

SULC,

A History of the Sydney University Labour

Club,

(Sydney, 1945)

1925-1945

A HISTORY OF THE

SIDNEY UNIVERSITY LABOUR CLUB.

I. LEFT POLITICS IN THE UNIVERSITY.

Political clubs have long been a feature of English universities. In Cambridge Liberal and Conservative Clubs originated during the 1880's. The fact that several of these universities returned members to parliament served as a stimulus to the formation of such political groups. The University Labour Federation in England, which unites socialist and labour clubs (the name varies from university to university) was founded in 1922.

In Australia a modern industrial proletariat began to appear only during the 1920's, with the growth of monopoly capitalism. And as in previous periods the existence of a strong working class attracted to its cause a section of the intelligentsia. A second aspect of monopolistic industrial society is the formation of special "pressure groups" seeking to advance the aims of various sections. Within the university a reflection of this tendency was seen in the increasing trend towards instituting various student societies during the 1920's. In Sydney the Public Questions Society was in existence in 1925, while the League of Nations Society was founded in 1925. Union night debates were frequently conducted with the speakers organised in political groups. This increased tendency towards undergraduate societies was also to be seen in Melbourne, where the University Labour Club also dates from 1925.

II. THE UNIVERSITY LABOUR GROUP.

In the course of the debates run under the auspices of the Union a group of similarly minded Labour supporters had emerged. At the beginning of 1925 these came together to form a "Labour Group" at the university. This group, however, was not, properly speaking, a formally constituted society, and no mention of it is to be found in the university calendar or, for that matter, in the "Mixtures" column of the "Union Recorder". The founder of the club was Dr H.V. Evatt, and associated with him were such people as Clive Evatt, Bernadine Burns, A. Landa, E.V. Steele, J.A. McCallum, E.H. Tracy, R.A. Newnham, W. Sheehan, C.B. Martin, Greg Thomas, and several undergraduates from the faculty of Arts and a few from Economics and Science. A number of evening students were also concerned.

The occasion of the founding of the Club was the visit to Australia of Malcolm McDonald, son of Ramsay McDonald, as one of a team of debaters. The Oxford Union debating team arrived in April 1925 and, in an effort to "scoop" the official Union dinner, the Labour Group gave a dinner. At this Mr Alldis and Mr Donald Grant spoke as guests of the group. According to an indignant letter in "Hermes" (Lent, 1925) "the organisers of the dinner were Dr Evatt and his supporters in the election campaign". The writer asserted that the university should stand "aloof from all political engineering". Professor Carslaw replied, maintaining the right of students to form a Labour Club if they wished.

N.C.L. Nelson and B. Burns were joint secretaries of the group for a time, and A.W. McGuinness also held that position for about 18 months.

The Labour Group was particularly active in the 1925 election which returned J.T. Lang. There was particular activity in the Dalmain five-member electorate, where N.V. Bvatt secured a record majority. The club functioned until the following federal elections, and sent speakers to different parts of the country to assist candidates, but in mid-1927, resultant on the Lang-Loughlin split, it gradually failed to function. It was not until 1931 that another attempt to set up a Labour Club was made.

III. THE SECOND FOUNDING OF THE CLUB, 1931.

In 1931 Labour governments were in office both in the state and federal spheres. The Depression was responsible for much political ferment, both within and without the university. In face of the breakdown in the economic system there was much questioning of the social order. Within the university this period saw the appearance of a large number of political clubs, the movement reaching a peak in 1932. In 1930 the Public Questions Society, the League of Nations Society, the International Students Service Union, the Economics Society, and the Christian Union (Secretary W.A. Wood) were holding meetings on international affairs, etc. In September Professor Anderson opened the inaugural meeting of the University Society for Free Thought, its first president being Professor Anderson. "Noni Soit" (instituted in 1929) was reprinting addresses delivered to the Public Questions Society in Melbourne University.

Another expression of social discontent during the crisis was the existence of the Labour Educational League and later the Socialisation Committee and socialisation units within the A.L.P. It was this socialisation movement which provided what direct stimulation was needed for the second founding of the Labour Club, the three main founders, C.E. Martin, J.B. Sweeny, J.O.A. Bourke, being associated in the Labour Educational League.

On Feb. 9, 1931 a notice was put up in the Union Common Room inviting all undergraduates interested in forming a Labour League to a meeting early in Lent term. This evoked a letter in "Noni Soit" protesting that "a university is non-political". Three letters came back in reply, including one from J.O.A. Bourke, Organising Secretary, and one from Colman Wall, Joint Secretary, Labour Group, who stated that "politics ... have definitely come to stay".

The third issue of "Noni Soit" for 1931 had as its headline "Proposed Labour Group Causes Stir in University". But Professor Anderson was strong in support of the 'Labour Group', while a stormy Union Night meeting carried by three votes a motion "That the Union board accommodate meetings conducted by political groups of members of the Union, and foster political discussion through the Union debates and otherwise".

The April 15th issue of "Noni Soit" carried the following two-column advertisement over the editorial:-

University Labor Club.
Inaugural Meeting
in
Union Hall
on Tuesday, April 21st, at 8 p.m.
Friends and foes Welcome

non mark Gosling, Chief Secretary; non J. Lamaro, Minister of Justice; messrs C.E. Martin, E.P. Kinsella, & A. Landa m's L.A., J.J. Graves, secretary A.L.P. will speak.

For Provisional Executive
O.A. Bourke
Organising Secretary.

The inaugural meeting was stormy. "A motion that a Labour Group be formed within the University was defeated by a large majority of the 700 students who filled the Union Hall... Considerable disorder prevailed... hooting, organised singing, cheers, and the liberation of quantities of tear gas in the hall". The chairman of this meeting was Clarrie Martin. Afterwards Mr Kinsella denied that a brick had been thrown at him on the platform, pointing out that it had merely been dropped at the side of the stage to make a noise.

However, the Labour Club was launched, the president being Mr N.C.L. Nelson, LL.B. and the Secretary A. Date, B.Sc. W.A. Wood was an unsuccessful candidate for the L.C. Committee.

The Club proceeded to hold evening meetings (in the Philosophy Room). On June 15th Professor Anderson spoke on "The Working Class". A discussion on student representation on the Senate was also held. All meetings during 1931 were "stormy".

The Commemoration week number of "Doni Soit" was printed in red with the main headline: "ghastly Red Plot brought to Light in Ryaney Domain".

At the end of the year the L.C. contested every position at the Union elections. An "Doni Soit" report (11/10/31) ran as follows:

UNION ELECTIONS
LABOUR CLUB ENDORSES
CANDIDATES TO CONTEST
ALL VACANCIES

REVOLUTIONARY
PLATFORM

At a meeting held last Monday evening the committee of the Labour Club selected twelve candidates to contest the forthcoming Union elections.

The platform of the club's nominees will include the removal of the Union from the control of the Senate, the abolition of the compulsory election of five retiring directors, and the introduction of preferential voting. In addition, they propose, if elected, to reduce administrative costs and Union charges, reorganise Union debating, and provide more facilities for members than are at present available.

The President of the Labour Club stood for the Union Presidency, while the 12 candidates pledged themselves, if elected, to accept decisions of the Labour Club Committee. It was a record poll, though no Labour Club members secured election.

IV. AFFILIATION WITH THE A.L.P.

Membership of the Club at this time stood at about 130. In August 1931 it was resolved, by a small majority, that the Club affiliate with the Lang-led State Labour Party. The opposition to this move was led by J. Bourke and A. Date, the Secretary, who was replaced in that position by A. McGuinness.

Membership of the Club was somewhat restricted by a rule requiring membership in the member's locality branch of the Lang A.L.P., and consequent on this, the non-recognition of the Scullin supporters.

The division within the Labour movement at the University can be illustrated from the Union Debates. At the beginning of 1931 political parties were again permitted. Four appeared-- the Conservative Socialist, Communist, and Laissez-faire Parties. The "Union Recorder", describing the April 1 debate, wrote: "Eventually the Socialist Party joined the ranks of the Conservative Government in supporting the motion: 'That socialism is a dangerous fallacy'--a truly astounding ' volte face'. The Communist Party thus became the official Opposition". We are told that Comrade Poole and Comrade Bourke formed a Communist Government.

1932 started with the Labour Club producing a parody on the Students' song-book, "Bridge of Size", priced at 1/-. (The reference is to the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge).

The December 1931 elections (Federal) had resulted in a crushing defeat for both the Scullin and Lang factions. The Club in February 1932 played a big part in the return of E. J. Ward at the East Sydney by-election.

At the 1932 Easter Conference of the A.L.P. a charter was granted to the University Labour Group, two representatives of which were permitted to attend the conference with full voting powers. Messrs. Bourke and Date were now readmitted to the Labour Club, which was now constituted as a branch of the A.L.P.

It seems clear that affiliation to the A.L.P. had a restrictive effect on the Labour Club. It meant that many students not fully in sympathy with A.L.P. policy were excluded. The fact that 1932 was a peak year for the formation of new political clubs at the University seems to indicate that the L.C. as then constituted was unable to satisfy student needs. Early in 1932 a Social Problems Group was formed. Then came the Politics Club, functioning like a parliament and presenting the views of various parties (Its opening speakers were Bruxner, H.E. Manning, C.E. Martin, and Prof. John Anderson). A Liberal and a U.A.P. Club were also formed.

At his speech to the Politics Club Professor Anderson said he was disappointed with the way the Labour Club was going. At this time a large proportion of Club membership came from Law students, while graduates tended to dominate.

The Committee of the Labour Club held a meeting at Parliament House and pledged its support to the N.S.W. Premier in face of threats from Mr Bruce, the Prime Minister.

At the Annual Elections in 1932 (apparently about the middle of

the year) the socialisationists were in a majority, and it was decided to form a "socialisation unit" at the University.

V. THE SOCIALISATION PERIOD, 1932-4.

The new President was T. Hornibrook and the Secretary S. S. W. Davis. The Club was holding fortnightly meetings in the evening, and engaged in a number of debates (e.g. one with Mrs. Pankhurst-Walsh on socialism). On Sept 27 at 1.20 in the Union hall Mr Charles Heeve, a former member of the I.W.W., spoke to an uproarious audience on "Why I am a revolutionary". A lantern lecture on Russia was also given in the Union Hall, and later a Soviet film, "In Lenin's Country".

The Labour Club welcome to refreshers at the beginning of 1933 took the form of an address by Dr Saccharini, President of the Soc. Nazionale Dante Alighieri and lecturer in Italian, on "The Labour basis of Fascism" ("Fascism", he said, "was ultra-democratic").

Clarrie Martin led two discussion groups for the Club. The Free Thought Society, the League of Nations Union, the Labour Club, and the S.C.M. held a combined anti-war meeting on June 22, 1933. The L.C. speaker was J. B. Sweeny LL.B., one of the founders of the club. An anti-war resolution was carried unanimously by the audience.

On June 22 also the Annual General meeting was held, J. M. Smail becoming President, and W. H. Pawley (later lecturer in Agricultural Economics) Secretary. One estimate places membership for this period at 10 or 15.

Meetings for the rest of the year included Mr Higgins, M.A. on "The Working Class Attitude to War", a combined meeting with the L. of N. U. on "Causes of War", an address by P. H. Stephenson, "Publishing as a business--Its Social Consequences" (there was an audience of 7 and Stephenson wrote an irritable disclaimer of the secretary's report of the meeting published in "Noni Soit"), J. M. Smail "The History of Fascism", J. C. Foster, "The Causes of Fascism", and T. J. Weekes, "Religion in Russia". During 1934, apart from Union Hall meetings, the Labour Club met in the Philosophy room.

It was at this period that J. T. Lang commenced to suppress the socialisation units within the Labour Party. A meeting of the Labour Club was called for April 19, 1934 to consider "disaffiliation from the State A.L.P., the changing of the Club's name to the 'University Socialist Club', and drastic restatement of the aims". As a result of this meeting the following announcement appeared in "Noni Soit":

"At a recent meeting of the Sydney University Labour Club, which will be known from now on as the Sydney University Socialist Club, it was resolved that the club be disaffiliated from the Lang Labour party, on the ground that the latter organisation had not attempted sincerely to carry out the socialisation policy of the A.L.P.

Membership is now open to all members of the student body who accept collective ownership as a desirable means of production".

VI. THE SOCIALIST CLUB, 1934-37.

The disaffiliation of the Labour Club was an important step forward. For one thing, it opened the way for a wider membership. It disassociated the Club from the decline into which, under J. T. Lang, the N.S.W. Labour Party was sinking. A.L.P. routine branch business

was less likely to intrude in L.C. matters. At the same time the move had been left very late and there were now a large number of rival organisations in competition with the Club. The new name, reminiscent of the 'Socialist Societies' at many English Universities, was, perhaps, somewhat radical at a time when the depression was beginning to wear off and student interest in politics to wane. At the same time, according to Professor Wood (in "Smad", the student paper at Victoria College, Wellington, N.Z.), it was "the Free Thought Club, which was suspected, more or less rightly, of holding Communistic feelings..."

The Socialist Club launched a new series of meetings. W. Orr, Secretary of the Miners' Federation, gave a topical talk on the "Wonthaggi Strike" in the Union Hall. An admission fee of 3d. was advertised. A debate was organised with the Baedean Society (an organisation of teachers studying at the University), the Club denying "That present-day education is progressive and enlightening".

The President of the Club at this time was J.M. Small and the Secretary John Foster.

In November 1933 the Labour Club had produced a printed magazine entitled "Student" for free distribution within the University. This had been inspired by Melbourne Labour Club's "Proletariat", and contained an article by John Anderson on "Freedom of Speech". In July 1934 the Socialist Club brought out a similar publication, "The Student", price 3d., containing articles on Fascism, on the Wonthaggi Strike, "The Truth about 'Farrago'", "What's wrong with the University", a Socialist Club-S.C.M. symposium on War and others. A Socialist Club meeting in Sept 1934 was to consider producing a second issue, but apparently this was not done.

In the last week of final term the Socialist Club collected 300 signatures to a petition opposing a compulsory sports fee, a scheme then projected. This campaign was maintained during 1935, a meeting being held (June 20) in the Econ's II room at which 45 were present. Mr Foster was in the chair, while Mr Jury outlined the ideas of the Soc. Club executive. A motion was carried that University sport should be free to all students, the costs to be defrayed by a Government subsidy, together with payment of the expenses of all touring teams.

At the beginning of 1935 the Socialist Club "decided to issue a fortnightly bulletin outlining its attitude on political issues, but paying particular attention to the ventilation of student grievances" (HS IO/4/35). The first issue was scheduled for April 15.

The movement against war occupied much of the energies of the Club during this year. The Joint Committee for Peace held a symposium Monday and Tuesday, June 24 and 25th in the Union hall. On the latter day the speakers were from the Freethought Society, the Teachers' College Fellowship of International Pacifists, and the Socialist Club (Mr L. Jury, a medical student). The Joint Committee ran a peace ballot at which 47% of the students voted.

(First question: "Is war inevitable

a) Under capitalism? Yes No

b) Under any system? Yes No")

In line with this the Socialist Club had J.N. Kawlings B.A. (Editor, "War, What For?") to lead a discussion, "August 4th--21 Years Later". Later in the year the Joint Committee for Peace held a further meeting (in the Philosophy room), the Soc. Club sponsoring one of the speakers.

Several meetings were held on student issues (e.g. proposed increase of fees), while in an invitation addressed to "all socialists, whether Lang-planners, Socialisationists, communists, or Christian socialists can be seen an attempt to broaden the Club's attitude.

At this time Professor Anderson was commencing to lecture on Trotsky, while the Freethought Society undertook to supply its members with "The New International", a U.S. Trotskyist periodical.

The club was attempting to form an "Australian Student's League" with little success. These attempts were to continue in the following year.

On March 19th, 1936 the Club kicked off to a good start with an address in the Union hall by Mr S. Moran ("domain orator") on "Education in the Soviet Union". The Soc. Club occupied the front seat, while the visitors in the body of the hall amused themselves kicking the chairs. Mr Moran examined also the Australian Universities which he attacked as citadels of class distinction. Jury claimed this meeting had been organised to get publicity, and if so, it certainly succeeded.

Much of the Socialist Club activity was devoted to combating the "Andersonians". The Freethought Society was probably more active at this time than the Soc. Club. The Club, however, sponsored, with the Freethought Society and the S.C.M. Prof. Anderson on "Capital Punishment", with a discussion to succeed the short introduction. At the end of the year Lance Sharkey (Chairman, Communist Party) led a discussion group on "The Political history of Leon Trotsky, 1927-37". The story is that University enthusiasts expressed their opposition by chasing two Socialist Club guests--Professor Anderson to his office, where he locked himself in; and his less fortunate colleague, Sharkey, who was frogwalked to the park and dumped in the University pond.

The Club borrowed the idea of Sunday night discussion groups in a private home from the Melbourne University Labour Club (not the last debt of this kind to our Melbourne friends).

The mid-year election of officers resulted: Patron, J.E. Martin, M. Ec., Senior Vice-President Mr C. Crittle, Secy, L. Jury, Bob Gollan was probably minutes Secretary. Also in the club were such people as Beth Wells, Jack Swan, Ross Burn, H. Makinson. Annual subscription was reduced from 2/- to 1/-, a rather poor sign. A report of the meeting stated: "Until the beginning of this year, the Socialist Club had experienced a gradual decline in its activities and membership, however, early in first term the Club began to revive somewhat". This revival was of no long duration. According to H.A. Gollan, membership at the end of the year totaled about 10.

Other speakers this year were V.Y. Chow, of the Chinese Institute of Journalists and Dr Lloyd Ross, Secretary. A.H.U., who spoke on "Proletarian Literature".

The Club made an apparently impressive start in 1937 by advertising Miss Irene Saxby as their speaker at a Union Hall meeting. Her subject was "The Status of Women in Soviet Russian Society". However, after publicity was out, but before Miss Saxby had been definitely invited, it was decided to present instead an address by A.J. Dalziel of the Legion of Christian Youth (later Secretary to H.V. Evatt) on "Slum Clearance". An audience of 50 turned up expecting Miss Saxby, friends of this lady had informed her of the advertisements, and she arrived a little late expecting to have to speak. Mr Dalziel, however, held the floor.

Mr H. Gould led a discussion group on "Leninism in Theory and Practice". And on May 6th the Rev. G. Stuart Watts was advertised to speak on "Christians in Spain". This is the last mention of the Socialist Club in "Honi Soit". According to R.A. Gollan, a meeting of members (there were about 10) was held in a cafe downtown about this time, and it was decided to dissolve the Socialist Club so that its members could engage in activity in other and somewhat "broader" organisations.

VII. A PERIOD OF DECLINE IN STUDENT POLITICS.

The period between the Depression and the commencement of World War II was one of decline for student clubs generally. An editorial in "Honi Soit" dated 23/9/36 stated: "many of the University Clubs have entered into a period of decline. without casting any reflections on present office-bearers, it can be fairly said that the majority of the societies do not occupy the position in undergrad life which they did three or four years ago".

This position was not limited to the University. Dr Booth, Secretary of the University Extension Board, complained that twice in 1937 a series of lectures on political theory had to be cancelled through public apathy.

There were many reasons for this state of affairs. One would be the easing of the compulsion towards politics of the Depression years. Another the lethargy into which labour and liberal groups in society had fallen when the labour movement was divided and under the Lang regime. Internationally the steady successes of fascism during the period of Britain's "appeasement" policy would also encourage such an attitude. In University politics the great division of progressive students among a number of societies has already been mentioned. The Socialist Club saw this, and at its Annual General Meeting, June 25, 1936 "the necessity for closer co-operation between, and if possible, the ultimate amalgamation of, the socialists within the Socialist Club, the Free Thought Society and the S.C.M. was stressed". ("Honi Soit")

During 1938 there was no Socialist Club. But the former Club members continued active. R.A. Gollan spoke several times to the History Club and was Secretary of a Committee to Take a Ballot on Compulsory Military Training. L. Jury was Secretary of the League of Nations Union till the end of 1937. The Secretary of the Public Questions Society in 1938 was Eric Aarons. But both the L. of N.U. and the P.Q.S. were effected by the low ebb in student interest.

VIII. THE LABOUR CLUB IS REFOUNDED.

The re-establishment of the Labour Club in 1939 was partly stimulated by the visit of 4 members of the Melbourne University L.C. to Sydney. "The events in Spain, China, and Czechoslovakia, the arms expenditure... the chaos of world affairs, must present to all students a problem that demands solution" stated the preliminary advertisement. The inaugural meeting of the S.U.L.C. was organised in the Union Hall by Roy A. Smee, R.A. Gollan, Daphne Morris, John Couani, and Jack Waddy. It was hoped to get Clarrie Martin to chair this meeting, but he failed to attend. The Labour Club had as its Chairman Dr R. Makinson with R.A. Gollan as Secretary (and apparently Roy Smee as Asst. Secy).

The new Labour Club was based partly on the organisation of the 1938 P.Q.S. which had lapsed at the end of that year. The League of Nations Union collapsed soon afterwards for reasons that are obvious once the international situation is considered. ("Students should not

be deterred by the name. The L.C. is by no means a degenerate body at present as was the "League of Nations" -- A. Gray, Hon Secy., League of Nations Union, 11/20/39

Various meetings on Australian politics, etc. were held during the year. A joint meeting with the S.C.U. in the Union Hall on the National Register was broken up by the throwing of fireworks, smoke-bombs, etc. through the windows and from the back of the hall. During this period (1939-41) the attitude to Russia proved to be a crucial point in left politics at the University.

One publication was brought out, "This is What They Said in 1914-18", containing quotations from University publications during World War I. (Reviewed n.s. 21/9/39). The publication was prepared by June Davies (June Wells).

During 1940 the Club had a second able secretary in Eric Aarons, with Dora Dixon as President. "Honi Soit" was consistently hostile (at this time the "Australia First Movement" advertised in the paper). One editorial (9/5/40) advised the L.C. to close down when its audience was unfriendly, or alternatively "a suspension, for the duration, of active proselytising in quarters where it is resented..." A later editorial (18/7/40) stated that student societies must help the war effort and must not criticise the (Menzies) Government. When the Labour Club organised a protest on the banning of the Adelaide University Radical Club Professor Todd attempted forcibly to prevent Eric Aarons distributing protest leaflets in the quad. "Honi Soit's" Foreign Editor stated that "it would be a justifiable 'insurance policy' if, during the present crisis, the example of Adelaide University were followed in all the other states". The student paper refused to print the Club's protest on the suppression in Adelaide; a petition protesting against "Honi Soit's" censorship of a matter already reported in the outside press was circulated.

Previously Labour Club meetings had taken the form of "discussion groups", but now these were expanded to ordinary addresses and larger rooms used. Some meetings were also held in the Union and were frequently hectic (e.g. one on miners' strikes). Labour Club members were also active in the History Club's "Anglo-Saxon Group".

By the end of the year Club membership was about 40. The Club marched in the May Day procession this year as last. The "Labour Club Bulletin" appeared in 1940. The first Labour Club Conference was held at Newport, Dec. 5th-9th, 12 delegates from the Melbourne University Labour Club attending, and the Australian Student Labour Federation was set up.

1941 proved one of the most important years in Labour Club history, as also it was in world history. The President of the Club was Eric Aarons (Sc. IV), the Secretary Frank McGrath (Arts III). Excluding the Evening Secretary the Committee of 9 contained 6 men from Arts III plus an Arts graduate, while Science was represented by 2. The Club was based essentially on men in Arts, many of them Teachers' College trainees and also honours students in English, History, etc.

During this year both "Honi Soit" and the S.H.C. were favourable from the L.C.'s point of view (May 1 n.s. gave almost the entire front page to Prof Stout's address on A.H.P.). Both the Labour Club and the S.H.C. participated in the Youth Parliament, while at the end of the year the S.H.C. affiliated with the Friendship with Russia League.

On July 10 A. Barcan prepared an address for the Labour Club. It was reported thus in the following "Honi Soit":-

LABOUR CLUB RIOT

The Labour Club discussion "Labour Policy Since 1937" last Thursday failed to eventuate.

At least two hundred hooligans from Vet. Science, Engineering and Medicine prevented the speaker beginning.

The final stimulus to this display of student larrikanism was the recent entry of the Soviet Union into the war. The L.C. had been consistently sympathetic towards the U.S.S.R. The reactionaries wished to express their opposition to Britain's new ally and their belief in the Soviet's inability to resist the Nazis effectively.

For a moment Mr Dale, the Asst Registrar, played with the idea of having the Club banned on the grounds that it could not control its meetings. The next meeting was reported:

HOWDY STUDENTS
QUELLED AT LAST.

Canon Garnsey, Yeoman Bedell
Intervene.

Hupert Lockwood spoke on "The Anglo-Soviet Pact" to 300-400 packed into the Econ's I room.

At the next meeting the President of the S.R.C. (Mackay) and the Vice-Chancellor appeared to insist that the Club be permitted to hold its meetings without disruption. Joe Collings also spoke. The speaker advertised was unable to turn up for this meeting and a general discussion on the L.C. followed.

An evening recital of Soviet music was held in the Union Hall at this time and drew a large crowd, while a L.C. Dance organised in 3rd term had an attendance of 80. Cottage musicales were run during the year. Gordon Jockel was the Club's "General Organiser" and Douglas MacCallum editor of the bulletin. At the end of the year membership was about 120.

The outbreak of war in the Pacific, however, created a quite new situation for the socialist movement at the University.

IX. 1942-45: WAR MOBILISATION.

On Dec 4 1941 almost all University men went into camp at Ingleburn, and 3 days later war commenced in the Pacific. There was an attempt to maintain L.C. organisation in camp, and a bulletin was produced in January, but generally little could be done. In March 1942 the L.C. found that many of its most able members, belonging to the unreserved faculties, had remained in camp.

At the University the working alliance which, in effect, had been in operation with the Freethinkers now lapsed. With a Labour Government in office in Australia, with Japanese invasion threatening, with the more progressive nature of the war and the growth of left-wing influence consequent on the entry of the U.S.S.R. into the conflict, the Labour Club's attitude became more positive as far as the war effort was concerned.

During this period (till 1945) S.R.C. policy was generally in conflict with that of the L.C., and "noni soit" was unsatisfactory in the main. In 1942 particularly a note of pessimism, partly justified, was apparent in the journal (of the "Death Editorial", 24/9/42: "whether murder, suicide or death from natural causes no inquest will ever determine...there is nothing in the death of a University that can be

called 'accidental').

The Labour Club was not unaffected by the new atmosphere: "The distinction between the 'true' revolutionary and the 'coffee-pot' revolutionary was indicated by Mr R.H. McGrath to an audience of six at last Thursday's meeting of the Labour Club. 'The true revolutionary', he said, 'is one who not only bangs out a revolutionary theory but who also lives a revolutionary life'." (MS 15/10/42). Other meetings were addressed by W. Wood ("The People's Defence"), Sid Jordan ("The Second Front"), Rev Churchwood ("The miners and the War Effort"). "Marx of Time", an N.T.L. show was put on in the Union hall and ensured a good financial position for some time. The President during this year was R.H. McGrath and the Secretary Maxine Maxwell. Membership was about 65. At the end of the year a L.C. Conference was held at Newport.

At the end of 1942 the Commonwealth subsidy Scheme was introduced; an effective mobilisation of the University for its wartime tasks and a breach in the privileged position of certain social groups as regards admission to the University. After the loss of its Arts 'backbone' the Club, in order to survive, was driven to penetrate faculties previously almost untouched, e.g. Medicine and especially Engineering. The Commonwealth Scheme, by opening the way for a new type of student, facilitated this process.

1943 saw the Labour Club at its lowest during this period, despite the ability of its Secretary, Joe Dunlop (of Engineering). The Presidential address by Maxime le Petit was on "Sex and Crime in Russia" and drew quite a crowd. A Presidential letter to "Honi Soit" (13/5/43) stated: "No one, unless he has made a nation-wide survey, can comment on the attitude of the Russians to freedom. Who indeed cares what their attitude is? Not the Labour Club". A little later the President decided to resign, while the Committee simultaneously decided to remove him.

The W.E.A. dispute was a feature of this year and the L.C. held meetings in reference to Mr Partridge's disputed course B40 on Russia. At the end of the year an A.S.L.F. Conference was held near Sydney, with visitors from Melbourne and Adelaide.

Another new element in this period was the appearance of sectarian controversy at the University, on such matters as Spain, and the Catholic Church--a reflection of the growing intensity in society generally. A number of the L.C. discussions during 1943 were on religious aspects. Again, at the elections at the beginning of 1944 two members of both the SCM and the Newman Socy. were elected to the Committee, the first time this had occurred in the latter instance.

"LABOUR CLUB LIARS SLANDER STUDENTS" was an "Honi Soit" headline during the censorship dispute early in the year. This referred to the L.C. claim that the students' protest procession had been pre-arranged. A.L. Burns, President of the A.S.L.F., made a statement to the Melbourne press which he subsequently retracted on advice from S.U.L.C. yet the comment of "On Lit"'s editor on the position of the editor of MS was probably more accurate than he knew: "All I can say is that you're in with a shady gang, Sayle!" (5/5/44).

With the war approaching a climax post-war issues were now arising. One of these was the retention of the Commonwealth Subsidy Scheme in some form after the war. The L.C. opposed the attitude of the so-called "Andersonian" SAC and circulated a petition for a general meeting of students in the Union Hall, where a decision of

the S.H.C. that subsidies were not a progressive step was reversed.

1944 was in the main a year of reviving activity. During the year the Club was strengthened by the arrival of several "old hands" from Melbourne or the army (Dryden, Kaiser, Barcan). Conferences were held during each vacation, the December Conference drawing a maximum attendance of 50. Two delegates attended the A.S.L.F. Conference in Melbourne, August '44. The L.C. Bulletin (renamed "Left Forum") was constantly improving under the editorship of Tom Wink. By the end of the year Club membership had reached 65. A better reception was being accorded the Club in "NS".

The L.C. continued to function over the 1944-45 vacation, several functions being run and Committee meetings held. A Freshers' welcome was organised in March with an attendance of 150. A function was organised with the Technical College social committee as an attempt to further co-operation between students of the two institutions. The L.C. presented the film "Stalingrad" in the Union hall, in co-operation with the Social Studies Association. 18 members of the Club participated in the May Day march. The "Labour Club Songbook" was produced by Jeff Way (Feb), the production of the bulletins improved, and the L.C. history written. In addition the usual activities (such as discussion groups, lunch-hour addresses, hikes, vacation conferences and the like) were engaged in. The L.C. brought out a leaflet, "Why You Should Join the Liberal Party" on the occasion of the visit of Mr Menzies to the University to found the Liberal Club.

This year proved to be the Club's best after 1931 and 1941. Membership reached 85 and Committee organisation was improved. The A.S.L.F. executive was established in Sydney for the first time. A similar revival went on in the other Universities, the Radical Club being revived in Brisbane and a Labour Club established in Hobart and also at the Sydney Teachers' College. At the same time the achievements at Sydney University were not as great as had originally been anticipated.

The Secretary during this year was Alan Barcan, and the President Tom Kaiser, B.Sc.

X. THE UNIVERSITY AND SOCIALISM.

In conclusion it is worthwhile examining some of the lessons to be drawn from the history of the Labour Club, and to see what guide there is for the future. The first point is that the Club has primarily been and should continue to be a socialist body. What strength and meaning it has comes in large measure from the fact that the Club can offer the socialist alternative to the obvious crisis of present-day society.

At the same time the Club must be a broad body, welcoming people who are generally interested in the Labour movement but not yet prepared to adhere to any particular theory. Past experience has shown that affiliation to any one particular party is likely to be injurious in the long run to the Club. There must be variety of opinion among the leftists constituting the Club. The Club must be broad enough to avoid the splintering of radical students among a myriad of student societies, such has been a weakening factor in the past. Further, attempts must be made to increase co-operation where possible between the L.C. and other student societies.

The Labour Club, in the writer's belief, should act as an organisation for the turning out of capable people, socialists. We

need in Australia an intelligentsia not only alert academically but also politically, people capable of independent thinking and equipped with social theory. In some ways then it might be claimed that the Labour Club is, or should be, almost, the embryo of the future socialist University.

August, 1945.

LIST OF LABOUR CLUB PUBLICATIONS.

I. MAGAZINES

1932.... "bridge of size"
 1939.... "This is what they said at the University,
 1914-18"
 1945 (Feb)... "Labour Club songbook"
 1945 (Aug)... "Labour Club history"

II. BULLETINS

1933 (Nov) "The Student" was produced.
 1934 (July) a second "The Student" appeared.

These were more in the nature of printed bulletins than magazines.

1940.	number of L.J. bulletins issued was	3	issues
1941	" "	"	" 7 "
1942	" "	"	" " 2 "
1943	" "	"	" " 2 "
1944	" "	"	" " 6 "
1945	" "	"	" " 5 (to August)

SOME PAST OFFICERHOLDERS.

1925-27: Secretaries, N.C.L.Nelson, B.Burns, A.McGuinness.
 1931-32: President N.C.L.Nelson, LL.B., Secretary A.Date, B.Ec.
 June 1932-June 1933: President, T.Mornibrook, Secretary S.O.W.Davis
 June 1933-June 1934: President J.M.Smail, Secretary W.H.Pawley
 June(?)1934: President J.M.Smail, Secretary J.Roster
 1935
 June 1936-June 1937: Senior Vice-Pres. C.Crittelle, Secretary L.Jury
 1937
 1939: President, Dr H.E.S.Makinson, Secretary H.A.Gollan, B.A.
 1940: President Lora Dixon, Secretary Eric Aarons
 1941: President Eric Aarons, Secretary F.H.McGrath
 1942: President F.H.McGrath, Secretary Maxine Maxwell
 1943: President Max Le Petit, Secretary Joe Dunlop
 1944: President Averil Collins, Secretary May Lynch
 1945: President Tom Kaiser, B.Sc, Secretary Alan Barcan.

RECORD OF MEMBERSHIP.

The figures are the maximum membership for the year.

1931	130-150	1940	40
1933	10-15	1941	120
1936	10	1942	65
1937	c10	1943	30
1938	-----	1944	65
1939	20 (?)	1945	85 (Aug)

LABOUR CLUB CONFERENCES.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Max. Attendance</u>
1.	Dec., 1940	Newport	1st ASLF Conference	c.24
2.	Aug. 1941	Newport	1 Day Conference	
3.	Dec 1942	Newport		
4.	Dec 1943	Bundeena	ASLF Conference	c.20
5.	May (?) 1944	Ettalong	Trade Unions	c.40
6.	Aug 1944	Mona Vale	The Pacific	17
7.	Dec 1944	Mona Vale	Is Socialism the Answer?	50
8.	June 1945	Towler's Bay	Victory and After	19
9.	Aug 1945	Newport	The British Commonwealth in the Post-war world	24.