember that they were 'responsible for the humane treatment of those in the employ of the State' and they called for the appointment of an independent inquiry into the workers' grievances, of which there were many. Jack Lang MP stressed that this was something more than 'a mere idle strike' as sacrifices would not be made by the employees of the state's transport services 'unless some great principle' was at stake. At the heart of this principle was the traditional workers' right to collective union representation in negotiations over the conditions of employment and pay. For the workers, this principle was essential for the defence of their shared interests and their protection against increased surveillance, work intensification and insecurity at work.

The Government's unwillingness to negotiate over the card-system challenged traditional collective practises in the workplace and was perceived as a threat to the improvements in conditions and wages that had been hard won during the preceding decade through the conciliation and arbitration system in which courts and judges ostensibly worked to balance the interests of workers and employers or managers in the public interest. As Labor PM, Andrew Fisher had put it in his election speech in 1914, when running for his third term in office, 'we look upon arbitration as a civilised system of obtaining justice between all citizens with the minimum disturbance of industrial relationship and the minimum of distress.... We desire therefore, the widest possible opportunity to be afforded to all workers and employers to approach the Arbitration Court'. However, in this dispute the strikers were not given recourse to the Arbitration Court because the card-system was deemed to constitute 'a mere detail of workshop management' rather than a 'change of working conditions'



and as a result it could not come within the purview of the Court under the State legislation as this was interpreted by Judge Heydon. In fact, according to V.G. Childe, Beeby as the Minister for Labour, had the power under the *Arbitration Act*, to call a compulsory conference of the unions and the Commissioners, a power which had been employed in the past 'on various occasions when a dispute arose between private employers and their employees'. But in this instance, the Minister did not do so.

One of the major factors that caused the Strike to spread quickly to a huge range of occupations and industries was the refusal of many rank-and-file employees to work with materials that had been handled by those who chose not to strike or replaced those who were on strike. Known as the 'Black' doctrine, this principle invoked solidarity among workers to uphold bans. Such black bans were imposed by some Electrical Trades Union (ETU) members employed at the Randwick workshops and those at Eveleigh who filled the steam trains with coal. This brought their union, the Federated Railway Locomotive Enginemens' Association of Australasia into the conflict, particularly after some engines were loaded by Railway Department clerks. These workers were then followed on 3 August by members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (ASE), the Boilermakers' Union, the Ironworkers Union and the Moulders Union employed in the Bathurst, Cowra, Dubbo, Newcastle, Orange and Wellington workshops. As the Secretary of the Moulders' Union explained in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 4 August: 'Our men are out simply on a matter of union principle ... If our men could have remained at work without infringing on the work of other men, they would have done so'. This solidarity not only ensured that the Strike spread beyond the railways but also that it would spill over into the community, as Connell and Irving put it.

Over the next days, unions were pressured by members to support this principle and it also motivated train and tram guards belonging to the Traffic Association to join the Strike. The Amalgamated Rail and Transport Service Association (ARTSA) experienced such pressure from railway porters at Central Station, shunters, fettlers and signalmen. South coast miners began refusing to go to work on trains with strike-breakers and

some could not go to work because the number of trains was reduced by the strike activity, leaving 1,000 miners out.

On 6 August, Acting Premier Fuller issued an ultimatum to railway and tramway workers. Either they returned to work on 10 August, a date later extended to the 13th, or they would be dismissed and lose their seniority and other benefits. Those who remained at work would be given preference in all these areas. Fuller then also announced that the Government would begin recruiting 'volunteer' labour. In response, the Defence Committee declared coal 'Black' on 6 August, and all railway and tramway employees were called out with support from the Tramways Union and ARTSA, including its Greta and Aberdare branch in the Hunter coal district. Their action 'in support of the card grievance', according to Coward, 'cut off two-thirds of the northern coal trade, affecting about 9,000 miners in all the Newcastle and Maitland district collieries. By midnight the trams had stopped running and between 7 and 10 August, mines in the South Coast, Newcastle, Maitland and Lithgow had also stopped. At this time, too, '600 crane drivers and coal trimmers who objected to working with non-unionists on the Newcastle waterfront left work, together with 250 Newcastle tramway men. Engine drivers and firemen at Bathurst and Goulburn and ARTSA members at Goulburn joined the strikers' as did the Tramway Employees' Union in Sydney.

From 7 August, the strikers' families and supporters began to protest, joining daily processions, demonstrations and public mass meetings not only in Sydney but wherever the strike spread throughout the industrial centres of NSW. In Sydney, protest was initially spontaneous and involved only five to six thousand people who marched from the Central Railway Station at Eddy Avenue to the Sydney Domain, the traditional site for gatherings of working people. Even at this early stage, speakers began to denounce the Government for its obstinacy. Indeed, in response to claims by Chief Commissioner Fraser that the strikers were traitors and agents of Germany and its King, one Domain speaker suggested that the Commissioner's approach resembled that of the German King rather than that of a public servant. Working people and their representatives quickly

recognised that this industrial battle was also a political one. Hardly a surprising conclusion considering the fall-out after the first Conscription referendum. Edna Ryan, a thirteen-year-old at the time of the Strike, who refused to take her usual tram to school from Newtown to Fort Street, remembered going to Eddy Avenue to join the strike processions to the Domain. As she put it in an interview in 1987, 'we were so outraged and when you were outraged it was your battle ... You belonged to it if it was a strike. It was yours'.

The Government's response to the Strike and the protest was beligerent. The Inspector of Police instructed the SDC that permission

'Aeroplane Flying Across the Strikers' Procession Yesterday'. *Daily Telegraph*, 18 August 1917



had to be obtained for all future processions. So from 8 August protest became more systematic. Each day families would form contingents in the suburbs in which they lived and march to Eddy Avenue and at 2pm daily the main procession would proceed to the Domain.

On 8 August, Arthur William Buckley, MP for Surry Hills, suggested that 'one Minister, previously associated with Labor' was 'out to break unionism', probably referring to the Labor 'Rat', G.S. Beeby. Percy Brookfield MP, representing the electorate of Sturt in far western NSW, criticised the 'Government of 1917' for bringing 'in a system which no honest' person 'could submit to without a fight' given that it threatened their liberty. The following day, the procession included eleven different unions, as well as thousands of strike supporters, while on 10 August a women's procession commenced at Cooks River in southern Sydney and proceeded to Eddy Avenue via the Enmore terminus and Newtown Bridge where additional participants joined the march.

Increasingly representatives of the larger unions and the Parliamentary Labor Party who spoke at mass meetings depicted the dispute as a struggle between liberty and slavery. At the same time, another deputation to the Acting Premier from the 'big unions' and public meetings held throughout NSW attended by 'citizens' representing 'all shades of political opinion', carried unanimous resolutions urging the Government to appoint an independent inquiry into the dispute. This demand was reiterated by a women's deputation to the Acting Premier on 9 August, representing 'fifteen thousand wives of the men on strike as well as women who had entered the industrial field to earn their own living'. Fuller was deaf to these requests. Afterwards, the deputation marched with several hundred women demonstrating in front of Parliament House to the Domain, where they were cheered by 40,000 other demonstrators. Two days later the *Herald* and *Telegraph* newspapers reported that in his speech at the Domain, William Davies MP for Wollongong, had said: 'I firmly believe that the women are the main factors in this strike. If the women keep solidly together we will win'.



'A Domain Snapshot: Off to see the Acting Premier'. *Sydney Mail*, 15 August 1917



'Women's Demonstration in front of Parliament House'. *Sydney Mail*, 15 August 1917

The Government remained unresponsive to all appeals and blocked discussion of the Strike in Parliament except 'On Notice', an action described by members of the State's Parliamentary Labor Caucus as the Government's use of its 'brutal majority' to 'stifle the voice of democracy'. Such claims demonstrated that the industrial dispute over a management innovation had turned into a fight for general rights and justice. As a headline in the *Australian Worker* newspaper put it on 9 August: 'Official Tyranny drives men to Defensive Action'. This tyranny was linked to the 'pernicious' Taylor system - known to workers from American experiences and believed to wreck workers physically, dull their brains and break their spirits, leaving them on the scrap heap at the age of forty.



'A great Strike. Railway and Tramway Industry of New South Wales. Completely disorganised. Official Tyranny drives men to Defensive Action'. *Australian Worker*, 9 August 1917



On 9 August, Commissioner Fraser confirmed that 62 percent of railways staff had joined the strike, now also encompassing engineers in the Lismore workshop and drivers, firemen and cleaners, and the railways' permanent way staff. It was now also official in all coal mining areas. Following a mass meeting of the Wharf Labourers' and Coal Lumpers' Union, a stop-work meeting of 3,000 members took a unanimous decision to strike, affecting the wharves at the Darling Island and Pyrmont, Darling Harbour and Woolloomooloo. Invariably, this action soon spread to the rest of the maritime industry. According to Bollard, 'the complete stoppage of work along the waterfront' on 10 August, and the possibility that strike-breakers would be brought in, led the seamen to join the strike. Two days later, the SDC declared wheat and flour carried by train 'black'. This 'unionist principle of refusing to handle 'black' goods', had what John Lack referred to as 'a snowballing effect' spreading to the waterfront in Victoria, where carters, drivers and seamen stopped work in sympathy with NSW strikers.

Some unions did their best to keep members at work. Although the Trolley, Draymen and Carters backed a policy of staying on the job on 13 August, the following day carters voted to ban 'black' goods and refused to cart goods to railway stations. By the next week they had extended their bans to the wharves, which Bollard suggests 'was a dramatic extension of their strike'. As the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 20 August, 'The business of Sussex-street, the greatest food-distributing centre in the city' had been 'declared black' after a large meeting of the Trolley and Draymen's Union 'refused to handle foodstuffs arriving either by rail or steamer'; action that led to their replacement by strikebreakers.

## PRINCIPLE – WHAT PRINCIPLE?

What was it that made all these workers and their representatives jump on the band-wagon, as it were, to support the Strike? How significant was the principle that workers and their representatives constantly referred to as motivation for the workers' actions? In 1923, V.G. Childe concluded that the spread of the strike was based on 'a mistaken spirit of solidarity'. Decades later, in 1970, Ken Buckley, the historian of the Amalgamated Engineers Society, argued that workers were drawn in by the sympathy element, although 'behind this were the pent-up frustrations of the war years'. Similarly, in 1980, Michael McKernan argued that such a great disruption 'out of an apparently trivial dispute', simply 'showed how deep were the antagonisms that had developed in Australia'. This view about the nature of the Strike echoed the argument presented a year earlier by labour historian, Ian Turner who had concluded that the 'card system was a small issue to precipitate such a big strike' and that the 'introduction of some means of recording jobs was not unreasonable'.

These views failed to appreciate the broader significance of the card-system for the strikers and their supporters. In the SDC's view, the Commissioner's claim that the system was 'a more modern and useful method of computing the cost of work – a harmless method of time-keeping', was absurd. It was not simply that the booking system of recording times already in place in the workshops provided 'ample data for readily arriving at the cost of any and all work'. More importantly, for the workers and their unions, the card-system was 'the entering wedge for what' they believed would follow, notably a system of management 'that

was being adapted to all classes of work, and throughout America, the home of high speed'. As the SDC's Manifesto of 11 August, published 2 days later in the *Daily Telegraph*, put it:

*'What is meant by the card system? It means to the worker ... a system of speeding up of the workman to his utmost capacity, and of pitting him against his fellows, and against himself – a system which aims to ... make him a machine in the crudest sense of the word. It means slavery!'*

The effect, as they saw it, was that the workers' individuality would be 'completely smothered'; workers would become 'part of the machine', required to work until they 'could work no faster and' be 'discharged when' they 'failed any longer to keep up the pace required by the system and the "speeder-up"'. As Labor Senator Albert Gardiner emphasised at a mass meeting of tramway employees held at Centennial Park on Sunday 12 August, the card-system was 'a degradation' and a breach of the working conditions that were contained in their industrial award.

This belief that the card-system posed a broad threat to workers and their conditions provides some insight into daily processions that had been held in support of the Strike during the preceding week and the massive demonstration that occurred at the Domain on Sunday 12 August, which the *Daily Telegraph* suggested was 'probably the greatest gathering ever witnessed' there. Equally important was the point made by numerous speakers on this occasion that the upheaval was based on a concerted effort by the Government to smash trade unionism. It was the Government that speakers condemned at the Domain the next day, as the real enemy of Australia because it was attempting to institute a 'machine slave system'. From this point demonstrations at the Domain attracted between 80,000 and 150,000 people.

The Government was, however, unresponsive to these protests. Mass dismissal of railway and tramway strikers for misconduct began on 14 August. Even so only 1,300 workers returned before the Government's ultimatum expired. These men, together with those who the strikers called

'scabs' became known as **Loyalists**. Those who remained on strike became known as **Lily-Whites** and wore buttons on their coats adorned by a white lily.



Lily-White Badge  
[courtesy of Mrs  
Dorothy Jones].

The Lily-White identity was recalled with pride by Leslie Best, a junior member of the iron workers' union who was a shop boy at Eveleigh. As he recalled in 1987:

*'Well they all went out. They all downed tools one morning and went out, everybody was called out, see. ... I was what they called a Lily-White. I was out at the required time, you know, for the strike, I never, as they called it scabbed it, you know. But I was in the band. They had a Strike Defence Committee band .... They had a ribbon printed - Strike Defence Committee Band – to put round our hats. And we took the men, we marched with the band out to the tramway works. They were all out, on strike too, at Randwick'.*

Eight Lily-Whites, whose personnel cards were stamped 'Dismissed by Proclamation – Left work on Strike', later became prominent Australian politicians. Included among them were Ben Chifley, engine-driver, Bathurst; W.J. Long, Eveleigh boilermaker; E.J. Ward, Eveleigh shop-boy; J.J. Cahill, Eveleigh fitter; C.H. Matthews, Eveleigh shop-boy; W.T.J. Murray, Eveleigh ganger; G.W.H. Noble, Eveleigh gasfitter; W.T. Padgen,

Eveleigh machinist. This same fate befell 2,000 strikers, although Cahill's card was annotated with the word: 'Agitator' and Padgen's with 'Strike Leader'.

Personal employment history card of Joe Cahill. [NSW State Archives NRS 12922]

DATE	POSITION	STATION	BRANCH	RATE OF PAY	REMARKS
2 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	Ambulance Cert. 19.9.17
2 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
6 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
10 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
14 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
17 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
18 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
19 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
20 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
21 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
22 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
23 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
24 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
25 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
26 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
27 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
28 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
29 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
30 July 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
1 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
14 Aug 1917	Dismissed by Proclamation	Left work on Strike			
19 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
20 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
21 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
22 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
23 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
24 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
25 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
26 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
27 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
28 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
29 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	
30 Aug 1917	Apprentice	Eveleigh	Locomotive	10/6	

Protest in the mining communities was immediate. Large crowds gathered at several centres in and around Wollongong. At one, William Davies MLA for Wollongong, described this 'most diabolical piece of legislation' as a clear attempt 'to smash trade unionism'.

This view was reinforced by the Railway Commissioner's application to deregister striking unions and the Government's recruitment of strike-breakers. Initially, they relied on 'volunteers' from local private boys' schools, such as Sydney Grammar, and Sydney university students, something well documented in the pages of various newspapers.



Sydney Grammar boys volunteering (Sydney Mail 22nd August, 1917)

The Government's persistent attempts to adjourn sittings in Parliament during such a critical time, its unwillingness to appoint an independent inquiry, and its blatant coercion of workers and their organisations, all suggested that democracy was being 'gagged'. In addition, the 'army of detectives' sent 'to take notes of the speeches being made at all public meetings associated with the Strike and the censorship of letters and telegrams addressed to Trades Hall were interpreted as a 'dictatorial attitude' in support of 'Czar Fraser'.

This did not stop the Government from taking more drastic actions, which escalated matters further. On 14 August, it commandeered all privately-owned motor vehicles in NSW and the next day it also commandeered all coal stocks. William Daly, the Vice President of the Seaman's Union was arrested on a 'charge of conspiracy to instigate members of his union to strike'. Also from 15 August, the Government began flagrantly attacking trade unionism and occupational health and safety by forcing an amendment to *The Coal Mines Regulation Act* through Parliament to enable 'volunteer' labour to be employed in the mines.

Yet not all private school students opposed the strikers. According to Kylie Tennant, Mary Alice Sheffer, a senior student at an Anglican Girls School in North Sydney and future wife of the Labor leader, H.V. Evatt, disregarded claims that the strikers were pro-German traitors and 'marched her friends down to the tramway sheds in the lunch hour' to the delight of the strikers.

By mid-August, however, the Government had enlisted the support of the conservative Farmers & Settlers Association and Primary Producers



Union to find 'volunteers' in rural areas where unemployment was high. These strike-breakers were provided free accommodation at Eveleigh, in the Sydney Cricket Ground, and later at Taronga Park Zoo in Sydney and in various places around Newcastle. The Strike-breakers were given free food and beer, as well as entertainment. Jack Lang noted that '5,000 young farmers were brought to Sydney' and were paid twelve shillings per day, while the soldiers who were brought in to support them received six shillings a day.



Strikebreakers from the Upper Hunter region during the 1917 strike. *State Library of NSW*

Tension created by this recruitment was made particularly clear on 18 August, when several thousand people gathered outside the Sydney Cricket Ground, 'nicknamed the "Scabs" Collecting Ground' according to Dan Coward, where they 'boo-hooed' and threw blue metal at the 'volunteers' inside until they were dispersed by mounted police. In addition, as Coward points out, the Federal Government also intervened to support these State Government actions. Using its War Precautions regulations, Prime Minister Hughes 'established a National Service Bureau ... to recruit volunteer labour for coaling, loading and discharging ships.

When the Bureau began its operations on 24 August, it also supplied labour for the coal mines'.

Outside of Sydney protest grew in response to the enlistment of strike-breakers. In Newcastle, a procession of over 14,000 people carried a banner inscribed 'Defence not Defiance', while public meetings in Bourke, Bathurst, Lithgow, Orange and West Maitland, and of the Eight Hour Association and the Labor Council in Armidale condemned the Government's support for the card-system and urged it to support the system's withdrawal and an inquiry into this and other grievances including the maladministration of the Railway and Tramway Department, the curtailment of public works, rising unemployment, food prices and the cost of living. In Sydney, the number of women involved increased with most wearing a red solidarity ribbon. One banner inscribed: 'Railway Room Girls Stand Loyal for Pre-war conditions' was carried on Monday 13 August by the waitresses from the refreshment rooms at Sydney's Central Station, who marched to the Domain singing 'Solidarity Forever'. As their leader, a Miss Hughes told the crowd, the women had been locked out because they refused a directive from their manager to serve 'volunteers' in railway and tramway uniform.

By 15 August, the Strike had been joined by firemen, engine drivers and cleaners, moulders, boilermakers, electrical trade employees, coach makers, railway carriage and wagon builders, coal-lumpers, carpenters and joiners, miners, seamen, marine stewards and pantry-men, wharf labourers, carters, trolley and draymen, meat industry employees, ships painters and dockers and other employees of the Government Dockyards at Cockatoo and Garden Islands. At the same time the Operative Bakers Association, the Storeman and Packer's Union, the Federated Painters and Decorators and the Ferry Deckhands Union had all placed themselves in the hands of the SDC. As one Domain speaker reported, the SDC's difficulty was keeping men at work 'as they were eager to throw in their lot with the rest'. Only 14 members of the Coach makers' Union with a membership of 2000 (1500 who worked for the Railways) did not join in the Strike.

In addition, a meeting of 'electors' in West Maitland, protested that the Government had 'denied [the] men of their final Court of Appeal' by identifying itself with the Railway Commissioners. Public meetings held in the Sydney suburbs of Glebe, Newtown, Surry Hills, Rockdale, Redfern, Marrickville, Kings Cross, Botany and Paddington, also unanimously carried a resolution which stated that '[t]his public meeting of citizens, comprising all shades of political opinion, urges the Government to at once appoint an Independent Tribunal'. Demonstrations at the Sydney Domain reiterated this on a daily basis. The Government's lack of response led to the view that it had 'entered upon a vicious campaign of trying to starve the men into submission'. This led Henry Boote, a labour journalist and opponent of Conscription to conclude on 16 August that the extension of the Strike and protest was a 'revolt against Government tyranny'.

Albert Talbot, the Anglican Dean and Archdeacon of Sydney, concurred with this view, albeit less vehemently, commenting at the Anglican Provincial Synod that there had been 'a breach of faith with the workers' because the Government had promised not to alter conditions during the war. His argument that the Government's 'unrelinquishing policy' was 'going far beyond common justice' and 'alienating public sympathy' was immediately applauded by strikers and their supporters. A placard during the following day's procession stated: 'Give Three Cheers for the Dean of Sydney when passing St. Andrews'. He also received praise from members of the Postal Sorters and Letter Carriers' Union employed at Sydney's GPO, the Boilermaker's Union and at public meetings in Bathurst and Sydney's Town Hall, amongst others. By this time, cement, wheat, flour, fodder, bread, meat and milk had all been declared black.

Working people's sense of outrage was reinforced by the Government's campaign of arresting significant members of the labour movement. On 18 August, Claude Thompson, Secretary of the ARTSA, Edward Kavanagh MLC and Secretary of the Labor Council and Albert Willis, Secretary Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, were all arrested on charges of conspiracy. The latter's arrest led to a spontaneous walk out by Victorian miners in Wonthaggi. The cases were not heard until after the Strike ended and those charged were acquitted.

In light of these events it is not surprising that the demonstration in Sydney on Sunday, 19 August, was the largest ever witnessed at the Domain, according to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which reported that 'some judges estimated 80,000, others 100,000 and not a few went so far as to say that 150,000 were present'. Most speakers asserted that this Government action would only strengthen the determination of unionists, but the strongest and most consistent call was for an independent tribunal to settle the dispute; an appeal that was echoed at a demonstration of two thousand people in the Wollongong suburb of Woonoona and another of 350 in Lithgow. Nevertheless, the ranks of strikers continued to grow. In Sydney, journeymen butchers, grocery packers and storemen and sugar refinery employees withdrew their labour as did mine mechanics in Maitland and an additional 7,000 in Broken Hill. The Government, however, remained belligerent.

As the Strike continued to spread, workers and unions reiterated the rationale underpinning their action. As the NSW Branch of the Federated Bricklayers Union put it on 22 August, the Branch was 'in full sympathy with our fellow unionists who are out on strike on a principle'. According to Bollard, 'by 23 August, there were 2,300 "volunteers" at work, mostly as drivers and on the waterfront. On 25 August a second major camp for volunteers was opened at Taronga Park Zoo, initially housing 1,200' and by '27 August there were 3,000 volunteers working. In addition to the 200 working at the abattoirs, there were a large, but unrecorded, number working as carters, 500 at Cockatoo Docks and a number at CSR'.

In the meantime, union deregistration began in earnest. According to the Report on the 1917 Crisis produced by the Industrial Commissioner, J.B. Holme and later also V.G. Childe, the full force of the Arbitration System was brought to bear against the unions which were deemed to have contravened Section 10 of the State's industrial legislation by 'instigating or aiding any other union or any of its members in a lock-out or a strike'. In justifying this action, Justice Heydon told the Industrial Court on 23 August: 'By acting together they aided each other, and by aiding each other they brought themselves under Section 10'. Heydon then used a sleight of hand to legally support his decision by adding: 'Their proper course was to come

to the Court. If the card system comes within the jurisdiction of the Court, the Court could have considered it'. This profoundly contradicted his own earlier ruling that the card-system did not come within the purview of the Court because it was 'a mere detail of workshop management'. According to Childe, in a country in which 'claims for the [Arbitration] Court had become the chief function of unionism', the deregistration of 22 unions was an extremely 'serious matter'.

A further attack occurred on 24 August when the Acting Premier announced that the Government would no longer negotiate with individuals or groups on behalf of the strikers as it considered strike committees illegal. It then also instructed Benevolent Societies to refuse support to the families of the strikers. The 'pressures of starvation' had already been noted in the previous day's *Australian Worker*, where Henry Boote commented: 'we have paid in turmoil and tears all that we can afford at present'. A month later, a poem appeared in the same newspaper by the Australian writer and journalist, Mary Gilmore, who eloquently summed up the effect of the Government's intransigence and belligerence, as well as the increasingly dire economic circumstances experienced by the strikers and their families:

THE GOVERNMENT STROKE by Mary Gilmore, *Australian Worker*, 27 September 1917

*Starve baby; starve!*  
*Daddy went on strike!*  
*We can't get at him;*  
*We can treat you as we like.*  
*Starve baby; starve!*  
*Soon you should be dead!*  
*We can't get at daddy,*  
*So we get at you instead!*  
*Starve baby; Starve!*  
*(Pinched and pale and Blue):*  
*When we can't jail daddy*  
*We can deal it out to you!*

Inevitably, these developments caused protest to escalate. Sydney's Waterloo Council carried a resolution condemning the Government and a meeting of returned soldier trade-unionists resolved to form a 'joint body of workers and soldiers' to uphold pre-war industrial conditions. In Broken Hill, protest meetings led to increasingly violent confrontations with police particularly after they were reinforced by one hundred South Australian 'blues'. Railway workers and miners met in Thirroul and Wollongong to organize a route-march to Sydney and a number of mass meetings were held in Newcastle.



'Argent Street, Broken Hill, Where Many Notable Demonstrations Have Taken Place'. *The Sydney Mail*, 29 August 1917

Further arrests followed. Percy Brookfield MP, and unionists George Waite and Edward Parry were all charged with having made statements at the Domain which were prejudicial to recruiting for the war effort. Thomas Mutch, MP for the electorate of Botany and a member of the SDC, was charged with having used insulting words and Thomas Robinson and William Daley, both executive members of the Seamen's Union, were charged with conspiracy to instigate a strike. In response, the Leader of the Labor Opposition launched a Censure Motion against the Government in the NSW Parliament. Generally, protest against these arrests was repeatedly framed as



criticism of the Government's 'despotic' attitude. At the same time a meeting of approximately 500 at Newcastle Trades Hall and a meeting of Paddington Council both called on the Government to withdraw the card-system and to appoint an independent inquiry. The Government, however, remained deaf to these popular appeals and the arrests continued. T.J. McCristal, an ex-serviceman and President of the Wharf Labourers' Union; George Kerr, President of the Amalgamated Miners Association; and Ned Riley, a wharf labourer were charged with sedition. These circumstances led to an increase in violent incidents in Sydney, the South Coast, Broken Hill, Newcastle, Bathurst and Ulmarra. And this, in turn, provided the Government with a justification for the arming of 'volunteers' with revolvers.

Protest continued to escalate. On Sunday 26 August, an estimated one hundred thousand waited at the Domain for the arrival of the procession. Marching in the vanguard was a contingent carrying a banner inscribed: 'Returned Sailor and Soldier Unionists Stand Solid behind their fellow workers in the Dinkum Fight for Justice'. Walter Padgen, a machinist at Eveleigh from 1910 and union official, told the gathered crowd that the strikers 'were only asking for a fair deal'. The following day, the *Herald* and *Telegraph* reported that Padgen had also stressed that the Strike was not the work of a few agitators, but 'a spontaneous revolt of 80,000 workers against tyranny and arrogance'.

The conflict and tension caused by the Government's actions and the employment of strike-breaking farmers was recalled by John Mongan, an eleven-year-old in 1917, whose family was affected by the strike because one of his uncles was an engine-driver at Eveleigh and another was a train guard. Referring to the strike-breaking farmers by the Australian slang term 'cocky', he described how 'all the strikers would be lined up in the street and be singing "pretty cocky" to them' as they drove 'wagons down Sussex Street'.



'How the strikers greeted the Loyalists'. *Sydney Mail*, 15 August 1917

These sorts of encounters were mild compared to an altercation that happened on 30 August at 4.45pm, opposite the Children's Hospital in Bridge Road, Camperdown.

The incident began much as Mongan described, with carters hurling abusive language at two passing strike-breakers. In response, Reginald James Wearne from Bingara, brother of W.E. Wearne, the conservative NSW MP for the rural seat of Namoi, raised his revolver against the group. Two striking carters were shot, Mervyn Flanagan in the heart and Henry Williams, in the leg. On Saturday 1 September, thousands of trade unionists and their families marched from the Sydney Trades Hall to the Mortuary Station, adjacent to the Central Railway, as part of a funeral procession for Mervyn Ambrose Leslie Flanagan. It stretched for over a mile and held up traffic for one hour. One eye witness remarked on 'the tragedy of despotism now sweeping over our fair land gathering its victims one by one'. John Mongan, remembered being 'at the tail end of that procession', adding: 'You see it was a big thing' because in 'that era it was class warfare ... the other class was trying to ground the lower class lower'. The dispute, he said, 'was civil war on a small scale you see, because after this disturbance a lot of the farmers used to bring rifles with them'.

Five days later the *Australian Worker* published a poem, which painted a vivid picture of the protest and sentiments that motivated it: 'SONG OF THE STRIKE' by 'Rufus (on strike)', *Australian Worker*, 6 September 1917.

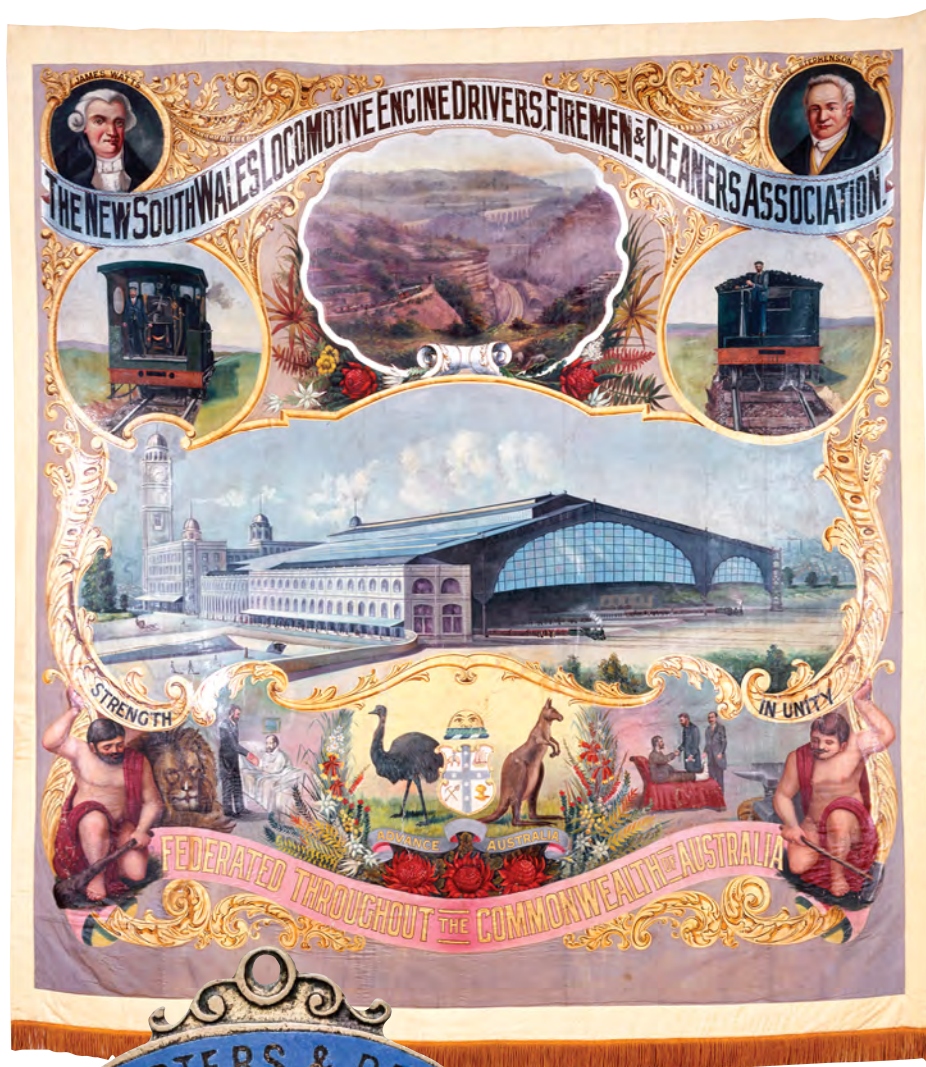
*Tramp, tramp, tramp! Can't you hear the marching feet,  
As the sturdy sons of labor come swinging down the street?  
With manly step and bearing, and faces shining bright,  
They have taken up the gauntlet in the battle for the right.  
In the van are Labor's heroes who've fought and shed their blood  
To save our daunted freedom being trampled in the mud.  
They can hear their comrades calling, from far across the sea,  
As we fight in France for freedom, fight to keep our homeland free.  
We have fought the German Tyrant and have written Austral's name  
In imperishable letters, high upon the scroll of fame;  
But our blood was spilt for nothing and our sacrifice were in vain  
If our own dear Australia is bound by Serfdom's chain.*

During the first week of September mobilization peaked in the mining centres. Repeated attempts to hold mass meetings in Broken Hill led to a total of thirty-eight arrests. In Lithgow, Wallerawang, Portland and Cullen Bullen, the introduction of strike-breakers into the mines united the residents in further protest. Many marched to Lithgow, where on 4 September, 1,200 people gathered at the Town Hall to call for an independent tribunal. Similarly, in Helensburgh, protest meetings continued to condemn the Government's 'unbending attitude' and its refusal to 'adopt a spirit of conciliation'. On the day that a major march of miners and their sympathisers arrived in Sydney from the South Coast, crowd numbers at the Domain swelled again to approximately 120,000. As Willis told the crowd, it was evident that the Government had no power to settle the dispute because: 'Ministers had always to consult the Employer's Federation' which was 'the power behind the throne'. In the meantime, concerns about the card-system continued with the President of the ASE stressing that 'The card system was going to rob the workman

of the brotherhood of man' and that it would 'put them back into the middle ages'.

The concerns of all the striking workers coalesced around the fears that the card-system, changes to the mine regulation laws and recruitment of strike-breakers, all undermined the social cohesion which allowed them to act in concert to enforce protective standards through their industrial and political organisations. Their concerns were sharpened by the fact that 5,833 strike-breakers were being employed in and around Sydney by 4 September with just over 1,000 on the waterfront, as well as by the cancellation of the Trolley and Draymen's Award and of the union preference clause in the Waterside Workers' Award on 8 September, which affected ports in Bowen, Mackay, Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne and Fremantle.

By this time, the dire circumstances had led to a number of efforts to resolve the turmoil. Efforts made the preceding week by the Lord Mayor of Sydney, R.D. Meagher MLC, to negotiate a settlement between the SDC and the Government had ended in failure. On 6 September, the NSW Industrial Commissioner, J.B. Holme became involved in an effort to resolve the railway and tramway dispute and over the next few days, the SDC attempted to negotiate the terms of settlement. Three days later, a settlement was accepted, much to the disappointment and hostility of many thousands of strikers. Its terms, which included the retention of the card-system and a clause that gave the Railway Commissioner discretion to fill all vacancies, caused the greatest anger and opposition. Workers clearly did not trust the inclusion of a statement that consideration would be given to those who had been employed by the railways and tramways before 1 August, nor confirmation that work would be resumed 'without resentment' or vindictiveness. As they rightly surmised, this term was contravened from the moment that the railway and tramway dispute officially ended on 10 September.



Banner of The New South Wales Locomotive Engine, Firemen and Cleaners Association.

(Sydney Trades Hall Collection)

The Carters and Drivers Badge. In Commemoration of 1917 Strike. (courtesy Greg Piper Photography)

Why did the SDC capitulate? In Patmore's view there were three major reasons:

- (i) 'the Strike Committee did not have sufficient funds for strike pay';
- (ii) extreme hardship was causing increasing numbers of railway and tramway workers to return to work;
- (iii) 'there was concern at the "inexhaustible" supply of' strike-breakers, 'who management were promising the railway strikers' jobs'.

The return to work was, however, extremely problematic; when they arrived to sign on, rail and tram strikers found themselves required to fill out individual re-employment application forms, contrary to agreements with the Rail Commissioner. Seven thousand declined to sign the forms.

In the meantime, as Jurkiewicz noted, 'workers in other industries were left to negotiate their own terms of settlement with respective employers'. Coal miners, waterside workers and seamen did not return to work until mid-October. The fact that 'seventeen collieries were producing coal' with 'the use of inexperienced labour', meant that coalminers 'were forced into a bitter surrender by starvation'. Their acceptance of the humiliating and degrading terms of settlement was done 'resentfully', according to Coward. Similarly, the wharf labourers who had 'stood by' their 'fellow-unionists', on what their union's President referred to as 'a matter of principle,' were thwarted by strike-breaking-labour on the waterfront. As Coward put it: 'Re-employment for strikers was a



humiliating affair'. The application forms adopted by the Railways and Tramways Department were used as a means of identifying those who would be denied re-employment or of cutting the grades, seniority and rates of pay of those who were reinstated. Similar approaches were adopted by private sector employers. At the Newcastle steelworks owned by BHP, returning strikers 'were forced to sign forms giving personal details of their age, height, colouring, distinguishing marks, marital status, and number of children'. Thousands refused to resume on such terms. Included among them were railway and tramway workers, meat industry, timber and gas workers, carpenters and joiners, coach makers, boilermakers, seamen and miners, not only in Sydney but also in country areas, such as Orange. According to Julie Kimber, while some workers in Orange were told 'their services were no longer required', many refused to return' to work believing that 'they "had been tricked" by the Government and Defence Committee'. Meanwhile in Bathurst conflict raged between workers who resumed work and those who did not.

The impact of the Strike was immense. Writing about NSW coalminers, in 1963, Robin Gollan commented that at no other time before or since had 'victorious employers exacted such a high price from defeated strikers', nor had unionists been left 'so angry and bitter'. As he characterised it, the aftermath: 'was open season for vindictive informers'. Kimber notes that 'there were numerous cases of victimisation' in Orange and that 'at the Orange railway station ... it is not until 1919' that employment numbers 'reached levels before the strike'. This outcome was extremely widespread.

**A**s Childe pointed out in 1923:

*The aftermath lasted long. The working class of Sydney experienced a period of distress and actual starvation which had not been paralleled in their generation. Thousands of families were driven to subsist on public charity which was given with no generous hand. On the railways and tramways, despite promises of no vindictiveness, those strikers who were lucky enough to get back at all were shown no mercy. All their accumulated privileges and seniority were forfeited, and they were treated worse than fresh recruits to the service.*

Strike-breakers kept their new jobs and the Department explicitly focused on ensuring a compliant labour force by drawing up lists of its former employees who had participated in the Strike and the picket lines. Included were those who were thought to be either sympathetic to the IWW or simply 'indifferent' workers. On this basis, it refused to re-employ 2,000 strikers. Unionists and activists were at the forefront of those black-listed. According to Buckley, engineering union officials and shop stewards were told their 'services were not required' after the Strike and even in 1918, 135 members of this union had not been re-employed. For many, it would take years before they obtained work with the Department. Those who did, received lower grades and therefore pay and lost their superannuation rights. This had a huge impact on Ben Chifley, who had worked for the

railways from 1903. According to Waterson, when he was reinstated at 'the lower rank of fireman' on 8 October, he 'found himself working for former subordinates (some of whom he had trained) who had been given advancement for scabbing'. Chifley later told his biographer, L.F. Crisp, that this left 'a legacy of bitterness and a trail of hate'. As he put it: '*All that harsh and oppressive treatment did as far as I was concerned was to transform me, with the assistance of my colleagues, from an ordinary engine-driver into the Prime Minister of this country*'.

Further animosity arose when employer sponsored unions were formed and registered by the NSW Industrial Court. As Patmore explained, on the railways, they were given privileged access to premises to post notices and collect subscriptions, while being paid for normal duties. These were avoided by strikers who regained jobs and who therefore formed their own ad hoc, and generally short-lived committees to deal with specific local issues. As Fraser later admitted in 1922 to Justice Edmunds:

*Several new Service unions were formed in accordance with the Commissioner's design, but they were composed almost exclusively of volunteers and loyalists, most of the unionists preferring to retain their membership in the old unions although these had been deregistered.*

Employers in other industries adopted similar practises to undermine existing unions. According to Coward, members of the General Textile Workers' Union of NSW, 'were required to sign a form which obliged them to resign from their union "when called upon by the employer to do so"' and to 'join and support such new union as the employer shall approve'.

Recruitment of workers in many other sectors was also fundamentally changed. In May before the General Strike, the *Australian Worker* had noted that Sydney Trades Hall provided rooms specifically for the location of workers for Government jobs. As J.B. Holme later reported, during the Strike these were closed down when the Government no longer saw fit to employ union labour. This shift was also evident outside the public sector. After the Strike, instead of communicating with union offices to find

labour for the waterfront, steamship owners were able to centralise and control recruitment through the Shipping Labour Bureau. Akin to what we now call a labour-hire company, this agency adopted a method of registration to ensure that only those 'with a reasonably clean record' would be employed and those 'who had been associated with the IWW' could be excluded.

The Nationalist Government fulfilled its promise to hold an inquiry by appointing Justice Curlewis to investigate the card-system in 1918. For the strikers this was deemed 'a farce'. As the *Herald* reported on 24 January 1918, for Walter Padgen, this appointment demonstrated that the Government was 'about to perpetrate a grave and costly scandal, presumably for the purpose of grossly deceiving the public of New South Wales and to white-wash themselves'. It was 'making a mockery of Justice' since Curlewis had 'frequently dealt very trenchantly with the unions which would be called upon to support their contentions before the commission' and his 'many expressions' over the years had proved him to be biased against unions. Predictably, this Inquiry found that the card-system had not been detrimental to the workers, although the Judge was forced to admit that the cards could be used 'to the detriment' of workers if a foreman was 'disposed to be spiteful or vindictive'.

Doreen McClelland's father, a railway worker, was 'very bitter against this scab labour men [sic] and the breakaway Railway Union that was formed by these men', condemning them for being 'unprincipled'. Such sentiments were widespread. Speakers at ensuing demonstrations continued to focus on the Government's 'cruelty', particularly insofar as it was allowing women and children to starve. Increasingly, the 'One Big Union' was advocated as the only solution to crises such as this one.

By 1919, the Department's *Railway and Tramway Magazine* was openly admitting that the card-system's adoption in the Department's branches involved the recording of employee's motions, a process that enabled deskilling. Evidence of this was provided when management implemented a type of labour substitution by allowing boy-labour to perform work previously done by skilled tradesmen and deemed that some work, such

as that done by moulders, would no longer be classed as skilled. In addition, management ensured that the information recorded on the cards would now include the employee's history, position, pay-rate, debits for offences committed and credits for increased output; precisely those elements that Taylor had specified for inclusion on the instruction cards for workers that were a pivotal element of scientific management.

The card-system enabled the sub-foremen to calculate the time taken 'instead of asking'. The duties of the sub-foremen were also extended so they could not only supervise that work, but also check it, and 'see that the employee conducts himself properly'. It was up to them, rather than the workers, to record the time taken by each individual in the performance of tasks. This, according to Leslie Best was 'the fly in the ointment'. 'Who ever heard of foremen being told to stand over and watch good workmen in order to get good results from their labour?', asked John Storey in the Legislative Assembly. By 1918 railway workers were using the term 'over-supervision' in their objections to the card-system's administration by the new sub-foremen. In his testimony at the Curlewis Royal Commission, Padgen said that when he returned to the workshops in 1918 on an errand, he 'saw more foremen than workmen. They seemed to be falling over one another', adding that there was nothing 'more aggravating to a man than to have a very large number of officials continually hopping around him like flies around a honey-pot'. These sub-foremen were distrusted, Padgen told Curlewis because they were thought to be capable of including 'false particulars' about the workers on the cards that they filled in and locked in a box 'with Yale locks on the doors'. When asked by Curlewis: 'Did you say that the men were picked as sub-foremen who had no sympathy with working men, men who did not believe in a fair day's work, but in sweating men...?', Padgen replied emphatically: 'Yes, and I believe it too'.

In short, the card-system increased surveillance over workers precisely as the strikers had anticipated. Their prediction that the System would intensify work was also borne out. As F.B. Shenstone, Manager of the Randwick workshops, told the Curlewis Commission, 'old employees' who regained employment with the Department after the Strike began to work at

a faster pace having been 'drawn into the speed set up' and the 'vigilance incorporated into Eveleigh by the loyalist workers'; the University graduates who had volunteered for workshop service during the Strike had 'set a pace' that was 'to be envied' and it was this pace that was followed when strikers came back to work.



Sub-Foremen Loyalists. [NSW State Archives NRS 15309]



## ENDURING PAIN AND STRUGGLE

The formation and registration of employer unions created formal divisions between workers. According to labour historians, Patmore and Hearn, 'loyalists' and Lily-whites refused to talk to each other or socialise during lunch-breaks on the railways and many workers who gained railway employment during the 1920s recalled the continuing hostilities. John Mongan, who started in 1925 at Enfield before being appointed as a permanent cleaner at Clyde in 1926 recalled: 'I saw some near violence in the barracks between strikers and the loyalists'. Similarly, Stan Jones, whose father lost his job as a result of his involvement in the Strike and who obtained employment at Eveleigh during the late 1920s noted in 1988, that:

*'After the strike unionism became a somewhat difficult organisation. Representatives on the job found that they were being harassed by the new supervisors. The Railway Commissioner ... gave assistance to what was regarded at the time as the Commissioner's or employer's union ... this made it difficult for ordinary union activity on the job to be carried on'.*

In the years after the Strike, general concern grew about the dismissal and victimisation of the strikers, and the demotion of those who were re-employed as well as the findings of the Curlewis Royal Commission. The major swing against the Nationalist Government in the NSW election in March 1920, resulting in a Labor Government, increased pressure for another inquiry. On taking office, Premier John Storey immediately appointed a Royal Commissioner into the gaoling of the twelve IWW

members who had been arrested in 1916 and directed the Railway Commissioner to restore jobs and seniority to 2,000 railways workers. After Fraser refused to comply, the Storey Government appointed a Royal Commission into the Administration, Control and Economy of the Railway and Tramway Services of NSW. Headed by Justice Walter Edmunds and conducted between 13 October 1920 and 28 November 1921, this inquiry investigated the continued victimisation of the strikers and the violation of the strike settlement, interviewing 295 witnesses in the process. H.V. Evatt appeared for the railway and tramway unions.

Justice Edmunds found that railway management had 'violated the terms of the strike settlement': 'volunteers' and 'loyalist' were given preferential treatment in recruitment processes, thereby denying 'procedural justice' for the strikers. He therefore recommended the restoration of seniority for the strikers and re-employment for future vacancies. Unfortunately, these recommendations were ignored by the Nationalists Government that was elected in April 1922. As a result, the Lily-whites' victimisation became a cause celebre for the State's labour movement.

The continuing bitterness in the workshops led the ARTSA's successor, the Australian Railways Union to step up its political campaign in the Labor Party (ALP) and at its annual state conferences against the continued existence of the loyalist unions. Both matters were directly addressed by the Leader of the NSW ALP, J.T. Lang in his election campaign of 1925 and immediately after his victory in May, Lang moved to fulfil his promises. First, he removed them from the schedule of industrial unions contained in his Government's *Industrial Arbitration (Amendment) Bill*. In addition, when Lang's personal instruction to the Railway Commissioner to restore the victimized railway and tramway employees' rights and entitlements was challenged in the Court of Equity, he introduced the *Railways Amendment and Reinstatement Act*, which came into force on Christmas Eve. As Lang put it in his autobiography, *I Remember*, 'That was our Xmas present to the Lily-Whites'. A few years later, in 1927, he introduced a Bill to amend the *Railways Act* so that employee representatives could be added to the Railway and Tramway Commission.

Lang's efforts on behalf of railway workers, while successful, were entirely reliant on his maintenance of Office. When he lost the 1927 election, the conservative Bavin Government moved rapidly to undo the Lily-Whites' reinstatement. So, on his re-election in 1930, Lang had to restore their positions yet again. During this second period in government, which lasted until 1932, Lang again showed himself to be responsive to the concerns of railway workers and their unions by taking the Railways portfolio for himself as he explained at length in his book, *The Great Bust*. In this capacity, he addressed the most significant legacies of the 1917 Strike by challenging the time-keeping system adopted in 1917, as well as the Halsey bonus payment scheme that was introduced to Eveleigh in 1918. This bonus scheme had been linked to scientific management in the USA in 1910 when it was implemented at the American Government's Watertown Arsenal, where it was combined with task setting by time study. This resulted in massive industrial action there, just as the card-system did in the NSW railways and tramways in 1917.

At Eveleigh, this bonus scheme based payment on past performances and allocated bonuses to specifically selected jobs. Between 1921 and 1925, the number of employees affected by this payment system increased fourfold, while the number of bonus tasks at Eveleigh expanded from 1,000 in 1927 to 4,198 in 1931. Lang appointed an inquiry into the Locomotive and Permanent Way branches in September 1931. And according to Patmore, after the assessed standards used for the bonus scheme at Eveleigh were found to be 'absurd and extravagant', the Lang Government abolished both the card and bonus systems in the NSW Railways in April 1932.

Nevertheless, Frank Bollins, who joined the railways in 1934, commented that 'the aftermath of the 1917 strike was still a predominant thought in the minds of many workers, and this was so right until the beginning of the 1960s, "remember the lessons of 1917" we were always told.'

This focus on political avenues to address industrial issues had its origins in the 1890s, when workers formed Labour Leagues and a number of railway workers were elected to the NSW Parliament as Labor Party representatives.

One was J.S.T. McGowen, a railway boilermaker between 1875 and 1891 mainly at Eveleigh, who represented Redfern from 1891 until 1917, becoming the first NSW Labor Premier in 1910. The other was William McKell, a boilermaker at Eveleigh in 1913 who won the Redfern electorate for Labor in 1917 and became NSW Premier and Treasurer in 1941, before being appointed the 12th Governor-General of Australia in 1947. After the Strike, eight Lily-whites, also became prominent Australian politicians. Included among them were:

- J.B. Chifley, who started as a shop boy in the Bathurst workshops in 1908, progressed to being an engine-driver by 1913 and became Prime Minister of Australia between 1945 and 1949;
- William John Long, an Eveleigh boilermaker from 1915 who became a Member of the Australian House of Representatives (MHR) for the southern Sydney electorate of Lang between 1928 and 1931;
- Eddie Ward, who started at the Eveleigh Stores as a junior canvas worker in 1916, was elected to represent the electorate of East Sydney in the Federal Parliament's House of Representatives in 1931, a seat he held until his death in 1963;
- John Joseph Cahill, who started at Eveleigh as an apprentice fitter, was elected as a NSW MP for the St. George electorate in 1925 and later became the NSW Premier between 1952 and 1959;
- Claude Hilton Matthews, who started as an Eveleigh shop-boy in June 1917 and became the MP for Leichhardt in 1934, a seat he retained until 1954;
- William Thomas Joseph Murray, an Eveleigh Loco shop boy from 1907, who was also a fitter's labourer and ganger before the Strike and who became a Marrickville Council Alderman between 1941 and 1959. In the meantime, he was appointed to the NSW Legislative Council in 1952 and remained there until 1976;
- George Walter Harry Noble, who began as an apprentice gasfitter at Eveleigh in 1908 and progressed to gasfitter in 1913,

becoming an Alexandria Council Alderman between 1928 and 1932 and MLA for Redfern between 1947 and 1949;

- Walter Thomas Padgen, who began as a Machinist at Eveleigh in 1910, was a Randwick Council Alderman between 1941 and 1948, becoming Mayor in 1948, two years after he was appointed to the NSW Legislative Council, a position he retained until 1955.

Others who followed a similar path included: William Ainsworth, a railway engine-driver at Eveleigh until 1911 and union representative on the 1917 Strike committee who became a member of the NSW Legislative Council (LC) in 1925; Gilbert Sinclair, an Eveleigh boilermaker in 1916 and Federal Secretary of his Union, who was a member of the NSW LC between 1931 and 1934; and H.V. Evatt, who was elected to the NSW Legislative Assembly for Balmain in 1925 and was subsequently appointed to the High Court of Australia in 1930, before being elected to represent the Federal seat of Barton in Sydney's south in 1940. As Attorney-General and Minister for External Affairs between 1941 and 1949, he played a role in the formation of the United Nations and was President of its General Assembly in 1948, when it adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

It is true that the Strike represented a major defeat for workers and many trade unions and was followed by renewed efficiency pursuits in the public and private sectors. Yet the brief profile of those who became active in Federal, State and Local politics after participating in the 1917 Strike, illustrates that the event also built a foundation for the future.

As a *Sydney Morning Herald* article, titled 'From Engine Driver to The Prime Minister's Lodge' put it, on 13 July 1945: 'If it had not been for the 1917 strike ... there might not have been any Ben Chifley on the Australian political stage to become Australia's seventh Labour Prime Minister'. It was the straightened circumstances he experienced after being demoted 'from a crack express driver' that 'gave the psychological fillip which committed his industrial thinking to the political avenues along which, as long as Australian democracy lasts, lies the way of rectification of industrial grievances'. In addition, the Strike had some other important outcomes for the labour movement.

The re-registration of some unions and the restructuring and registration of others, like the Australian Railway Union, enabled the phoenix to rise from the dead in a new form. On the Left, together with impetus from the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the defeat in NSW legitimated the push for 'One Big Union', and for rank-and-file shop-committees. Numerous workers, like Stan Jones, who began working at Eveleigh in the 1920s, became active in their unions and in such committees for decades to come. Their struggles were hard fought but resulted in major improvements in working conditions.

As Bollard correctly pointed out: the 'defeat was not a final defeat, but a sharp lesson to a movement that remained, in general, on an upward



*Sydney Mail*: 27 September 1905  
Blacksmiths' Shop - p. 807



Stan Jones 1932  
(Courtesy Mrs D. Jones)



trajectory. ... the rebuilding of the movement from the mid-1930s and into wartime' enabled 'more substantial and permanent victories' to be secured. Like Bollard, we are led to the inexorable conclusion that the solidarity of the workers of 1917 'was not misapplied'. What then are the lessons for us today? To answer this question, we need to end the story with a brief account of the longer term impact of scientific management.



Sydney Schoolboys as scabs. (*State Archives NSW NRS 15309*)

The ostensible removal of the card-system and other aspects of scientific management from the railways and tramways in the early 1930s did not prevent the system's spread. Today, as was the case 100 years ago, workers continue to struggle against a range of techniques that increase surveillance over their work, that speed-up and intensify work processes and that result in insecure employment. Taylor's active opposition to workers' ability to exert control over work performance and to trade unions continues to cast a shadow.

During the twentieth century, scientific management was narrowly associated with time and motion studies, financial incentives and clichés about the 'one best way' to accomplish every job. In my PhD, I challenged this narrow view by drawing attention to Taylor's argument that his system could 'be applied with equal force to all social activities', not just to industry but also to the management of homes, farms, churches, philanthropic institutions, universities and government departments. This broader thrust was clear to progressives. In 1913, the English economist, J.A. Hobson, commented in an article on scientific management that such so-called 'improved methods of working' opened up 'possibilities of opposition between the business and the human interest'. These possibilities surround us today as the influence of Taylor's system continues in a myriad of different forms. As Richard Dunford put it in 1992, 'the spirit of scientific management' has remained 'a significant influence on the design and operation of work organisations, a view that has been echoed repeatedly by a wide range of scholars.

Since the 1990s, a range of studies by scholars like Warner in 1994; Taneja, Pryor and Leslie in 2011; Mortenson, Doherty and Robinson in

2015, have identified links between scientific management and total quality management. In 2002, Bain, Watson, Mulvey, Taylor and Gall, argued that:

*'the application of Taylorist methods to organising work in the office has long historical antecedents. The integration of information and communication technologies in recent years has enabled management to expand monitoring of office work exponentially. Work in call centres represents the latest phase in these Taylorist developments, with attempts to elevate management control to new historical levels by target-setting and monitoring, in 'real time', both quantitative and qualitative aspects of employee performance.'*

In 2008, Brown, Lauder and Ashton referred to 'the twenty-first century' as 'the age of *digital Taylorism*', in which *knowledge work is translated 'into working knowledge through the extraction, codification and digitalisation of knowledge into software prescripts that can be transmitted and manipulated by others regardless of location'*. For Grugulis and Lloyd, this 'new form of deskilling' is now being applied to managerial and professional work. In addition, in 2013, Petter Øgland referred to wide range of scholars who all agreed that 'operations research, management science and systems analysis' built on Taylor's principles. The long-lasting and continuing impact of scientific management on adult, management and business education has also been outlined extensively by Taksa in 1995, 2004, 2007 and 2017.

Two decades ago, in 1997, Kanigel argued that Taylor, 'helped make modern life what it is – not only in the factory or even in the broader workplace but also everywhere'. A little over a decade later, in 2011, Giannantonio and Hurley-Hanson marked the centenary of Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*, by saying that 'Taylor changed the way people worked in the 20th century'. Writing in the same year, Wren argued that Taylor's 'ideas shaped how we live and think today'. As Evans and Holmes commented in 2013, Taylor's ghost '*is still very much alive in "high value" (so high skill) knowledge and service sector organisations, highlighting how contemporary knowledge workers are just as constrained by the principles of scientific management as the industrial workers Taylor studied in the early twentieth century'*.

Looking back to 1917, we see the courage with which workers collectively tried to prevent the negative effects of Taylor's system on their working conditions and working lives. Their industrial action and their words in public protest illustrate a penetrating insight into the devastation that scientific management would inevitably wreak on their skills, their workplace rights and environments, as much as on their personal wellbeing. Their industrial mobilisation was defeated and the cost to themselves and their families was immense. Collusive managers, governments and courts undermined industrial laws and traditions, and exercised no restraint in their victory. Yet from the ashes new initiatives were launched and further struggles were mounted to minimise the worst aspects of a system that increased surveillance over workers, intensified the pace of labour and increased employment insecurity. The successful efforts made subsequently by trade unions and Labor politicians and Governments to address the injustices of 1917, illustrate that only through concerted collective action can techniques that attack the workplace rights of working people be constrained.

## APPENDIX : DE-REGISTERED UNIONS

The following list identifies the dates on which applications were made to deregister each union, the union and the organisation that applied for the deregistration. This information has been drawn from 'A Calendar of Industrial Dislocations', NSW Industrial Gazette, Vol. XIII, No. 2, February, 1918, pp. 144-45 (Compiled by Unions NSW)

- Applicant: NSW Railway Commissioners  
23 August 1917 NSW Amalgamated Railway and Tramway Service Association  
23 August 1917 NSW Traffic Employees Association  
23 August 1917 NSW Government Tramway Employees Union  
23 August 1917 NSW Locomotive Engine Drivers and Firemen and Cleaners Association  
23 August 1917 Carrington Coal and Coke Shipping Union
- Applicant: Earp Woodcock Beveridge & Co Ltd & others:  
5 September 1917 Amalgamated Timber Workers Union of Australia NSW Branch  
11 September 1917 Newcastle and District Trolley Draymen and Carters' Union
- Applicant: Master Carriers' Association of NSW  
6 September 1917 Trolley Draymen and Carters' Union of Sydney and Suburbs
- Applicant: Colonial Sugar Refining Co Ltd.  
10 September 2017 Pymont Sugar Works Employees' Union
- Applicant: Drug Manufacturers Assoc. & Others  
10 September 1917 Federated Storemen and Packers' Union of Australia, NSW Branch

- Applicant: Minister for Labour and Industry  
13 September 1917 Amalgamated Society of Engineers, NSW District
- Applicant: Australian Gas Light Company  
17 September 1917 Gas Employees' Union
- Applicant: Warburton & Son and another  
19 September 1917 Wood and Coal Labourers' Union of NSW
- Applicant: West Wheel Co Ltd  
21 September 1917 Amalgamated Coachmakers Railway Car and Wagon Makers, Wheelwrights' Society of NSW
- Applicant: Minister for Labour and Industry  
24 September 1917 Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union  
25 September 1917 Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association of Australasia (Coast District)
- Applicant: Schwebbes Ltd.  
27 September 1917 Federated Liquor Trades Employees' Union
- Applicant: Broken Hill Pty. Ltd.  
28 September 2017 United Labourers' Protective Society of NSW  
28 September 2017 Core Workers' Association of NSW  
28 September 2017 Australasian Society of Engineers  
28 September 2017 Federated Ironworkers' Association of Aust., NSW Branch
- Applicant: Lupton & Co. and others  
30 October 1917 Wool and Basil Workers' Association of NSW
- Applicant: Sydney Ice Skating Rink and Cold Storage Co. Ltd.  
2 October 1917 The Cold Storage and Ice Employees' Union
- Applicant: James Couston  
12 December 1917 Newcastle Branch No. 4 of Boilermakers & etc Workers of Australia



## REFERENCES

### Unpublished Theses

- Bollard, R. (2007) The active chorus: the mass strike of 1917 in eastern Australia. *Unpublished* PhD Thesis. Victoria University.
- Coward, D. (1974) The Impact of War on New South Wales: Some Aspects of Social and Political History, 1914-1917. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Australian National University (ANU).
- Jurkiewicz, W. (1977) Conspiracy Aspects of the 1917 Strike. Unpublished Honours Thesis. University of Wollongong.
- Øgland, P. (2013). Mechanism design for total quality management: Using the bootstrap algorithm for changing the control game. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Oslo.
- Patmore, G.A. (1985) A History of Industrial Relations in the N.S.W. Government Railways: 1855-1929. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of Sydney.
- Taksa, L. (1983) Social Protests and the NSW "General Strike" of 1917. Unpublished Honours Thesis. University of NSW.
- Taksa, L. (1994) All A Matter of Timing: The Diffusion of Scientific Management in New South Wales, Prior to 1921. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of NSW.

### Articles

- Bain, P. et. Al. (2002) 'Taylorism, targets and the pursuit of quantity and quality by call centre management'. *New Technology, Work and Employment*.17:3: 170-185
- Bollard, R. (2006) 'The Active Chorus: The Great Strike of 1917 in Victoria'. *Labour History*. 90: 77-94.
- Bollard, R. (2010) 'The Great Strike of 1917 - Was Defeat Inevitable?', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*. 56 (2): 159-172.
- Brown, P., Lauder, H., and Ashton, D. (2008) 'Education, Globalisation and the Future of the Knowledge Economy', *European Educational Research Journal*, 7 (2): 131-156
- Fahey, C. and Lack, J. (2014) 'The Great Strike of 1917 in Victoria: Looking Fore and Aft, and from Below', *Labour History*
- Giannantonio C.M., and Hurley-Hanson A.E. (2011). 'Frederick Winslow Taylor: Reflections on the Relevance of the Principles of Scientific Management 100 Years Later.' *Journal of Business and Management*. 17: 7-10.
- Hobson, J.A. (1913) 'Scientific Management', *Sociological Review*, 6 (3): 197-212.
- Kimber, J. (2010) 'Patriotism and its discontents: a small town in a great strike', in Barnes, A., Balnave, N. and Lafferty, G. (eds.) *Proceedings of 'Work in Progress: Crises, Choices and Continuity', 24th Association of Industrial Relations Academics in Australia and New Zealand Conference (AIRAANZ)*. Sydney: AIRAANZ.
- Lack, J. (2015) 'The great madness of 1914-18': families at war on Melbourne's eastern and western fronts', *The La Trobe Journal*: 96: 59-87.

- Moore, A. and Taksa, L. (1988) 'Merv Flanagan: The Australian Labour Movement's Forgotten Martyr', *The Hummer: Newsletter of the Sydney Branch, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History- Labor Day 1988 Special Issue*, 21: 1-9.
- Mortenson, M.J., Doherty, N.F., and Robinson, S. (2015). "Operational Research from Taylorism to Terabytes: A Research Agenda for the Analytics Age." *European Journal of Operational Research*, 241 (3): 583-595.
- Taksa, L. (1988) 'The 1917 Strike: A Case Study in Working Class Community Networks', *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, 10: 22-38.
- Taksa L. (1994) 'Oral History and Collective Memory: Labour Rituals and Working Class Memory', *Oral History Association of Australia Journal*, 16: 46-52.
- Taksa, L. (1991) "'Defence Not Defiance": Social Protest and the NSW General Strike of 1917', *Labour History*. 60: 16-33.
- Taksa, L. (1992) 'Scientific Management: Technique or Cultural Ideology?', *Journal of Industrial Relations*. 34 (3): 365-395.
- Taksa, L. (1995) 'The Cultural Diffusion of Scientific Management: the United States and New South Wales', *Journal of Industrial Relations*. 37 (3): 427-461.
- Taksa, L. (1997) 'Scientific Management and the General Strike of 1917: Workplace Restructuring in the New South Wales Railways and Tramways Department', *Historical Studies in Industrial Relations*. 4: 37-64.
- Taksa, L. (1998) 'All a Matter of Timing: Managerial Innovation and Workplace Culture in the New South Wales Railways and Tramways prior to 1921', *Australian Historical Studies*. 110: 1-26.
- Taksa, L. (2007) 'Uniting Management and Education in Pursuit of Efficiency: F.W. Taylor's Training Reform Legacy', *Economic and Labour Relations Review*. 17 (2): 129-56.
- Taneja, S., Pryor, M.G., and Leslie A. (2011). "Frederick W. Taylor's Scientific Management Principles: Relevance and Validity", *Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, 16 (3): 60-87.
- Warner, M. (1994). 'Japanese Culture, Western Management: Taylorism and Human Resources in Japan'. *Organization Studies*, 15(4): 509-33.

### Books and Book Chapters

- Aitken, H.G.J. (1960) *Taylorism at Watertown Arsenal*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Bolton, G.C. (1996) 'Evatt, Herbert Vere (Bert) (1894-1965)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 14. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
- Boughton B., Taksa, L., and Welton, M., (2004) 'Histories of adult education', in Foley, G. (ed.), *Dimensions of Adult Education Learning*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin 3rd Edition, pp 121-36.
- Buckley, K. (1970) *The Amalgamated Engineers in Australia, 1852-1920*. Canberra: Dept. of Economic History, Research School of the Social Sciences, Australian National University.
- Childe, V.G. (1964) *How Labour Governs*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press [2nd edition; originally published, 1923, London: Labour Publishing Co.].

Coward, D. (1973) 'Crime and Punishment: The Great Strike of N.S.W. August to October, 1917', in Iremonger, J., Merritt, J. and Osborne, G. (eds) *Strikes: Studies in Twentieth Century Australian Social History*. Sydney: Angus & Robertson.

Crisp, L.F. (1960) *Ben Chifley: a political biography*. London: Longmans.

Golding, P. (2009) *They Called Him Old Smoothie: John Joseph Cahill*. Melbourne: Australian Scholarly Press.

Dunford, R. W. (1992). *Organisational Behaviour*. Sydney: Addison-Wesley

Evans, C., and Holmes, L. (2013) 'Introduction', in Evans, C. and Holmes, L. (eds) *Re-Tayloring Management: Scientific Management a Century On*. Farnham: Gower Publishing.

Grugulis, I. and Lloyd, C. (2010). 'Skill and the Labour Process: The Conditions and Consequences of Change', in Thompson, P. and Smith, C. (eds) *Working Life: Renewing Labour Process Analysis*. Houndsmills: Palgrave Macmillan.

Gollan, R. (1963) *The Coalminers of New South Wales: A History of the Union, 1860-1960*. Parkville: Melbourne University Press.

Harris, J. (1970) *The Bitter Fight*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Hearn, M. (1990) *Working Lives: A History of the Australian Railways Union (NSW Branch)*. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger.

Kanigel R. (1997). *The One Best Way: Frederick Winslow Taylor and the Enigma of Efficiency*. London: Little Brown and Company.

Lang, J.T. (1956) *I Remember: An Autobiography*. Sydney: Invincible Press.

Lang, J.T. (1962) *The Great Bust: The Depression of the Thirties*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.

McKernan, M. (1980) *The Australian People and the Great War*. Melbourne: Nelson.

Murphy, D.J. (1983) 'The North Queensland Railway Strike, 1917', in Murphy, D.J. (ed.) *The Big Strikes Queensland 1889-1965*. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press: 132-143.

Radi, H., Spearritt, P. & Hinton E. (1979) *Biographical Register of the New South Wales Parliament, 1901-1970*. Canberra, ANU Press.

Rydon, J. (1975) *A Biographical Register of the Commonwealth Parliament, 1901-1975*. Canberra: ANU Press.

Shields, J. (2003) 'Walter Edmunds 1920-1926', in Patmore, G. (ed.), *Laying the Foundation of Industrial Justice*. Sydney: Federation Press:103-128

Taksa, L. (2003) 'George Stephenson Beeby', in Patmore, G. (ed.), *Laying the Foundations of Industrial Justice: The Presidents of the Industrial Relations Commission*. Sydney: Federation Press:129-54.

Taksa, L. (2010) 'Merv Flanagan, Labour martyr – The Mortuary Station', in Irving, T. And Cahill R. (eds) *Radical Sydney: Places, Portraits and Unruly Episodes*. Kensington: UNSW Press, pp. 136-44.

Taksa, L. (forthcoming 2017) 'Scientific Management', in Wilkinson, A., Lounsbury, M. and Armstrong, S.J. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.

Tennant, K. (1972) *Evatt: politics and justice*. Sydney: Angus and Robertson.

Turner, I. (1979) *Industrial Labour and Politics: The Dynamics of the Labour Movement in Eastern Australia 1900-1921*. Sydney: Hale & Iremonger.

Taksa, L. (forthcoming 2017) 'Scientific Management', in Wilkinson, A., Lounsbury, M. and Armstrong, S.J. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of Management*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Chapter 2.

Taylor, F.W. (1903) 'Shop Management' in F. W. Taylor, *Scientific Management*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers.

Waterson, D.B. (1993) 'Chifley, Joseph Benedict (Ben) (1885–1951)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. Vol. 13. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

## Contemporary Sources

'Arius' (1919) 'Social Unrest (Universal and Local) and Its Causes' Also 'The Story of the Great NSW Strike - 1917'. Sydney: *The Worker Trade Union Printery*.

Curlewis, H.R. (1918) Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry on the Job and Time Card System in the Railway and Tramway Workshops of the Railway Commissioners, NSW *Parliamentary Papers*. Vol.6.

Edmunds, W. (1922) Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Administration, Control and Economy of the Railway and Tramway Services of NSW, NSW *Parliamentary Papers*, Second Session, Vol. 3.

Evatt, H.V. (1921) *The 1917 Strike And The Aftermath*. Sydney: The Worker Trade Union Print.

Fisher, A. (1914) Election Speech Delivered at Bundaberg, Queensland, 6. July. <http://electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/1914-andrew-fisher>

Fraser, J. (1916) Address by Mr. Fraser (Deputy Chief Commissioner) to Employees at the Locomotive and Carriage and Wagon Shops, Eveleigh, 23 November 1916.

Holme, J.B. (1918) 'The NSW Strike Crisis of 1917'. Report prepared by the Industrial Commissioner of the State. Sydney: Government Printer. [*Supplement to NSW Industrial Gazette*, 13 (2)].

NSW Labor Council (1917), *Report*, 31 December

NSW Railway Personal Cards for Employees born pre-1900, State Archives and Records Authority, NSW, Sydney. NRS 12922.

## Interviews:

Leslie Best: conducted by Lucy Taksa, NSW Bicentennial Oral History Project, 8/12/1987.

Frank Bollins: conducted by Russ Herman, Combined Railway Unions Cultural Committee Oral History Project, 1988.

Stan Jones: conducted by Russ Herman, Combined Railway Unions Cultural Committee Oral History Project, 1988.

Doreen McClelland: conducted by Lucy Taksa, NSW Bicentennial Oral History Project, 7/9/1987.

John Mongan: conducted by Lucy Taksa for NSW Bicentennial Oral History Project, 19/3/1987.

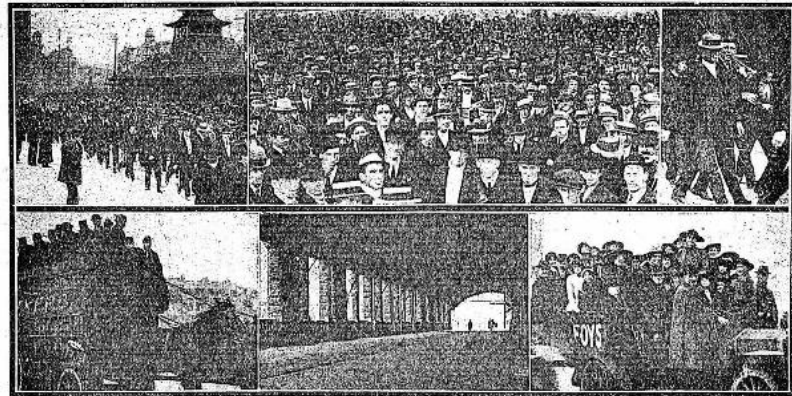
Edna Ryan: conducted by Lucy Taksa, NSW Bicentennial Oral History Project, 19/10/ 1987.

**PERSONALITIES OF THE STRIKE: PORTRAITS OF THE LEADERS**



These portraits of the political and industrial leaders on both sides show (reading from left to right).—Top: Mr. J. Storey, M.L.A., Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party; Mr. A. K. Deane, Secretary of the Amalgamated Engineers' Society; Mr. James Fraser, Chief Railway Commissioner; Mr. E. J. Kavanagh, M.L.C., spokesman for the Strikers Defense Committee, and Secretary of the Trades and Labor Council; Mr. G. W. Fisher, Assistant Premier; Bottom: Mr. A. C. Warren, Secretary of the Tramway Union; Mr. H. Cox, Assistant-Railway Commissioner; Mr. E. Milne, Assistant-Commissioner; Mr. D. R. Dwyer, President of the Labor Council; Mr. J. H. Cobb, Assistant-Commissioner; and Mr. G. E. Deby, Minister for Labor.

**PEACE OR WAR? THE STRIKERS' BIG MEETING IN THE DOMAIN**



This picture, depicting incidents of the strike, by the Mirror photographer, shows (1) tramway men marching through Railway-square, Sydney; (2) the big crowd in the Domain; (3) men with banners leading the procession of tramway men; (4) prohibition which covered a number of people to work; (5) a light system over the tramway track outside the Central-square station clear of trams; (6) a motor-lobby which did valuable service in carrying work people from home to work.

Leaders of the 1917 Strike (*The Mirror 11 August 1917*)

# Unions Affected by the Strike

**Govt. Mechanics      Railways and Tramways**  
**Wharf Labourers      Coal Lumpers      Carters**  
**Seamen      Engineers and Firemen**  
**Slaughtermen      Butchers      Coalminers**  
**Street Boys      Sanitary Carters**  
**Gas Employees, and others**

The Unions Affected (*still from the film made of the strike*)

Issued by Authority of the Unions Defense Committee, Sydney.

# THE STRIKER

SYDNEY, MONDAY, AUGUST 13, 1917. ONE PENNY

**PERTINENT PAR.**

"It is said that one reason for the presence of the police on the train is to protect the public revenue. If they were not there it is suggested that some of the blacklegs might alight with their bags."

Remarkable how the political rats rub to the benefit of their industrial brethren. No wonder had the strike started than Billy Hughes hounded to the limelight with a characteristic shriek. But Hughes is a very blank cartridge these days.

People are wondering how Fraser ever came to get his present job. The railway service has been running smoothly for many years under very competent control, without any American card system. Yet this man comes along and pretends to say that all his predecessors were duffers.

What does Fraser and his political and commercial associates seem to forget by that when they try to kill Unions they are trying to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. It is Unions that keep all these parasites alive. Take the members of Unions out of

**PUT THE BLAME WHERE IT BELONGS.**

PEOPLE OF NEW SOUTH WALES.—

You are suffering through this strike because of the tyrannical attitude of the Government and the Chief Railway Commissioner.

The men DID ALL THEY POSSIBLY COULD consistent with manliness and that spirit of liberty which makes Australia the great country that it is, to settle this dispute along the lines of reason. With this object in view they made three peace proposals to the authorities.

PROPOSAL No. 1.—

**BEFORE THE STRIKE WAS ENTERED UPON they offered to submit their case to AN INDEPENDENT TRIBUNAL, and**

any say whatever in the conditions under which they work.

PROPOSAL No. 3.—

Still anxious that you, the Public, should not suffer, the men then offered, pending an impartial inquiry into the Card System which the Chief Commissioner is seeking to enforce, to return to work under the existing system in view of the railway workshops prior to June 1 last.

**BUT ONCE MORE THEIR EFFORTS TO SECURE A PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF THE TROUBLE FAILED.** Either with a malice intention to SMASH AND HUMILIATE THE UNIONS, or with a pig-headedness fatal to the best interests of the community, the Chief Commissioner and the Government

**SCIENTIFIC STRIKE METHODS.**

The men on strike are able to rebuke any move made by the Government by a tenfold counter-move. WHY IS THIS?

**WE WILL LET THE GOVERNMENT INTO A LITTLE SECRET.**

At the beginning of the strike MEN WHO COULD BE TRUSTED were drafted into the Unions on strike. The duty of these men is to keep the outside organization on their FEELIY SUPPLIED WITH INFORMATION AS TO THE HAPPENINGS ON THE INSIDE—which information the Government is extremely desirous of keeping from the general public.

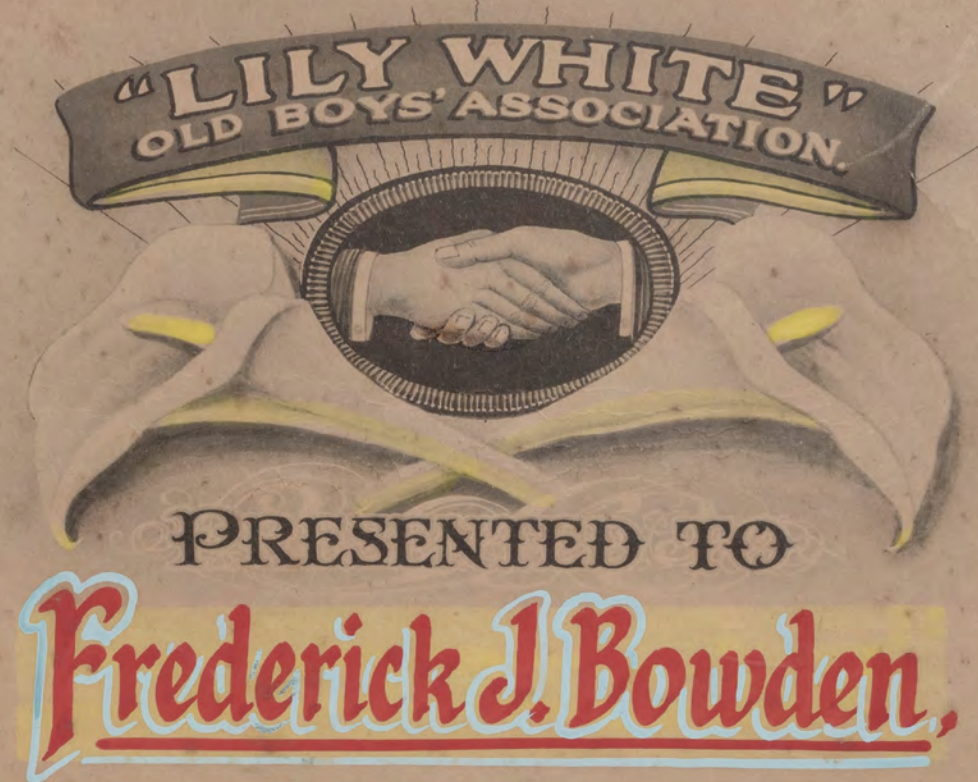
The Government is not fighting the men under old strike conditions. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN AUSTRALIA THEY ARE UP AGAINST THE SCIENTIFIC STRIKE METHOD. THAT IS WHY THE MEN OUTSIDE KNOW EVERY MOVE THAT IS BEING MADE ON THE INSIDE.

Newspaper produced by the Strike Committee





Lilywhite certificate



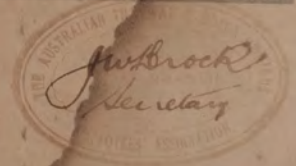
As an expression of the appreciation, respect, and good wishes of the members of the above Association at a complimentary re-union of the Old Boys' held on 28<sup>th</sup> FEB, 1950 in recognition of his unstinted sacrifice and unswerving loyalty to the principles of Trades Unionism throughout the whole period of the Tramway Strike of 1917.

PRESIDENT. SECRETARY. TREASURER

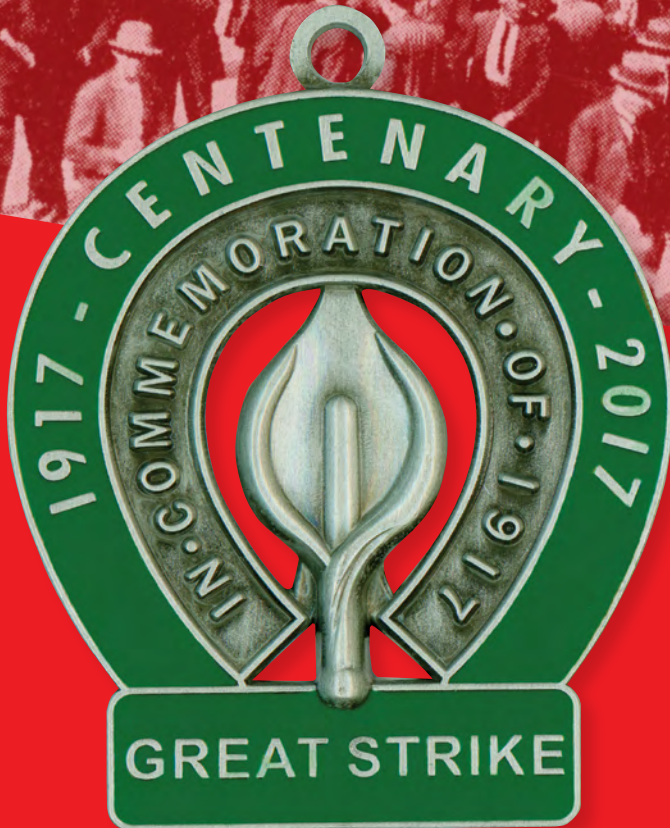
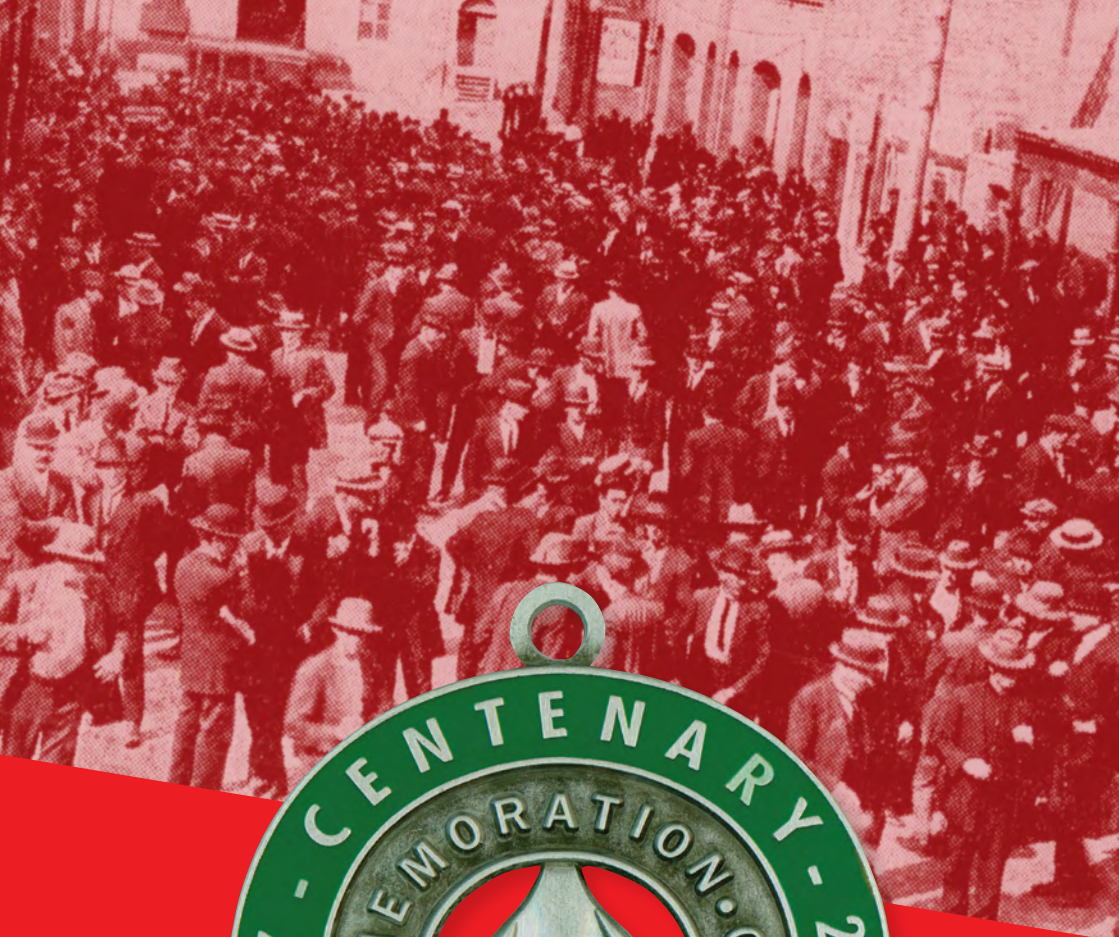
*Joseph S. Donohue* *Joseph Hunter* *William J. Little*

**Certificate of Union Membership**

I, the undersigned, hereby certify that **Frederick J. Bowden**, of **NEWTOWN** Depot was a financial member of the Australian Tramway & Motor Omnibus Employees' Association on the above date, when the Lilywhite Association ceased to function







New Commemorative Lily-White Badge