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RHETORICAL SMOKE WITHOUT REVOLUTIONARY FIRE

A Study of the Consciousness
of the
New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation
1915 - 1937

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the
Degree of Master of Arts in Sociology at Massey University

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis has two purposes. The first is to establish a tool for a Marxist analysis of trade union consciousness; the second is to demonstrate it in action in a case study of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation (NZWWF) from 1915 - 1937. Basing itself on the work of the classic Marxist revolutionary theorists, (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Lukacs and Gramsci), a Marxist typology of essential revolutionary concepts is constructed. This is designed to assess the degree of revolutionary consciousness of any particular union, that is, the degree to which it struggles against bourgeois constraints or, on the contrary, the degree to which it succumbs.

A multi-factorial, bi-polar typology is then built up from basic Marxist concepts with particular reference to trade unions and their role under capitalism and this typology is used to analyse the consciousness of the watersiders. This analysis includes both a study of the historical constraints facing them and a detailed study of their responses. The historical constraints are the economic, political and ideological forces confronting the trade union movement as a whole 1915-1937, together with an account of the development of the trade union movement within these constraints. The role of the transport workers and the watersiders within the wider union movement is described.

The typology is then applied to the contents of the Federation newspaper, the Transport Worker, (TW), and the decisions of the

Federation as recorded in the Minutes of its Annual (later Biennial) Conferences from 1915-1937. The actions and ideas of the Federation are discussed according to periods set by the economic and political conditions external to the union: Boom, 1915-1921; Stagnation 1922-1929; Depression, 1930-1934; Labour Government, 1935-1937. The Federation shows a development from a syndicalist, though not militant, position to one leaning heavily on political action through the parliamentary Labour Party.

PREFACE

This thesis emerges from questions which became urgent for me to answer during my work as a rank-and-file trade unionist. On the one hand, most of us with socialist goals were working in the trade union movement in the belief that these working class organisations had something to do with the attainment of those goals. On the other hand, there were considerable obstacles to this, not only of an objective kind, but in the minds of our fellow workers. What were the forces which created attitudes in workers which led them often to collude in their own exploitation? What sort of ideas and aims would they need to enable them to resist capitalist exploitation and domination? This thesis does not attempt to answer the question 'Why no revolutionary consciousness?', but seeks simply to establish the nature of the kind of consciousness which would need to be an aspect of revolutionary practice. By measuring such a profile of revolutionary consciousness against the concepts embedded in the actual words and actions of a leading trade union in a significant period of New Zealand history, the nature of the apprent lack of revolutionary consciousness in a New Zealand union can be illustrated. The exercise, then, is one of identifying an absence. No attempt is made to theorise this absence in sociological terms. However, it is of considerable practical value for socialist activists to clarify the nature of revolutionary consciousness, on the one hand, and the nature of its absence at a particular historical conjuncture on the other.

ABBREVIATIONS

All references in the text are abbreviated thus:

AJHR,H.11,1931:131	Annual Report of the Department of Labour <u>Appendices to the Journal of the House of Representatives,1931,p131.</u>
NZC	<u>New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings</u>
NZYOB	<u>New Zealand Official Yearbook</u>
RP,B23/1:2Dec1933	Roberts Papers,B23/1, 2nd December, 1933.
RP,B43/12,1931:5	Roberts Papers,B43/12,p5.
WS,Aug1916:1.	<u>New Zealand Watersider</u> , August 1916, p1.
TW,Oct1933:14	<u>New Zealand Transport Worker</u> , October 1933, p14.

Note: Official Government Publications are listed in the bibliography under the most recent title of department and publication.

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Lastly, I acknowledge two broad sources of inspiration for this thesis.

My colleagues and fellow workers in the trade union movement taught me solidarity in class struggle and the unity of theory and practice. The theory developed in this thesis in part springs from, and hopefully informs, that practice.

My parents, Gerda and Imrich Porsolt, bequeathed to me a rich cultural tradition which Isaac Deutscher has called that of the non-Jewish Jew - critical, rational, internationalist. While I have diverged considerably in my life from the path they chose, I have followed in their footsteps more closely than may be apparent. To them I dedicate this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis has a two-fold purpose, firstly, to construct a tool, a typology, for the analysis of trade union consciousness and, secondly, to apply it in a case study of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation from 1915 to 1937.

Class consciousness is a significant force in historical development. Key questions for a Marxist understanding of New Zealand history are: Why is there so little revolutionary working class consciousness in New Zealand? What is the nature of the consciousness which does exist? But before the sources of working class consciousness can be explored, it is necessary to identify the exact nature of its content. Only when we have identified the phenomenon we seek to explain can we begin to ask the question 'How come?' This thesis seeks to establish a framework to assist such identification and description. In addressing the issue of class consciousness, it is hoped to make some contribution to the broader analysis of class in New Zealand.

At present, these questions remain unilluminated because of the lack of historical research prompted by them. Class, in the Marxist sense, has been so consistently denied, confused or underplayed in New Zealand historiography, that research, Marxist or otherwise, which would make it possible to begin to examine such a question is simply not available. As Campbell has pointed out, the debates between Oliver(1969), Olssen(1974) and Sinclair(1965) show an

inadequate conceptualisation of class from a Marxist point of view (Campbell, 1977:62). The blind spot in New Zealand historiography concerning class is just one expression of the lack of class consciousness in general. In particular, the history of the working class and its organisations has been neglected. The Labour Party has been studied, not as a working class party, but as, what in fact it became, a 'classless' agency of general social betterment. There has been only one brief general history, (Roth, 1973b) of New Zealand trade unions published, with a few histories of individual unions, (Pettit, 1948; Bollinger, 1968; Campbell, 1976; Roth, 1973a; 1977; 1984; Norris, 1984). It is no accident that most of these are accounts of the transport workers' unions.

It is ironic that this lacuna of New Zealand historians as regards class has begun to be remedied by those working in other disciplines - geography, economics, political science and, in particular, sociology. Armstrong (1978), Bedgood (1980), Jesson (1981), Martin (1981), Walsh (1981), Steven ((1985), Gallagher and Swainson (1985) are among those who have begun to reinterpret in the light of a class analysis the material researched by historians. Sociological theory offers a powerful means of illuminating New Zealand historical development in terms of the class forces which shaped it. However, much more historical data is still required to inform and extend such work.

These historical questions are important for socialists as well as for sociologists because the answers offer a guide for strategy and

practice; they help decide 'What is to be done?'. The focus of this thesis is essentially practical; through a piece of historically-grounded and sociologically-informed research, which extends a Marxist sociological analysis of New Zealand history, it is hoped to make one small contribution to the political task of achieving socialism in New Zealand.

One important working class agency for the constitution of working class consciousness is the trade union movement. Moss has pointed out that:

'Contrary to the view that sees trade unions as adaptive or reactive organisations, they play a formative role in the creation of a working class...Their policies...weld the bonds and shape the consciousness of the working class,' (Moss, 1984:238).

Parkin has noted that trade union membership is a significant factor in enabling workers to resist bourgeois ideology, what he calls the dominant value system (Parkin, 1967:284). Trade unions are probably even more important in New Zealand in this respect since the stable working class communities, which are an alternative source noted by Parkin of this capacity to resist, have been largely lacking. The study of trade union consciousness is therefore an important aspect of the study of working class consciousness in the wider sense.

One problem with existing discussions of trade union history that do exist is that they concentrate on great events in which trade union militancy was displayed - 1890, 1913, 1951. These struggles are

mythologised in trade union tradition. It is too often forgotten that these were also major defeats which involved only a minority of the trade union movement. At its height in 1912, the Red Federation of Labour represented 15,000 members while the Trades and Labour Councils represented 52,000, (Roth,1973:33). The state repression and economic collapse of the 1920's and 30's which reduced wages and hamstrung union organisation, must be seen as a landmark in trade union history of equal significance to the three defeats noted above; in fact, the defeat of the 20's and 30's could be seen as more significant, since it affected every worker, employed or unemployed. But because this defeat did not take the form of one cataclysmic collective struggle, its significance as an event in trade union history is ignored by historians, working class and bourgeois alike.

Within the constraints set for it by bourgeois power, the working class continues to 'make itself' in times of acquiescence quite as much as in times of militancy. It is as, or even more, important to study its processes in the times when it fails to challenge bourgeois exploitation and oppression as on the occasions when it does do so. For this reason, the 1920's and 30's is a significant period in the history of the New Zealand trade union movement, but because its significance has been overlooked, it is even less studied from a working class point-of-view than most others. This thesis therefore draws its case study from this period.

Another interpretation that needs examination is the traditional distinction in New Zealand labour historiography between 'right-wing'

so-called moderates and 'left-wing' so-called militants. It is a moot point how much the militant/conservative split was an ideological one and how much a tactical one based on differing positions in the economic structure. While clearly revolutionary political aims did emerge, as with the Red Federation, this was not always so with those that took militant action. The objects of the Maritime Council were restricted to 'legitimate and necessary reforms', (Roth,1973:13). And the Trades and Labour Councils at times espoused socialist aims. This was so with the United Federation of Labour before the 1913 Waterfront strike, which still retained the Industrial Workers of the World preamble and a controversial strike clause. All but a tiny minority of the trade unions subscribed to this constitution. The contrasting conditions of the various occupational groups offered widely differing possibilities for successful action and the apparent differences in militancy must not necessarily be interpreted as basic ideological differences. Two unpublished studies on the Trades and Labour Councils 1891-1911, (Mills,1977) and on the printing unions in the 1920's and 30's (Porzsolt,1983) already bring into question the militant/moderate distinction in historical terms. More historical study is needed to test this traditional view. Therefore in choosing a union to take as a case study, it is useful to examine the nature of the consciousness of a reputedly militant, left-wing union: the watersiders.

Jesson (1981a) has noted the theoretical confusion between trade union militancy and revolutionary impulses in New Zealand

historiography. In fact, Jesson sees militancy as having a comparable role to the welfare state in integrating the working class under capitalist hegemony. In achieving bread and butter objectives, even with undoubted vigour and class struggle, the working class, Jesson claims, is more firmly maintained within the confines of the system which militant unionism of itself fails to challenge. While Jesson's point is overstated, it does spotlight the need to demythologise militancy. This ambiguity of militancy, in fact, implies the necessity, in a Marxist analysis of consciousness, of distinguishing between an authentic revolutionary Marxist position and a merely militant, reformist one.

The watersiders are interesting for two reasons. They took a leading role in the 1920's and 30's in the formation and direction of the Alliance of Labour, the self-styled militant wing of the trade union movement in the period. A study of their consciousness therefore should throw some light on that of the wider industrial labour movement in the period.

The watersiders are generally reputed to be on the left of the political spectrum - for right wingers, red wreckers and Bolsheviks, for left wingers, progressive or militant. It is important to examine the exact nature of their political position and to what extent it was truly revolutionary.

While some historians have studied class consciousness in other parts of the world from a more or less Marxist perspective, they have done

it largely in an intuitive manner, with little definition in theoretical terms of what it is they mean. For instance, in his formidable work Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, Foster, hinges his complex argument on evidence of militancy which has the aim of 'a total change of the social system', (Foster, 1974:74). Even granting the 'difficulty of defining something whose ideological content is always historically relative and specific,' (ibid:73), this is not sufficiently specific from a Marxist point of view.

Rothstein has clearer implicit ideas of what constitutes what he calls proletarian class consciousness. This is basically the understanding that the proletariat must rely on its own efforts to achieve change and have 'the resolve not to shrink from the most extreme measures,' (Rothstein, 1983:49). This implies, firstly, that the proletariat relies on independent structures of its own, structures not dominated by bourgeois power - in other words, that it is a subject in its own history. Secondly, it implies uncompromising class struggle.

Moss in his study of the three major trade union confederations in France offers a useful analysis of the different political and ideological strategies which they adopt (Moss, 1984). However, this too is an historical study and from a sociological point of view, something more systematic is needed for a precise analysis of revolutionary class consciousness.

This thesis proposes a development from these contributions. Taking a sociological approach, it will set down in a systematic manner concepts which must underlie the practices of a trade union if it is to be said to have a truly revolutionary consciousness in the Marxist sense. It does not seek to typologise empirical words and actions which are always determined by their historical context. In this way it is hoped to surmount the difficulty noted by Foster of 'defining something whose ideological content is always historically relative'. While the typology is theoretical, its application to union words and actions will rely strongly on analysis of the historical forces in which it operates. The emphasis will be on analysing the nature of a union's practices, the degree to which it engages in class struggle and the kinds of strategies it adopts. Thus while the primary purpose of the thesis is to describe the consciousness of a trade union, this inevitably means consideration of the material basis in terms of the historical constraints. However, there will be no attempt to theorise these beyond the basic materialist premise that all consciousness is a product of material historical existence.

The theoretical chapter has two purposes. It seeks to establish a materialist concept of consciousness. It is necessary to be quite clear exactly what it is we seek to analyse and describe. It is equally necessary to be clear about the role of trade unions in capitalist society, their limits and potential for revolutionary action. The basic concepts of the typology will be drawn from the classic Marxist theorists (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Lukacs and Gramsci) and their theories of the nature of the

capitalist mode of production and of revolutionary strategies to overthrow it. Much current neo-Marxist sociological theory has moved a considerable distance from the materialist basis set by these classical writers, who, with the exception of Gramsci, have suffered neglect. The classical writers are differentiated from neo-Marxist theorists by their engagement in revolutionary practice. Their ideas were forged in the fire of that practice and have all, to a greater or lesser extent, been taken over or used by subsequent revolutionary movements. These ideas have thus taken on a material reality by being absorbed and enacted by historically significant agencies. 'Ideas become a material force in history when they seize the minds of the masses,'. Their theory grew out of their practice and in turn developed that practice. As Anderson says:

'The international disputes which united and divided Luxemburg, Lenin, Lukacs, Gramsci or Trotsky...represent the last great strategic debate in the European workers' movement. Since then, there has been little significant theoretical development of the political problems of revolutionary strategy in metropolitan capitalism that has had any direct contact with the masses,' (Anderson, 1976/77:78).

It is this firm link between the practice and theory of these writers that gives their work a sound materialist basis. Their theory is materialist both in its origins and its effects. Since this thesis addresses the essentially practical question, 'What is to be Done?', it is important that its theoretical framework has a sound basis in practice. A return to these classical revolutionary theorists offers a timely renewal of a truly materialist approach.

The next chapter will construct the analytical framework to describe trade union consciousness. It will take the form of a multi-dimensional bi-polar typology. That is, it will establish a whole range of concepts considered basic to a Marxist position to form one pole and their opposing bourgeois concepts to form the other pole. Each pole of the typology will therefore consist of a number of dimensions and the typology thus offers complexity combined with flexibility. The aim is to build an analytical tool which will expose the degree to which a trade union struggles and opposes the constraints in which it is situated, its degree of 'resolve' in Rothstein's sense.

Having set the theoretical framework, we will then move on to outline the historical conjuncture in which the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation was situated 1915-1937 with reference to the economic, political and ideological forces with which the trade union movement had to grapple. Then we will trace its internal development with a focus on the NZ Watersiders' Federation and the transport unions.

Then follows the empirical core of the thesis - the application of the typology to the words and actions of the NZWWF 1915-1937. The Transport Worker and the minutes of the Annual (later Biennial) Conferences of the NZWWF form the selected data base. The consciousness exhibited by the Federation will then be analysed and discussed within the context of four sub-periods of the period 1915-1937 defined by economic and political conditions external to the Federation. These periods are War Boom 1915-1921; Stagnation

1922-1929; Depression 1930-1934 and Labour Government 1935-1937.

This approach aims to highlight the constraints within which trade unions under capitalism function. The task of the thesis is thus to establish the nature of the economic, political and ideological forces at work within New Zealand 1915-1937 and then use the typology to assess and identify the nature of the practices engaged in by the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation within that set of historical forces.

Ideally, from a historical point of view, it would have been desirable to follow up other material such as correspondence, awards, shipping company records and newspapers to gain a fuller assessment of the events which impinged on the watersiders. However, this is a sociological study and the emphasis has been on sociological analysis. Secondary material such as Pettit

(1948), Norris (1984) and Townsend (1985) has been used where appropriate. This thesis, therefore, makes no claim to be a history. Its main purpose is to explore the revolutionary potential of trade unions, and to clarify the problems involved in examining trade union consciousness. By applying the framework derived from this discussion in a preliminary way to one leading trade union in a neglected period of New Zealand labour history, it is hoped that that history may be to some degree illuminated.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This chapter sets out the theoretical underpinnings for a typology which will be developed in the next chapter as a tool for examining the concepts embedded in the words and actions of the union selected as a case study, the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation from 1915 to 1937, and assessing the level of its revolutionary consciousness. First, it is necessary to carefully define consciousness in order to be clear about the exact nature of the phenomenon to be analysed. Secondly, an appropriate framework for describing trade union consciousness cannot be constructed without an understanding of the limits and potentialities of trade unions as organisations. After establishing the nature of consciousness, we will derive from selected classical Marxists the concepts which a trade union would have to embody in its practice if it were to be described as having a revolutionary consciousness. We will then discuss the potentiality or otherwise for a revolutionary role for trade unions as seen by the classical theorists.

The concept of consciousness is a very thorny and elusive one indeed in a materialist analysis. What exactly are we trying to analyse?

Consciousness is not simply a mental event, a set of ideas in the head. It does involve ideas, understandings, concepts but focusses on action in the world. As Marx says, 'Consciousness can never be anything else than conscious existence, and the existence of men is

their actual life process,' (Marx in Tucker, 1972:118). To describe the consciousness of a class is to describe the concepts and goals embedded in the words and actions, the life process of that class. If praxis is theoretically informed action, consciousness is action-oriented thinking. It is the mental aspect of material actions, 'practical critical activity'. Thus concepts such as goals, actions and consciousness are not idealist, but aspects of material practice. They do entail a subject, but this is a determinate, historically constituted subject, in our case, a trade union. By defining consciousness as concepts embedded in words and actions, we can speak of the consciousness of a trade union without getting into the position of attributing a non-material mental life to an organisation.

But consciousness cannot be reduced to the conceptual content of actions. Actions are circumscribed in many ways by material constraints and it may not be possible to express various goals in material actions. It is not therefore possible to read off consciousness from actions alone. Goals, which may be denied fulfilment by objective circumstance, can be identified through the words or verbal practices of a class. Words, too, are material practices, if they 'seize the minds of the masses' and are therefore potentially transformable into historical action when circumstances permit. Words are less constrained than more directly material practices and must be carefully analysed in the context of the union's other actions. Thus words can be evidence of consciousness in the absence of overt actions. Consciousness is therefore a

separate moment of practice which can be examined in its own right. 'Thought and being are indeed distinct but they also form a unity,' (Marx in Bottomore and Rubel, 1963:92). We can relocate the emphasis and say, 'If thought and being form a unity, they are indeed distinct.'

Our focus is revolutionary consciousness, hence we are interested in the nature of the consciousness embedded in revolutionary practice, that is, class struggle. Class struggle is the expression in the social sphere of the contradictions which occur in class society between the social relations of production, on the one hand, and the technical forces of production, on the other. The subordinate class, (under capitalism, the working class) is driven by its conditions of existence to struggle against exploitation by the ruling class, (in this case, the bourgeoisie). Insofar as it is dominated by the bourgeoisie, the practice and consciousness of the working class will conform in a passive way to the economic, political and ideological structures of bourgeois power. Insofar as it resists the bourgeoisie, the working class will struggle to negate those structures. Only in negation and struggle can the working class affirm itself as an independent force in history and overthrow the capitalist class. The analytical framework to be used for the study of trade union consciousness must therefore be constructed so as to be capable of assessing the degree of struggle and/or collaboration practiced by a trade union within the historical constraints which face it. By deriving from the work of the classical Marxists the basic revolutionary theoretical concepts and practices which are

required to overthrow capitalism, we can construct a profile of the concepts a trade union must embody in its practice if it is to be described as revolutionary.

What, then, are the basic theoretical concepts of the Capitalist Mode of Production and its revolutionary overthrow as found in the classical theorists? While Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg, Gramsci and Lukacs were in broad agreement on the nature of capitalist relations, they placed varying emphasis in theorising the other spheres of the social formation - the political, the ideological and the role of trade unions. We are interested in establishing broad criteria which can identify a revolutionary consciousness. Hence, only the most fundamental concepts are relevant to the typology and we will not go into the more subtle theoretical differences between the theorists. Only the most basic distinctions between them will be examined in order to derive the components of the typology.

For the purposes of analysis, the basic Marxist concepts will be discussed under three headings of ideas and actions within the world - what is, what can be and should be and the means of transformation from the former to the latter. This is an artificial division from the dialectical point of view, because future developments exist 'within the womb of the old society' and 'what can be' is 'what should be' from the point of view of the oppressed class. The dialectical view of history embodies a very real tension between the notion of 'natural laws...working themselves out with iron necessity'

and the conscious thrust of creative human endeavour. Present and future, 'what can be' and 'what should be' are integrated, but in contradiction. However, the tripartite division is a convenient analytical device.

WHAT IS

1. Structural

A fundamental thread which runs through all Marxist-Leninist concepts, whether economic, political, epistemological or historical is one of totality, a unity of the social formation. The concept of totality means that all parts of the social formation affect and are affected by each other. It is the relations and forces of production at the economic level, however, which, in the last analysis, determine and limit ideological and political structures.

'The same men who establish social relations in conformity with their material power of production, also produce principles, laws, and categories, in conformity with their social relations,' (Marx in Bottomore & Rubel, 1963:108,109).

This does not mean that the latter can be read off from the economic structure. On the contrary, all our selected theorists asserted that the political and ideological spheres had a level of determination and effectivity of their own, though, as already noted, the theorists differed in their analyses of these. Engels expresses it thus:

'The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure: political forms of the class struggle...and then even the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the participants, political, juristic, philosophical theories, religious views...also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form,' (Engels in Tucker, 1972:640).

This economically structured social formation is in constant dialectical movement based on the fundamental contradiction between capital and labour. The working class, the element which contradicts capital, will eventually negate and overthrow it in the revolutionary process. It thus forms the basis of the future society existing and growing in the 'womb' of the present one.

2. Economic

First and foremost, at the economic level, is the concept of exploitation and the extraction of surplus value from the working class by the capitalist class. This is the lynch-pin of capitalism. Moreover, this exploitation takes place at the point of production and is not a phenomenon of distribution. That is, profit is not extracted simply through the circulation and exchange of the products of human labour in society, but is extracted at the point of production by the capitalist class in the actual use of the labour power of workers. Thus:

'If commodities, or commodities and money, of equal exchange-value, and consequently equivalents, are exchanged, it is plain that no one abstracts more value from, than he throws into circulation. There is no creation of surplus value,' (Marx, 1954:158).

'...the production of surplus value, a process which is entirely confined to the sphere of production,' (ibid:189).

The bourgeoisie is able to expropriate the value of the product of the working class because it owns the means of production and the workers are forced to sell their labour power to capitalists because they have no such means with which to produce goods of their own. This antagonistic relationship entails, on the one hand, class struggle between capitalists and workers, and, on the other hand, solidarity between workers:

'The proletariat goes through various stages of development. With its birth begins the struggle with the bourgeoisie...But with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows, and it feels that strength more...Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades Unions) against the bourgeois,' (Marx & Engels in Tucker,ibid:342).

it is this antagonistic relationship between capitalist and proletariat which shapes and sets limits to all other relationships in society.

3. Political

The state in the Marxist analysis is a crucial structure of class rule. It is seen as a direct result of class antagonism, in that it was required to mitigate it:

'as it rose , at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class which, through the medium of the state, becomes also the politically dominant class and thus acquires new means of

holding down and exploiting the oppressed class,' (Engels, 1972:160).

And Lenin says:

'[The State] is the creation of 'order' which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes,' (Lenin, 1975:242).

The role of the state is thus to ensure social cohesion by mitigating and diffusing the class antagonisms which would otherwise tear it apart. This maintenance of stability inevitably serves the interests of the ruling class, since it is only the artificial stability imposed by the state which prevents its overthrow by the working class. The state is thus both separate from the classes and serves the interests of the dominant class because of the economic power of the latter. Thus the state is relatively autonomous, serving the dominant class by limiting the class struggle against it.

4. Ideological

All the theorists, whatever their approach, stated that the workings of capitalism could not be understood by reference to immediate observation. A variety of ideological, political and economic processes mask its essential inner dynamics. Common sense gives a partial or false picture of the world. Marx shows how competition and market relations conceal the underlying exploitive nature of the relations of production:

'Everything appears reversed in competition. The final pattern of economic relations as seen on the surface, in their real existence and consequently in the conceptions by which the bearers and agents of these relations seek to understand them, is very different from, and indeed quite the reverse of, their inner but concealed essential pattern and the conception corresponding to it,' (Marx,1959:209).

This mystification is connected with the dialectical explanation of historical change. As noted above, in the dialectic of historical development, present and future, what can be and what should be, are in a contradictory unity. The present conceals and mystifies the dynamics of the future which it contains.

'No social order is ever destroyed before all the productive forces for which it is sufficient have been developed, and new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the framework of the old society,' (Marx,1970:21).

The process of ideological mystification is rooted in this dialectical development. To accept empirically given reality is to be confined to the present, ignorant of the contradictions which produce change.

However, theoretical activity alone cannot expose the nature of social reality. As Marx says of the theoretical discovery of the nature of value:

'The recent scientific discovery, that the products of labour, so far as they are values, are but material expressions of the human labour spent in their production...by no means dissipates the mist through which the social character of labour appears to us to be an objective character of the products themselves,'

(Marx, 1954:79).

Only revolutionary activity, which allies itself with the forces pushing towards the future and the overthrow of capitalist relations, can penetrate at the level of consciousness the ideological mystifications:

'...all the forms of and products of consciousness can be dissolved not by intellectual criticism...but only by the practical overthrow of the actual social relations which gave rise to this idealist humbug,' (Marx & Engels in Bottomore ses & Rubel, 1963:70).

Thus theory can penetrate this ideological mystification only when it is part and parcel of revolutionary activity.

5. Historical Contingency of Social Forms and Values

Because of this central dynamic role of contradiction and the change it produces. There is no fixed social structure or value system. Given facts and values of social structures are therefore historically contingent and have no eternal validity and are thus open to critique and change.

WHAT SHOULD BE

As just explained, perceptions of what can be arise out of perceptions of what is. The goal of the abolition of wage labour cannot arise if the present is seen as eternal and unchanging as

fixed in the nature of things, rather than as an historical product. A notion that the present is wrong, if unalterable, still operates within the confines of the present. Thus a revolutionary consciousness includes the rejection of existing capitalist social relations and the recognition of their potential for restructuring by and for the working class.

Together with the idea of the abolition of wage labour must go the abolition of the bourgeois state. It is not a neutral instrument to be taken over by the working class for its own ends, but must be smashed as part of the edifice of class rule.

'One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz. that 'the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes', (1872 Preface to the Communist Manifesto, quoted Lenin, 1975b:263).

In no way can the bourgeois state be used to pave the way for socialism in a gradualist manner. Lenin in State and Revolution asserted continually that the bourgeois state apparatus must be entirely destroyed and an 'apparatus of a new type' suited to proletarian interests must be erected in its place.

Gramsci's position was rather different. In contradistinction to the state, he stressed the role of civil society in maintaining capitalist relations through the hegemony or domination of bourgeois ideas in society at large. In his memorable military image:

'The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there stood a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks, [i.e. the ideological and social structures of civil society]', (Gramsci, 1971:238).

Civil society with all its social, exchange and ideological relationships was, in Gramsci's view, a far stronger bulwark of capitalist power than the state apparatus itself. The state certainly had to be overthrown, but the intricate web of civil society had to be dissolved also. This latter task he called the 'war of position' - the struggle for political and ideological hegemony. When this was complete, the 'war of manoeuvre', the military overthrow of state power could be accomplished.

'In politics, ... the 'war of position', once won, is decisive, definitively.... The war of manoeuvre subsists so long as it is a question of winning positions which are not decisive, so that all the resources of the state's hegemony cannot be mobilised,' (ibid:239).

For Gramsci, then, the ideological war is the key. While it is true that social and cultural forms are much more densely developed in late capitalist social formations, the state's intervention in these has expanded also. A materialist approach cannot give as high a degree of effectivity to the role of ideas as did Gramsci, and while acknowledging the role of ideological struggle as a significant component of revolutionary struggle in general, his contribution is best seen as an important addition to the Leninist and Marxist analysis of the state as the system of force which holds capitalism together.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

The definition of the revolutionary tasks of the working class depends on an analysis of what is/should be/can be. While all the classical theorists agree on the need to expropriate the means of production from the capitalist class, they differ in the relative importance they give in revolutionary strategy to the political and ideological spheres. However, there are a number of underlying threads in common. All theorists stress the need for conscious activity. The dialectical development of historical forces means that revolution is a negation of previously dominant relations of production. Passive surrender to economic, political and ideological structures cannot lead to their overthrow. Therefore revolution demands an active thrust towards the future based on full consciousness of the forces which make this possible. Simple spontaneity is not enough - this leads only to confinement within dominant structures. Thus Lukacs says:

'[The proletariat] is to be distinguished from other classes by the fact that it goes beyond the contingencies of history; far from being driven forward by them, it is itself the driving force,' (Lukacs, 1971:68).

And Gramsci says:

'All hitherto existing philosophies...have been manifestations of the intimate contradictions by which society is lacerated...[But] the philosophy of praxis...is consciousness full of contradictions in which the philosopher himself, understood both individually and as an

entire social group, not only grasps the contradictions, but posits himself as an element of the contradiction and elevates this element to a principle of knowledge and therefore of action,' (Gramsci, 1971:404,405).

And Lenin:

'All belittling of the role of 'the conscious element'...means...a strengthening of the influence of bourgeois ideology upon the workers,' (Lenin, 1975c:120).

Revolution thus is a process of conscious negation of existing structures.

This idea of revolution as a conscious act of negation and the idea of revolution as inevitable seem at first sight to be contradictory. However they are linked in a dialectical movement by three propositions. The first is that the interests of the proletariat can only be served by the overthrow of capitalism. The second is that the proletariat will inevitably become aware of these interests through the development of the contradictions of capital and, thirdly, that they will be willing to engage in revolution and endure the undoubted suffering this must entail. For Marx and Engels this connection was relatively unproblematic.

'The modern labourer.. becomes a pauper...And here it becomes evident that the bourgeoisie is unfit any longer to be the ruling class...The existence [of the bourgeoisie] is no longer compatible with society...Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable,' (Marx & Engels in Tucker, 1972:345).

And similarly Lenin:

'Capital collects the workers in great masses in big cities, uniting them, teaching them to act in unison. At every step, the workers come face to face with their main enemy, the capitalist class. In combat with this enemy, the worker becomes a socialist, comes to realise the necessity of a complete reconstruction of the whole of society,' (Lenin, 1963:301-302).

Interests are objective. They can be read off from the position of a particular group in the social structure. Thus Lukacs says:

'By relating consciousness to the whole of society, it becomes possible to infer the thoughts and feelings which men would have in a particular situation if they were able to assess both it and the interests arising from it in their impact in immediate action and on the whole structure of society...it would be possible to infer the thoughts and feelings appropriate to their objective situation,' (Lukacs, 1971:51).

However, Lukacs distinguished between true and false consciousness. The latter arises because of the limitation of individuals to a particular economic position. A true consciousness could emerge only by linking the knowledge from this limited viewpoint to an understanding of the totality of the social structure. This was a task of political and ideological leadership by the revolutionary party.

As noted above, true consciousness can only be produced through revolutionary practice which challenges and overturns the relations which produce false consciousness.

What are the forces of working class resistance to capital and which of these are capable of overthrowing it? What is the role, if any, of trade unions in this struggle? As Lozovsky says:

'The tasks of the trade unions can be correctly defined only on the basis of the general class tasks of the proletariat,' (Lozovsky, 1935:7).

Speaking of the 1905 Russian Revolution, Lenin says:

'But everyone understands that such an offensive cannot be evoked artificially in accordance with the desires of the socialists or militant workers. It is possible only when the whole country is convulsed by a crisis, mass indignation and revolution. In order to prepare such an onslaught...we must devote years and years to persistent, widespread, unflagging propaganda, agitation and organisational work, building up and reinforcing all forms of proletarian unions and organisations,' (Lenin, 1963:301).

Thus, two forces are needed for revolutions: On the one hand, the spontaneous development of the class struggle through workers' organisations like trade unions within the general development of the historical forces. On the other hand, the revolutionary party must consciously intervene in these processes. Revolution occurs neither as the result of the will of the revolutionary party, nor through the spontaneous development of contradictions, but as a dialectic between the two.

The thinking of the classical theorists revolves around three moments of working class struggle; the revolutionary party, the trade unions and the broad rank-and-file masses. While they all agree that only the revolutionary party can expose in a theoretical way the forces at

work and give conscious political leadership, they disagree on the importance of the party relative to the spontaneous mass struggle. They are at best ambivalent about the possibility for a positive role for trade unions in the revolutionary struggle. Since trade union consciousness is our focus, we will concentrate on their views of the role of trade unions. But before setting out the role of trade unions in revolution, we must set out their role under capitalism as such.

Trade unions under capitalism are organisations for the collective protection of the conditions and rates for the sale for labour-power. As Allen says:

'under conditions where labour is freely bought and sold, trade unionism is endemic, universal and permanent,'
(Allen, 1966:11).

Trade unions embody resistance to capital and at the same time express its domination because they only have a role where labour-power is bought and sold and this sale of labour power is one of the defining features of the rule of capital. Historically, after initial resistance to the trade unions' very right to exist, (in Britain, this took the form of the Combinations Acts and other anti-trade union legislation,) the bourgeois state has given them legal existence in an effort to curtail and discipline their potential to disrupt capital accumulation. This has been particularly evident in the history of industrial legislation in New Zealand. More and more, the bourgeois state has attempted to build

unions into the state apparatus in a corporatist manner. That is, it has sought to minimise the resistance role of trade unions and to expand their stake in the continuing rule of capital.

However, the contradictions of the existence of trade unions as simultaneously organs of resistance to capital and part of its structure cannot be erased. As Panitch points out, instability has been a feature of such corporatist structures, (Panitch, 1981:35). This is because if such structures are effective from the point of view of the bourgeois class, in protecting the expropriation of surplus value through minimising wage demands, the basic role of trade unions as protectors of the conditions and price of the sale of labour power is undermined. Rank-and-file members have been forced to resist the direction taken by union leaders and have engaged in direct action to protect their living standards. This is simply an expression of the irreconcilability of bourgeois and working class interests. But, as Anderson says:

'Trade unions do not challenge the existence of society based on the division of classes, they only express it,' (Anderson in Clarke & Clements, 1978:334).

They are a product of capitalism, taking on the contours imposed by capital, as, for instance, with trade and industrial divisions. They lack the role of conscious negation of capitalist relations which must be undertaken by the revolutionary party, (Anderson, *ibid*:335). The only power they have is that of withdrawal, an absence from production, (*ibid*). The capitalist system cannot be overthrown by

such passive means.. Further, trade unions are fundamentally sectional; they do not represent the working class as a whole.

Nonetheless, trade unions express the fundamental contradiction between capital and labour. They are driven to resist the demands of capital in their day-to-day existence, and in doing so provide workers with concrete experiences of collective strength and the opportunity to consciously and practically understand the exploitive nature of capitalism. The workers are constantly pitted against capital. The nature and existence of trade unions is, therefore, fundamentally contradictory.

The whole *raison d'etre* of trade unions is to struggle round the immediate day-to-day interests of the working class. These day-to-day interests are, as Wright says, interests defined within a given structure of social relations, (Wright,1978:89). The revolutionary struggle over fundamental interests seeks to negate that structure by deepening the contradictions within it through class struggle. It would seem therefore, that trade unions are fundamentally, by definition, non-revolutionary. However, again, as Wright says, immediate interests are dialectically linked with fundamental revolutionary interests, and are not 'false', (ibid:90). A key revolutionary task is to link these immediate day-to-day struggles with the ultimate task of overthrowing capitalism. Lukacs says:

'only when the immediate interests are integrated into a total view and related to the final goal of the process, do they become revolutionary,' (Lukacs, 1971:71).

This task has direct implications for trade unions and their revolutionary potential. It is their struggles around immediate interests which make them both essential and problematic in a revolutionary strategy.

Trotsky (1979) articulated this in the Transitional Programme. This proposed the raising of demands which are linked with immediate interests but incapable of being met under capitalism. Since trade unions are the key organisations around immediate interests, they have a place in revolutionary strategy and despite their paradoxical nature, this place must be theorised.

The contradictory existence of trade unions has produced widely varying assessments by the classical theorists of their potential for revolutionary struggle. However, this is more a function of the different historical contexts in which they were writing than of fundamental theoretical differences. If at any particular historical conjuncture, trade unions were seen to support the status quo and retard the class struggle, interpretations of their revolutionary potential were pessimistic. If they were taking a lead in the struggle, assessments were more optimistic. This simply reflects the paradoxical nature of trade unions. They both resist capitalist relations and are confined by them. Different historical conditions expose and elicit one tendency more than the other. Thus trade

unions play varying roles in regard to capital according to historical circumstances. When the different historical conjunctures in which the classical theorists wrote are taken into account, their analysis of the limits and potentialities of trade unions within the class struggle are remarkably similar.

Early writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin stress the positive role of trade unions in the development of class struggle. In the Communist Manifesto, trade unions are seen as an inevitable stage in the development of full political class struggle:

'But with the development of industry, the proletariat not only increases in number; it becomes concentrated in greater masses, its strength grows and it feels that strength more... Thereupon the workers begin to form combinations (Trades Unions) against the bourgeois...The real fruit of their battle lies not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers...This organisation of the proletarians into a class and consequently into a political party, is continually being upset...but it ever rises up again, stronger, firmer, mightier.' (Marx & Engels in Tucker, 1972:342,343, my emphasis).

Here, trade union organisation and spontaneous resistance are seen to lead inevitably to full class consciousness and political organisation and this is assumed to be revolutionary organisation.

'The advance of industry...replaces the isolation of the labourers...by their revolutionary combination due to association...What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, is its own gravediggers,' (ibid:345).

In general, strikes are actions over immediate day-to-day struggles unless they take on a mass political character. Again, early writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin point to the positive role these play in the revolutionary development of the working class. Thus Engels in 1845 says:

'These strikes...are the military school of the working man in which they prepare themselves for the great struggle which cannot be avoided... As schools of war, the unions are unexcelled,' (Engels,1973:230,231).

Lenin in 1899 says:

'Every strike brings thoughts of socialism very forcibly to the workers' mind,' (Lenin 1960:63).

And again in 1910 basing his assertions on the experience of the 1905 revolution, he says that workers in their day-to-day struggles come into conflict with the capitalist class and are made socialists directly out of this conflict:

'In combat with this enemy, the worker becomes a socialist, comes to realise the necessity of the complete reconstruction of the whole of society, the complete abolition of all poverty and all oppression,' (Lenin,1963:302).

These, then, are positive views of trade unions in terms of their revolutionary potential. However, none of the theorists see trade union activity in itself as sufficient to overthrow capitalism. Even

the early writings point out their limitations in no uncertain terms:

'Trade unions fail partially from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerrilla war against the effects of the existing system instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organised labour-power as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system,' (Marx, 1969:75,76).

Engels, too, says that union efforts:

'cannot alter the economic law according to which wages are determined by the relation between supply and demand in the labour market... The active resistance of the English working men has its effect in holding the money greed of the bourgeoisie within certain limits...while it compels the admission that something more is needed than Trades Unions and strikes to break the power of the ruling class,' (Engels, 1973:224,225,226).

In On Strikes, Lenin says:

'Socialists call strikes a "school for war"...A "school for war" is, however, not war itself...Strikes can only be successful where workers are sufficiently class-conscious...and where they have connections with socialists,' (Lenin, 1978:65,66).

The 'war' to which Lenin refers is, of course, the class war conceived as an allout revolutionary struggle for the victory of the working class over the bourgeoisie. Thus a strike is considered a success or a failure according to whether it promotes fundamental interests. If a strike is merely limited to mere immediate interests and gains, it is not successful from the revolutionary standpoint.

The recognition that 'something more is needed than trade unions and strikes' is the recognition of the need to carry the class struggle to the political level. The reference in the Communist Manifesto, quoted above, to the organisation of workers at the economic level and its natural progression to the level of political organisation is another statement that the economic struggle, of itself, will not overthrow capital. However, the optimism lies in the belief that the economic struggle will develop of itself to the political level.

By 1902, Lenin was questioning this natural progression and was concerned with developing political organisation. In What is to be Done, he emphasised the limitations of trade unionism and the consciousness circumscribed by this form of organisation. Trade union consciousness and struggle was a spontaneous response to the world. As such, it was confined to immediate gains and knowledge of surface appearances only. It could not represent real knowledge of the world or challenge its central structures.

Without knowledge, the working class was powerless to challenge bourgeois structures, becoming merely their passive participants. Only with revolutionary theoretical knowledge and leadership could it transcend and overthrow capitalism. Thus:

'Without revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement' (Lenin, 1975c:109).

For Lenin, trade unions are inherently incapable of this kind of knowledge and leadership, since:

'the common striving of all workers [is intended] to secure from the Government measures for alleviating the distress to which their condition gives rise, but do not abolish that condition,' (ibid:124).

'The spontaneous working class movement is trade unionism,' (ibid:122).

It cannot consciously negate the present social system or grasp the possibilities for the future which it contains. This attack on the limitations of trade unionism is not in contradiction with Lenin's earlier position, that strikes (and presumably trade unions), are schools for revolutionary war. Rather, he was addressing himself to the forms of political organisation which were most appropriate for revolutionary activity. The necessary positive role of trade unions could be taken for granted - the 'burning questions of the movement' centred round the much more developed stage of the class struggle. Trade unions in their nature were not capable of playing a leading role here.

However, they are certainly capable of being part of the revolutionary army. They could develop revolutionary consciousness under appropriate leadership. This is why in discussing the lessons of the 1905 Revolution, Lenin named building up the trade unions as a key revolutionary task (Lenin, 1963:301). It was not simply a matter of working in trade unions to communicate revolutionary ideas to workers, but actually building up the fighting strength of their

organisation. In 1920, Lenin further attacked those communists who would by-pass reactionary trade unions. He noted the role of trade unions in the development of the working class:

'The trade unions were a tremendous step forward for the working class in the early days of capitalist development, inasmuch as they marked a transition from the workers' disunity and helplessness to the rudiments of class organisation. When the revolutionary party of the proletariat, the highest form of proletarian organisation began to take shape...the trade unions inevitably began to reveal certain reactionary features... However, the development of the proletariat did not and could not proceed anywhere in the world otherwise than through the trade unions, through reciprocal action between them and the party of the working class,' (Lenin, 1975a:315).

The emphasis on 'certain' reactionary features emphasises the partial nature of these characteristics. It was thus a key revolutionary task to bring the members, if not the leaders, of the trade unions to a revolutionary position; this was despite the undoubted reactionary nature of many trade unions.

Gramsci, too, was concerned about the limitations of trade unions for the revolutionary struggle. Following Michels, he attacked 'the iron laws inherent in the bureaucratic structure of the trade union apparatus' (Gramsci in Blackburn, 1977:382). Unions were:

'the types of proletarian organisation specific to the historical period dominated by capital...They are in a certain sense an integral part of capitalist society...The union cannot be the instrument for a radical renovation of society,' (ibid:383).

In fact, Gramsci likened unions to big firms who play the market, controlling it as well as they can to maintain the price of their commodity, labour-power, (Gramsci, 1968:36). The nature of unions is competitive, according to Gramsci, not communist, (ibid). Again, 'something more' was needed. But for Gramsci, the 'something more' was an organisation of the rank and file masses. This was the Factory Council. At this stage, Gramsci rejected Lenin's concept of the vanguard party as the key revolutionary organisation. While the Party had a clear role in leadership, the central revolutionary impulse would come from the Factory Councils which included all workers, unionised or not. Only mass-based organisations like the Factory Councils could lead from below; the Socialist Party and Trade Unions were authoritarian, leading from above, (Gramsci, 1968:29). Thus, at least at this period of his writing, when he focussed on questions of working class organisation, Gramsci took a relatively spontaneist approach, seeing trade unions as artificial structures holding back the spontaneous class struggle. Later on, in his exploration of ideological hegemony, he was to give greater emphasis to the role of the Party in ideological and political leadership.

Nevertheless, even at this period, Gramsci saw a positive revolutionary role for trade unions. While the legality of trade unions was granted by the bourgeois state in order that unions could use their structures to deliver a disciplined work-force, this legality was a victory for trade unions, enabling them to organise and defend their members, (ibid, 39). It was not a final victory for

the working class, however. These rights and powers had to be used in a revolutionary way:

'If the officials of the trade union organisation...devote all the means at the disposal of the working class; and if they make all the indispensable moral and material preparations for the working class at a given moment to be able to launch a successful offensive against capital and subject it to its law, then the trade union is a revolutionary instrument and union discipline, even when it is used to make the workers respect industrial legality, is revolutionary discipline,' (ibid:39).

Thus, even when working within the confines of the capitalist order, provided the trade union advanced as far as possible in the conjuncture, it could still be a 'lever for the final emancipation of the working class'.

Luxemburg took up the theme of trade unions as integral components of capitalism. In Reform and Revolution, back in 1899, she attacked the revisionists who believed that the trade union struggle linked with political reform:

'will lead to a progressively more extensive control over the conditions of production...Trade unions cannot suppress the law of wages,' (Luxemburg, 1973:20,21).

These are determined by conditions of the labour market. But:

'Trade unions enable the proletariat to utilise each instant, the conjuncture of the market...They have not, however, the power to suppress exploitation itself, not even gradually,' (ibid).

She sees more negative aspects of trade unions. Insofar as they are driven to oppose technical innovation,

'They do not act in the interest of the working class and its emancipation, which accords rather with technical progress...They act here in a reactionary direction,' (ibid).

If trade unions:

'join with capital to fix the scale and costs of production in order to influence the market they are forming a cartel of the workers and entrepreneurs in a common stand against the consumer and especially against rival entrepreneurs,' (ibid).

This is the very opposite of class struggle, 'the solidarity of capital and labour against the total consumers,' (ibid:22). With technical innovation, the demand for labour slows and the rate of profit declines, resulting in stepped up efforts by capitalists to reduce wages. Trade unions are more and more reduced to defensive actions to protect gains already made. Thus trade unions become less able to achieve even their traditional trade union aims, let alone politically transform society.

'The objective conditions of capitalist society transform the ...functions of the trade unions into a sort of labour of Sisyphus, which is, nevertheless, indispensable,' (ibid:43).

The only solution to this contradiction is the 'development of the political side of the class struggle,' (ibid:23). This means that the trade unions, along with the parliamentary party, must be turned

to a revolutionary role and used as a 'means of guiding and educating the proletariat in preparation for the task of taking over power,' (ibid:29). Thus Luxemburg argues that trade unions are forced into a historic choice by the development of the contradictions of capitalism. If trade unions confine themselves to immediate aims, they are forced to be active participants in the maintenance of the capitalist order. They have the choice, however, of playing a role in overthrowing it. This role is educational, however; Luxemburg did not think, as did Marx and Engels, that trade unions could be a 'lever for the final emancipation of the working class'. She relied on the more spontaneous development of the mass strike, a movement of the unorganised masses.

In her view, the mass strike, played a more key role than the revolutionary party itself. The party simply gave a lead, it did not have the organisational role assigned to it by Lenin. According to Luxemburg, the mass strike was a historical phenomenon which could not be made or originated by a handful of 'revolutionary romanticists' or disciplined trade unions, (Luxemburg, 1970:160, 161). It was the mass strikes in Russia in 1905 which produced new trade unions - the trade unions did not produce the strikes:

'From the whirlwind and the storm, out of the fire and glow of the mass strike and the street fighting, rise again, like Venus from the foam, fresh, young, powerful, bouyant trade unions (ibid:176). 'The mass strike is the living pulse beat of the revolution and at the same time its most powerful driving wheel,' (ibid:182).

This then is an apocalyptic view of the revolutionary process, well removed from the Leninist idea of the vanguard party taking a leading organisational role. Again, it is important to remember the historical context of this debate. Revisionism and economism were rife in the Second International and Luxemburg was comparing the fierce struggle of the 1905 Russian Revolution with the inertia of the International. However, as we have seen, Lenin too saw revolution as an historical process which could not be invoked by the revolutionary party, only utilised by it.

For Luxemburg, then, trade unions could have a revolutionary role, but this was less significant than the role of the spontaneous rising of the masses. Her analysis of the revolutionary process rested on spontaneous action, more than disciplined leadership.

Trotsky's attack on the trade unions as anti-progressive institutions came, like Gramsci's, after the 1st World War, when the trade union movements of Europe, like their corresponding labour and social democratic parties, were on the defensive and lined up behind their respective national governments and bourgeoisie. This nationalism was the antithesis of internationalist class solidarity, an essential element of a revolutionary strategy. It was class collaboration, the natural result of a class defense strategy which confined itself to immediate interests and gains.

Trotsky echoes Luxemburg's assertion that unions would have to take up the political revolutionary struggle even to perform their bread

and butter role. He went so far as to describe the trade union bureaucracies as the 'chief instrument for [the workers'] oppression by the bourgeois state,' (Trotsky, 1975:29). This was because under conditions of capitalism in its final decline, (as it was seen at the time by Marxists), workers were under real attack and, if they did not take the revolutionary road, they were forced into active collaboration with the bourgeoisie. He made the telling point that all modern trade unions, whether communist, anarchist or social democrat in position, were drawing closer to the capitalist state, (ibid). This was a function of the conditions of capitalism in 'the epoch of capitalist decay'. Unions thus had the choice, either to continue as passive products of the bourgeois system and collaborate with capital, as they were doing, or to transform themselves into 'instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.' Neutrality was impossible, (ibid:71). This position is identical to that of Luxemburg.

But Trotsky was equally opposed to communists founding a separate revolutionary union movement as a means of challenging collaborationist bureaucracies. The left had to work within reformist unions ready to form revolutionary workers' councils at the right time, (ibid:56). Thus trade unions were still valid working class organisations despite their collaborationist role under the incorporated bureaucracy.

Because of this entrenched trade union bureaucracy, Trotsky, like Gramsci and Luxemburg, saw the need for rank and file organisations

such as shop committees and workers' councils. But these were only appropriate at times of crisis, when the mass of workers were disaffected from the leadership of their trade unions and were looking for alternative forms of organisation. It was important not to arbitrarily push the idea of workers' councils when union members broadly accepted the union leadership, (ibid). The material reality of trade unions had to be accepted in an objective scientific manner and used as a basis for revolutionary work. If possible, they were to be transformed through pressure from the rank-and-file under the leadership of the revolutionary party. If not, they were to be by-passed at the right moment in the workers' councils.

All these theorists, then, are in fundamental agreement that trade unions are necessary defensive organisations of the working class and that they provide it with essential organisational experience. They are also agreed that in their nature, trade unions are incapable of overthrowing the wages system. However, as key organisations of workers, they can play a revolutionary role if they ally their strength with a socialist party organised to overthrow the capitalist system. If the revolutionary process is a dialectical relationship between the agency of class struggle and the constraints of historical circumstance, then trade unions are quintessentially an embodiment of this contradiction. It is thus reasonable to pose the possibility of trade unions with revolutionary consciousness. They cannot be revolutionary in the sense of leading and organising a revolutionary uprising, but if a union is to perform its role as a 'lever for the final emancipation of the working class' in

collaboration with a revolutionary party, in its theory and practice, it must embody the basic Marxist-Leninist concepts and praxis outlined above.

The assessment of revolutionary consciousness of a trade union is an assessment of the nature of its agency within historical structures. A union can be revolutionary in a non-revolutionary situation, just as a revolutionary party can function as such in a non-revolutionary situation. The question of whether a union is revolutionary or not is not defined by its objective possibilities for action but by its goals together with its practices within a particular set of constraints. The actions of a union or party cannot be revolutionary in the abstract, only in relation to a concrete set of historical forces. Thus the degree of revolutionism of a union's practice can only be assessed by the extent to which a union struggles in an objective manner with the constraints in which it is placed. This assessment is thus an exercise in historical analysis.

We are now in a position to build the typology of revolutionary concepts which provides a tool to assess the level of class struggle of a trade union.

BUILDING A TYPOLOGY OF TRADE UNION CONSCIOUSNESS

In order to establish a typology for the analysis of the consciousness of the Waterside Workers Federation, I will now briefly survey existing typologies of class consciousness and values held by workers.

As pointed out in the introduction, this appears to be the first attempt to develop a detailed systematic tool for the analysis of trade union ideas and practices. However, a number of studies have developed typologies of class consciousness and workers' attitudes and values. While the latter do not include the action element essential to a Marxist concept of class consciousness, they either hint at some of the distinctions which my typology seeks to make more explicit, or if only by negative example, provide a basis for developing an alternative methodology.

Michael Mann (1973) defines four elements of revolutionary class consciousness. These form a hierarchy in that the first element at the bottom of the scale is subsumed by the next until full revolutionary consciousness is defined by the presence of all four factors.

The most elementary form of class consciousness is a sense of class identity, a sense of being working class alongside others in a similar position in the productive process. Then comes opposition, the sense that the capitalist employers' interests are inherently

opposed to one's own. Then comes totality, the awareness that these two elements define one's whole life situation and the whole society in which the worker is situated. Finally, comes the vision of an alternative society which can only be achieved through struggle with the opponent, (Mann,1973:13).

These images contain elements of a revolutionary consciousness - class solidarity, class struggle, totality and the need for a new order, but they by no means define such a consciousness exhaustively in a Marxist fashion.

Lockwood (1966) discusses two broad ways in which individuals perceive the class structure of capitalist society. One perspective is labelled 'dichotomous' in that society is perceived as based on two parts in conflict, one having power while the other has not - the 'us-them' view. This view is held more often by members of the working class. The other perspective sees society as a hierarchy of different levels of status and prestige but without necessarily having connotations of power. This view is more generally held by members of the 'middle class'. Researchers, both bourgeois and Marxist, have in particular sought to understand the nature of 'working class Tories'. These are members of the working class who though without positions of status, power, property or wealth, nevertheless support a party which represents the interests of those privileged by a system which places them in such positions. The roots of these beliefs are not the focus of interest here, but the way in which they are described and classified. Lockwood

distinguishes between two types of attitudes to be found among workers: traditional, on the one hand, and privatised on the other. The traditional view in turn is of two kinds, proletarian and deferential.

The proletarian adopts the power-divided dichotomous view of society while the deferential worker adopts the hierarchical status model. The privatised worker, on the other hand, sees social differences purely in terms of money. Status and power in society is just a matter of money. Such a worker adopts what Lockwood calls an instrumental view of work, seeing it purely in terms of the money to be gained by it. Similarly, there is little involvement in the wider community and union membership is instrumental only. The union is seen as a service rather than a movement which involves activity and commitment by the worker. The focus of life is the family and personal life and hence is called privatised.

The distinction between traditional and privatised is in line with the thesis presented in the key study by Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al. The Affluent Worker (Goldthorpe et al, 1968b:76). This stated that the privatised ideology of the workers at Luton's modern car factories was a prototype of the trends in modern capitalism - that the traditional perspective, whether proletarian or deferential, would disappear. The distinction is thus drawn through time - what has been and what is to come. This is quite different from the collaborationist/revolutionary distinction which we are interested in. And, of course, it posits an entirely different development of

capitalism and consciousness from that posed by Marxists. The distinction between proletarian and deferential was not so central to their study. However, in a general way this distinction foreshadows a distinction to be made in my typology.

Proletarian may simply mean being a unionist and voting Labour and may be far removed from any Marxist understanding of society. Nichols and Beynon(1977) illustrate this in their examination of two shop stewards, both calling themselves socialists and both keen unionists but differing markedly in their approach to many issues. Nichols and Beynon say that these issues reflect in part different political traditions in the working class, (Nichols and Beynon,1977:148). This illustrates the power of such traditions to shape the thinking of class subjects. They also point out how fragmentary and incoherent these traditions are and how typologies involving discrete categories cannot analyse such incoherence.

Hill(1976), too, in his study of London dockers, found that they did not have a coherent world view that could be placed in discrete categories such as 'proletarian', 'deferential' or 'privatised' (Hill,1976:189).

McKenzie and Silver(1968) in their study of working class Tories note two categories, deferential and secular (McKenzie & Silver,1968:164). These are similar to the traditional deferential and the privatised workers of Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al. The deferential worker is as they define it, while the secular conservative has the pragmatism of

the privatised worker - less ultimate commitment to any articulated political framework.

Parkin (1971) develops a typology of meaning systems which makes a distinction between types of proletarian outlook. Parkin distinguishes three meaning systems in values held by workers in Western societies. The dominant value system is drawn from the main institutional order in society. This promotes the existing class relations and the values of the dominant ruling class, seeing no basic conflict of interest between them. The subordinate value system is based on the working class community. It sees classes in conflict and having opposed interests but adopts an accommodating strategy. It does not oppose to ruling values and meanings an alternative model of society. The radical value system is based on the working class party. It acknowledges inequality and opposes it, but without necessarily posing an alternative society, (Parkin, 1972:81ff).

Parkin distinguishes between what he calls deferential and aspirational versions of the dominant ideology. Both accept the dominant value system but the deferential accepts his/her inferior position while the aspirational sees the system as offering possibilities for betterment. The latter is more pragmatic and is similar to the secular and privatised distinctions of Lockwood and McKenzie and Silver. The subordinate and radical value systems are two types of proletarian outlook, one accepting without necessarily approving the existing relations and the other opposing them with an

alternative value system. These distinctions are between value systems and an oppositional value system does not necessarily amount to a revolutionary programme of action. However, the acknowledgement of distinctions between varieties of proletarian meaning systems does come closer to the central concern of this thesis - what distinguishes a fully revolutionary outlook from mere resistance?

Bedggood(1977) brings us nearer to this concern with his categorisation into two forms of bourgeois consciousness which he describes as authoritarian and populist respectively. The authoritarian consciousness is a product of direct bourgeois hegemony, reproducing directly bourgeois ideas. The populist is a form of working class radicalism which does not seek to overthrow bourgeois power as such but seeks a redistribution of resources, a traditional Social Democratic position (Bedggood,1977:125). The revolutionary outlook he calls proletarian consciousness. Bedggood's typology does not classify value systems, as does Parkin's, but forms of class consciousness, action-oriented analyses of capitalism. While Bedggood's distinction between Marxist and reformist radical is crucial and central to the concern of my typology, the use of single global concepts for each type does not allow for the inconsistencies noted by Nichols and Armstrong, (1976:148ff).

Nichols and Armstrong see labourism itself as an ideological force in its own right (ibid:128). It is a view of capitalism which acknowledges its class nature, yet does not seek to overthrow it. As a force within capitalism, both as a product and an expression of its

contradictions, it is unsurprising that it consists of contradictory and incoherent ideas. Labourism supports capital in part by its mystifications (ibid:20). It is therefore analogous to Parkin's subordinate value system and Bedggood's populism.

The distinctions labourism/socialism and populism/proletarianism of Nichols and Armstrong and Bedggood respectively are identical with the trade union consciousness/socialist consciousness distinction of Lenin and the corporate consciousness/hegemonic consciousness distinction of Gramsci. It is these distinctions which are crucial to the identification of revolutionary concepts. However, the reformist positions are incoherent amalgams of bourgeois positions on the one hand and proletarian ones, on the other. They are bourgeois in practice and therefore do not really form a third ideological category. Lenin's stricture is cogent:

'The only choice is - either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course...to belittle the socialist ideology in any way ...means to strengthen bourgeois ideology,' (Lenin,1975:121,122).

A two pole typology between bourgeois and socialist positions offers a continuum which allows for greater flexibility as well as greater accuracy in expressing the fundamental ideological forces at work. It allows reformist positions to be elucidated on the basis that they contain bourgeois elements rather than assuming that they have a separate coherent analysis of their own.

The only typology of trade union ideology as such that I have been able to discover in the literature, is that by Hoxie (1917). He distinguishes between structural types on the one hand and functional types on the other. Hoxie finds basically five functional types which are conceptualised in a similar manner to Weberian ideal types. Hoxie, however, is concerned to show through empirical demonstration that such separate types do exist in a concrete sense, (Hoxie,ibid:54). As Nichols and Armstrong warn, such arbitrary allocation into abstract types does violence to the actual inconsistencies to be found in ideologies and attitudes. However, Hoxie's categories are of interest, in particular, the three categories which are distinguished by differences in social and political aims.

Business unionism is pragmatic and is concerned with bread and butter issues, with no wider concerns. It is usually craft-based and conservative politically and tactically, (ibid:45).

What Hoxie calls friendly or uplift unionism is concerned with social betterment, mutuality and democracy. It is idealistic and may be trade or class conscious, though not in the Marxist sense. It is not revolutionary in that it does not seek the overthrow of the existing order. Hoxie cites the Knights of Labour as an example (ibid:47). The third category is revolutionary unionism. This takes two forms, both of which repudiate the existing order. The socialist revolutionary union seeks a socialist state through class political action.

It presupposes a socialist party and in the meantime works within collective bargaining structures and contracts, (ibid:48). The anarchist revolutionary union repudiates socialism and all state power, aiming at a society of industrial associations. Sabotage and violence are favoured methods for achieving change (ibid:49). The other two categories, predatory unionism and dependent unionism are not distinguished by social and political goals and need not concern us.

The typology which I propose for the analysis of trade union concepts represents a development from the various typologies of attitudes and concepts so far discussed. The proposed typology sets up a grid of factors which together form a consistent revolutionary praxis. It is, firstly, a theoretical typology, setting out concepts only potentially observable in the ideas and actions of actual trade unions. These concepts will be drawn from the selected classical Marxist theorists to establish two theoretically possible extremes of trade union orientation - a Marxist revolutionary perspective, on the one hand, and a bourgeois perspective, on the other. The aim is to develop a concept of a revolutionary union. Because the concepts are theoretically derived, not empirically, the typology is a device for analysis, not classification. The object is to apply the theoretical typology to the empirical facts of trade union words and actions in order to expose the conceptual framework embedded in them.

As Poulantzas points out, Marx's use of typological distinctions between different modes of production and different types of state is

very different from the Weberian ideal type which is abstracted from various examples of a particular phenomenon, (Poulantzas, 1978:145). A Marxist typology is a theoretical construct from theoretically produced concepts. As Marx says of the process of theoretically appropriating the world:

'The method of advancing from the abstract to the concrete is simply the way in which thinking assimilates the concrete and reproduces it as a concrete mental category,' (Marx, 1970:206).

By developing an abstract concept of a revolutionary trade unions, it is hoped to illuminate the nature of the consciousness of a concrete union, subject to 'multiple historical determinations'. Because the typology is theoretically derived, it is not necessary or expected that any actual union will hold a consistent position classifiable within the terms of the typology. The incoherence of trade union ideologies due to the complex forces in which they are situated can thus be exposed. To attempt to classify concrete trade union words and actions a priori would wrench them from their historical context and destroy their significance.

Secondly, the typology consists of a large range of concepts and factors instead of the global single concept nature of the typologies so far considered. This allows for more flexible and thorough analysis.

Thirdly, the typology is a bi-polar continuum so that it does not entail an attempt to classify a particular union's beliefs and actions into a discrete category. This is very important since, as already noted, unions exhibit contradictory tendencies because of their contradictory position under capitalism. In fact, the thrust of Leninist revolutionary theory is that it is only with the leadership of a vanguard party, armed with the concepts of Marxist science, that the working class can form an accurate, consistent picture of the historical forces in which they are meshed. Thus, as noted above, the distinctions between varieties of working class consciousness noted by various theorists are crucial to the identification of specifically revolutionary perspectives. However, these distinctions are best exposed in a typology which allows for contradictory combinations of the various factors. Revisionism or reformism is thus not treated as a separate, discrete type.

While the revolutionary Marxist pole of the typology represents a coherent integrated set of concepts, this is not so for the bourgeois collaborationist pole. This is because the typology does not seek to identify all the belief-systems possible, but only how far a particular set of beliefs and actions is Marxist. In fact, a variety of bourgeois ideologies are present at the bourgeois pole of the typology in a fragmentary way. For instance, aspects of both libertarian and authoritarian bourgeois positions are included and are identified as bourgeois by their opposition to basic Marxist positions. This takes on board Lenin's point, already noted, that, insofar as a position is not revolutionary, it is bourgeois.

Having identified the basic characteristics of the typology, the next step is to set out its building blocks. This will be done by developing the basic concepts already established in the previous chapter in a more concrete manner to take into account the function of trade unions as collective organisations for the protection of the conditions and rates for the sale of labour power. As noted in the previous chapter, the typology will be divided into three broad sections: What is? What Should Be? and What is to be Done? These are further subdivided into the different levels or aspects of action; economic, political and ideological. How do these basic concepts translate into features of trade union consciousness?

WHAT IS

Economic

A revolutionary union must, first and foremost, acknowledge the fundamental antagonism of interest between the capitalist class and the working class. The revolutionary union sees the relationship as one of exploitation while the collaborationist union sees it as one of exchange. The revolutionary union understands exploitation to take place at the point of production, and arises from the form of ownership of the means of production and the resulting appropriation of the product and surplus value produced by workers in the labour process. The reformist or collaborationist union may see inequality merely as a problem of distribution of the products of the labour of the working class.

Political

At the political level, the revolutionary union sees the state as a structure of class domination while the collaborationist union sees it as offering equal representation to all.

Ideological

At the ideological level, the revolutionary union sees the class nature of a whole range of social institutions connected with the transmission and embodiment of ideas; schools, the media, political parties, the Church and academic experts. These are seen as institutions of mystification, while the collaborationist union sees them as objective presenters of ideas, values and information.

Ontological

From the ontological point of view, the nature of the social formation is viewed very differently by the revolutionary and collaborationist union.

As a general position running through all the dimensions of its action in the social formation, the revolutionary union asserts its totality, the connectedness of all its moments. Political power must be understood in relation to the means of production; dominant ideas and values have their roots in the interests of the dominant class; actions must be adapted to the historical context and so on. Collaborationist unions, on the other hand, see the social formation as atomised - the individual is autonomous; values are absolute and timeless; political structures are abstract and neutral; actions

are evaluated according to the intentions behind them, not according to their connections with their consequences, and so on. For the revolutionary union, the existing economic system is a historically produced formation which is in a dynamic process of change. It is neither eternal nor a naturally given structure as it is for the collaborationist union and can therefore be changed by human intervention. For the revolutionary union, human beings have the ability and power to change their world. Finally, for the revolutionary union, the world, social and physical, is to be understood entirely in materialist terms as opposed to idealist ones.

WHAT SHOULD BE

Economic

If the antagonism of interest between the capitalist class and the working class is seen as primary, then concern for craft, the product and 'getting on with the job' will be secondary to minimising the exploitation of capitalism and seeking its eventual overthrow. Conversely, a collaborationist union sees the interest of the employer and worker as essentially in harmony and complementary and not based on broader class antagonisms. Workers' interests are seen as depending on the prosperity of the employer. Pride of craft, service and loyalty to the employer will predominate over class loyalty.

Those in power or control, whether of the labour or political process, are endowed by the collaborationist union with more

legitimacy and authority than fellow workers. This appears in the dimension of hierarchy versus equality in the typology. In a collaborationist union, individual interests will be expressed in the demands for a defined hierarchy of workers, implying a ladder of status between workers and employers which may be climbed by the diligent, loyal, individual worker. This links the worker with the aims of the employer at the expense of ties with fellow workers.

The long term focus of the revolutionary union is the abolition of the sale of labour-power as a commodity, even though in the short term, the conditions for its sale must be protected and advanced; the collaborationist union has no such long-term aim. Nor will it struggle as militantly as the revolutionary union for the best possible conditions of sale.

We distinguished in the introduction between militancy and revolutionary consciousness. While militancy is not of itself revolutionary, especially if it involves an 'injudicious use of [union] power', a union must challenge capitalist interests as far as constraints allow if it is to be revolutionary. Thus provided considerations of revolutionary tactics and strategy are met, the more militant stance is the more revolutionary.

Political

The revolutionary view of political structure is that it must be fundamentally collective. This is because the nature of human beings is social:

'If man is formed by circumstances, these circumstances must be humanly formed. If man is, by nature, a social being, he only develops his real nature in society, and the power of his nature should be measured not by the power of private individuals, but by the power of society,' (Marx in Bottomore & Rubel, 1961:249)

Thus, even under capitalism, the state will be pressured to provide social services - to 'humanly form' the environment for human beings. This does not involve illusions about the class nature of the capitalist state; it simply affirms the social and collective nature of human beings and the right to collective provision for human needs. (In current theories of the welfare state, it is seen too often as simply a mechanism of incorporation of the working class. It is forgotten that it was a response to working class struggles, and like trade unions themselves, has a contradictory nature. This is exposed at times like the present when the crisis of capital accumulation is forcing cutbacks in its provisions.)

Collectivity entails equality. The political structure must serve, not rule. This is based on the premise, that since all members of society are its product, they are of equal value. For the revolutionary union, the political structure must express this collective totality, not dominate it.

For the collaborationist union, society is composed of individuals, who, as atomised units, have ontological priority over the collective. Given this priority of the individual, inequality among individuals is an inevitable consequence. Therefore the more 'fit'

must rule and lead the less 'fit'. The collaborationist union also sees individuals as necessarily asocial and requiring discipline and guidance from above. Political structures must therefore have a law and order function, above the individuals in society and must restrain them, in Durkheimian fashion.

Thus, at the political level, the revolutionary union seeks equality above all, a society where wealth and power are shared, with the state serving the collective as a mere administrative apparatus, while the collaborationist union assumes the need for leaders, experts - an elite to run society and keep the inferior in line.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

A number of antinomies of a general nature characterise the differences between revolutionary and collaborationist unions. The revolutionary union seeks to challenge in an active way the existing state of capitalist social relations, while the collaborationist union passively conforms to them. The act of negation is necessarily conscious and against the grain. Spontaneous action which is not governed by a conscious drive to negate and overthrow capital is simply an effect of present capitalist structures. It is fundamentally a passive phenomenon. Spontaneity is therefore not revolutionary.

Economic

At the economic level, because the revolutionary union challenges class relations of exploitation, it will use all methods of struggle to minimise that exploitation. It focusses its economic struggles at the point of production. This could involve strikes, sit-ins and go-slows. It is at the point of production where the struggle is necessarily sharpest because the class system is based on relations at that point. The revolutionary union is bound only by material and tactical considerations in its form of struggle, not the legality of state restrictions as such. Reformist or collaborationist unions may opt for action at the point of distribution. Examples might be credit unions, consumer cooperatives or collective agreements with business houses for cheaper goods, (i.e. discount booklets). Such methods, because they do not challenge class relations, involve no class struggle. The collaborationist union will depend on legally established procedures to achieve its economic ends. This could include legislation on such matters as wage rates and prices or state established channels of negotiation and wage settlement such as conciliation and arbitration procedures. The revolutionary union may use these tactically but is not bound by them.

Political

The class struggle perspective of the revolutionary union inevitably means rejection of the legitimacy of all power and authority maintaining the rule of capital. Law, religion, rights of property are all open to question and ultimately to be overthrown, whereas for the collaborationist union, they are fundamentals to be defended and

submitted to. The revolutionary union, because it conceptualises the invisible links between phenomena, will explore a wide range of historical, economic and political issues in developing its policies, and will encourage its members to participate in a whole range of activities and struggles beyond the work-place. Because the social formation is perceived as a structured unity, the state apparatus and all aspects of capitalist relations must be challenged, not just economic ones. The collaborationist union, on the other hand, will see social phenomena in an unconnected manner and will therefore not link them with on-the-job struggles. Because the revolutionary union sees existing social relations as historical, not eternal, it attributes considerably greater power to human agency than does the collaborationist union, which sees as natural and given that which is social and under human control.

Because of this sense of human power to shape society and history, the revolutionary union will actively and consciously struggle against ruling class interests and structures at all levels. It will not simply submit in a passive manner, making do with the minimum. This does not mean that it will arbitrarily throw itself against opposed forces regardless of the balance of power and historical possibilities. An aspect of conscious action is the ability to analyse and act in the world as it is. For the revolutionary union, it is the objective result of actions which is crucial - that is, the connection between an action and its object, its material effect. For the idealist collaborationist, the motivations behind and within the actions tend to take priority. Action taken in this way is

isolated and atomised in the subjectivity of motivation.

But because a trade union is a legal entity within capitalist relations of production, it cannot transcend those relations without transcending its own role and function. Therefore only in a revolutionary situation can it finally be objectively revolutionary and negate the rule of capital and then, like the working class as a whole, only by negating its own function and submitting itself to the leadership of the revolutionary party. However, as noted earlier, it is not paradoxical to pose the idea of a revolutionary union under capitalism any more than that of a revolutionary party or revolutionary working class. If a union acts in concert with a revolutionary party and uses its organisational force to promote revolutionary ends, it is revolutionary.

Ideological

Because the revolutionary union poses a basic challenge to existing social relations, it will also challenge existing 'common sense' ideas about the world. That is, it will reject simple appearances as an adequate image of reality and will, through reason and theoretical analysis, penetrate those appearances to a more adequate understanding. It will see the need to organise in a theoretical way the disjointed evidence of the senses. The power of human beings collectively to understand through reason their own social nature and that of the natural world, means that the revolutionary union rejects traditional and religious bases for knowledge. For the revolutionary union, all phenomena, natural and social, are ultimately knowable and

therefore may be used or controlled for human purposes. The collaborationist union, on the other hand, is fatalistic, traditional, unquestioning and moralistic. The acceptance of established religious frameworks would be an example of this.

Some unions may adopt a form of moralism which is not religious. This will take the form of condemnation of capitalism or capitalists on a moral basis: 'Capitalism is wrong' or 'Capitalists are wicked and greedy'. There may be no reasoned analysis of the material basis of capital and therefore no action can flow from the purely moral stance. It is essentially subjective. The revolutionary union is hard-headed and rational, conceptualising the materialist basis of the world in an objective manner and the need to change that basis through action. It will place more emphasis on analysis than on rhetorical condemnation.

Organisational

Class antagonism brings with it its dialectical corollary, class solidarity. The revolutionary union aims continually to build organisation beyond the workplace and craft to embrace all those who must sell their labour power as a commodity. This implies recognition of the necessity of solidarity among all workers. (At a certain point, this would necessarily extend beyond the industrial level, but by then, such a union would have transcended the limitation of a union.) Connected with this is the internationalist perspective: 'Working Men of all countries, unite!' Internationalist sentiment and analysis predominate over patriotism. Class solidarity

means rejection of all exclusiveness based on race, sex and craft. It means active concern for the unemployed as fellow class members. The revolutionary union emphasises equality of workers in the struggle against exploitation and will strive to eliminate divisive differentials.

A collaborationist union will adopt a nationalist, patriotic position in international conflict since ties with its own national bourgeoisie are stronger than those with other workers. Having no basis for class solidarity, collaborationist unions readily succumb to sexist and racist attitudes and the rejection of the unemployed.

The revolutionary union's commitment to class struggle and solidarity means that it will place the highest value on discipline and cohesion, while the collaborationist union will stress individual autonomy and rights whether of the branch or of the member. For example it may use secret and postal ballots, methods which constitute the individual separately from the class, (as does parliamentary democracy) and may often describe as 'undemocratic' methods used by more militant unions to achieve their ends. The collaborationist union, or sections of it, may frequently fail to carry out decisions jointly arrived at in conjunction with other sections of the union, on the grounds of 'democratic rights,'

There will be differences of degree of control over the affairs of the union by rank-and-file membership. A revolutionary union will educate and involve its members in decision-making to the greatest

possible degree, because such a union depends on the conscious activity of its members. The collaborationist union, on the other hand, must maintain a passive membership which has surrendered its control to its elected representatives. This has a direct parallel in the support of parliamentary institutions characteristic of such unions.

The collaborationist union will be leader-dominated in its structure, The structure of the union will place all control in the hands of officials at a high point in the union hierarchy. There will be more appointed officials and fewer elected ones. These officials do not act as promoters and interpreters of rank-and-file aspirations. Rather, they substitute their individual ideas and ideals for rank-and-file activity.

There may at first sight appear to be a contradiction between the designation of rank-and-file control and disciplined cohesion as revolutionary, on the one hand and individualism as collaborationist, on the other. Rank-and-file control is control by the majority of the members and the dissenting minority must be disciplined and go along with that. While rank-and-file members have no say in the policies of leader-dominated unions, characteristically, such unions do not take organised actions or positions which challenge the status quo in any way, so that no individual is disciplined to a position not his/her own. There is no collective position by which to be constrained. Further, in such a union, individual leaders and officials substitute their individual ideas and actions for

collective ones.

The typology may now be summarised as follows:

TYPOLOGY OF TRADE UNION CONSCIOUSNESS

<u>REVOLUTIONARY</u>	<u>WHAT IS</u>	<u>COLLABORATIONIST</u>
	Economic	
Exploitation		Exchange
	Political	
Domination		Representation
	Ideological	
Mystification		Objectivity
	Ontological	
Historical		Natural
Changing		Eternal
Totality		Atomism
Materialism		Idealism
Human Control		Human Impotence

WHAT SHOULD BE

Economic

Abolition of Sale
of Labour Power
Focus on Production
Relations
Pro-Producer

Conditions of Sale
of Labour Power
Focus on Distribution
Relations
Pro-product, pro-boss

Political

Equality
Abolition
of Bourgeois State

Hierarchy
Dependence
on Bourgeois State

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

Negation	Collaboration
Activity	Passivity
Consciousness	Spontaneity
Economic	
All forms of	Legal forms of
Activity	Activity
Political	
Objective	Subjective
All forms of	Legal forms of
Activity	Activity
Ideological	
Theoretical & Empirical Analysis	'Common Sense'
Reason	Morality
Organisational	
Solidarity	Autonomy
Discipline	Individualism
Class orientation	Craft Orientation
Rank and File Control	Official Control
Internationalism	Nationalism
Sexual and Racial Equality	Sexism/Racism

The dimensions of this typology are not of equivalent valency. In the discussion of the words and actions of the New Zealand Watersider Workers Federation, qualitative assessments will initially be made of these practices, taken separately and in terms of the separate

typologised dimensions. Thus a particular practice may be described as more or less revolutionary, taken in isolation. However, in concluding each section of the discussion, the assessment will be of these dimensions, taken as a totality, in their interrelationship. In this assessment, for instance, analyses of economic and political structures will carry more weight than those of ideological ones; or while an appeal to reason or human potency might be a revolutionary feature, their use in a reformist or collaborationist way, would determine a final assessment in the latter direction. The aim is to arrive at a general characterisation of the more or less revolutionary or collaborationist nature of the consciousness evinced by a trade union through a balanced, integrated analysis based on the various elements of the typology.

In our theory chapter, we established a materialist definition of consciousness, but one which was a separate moment of practice. In the application of the typology, it is necessary to be aware of a number of these moments. This is because the practice of a union is variously constrained by the historical conjuncture in which it is situated and consciousness cannot be simply read off from its practices within these. Thus a trade union can be revolutionary only in relation to a particular set of historical forces. The assessment of those forces and the contradiction which face a trade union are vital to an assessment of the degree of its revolutionary nature or otherwise. In turn, the contradictions of the conjuncture impose contradictions on union behaviour which are revealed in a number of ways. As we argued above, aims and goals are aspects of actions

which cannot be directly reduced to them. These are, however, not idealist conceptions and do not impute a mental life to a trade union. While not reducible to actions, these concepts are embedded in those actions.

Consciousness must be deduced from the confused amalgam of practices and constraint. This amalgam has a number of polarities.

a) Action/Structure As Allen points out, because of the number of factors affecting situations in which a union takes action, it is in fact impossible to isolate what actual effect union action has on a final result, (Allen, 1966:20). By the same token, because a union takes action on the basis of its assessment of the forces ranged against it, its very actions are a product of those forces together with its own aims. The structural result cannot therefore be a sole criterion for assessing union ideology. On the other hand, it cannot be ignored.

b) Aims/Results Actions and words are not in themselves revolutionary or collaborationist, but must be compared to the historical effect which they produce. The nature of the aim or goal cannot of itself determine the degree of revolutionism of a particular action. For instance, an ill-judged, super-militant action, no matter how revolutionary in intent, which leads to defeat and union disorganisation, cannot be judged revolutionary or progressive. In other words, 'The road to Hell is paved with good intentions.' Conversely, a very 'moderate' action taking into consideration all

the forces in the historical situation, (undeveloped class-consciousness of the workers involved, attitudes of other workers, political power, economic factors, etc.) may yet develop solidarity or expose a contradictory aspect of capitalism. Such an action, if it goes as far as the conjuncture permits, must be judged progressive and revolutionary in the long run.

c) Words/Actions As stated earlier, a union's consciousness consists of the concepts embedded in their words and actions. Because words are usually less constrained by structural limitations than actions, they may be more radical sounding and may even contradict the apparent meaning of the actions. For instance, a union in its pronouncements may express revolutionary aims and analyses, but its actions may be apparently 'moderate' or even collaborationist. But if its actions can be shown to challenge capital as far as the conjunctural constraints permit, the essential revolutionary nature of its verbal practices will be confirmed. On the other hand, analysis of actions in context may expose the verbal practice as empty rhetoric. The contradiction may be interpreted in two ways. Revolutionary words could be the end product of a progressive rank-and-file led by a progressive leadership asserting revolutionary goals in spite of being forced to limit action in a non-revolutionary situation. On the other hand, fiery rhetoric could be the tactic of a collaborationist leadership defending its bureaucratic position against more revolutionary rank-and-file demands. Revolutionary speeches may have no basis in action but may be a mere rhetorical cover for its lack. Alternatively, 'moderate' or collaborationist

words from revolutionary officials may express their measured leadership of a rank-and-file with a poorly developed consciousness, though, of course, in the latter case, these 'moderate' pronouncements would be an expression of the union as an organisation. Only analysis of the concrete historical situation can show which is which.

d) Words/Audience Words, like actions can only be assessed in context for their revolutionary nature or otherwise. In particular, the audience to which the words are addressed is important. The words will be a product of the audience's expectations as 'read' by the speaker and not simply a reflection of the speaker's or writer's intentions. Thus, as Slade has noted, Roberts' tone in speaking to the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants or the Alliance of Labour was less militant than that he adopted with the more radical watersiders (Slade, 1983:28). She assumes the less militant statements are the 'real' opinions of Roberts which he adapts and conceals to please the radicals within his own union. For our purposes, what Jim Roberts privately thought is not relevant, any more than the individual opinions of the individual members of the Watersiders' Federation. His speeches and articles as an official of the WWF addressing that organisation are the expression of that organisation. His speeches to the Arbitration Court, for instance, have an entirely different significance.

d) Consciousness/Action Because actions are circumscribed by material constraints, consciousness and goals cannot simply be reduced to and

read off from the concepts within actions. Only study of less circumscribed words in comparison with actions can reveal consciousness and goals which are denied in practice.

e) Methods/Goals As already noted, militancy and revolutionary praxis are not the same thing. As Allen says, militancy refers to methods rather than aims, (Allen, 1966:18). The poles of the typology refer to aims which unions could potentially adopt.

The traditional distinction drawn in New Zealand historiography between 'militant' and 'moderate' unions is a tactical distinction, a distinction between types of methods which unions use in maximising the conditions and price of the sale of the labour power of their members. Methods can be characterised as militant if they challenge the capitalist legal and political apparatus, or as moderate if they work within the parameters set by that apparatus. Thus, adherence to established disputes procedures and parliamentary representation is moderate, while strikes and demonstrations are generally militant.

A union may be militant without being revolutionary, as has been noted with the discussion of Jesson's comments in the introduction. No matter how much a union strikes or marches or even sets the factories alight, unless it confronts capitalist relations as a whole, it will not be revolutionary. The terms moderate and militant, therefore, when applied to consciousness, refer to varieties of trade union consciousness, centred purely on the conditions of sale of labour power. However, since the revolutionary

union issues as strong a challenge as possible to capital at any given moment, it will use the most militant methods consistent with strategic and tactical considerations. Thus, militancy may include revolutionary consciousness but not necessarily so. There is therefore no simple fit between the moderate/militant tactical distinction and the collaborationist/revolutionary one in the typology. Other things being equal, however, the more militant, the more revolutionary.

f) Leadership/Membership. The typology is intended for use on the official policies of unions as expressed in journals and union actions. It may be objected that this does not necessarily reflect the point-of-view of individual members. However, it is only in an organised form that the working class can take an active role and impinge on history. It is only as an organisation that the members of a trade union can function. Their private opinions lack materiality unless they are expressed organisationally. Conflicts and dissatisfaction among the rank-and-file members will normally make themselves apparent even if such dissatisfaction cannot surmount official obstacles to its organisational expression. Any serious prolonged disjunction between union leaders and membership will, over time, express itself in wildcat strikes and in splits in organisation. Conversely, a strike may fail through lack of support and the leadership is gradually brought back into line.

The ideas as expressed in official policy are thus a concrete result of a number of conflicting determinations. It is the actions of the

union as a whole which are the basis of assessing its degree of revolutionary consciousness. If these are in contradiction with each other, then these contradictions are themselves worthy of analysis. However, they must be expressed in material practices as part of the union's activity. Ideas in the heads of individuals are in themselves not relevant.

Summing up then, this approach to the analysis of trade union consciousness is a historical materialist one and is not an attempt at speculative model building. It is not attempting to speculate about how a revolutionary union might look in a concrete empirical sense, nor to build a generalised ideal type abstracted from empirical observation. Rather it draws out the concepts which a trade union's words and actions must embody if it is to be described as revolutionary. The typology does not assume the concrete existence of a revolutionary union. It seeks to represent only theoretical possibilities of trade unions under capitalism. It is therefore a heuristic, analytical device, not a classificatory one.

This approach sees consciousness as conscious practice which must be examined within a concrete historical context and seeks to elucidate the concepts within such practice. By using Marxist-Leninist concepts, the degree of ideological incorporation/opposition of a trade union within capitalist structures can be demonstrated. Because the typology offers a range of concepts, it is more flexible with the power to examine the unique combination and complexity of the ideas espoused by any individual union. It can only be used in

conjunction with a careful consideration of the historical conditions in which a union operates. Our next chapter is therefore devoted to those conditions which confronted the union selected as a case study, the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation 1915-1937.

THE NEW ZEALAND WATERSIDE WORKERS FEDERATION,
THE NEW ZEALAND TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, AND
THE HISTORICAL CONJUNCTURE 1915 - 1937

In a previous chapter, revolutionary consciousness was defined as a conscious negation of, a resistance to capitalist rule, and on the other, trade unions were construed as both an integral part of capitalist society and a potential 'lever for the final emancipation of the working class'. In New Zealand historical experience, trade unions could not be described as truly revolutionary. However, the typology constructed in the last chapter should expose the nature of this absence of revolutionary consciousness. At the same time, it should also expose elements of class struggle beyond bread and butter aims which have escaped the attention of historians who have sought to minimise the significance of class in New Zealand history.

Since our definition of class consciousness as the mental aspect of class struggle (or its lack) must be set within a particular set of historical constraints, we now turn to an examination of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation and the conditions it faced in the period 1915-1937.

The New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation played a leading role in the New Zealand trade union movement 1915-1937 until the formation of the New Zealand Federation of Labour in 1937. Throughout this period, they very much dominated the Alliance of Labour, the organisation of the so-called militant unions in that period, and set

the cautious direction which that organisation took. This chapter outlines the key constraints faced by the watersiders in this period - in their own occupation, in the wider trade union movement and the economic, political and ideological forces at work in New Zealand society as a whole.

After the failure of the 1913 waterfront strike, the waterfront unions were dominated by strikebreakers who had helped bring the defeat about. But gradually the old unionists won back their organisations and under the leadership of Big Jim Roberts, reformed themselves into the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation in December 1915.

The period under discussion, 1915-1937 is a record of the watersiders' struggle to organise and to improve the harsh conditions of their occupation. Gradually, they built up their organisation and eliminated the competition between workers on the wharves. This enabled them to gain greater control of their own work process and helped them limit their exploitation by extracting better pay and working conditions from their employers. They were enabled to do this by their key economic position in an export based economy and by their working conditions which necessarily gathered them together and welded them in interdependence. But though there were structural aids to organisation, there were significant barriers to it which had to be overcome.

The greatest evil of wharf work was casual employment. There was never enough work for the men who flocked to the waterfront. One aspect of this was the poverty suffered by watersiders. Even though the 1922 award acknowledged the casual nature of wharf work by setting the wage rate 25% above the general labourers' rate (Townsend, 1985:88), the hours worked could not give a living wage. Watersiders worked an average of 27.52 hours ordinary time per week, according to the Waterside Workers Federation submission to the 1924 award hearing of the Court of Arbitration (ibid:38).

The other aspect of casual employment was the power it gave to the foreman and the long hours involved in waiting round on the off chance of being hired. Initially, foremen would hire workers wherever they found them, often in the pub (Pettit, 1948:18). Men who wanted to work had to hang around likely places any time day or night (ibid:77) Only gradually were the hours of engagement limited and defined. The infamous 'auction block' system of hiring labour was wide open to victimisation, on the one hand, and bribery on the other (Townsend, 1985:38,39). It gave the foreman tremendous control, since each day, it was entirely up to him whether he employed a particular worker or not. An active unionist could be condemned to regular periods of 'stringer drill' while a 'royal', favoured by one or other of the shipping companies, could look forward to relatively steady work. The 'bull' gang system consisted of 'royals', men of superior fitness and strength, who worked extra fast or for long hours. In the conditions of totally unfettered competition among the workers promoted by the casual system, these gangs put great pressure on

other watersiders to keep up or lose their jobs. They were naturally hated (Pettit,ibid:19). Preference to unionists and the unions' right to limit membership were significant steps in the process of decasualisation and elimination of competition among fellow-workers which culminated in the establishment of the Bureau system to equalise work in 1937. This in principle took the control right out of the hands of the foreman. But it did not happen in reality till the appointment of union bureau officers in 1942, (Mitchell, interview, 18.5.84).

Waterside work was dangerous, dirty and hard. Particularly during and immediately after World War I, the number of fatal and disabling accidents rose sharply. There was no effective supervision of the safety of waterfront equipment until new government regulations were brought down in 1919 as a result of a Commission of Enquiry into waterfront accidents. Accidents were subsequently halved.

Facilities for watersiders were non-existent. The fight for dining rooms, more hygenic toilet facilities, waiting rooms and other amenities was a long one. Into the 20's, latrines for wharfies at Lyttleton consisted of planks suspended between wharf piles below the wharf decking. These planks were cleaned out by the tide (Norris, 1984:66).

Hours of work were quite unlimited and men would work for days and nights at a time. In 1915, one watersider worked from Monday to Saturday without a break. Going home, he fell into a ditch and died.

There was little sympathy for the man, however; those who worked for long periods while others were on the stand waiting for work were regarded as sharks, (Pettit, 1948:76). From 1916 to World War II, hours of work were limited to 8am to 10pm and up to midnight to finish a ship with 8am to 5pm on Saturdays, 6pm to finish. A 68 hour week was theoretically possible but that quantity of work was seldom available, (Townsend, 1985:38).

Gradually, through struggle on the job, many improvements and safeguards in conditions were achieved. Sling loads were limited, manning levels were set and protection or extra rates for obnoxious or dirty cargo were won. Thus the watersiders defended the maintenance of their own labour-power and limited the surplus value extracted from their labour.

One of the factors which made it difficult to win advances in conditions was the fragmentation of management of wharf work. Harbour Boards, stevedoring contractors, shipping companies and the Railway Department all had their finger in the pie and could readily pass the buck in the face of union demands. Hence the division of capital ownership and management rendered resistance more problematic and difficult.

Fragmentation of management was matched by fragmentation of the work-force. For instance, demarcation problems arose from time to time with the Seamen's Union over the question of operating shipboard winches to unload cargo. Similar difficulties arose with the use of

casual workers employed by the Railways Department and the permanent hands employed by the Harbour Boards. Ships' carpenters and painters also impinged on work covered by the watersiders.

The push for union cooperative control of waterfront work as an answer to casual labour conditions was a constant theme of the 1920's and 30's. However, the Waterfront Control Commission, established in 1940 under joint union and employer control was a far cry from the embodiment of workers' control which was the original impulse behind the demand.

The casual employment and tough work on the wharves had attracted those who valued their own toughness, individuality and freedom. These qualities are well summarised in the pen name of 'The Mixer', regular contributor of verse to the Transport Worker - 'Mixer' having the multiple meanings of mixing as in drinks, brawls, gregariousness and general rebelliousness and stirring. Watersiders valued the freedom to work, or not, at will, and to choose the class of work they would do. Noone was going to tell them what to do, union or bosses. Solidarity was of their own choosing. Early attempts to regularise employment on the wharves were stymied in part by members' rejection of the relative discipline involved and the removal of complete freedom of choice, (Pettit, 1948:102). Union minutes give evidence of the periodic restiveness of members at collective constraints entailed by effective union discipline. This 'bolshy' attitude did not, of course, entail scabbery; rather a resistance to what were seen as petty controls.

The theme of organisation along lines of class and industry was strong in the drive for unity. The process of building one national union for watersiders was begun with the founding of the Federation in December 1915 and the winning of a national agreement the following year. Gradually, through the establishment of a national newspaper, Federal levies of various kinds, a universally transferable ticket and eventually, centralisation of funds, a de facto national union was established. This did not become de jure till 1937 after the passing of the 1936 amendment of the IC&A Act enabled the registration of unions on a national basis.

The monthly newspaper, the New Zealand Transport Worker (TW) was published without any break from May 1916 until the lockout in 1951. Its initial title, the New Zealand Watersider, was changed in April 1919 to the TW in acknowledgement of the contributions from the other transport unions. It was vigorous and popular in style and clearly played a major role in building a national organisation.

The Federation was from the beginning dominated by the Wellington Waterside Workers Union under Big Jim Roberts. This is not surprising since they comprised over 30% of the total membership of the Federation at its inception in 1915 and maintained a proportion of over 25% right through the period under study (see Appendix B, Table 2).

Prior to the registration of a national union, member unions were based on individual ports rather than larger regions. This resulted

in a number of very small unions together with the larger ones in the four main centres. (In 1929, Tauranga retained its registration with only 5 members (AJHR,H.11,1930:19). The number of unions in the Federation grew from 18 in 1915 to 31 in 1933 (AJHR,H.11,1916-38). It appears that ports were as jealous of their identity and independence as were their rather unruly members. These port unions became branches of the national union on its registration in 1937. There was thus a tension between cohesion and autonomy among both of affiliated unions of the Federation and its individual members.

The drive to build organisation along lines of class and industry was not confined to the watersiders' own occupation. The Federation played a key role in forming the Transport Workers' Advisory Board in 1916 and later in 1919, formed the Alliance of Labour in conjunction with the miners.

In these initiatives to build organisation, the watersiders were limited by the constraints facing the trade union movement as a whole in this period.

The New Zealand trade union movement developed within a context of economic, political and ideological constraints which, until the election of the Labour Government in 1935, kept even the powerfully placed unions very much on the defensive, in action if not in words. Economic depression, political controls and a climate of opinion, (often shared by workers,) which shunned change or anything smacking of 'radicalism' - these forces formed the leg-irons of the labour

movement.

Key features of the New Zealand economy up till the Second World War included economic dependence on a narrow range of farm-produced exports, with resulting economic dependence on fluctuations in the world economy. Secondary industry was light industrial for the home market. Technological modernisation brought increased urbanisation and an expanded tertiary and service sector. Women took an increased role in paid employment and improved their status, but were confined to a narrow range of occupations related to their service role within the home. But the economic position of the Maori people remained far behind that of European New Zealanders as they were confined to eking out a subsistence living as a rural proletariat. All these factors left their mark on the trade union movement.

From the beginning of European settlement, New Zealand was little more than a gigantic farm for imperial Britain. Pastoral products, mainly wool, butter, cheese and frozen meat, grew steadily as a proportion of total exports, reaching 93.3% in 1921 (NZOYB, 1925:278). Thus New Zealand was reliant for its export income on a very narrow range of products, mostly for sale on the one export market, Britain. As primary products, they were subject to extreme fluctuations in world prices. Isolation from the main market brought dependence on overseas shipping lines, while reliance on overseas borrowing to finance the economic infrastructure brought dependence on international banking institutions. New Zealand was thus dependent and vulnerable to forces outside of its control.

However, this dependence on export trade gave a lot of economic muscle to a small number of workers. The leading transport unions, the seamen and the watersiders had a key economic role.

This colonial status, together with the lack of iron ore as a basis for heavy industry, left New Zealand's own secondary industry undeveloped. It was mostly for domestic consumption and relied on imports for components and many raw materials. Nevertheless, it is estimated that factory production between the wars contributed over 20% of GDP, (Brooking in Oliver & Williams, 1981:246).

Even in the early decades of European settlement of the colony, secondary industry employed a significant portion of the workforce. It had reached 22% by 1896. This had not increased much by 1926 when it was 25%, (ibid:228). This workforce was very scattered, though. In 1929 only 6% of factories (excluding those processing agricultural products) employed more than 50 workers (ibid:246). Such environments are not conducive to unionism of any kind, revolutionary or otherwise. There were some large scale enterprises, however: freezing works, mines and timber mills (ibid). It is not surprising, therefore, that the unions representing these workers played a leading industrial role.

Despite its huge contribution to export income, farming employed progressively a smaller proportion of workers. By 1930, agriculture employed under 25% of the work-force, (Brooking, ibid:245). However, the key economic role of agriculture gave farmers as a class

tremendous political clout. Technological change and increased efficiency was the chief factor behind this declining rural workforce. Because of the lack of local finance and industrial capital in private hands at adequate levels of concentration, the State played an important role in providing the economic infrastructure.

The push to greater efficiency in all spheres of the economy saw an expansion of bureaucratic and administrative functions in both public and private sectors in our period. This built up the proportion of workers in tertiary industry from 36% in 1896 to 45% in 1926, (ibid:228). This expansion of the tertiary sector did not change the organisational character of the union movement, however. This still revolved round the craft unions on the one hand and the key industrial unions on the other. However, such a significant proportion of workers in white collar service industry without traditions of industrial militancy could be expected to exert a conservative pressure on the climate of opinion within the working class movement. The growth of tertiary industries did, however, promote the shift of the majority of the population to urban centres.

While urbanisation proceeded apace and population moved from strictly rural centres to towns and became particularly concentrated in the four main centres, these were still relatively small in absolute terms. Auckland, the largest centre was only 210,393 in 1936, but this was more than double its 1911 population of 102,676, (ibid:254). These were therefore times of great mobility and change. However,

this did not have the effect one might expect of broadening attitudes in the community and increasing receptivity to new ideas because absolute size of concentrations of population was not great.

These changes had a marked effect on the family and hence on the role of women. Many of the family's educational and welfare tasks were taken over by the State in the form of public hospitals, industrial schools and child welfare homes, (ibid, 261). The role of women was changed too by the technological advances which meant that less women's labour was required both on the farm and in the home. In the 19th century, 90% of women's work had been domestic, (Owen, 1982). The First World War together with the expansion of the tertiary sector brought expanded employment opportunities for women. However, women were confined to a narrow range of poorly-paid jobs - in 1926, 50% of women workers were in domestic service, clothing, retailing, teaching, nursing, clerical and waitressing (ibid). Their paid work thus reflected their service role in the home. The ideology that this was women's place was very strong.

This narrow range of occupations, restricted to entirely powerless positions in the economy, meant that women were excluded from the possibility of effective unionism. Thus, despite their increased participation in the work force, women played no part in shaping the trade union movement in this period. Hence, it is not surprising that exclusively male unions like the watersiders' retained largely traditional views of the role of women.

The effect of these sweeping economic changes on the Maori people was considerably delayed, however. Their economic and social position was determined by the loss of their land. At the turn of the century, over 90% of Maori lived in rural areas, forming a rural proletariat to eke out the produce of their land, with occasional rural wage labour. They suffered disproportionately from unemployment during the Depression. Macrae and Sinclair estimate that 40% of Maori men and 35% of Maori women were unemployed in July 1933, (Macrae & Sinclair, 1975:44). As noted before, relief rates of pay for Maori were lower than those for Europeans. Like women, because of their virtual exclusion from the capitalist economy, Maori workers played little part in the trade union movement with the exception of their role in the New Zealand Workers Union as shearers.

New Zealand trade unions in the private sector have operated for the greater part of their history under the nearly unique system of state conciliation and arbitration. This system was initiated by the Liberal Government in 1894 and used by the state in a paternalistic manner to control and harmonise potential conflict. It was initially a voluntary system for workers but in the hands of subsequent governments, it became an instrument of coercion of trade unions, (Williams, 1977:200). Both the 1912 Waihi strike and the 1913 waterfront strike were provoked by employers with government support to drive the unions back into State control under the Act.

State unions, while outside the clutches of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, faced more direct government

controls. For instance, the government simply prohibited the Post and Telegraph Employees' Association from joining the Alliance of Labour in 1920 (Roth,1973:46) and forced the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants to withdraw from the Alliance as part of the settlement of the 1924 strike (ibid:46).

The Reform Party which became the Government during the strike at Waihi in 1912 was ferociously anti-labour. It used the police, the army, the navy and enrolled volunteers as special constables to battle the strikers on the waterfront in 1913 with uncompromising force. In 1913 it passed the Labour Disputes Investigation Act which deprived even unions registered under the Trade Unions Act of the right to strike. They also passed the Police Offences Amendment Act which forbade picketting. With the war, the Government brought in conscription with a series of draconian War Regulations which declared seditious any words or actions against conscription or 'incitement of class ill-will' (Gustafson,1980:114). These were used to imprison labour leaders opposed to conscription. Later, the War Regulations Continuance Act, which outlawed any advocacy of 'lawlessness', was used to imprison Communists. Any concerted action on the part of workers 'which interfered with the carriage of goods' was declared a 'seditious strike' under the regulations, (Walsh,1983:28). Jingoistic patriotism was thus used by the government to justify anti-worker measures.

Subsequent policies of the United and Coalition Governments were no better. In 1931, the Ward government cut the pay of civil servants

by 10% and reduced relief payouts. Later that year, the Coalition of the United and Reform parties led by Forbes, came to power. Forbes' policy was a balanced budget at all costs and 'no relief without work'. In 1932, Forbes abolished the compulsory clauses in the IC&A Act. This was the signal for wholesale wage cuts. The pay of civil servants (except the police), was reduced a further 10%. A clause was inserted into the Finance Act to allow summary dismissal of public servants for 'disloyalty' (Roth,1973:51). Recognition was withdrawn from the Post & Telegraph Employees' Association and their officials and newspaper banned from departmental offices, (ibid:52). Civil servants, together with teachers, post office workers and railwaymen met to plan meetings and other action. The 1932 Queen Street riot in Auckland exploded outside one of their meetings (ibid:51). In response to the riots, the government brought in the Public Safety Conservation Act, which enabled it to draft dictatorial emergency regulations as it thought fit. (These were later used in 1951 in the Waterfront Lockout). The union movement thus faced a barrage of direct repression by the state which left it little room for manoeuvre.

These repressive laws were in contrast to the strong pro-farmer and pro-employer measures taken by the government. Cheap rehabilitation loans were given to returned soldiers to take up land. These mortgages were then extended as the slump hit. Land and income taxes were reduced in 1922. Freehold ownership of the land along with cheap credit were Massey's planks. The farmers in turn helped the Government and employers defeat the watersiders in 1913 by

volunteering as Special Constables. Mounted and armed with batons, they were notorious for their drunken violence and were dubbed 'Massey's cossacks'. Unionists always remembered with bitterness the farmers' role in their defeat.

The government actively encouraged immigration from racially 'appropriate' sources to expand the supply of labour. From 1920 to 1928, between 50% and 60% of migrants were assisted with their passages, (Webster, 1980) In the unfavourable economic conditions, this inevitably led to labour market conditions which put workers at a disadvantage. The structure of class forces was thus very much stacked against the working class.

The Reform Government reflected the narrow conservatism which ruled social attitudes. These had their basis in an economic existence almost totally dependent on the vagaries of world markets which brought insecurity when these markets failed. This was the general trend throughout the 20's and the first half of the 30's. This economic dependence and insecurity produced a corresponding insecurity of public opinion which clung to traditional verities and memories of Empire. Bigotry, racism and puritanism were the order of the day. The economic dependence on 'Mother England' in particular, underlay a rampant loyalty to Empire. In 1915, the Returned Servicemen's Association was founded and became a significant pressure group. Patriotic hysteria produced the sadistic treatment of conscientious objectors such as Archibald Baxter. Massey was a British Israelite and regarded the Bible as his authority, (Burdon,

1965:34). The 1916 Easter Uprising in Ireland provoked an anti-Catholic backlash led by the Protestant Political League, which had strong ties with Reform. This anti-Catholicism rebounded on the labour movement since several of its prominent members were Catholic and it was asserted that labour was in league with Rome (Burdon, 1965:31). The New Zealand Welfare League, dubbed the 'Hell-Fire' League by the Transport Worker, was another right-wing organisation formed in 1919 which launched virulent attacks on the Labour Party and the unions. Senior members of the Employers' Association were among its ranks (Gustafson, 1980:146). It was particularly vociferous against the watersiders in the early 20's.

The successful Russian Revolution added anti-Bolshvik hysteria to a generally anti-worker climate of opinion. Dissent of all kinds was anathema. As already noted, rights to free speech and assembly were heavily restricted. 'Subversive' immigrants were prohibited, the criteria for subversive being defined in the broadest possible way. Thus both expression and importation of radical revolutionary ideas within the country was suppressed.

These restrictions on free speech invariably hit workers and their organisations, since they were the only class of society which needed to challenge prevailing views to defend their interests. There was thus no widely accepted stock of revolutionary ideas within New Zealand on which the working class could draw to construct a coherent alternative to bourgeois ideology.

The working class, dispersed as it was, and deprived by state repression of adequate alternatives, could not remain immune to this reactionary climate of opinion. Fairburn argues cogently that Labour failed to win power till 1935 because of the widespread phenomenon of the 'working class Tory', (Fairburn,1985:3). He refutes Chapman's arguments, (Chapman,1969) that there were simply not enough working class people to bring Labour to victory without the support of disaffected middle class voters, (Fairburn,ibid:3).

The political and ideological forces opposed to the dominant conservative ideology were the Labour Party and the Communist Party. The defeat of the 1913 Waterfront Strike together with the unity forged in opposition to conscription brought the NZ Labour Party into existence in 1916. The 1913 defeat had been the death knell of the Red Federation, and industrial militancy had lost its high promise. The Labour Party was established by those elements in the industrial labour movement who saw the parliamentary political road as the only way forward. Initially, the party's policies, while not fully socialist in the sense of seeking the overthrow of the capitalist system, were generally radical in temper. Extended nationalisation of key enterprises, together with land policies offering cheap credit and tenure based on occupancy and use, were key early planks. The Labour Party, of necessity, had to consider the farming vote and land policy was always a key issue. It was a regularly shifting compromise between socialist calls for outright nationalisation and more limited efforts to restrict land aggregation and absentee landlordism.

Fear of cheap labour governed Party attitudes to immigration. In 1920, it conceded the need to expand the white population (Brown, 1962:61), on condition that jobs and houses were provided. The racist distinction between white and other immigrants reflected the dominant racist ideology so rampant in New Zealand. They were opposed to the government's immigration schemes which were intended to keep up a ready supply of labour and prevent pressure on wage rates and conditions.

The anti-radical attitudes of the times found expression within the Party as an extreme fear of contamination by the Communist Party, founded in 1921. This was despite a generally sympathetic reception to the Bolshevik Revolution within the labour movement at large. The Communist Party made conciliatory overtures, but despite this, after 1925, Labour Party members had to sign a Loyalty Pledge that they would not work for any other party. From 1926, unions were not permitted to send Communist Party members to the Labour Party Annual Conference (Brown, 1962:56).

While the Labour Party was founded by trade unionists who were seeking a favourable political framework for their industrial struggles within the capitalist system, the Communist Party of New Zealand had its origins in the New Zealand Marxian Association, a federation of Marxist study circles which sought to overthrow that system. The New Zealand Marxian Association, while almost entirely based on the miners on the West Coast (Roth, 1973:158), had no industrial policy as such, but sought to propagandise the Labour

Party (Powell,1948:4). The Party was formed in 1921 and was affiliated to the Red International of Labour Unions, the trade union organisation of the Communist International. This set it the quite unrealistic task, given its tiny membership, (61 in 1928), of setting up a Revolutionary Opposition in the trade union movement on the same lines as the Militant Minority Movement in Great Britain (Roth,op.cit.:159). The party intervened in a number of industrial struggles in New Zealand. The line which it set proved always impossible for its members in the trade union movement to carry out since there was no hope of gaining support for it among other trade unionists. Angus McLagan and the other Communist miners' leaders left the Party in 1929 because of the Party's sectarian line unrelated to rank and file aspirations. This left the Party without its only significant base in the trade union movement. The tiny membership was further ravaged by endemic splits and expulsions. Despite its general sectarianism, the Party made repeated attempts to affiliate and work with the Labour Party, but to no avail (Powell,op.cit.:24). In 1933 the Labour Party declared even membership of the Friends of the Soviet Union to be incompatible with NZLP membership (ibid:67).

The Communist Party promoted and supported a number of movements. The Unemployed Workers' Movement was the most successful of these. Allied to the Unemployed Workers' Movement was the Working Women's Movement, which was able to issue a paper from 1934 to 1936 without missing an issue. Because of the Party's sectarianism, even their relative success in the area of unemployment was limited. In fact,

it was not until after the Depression, when members found employment and regained entry into the trade unions, that the Party built up more support and membership, (Roth, 1973:159). The Party thus failed at a time when it should have been able to convince increasing numbers of people of the incapability of capitalism to solve its problems. This failure was caused by its hopeless sectarianism and, in particular, its antagonism to the trade union movement.

Thus the one self-proclaimed revolutionary political and ideological force was impotent to inject into the working class a measure of revolutionary consciousness. Rather, it paradoxically played a reverse role and tended to 'innoculate' workers and their organisations against their ideas.

The trade union movement thus had to struggle in a highly antagonistic environment. The defeats and failures of the trade union movement 1915-37 have to be understood in the light of the constraints we have outlined.

A key feature of New Zealand trade unions throughout their history was the organisational split between a small number of militant unions and a much larger number of more conservative ones. This split centred around the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and consisted of divergent views of state intervention in industrial conflict. The weaker craft unions, without the economic punch, looked to parliamentary representation and Arbitration Court protection, while the stronger industrial unions felt better able to

advance their interests outside the fetters of state machinery. This found expression in the Red Federation of Labour from 1908-1913. However, this only applied in favourable conditions; whenever these deteriorated, direct action failed and even the militant minority were resigned to state arbitration as in the 1890's after the defeat of the Maritime Strike. The militants were placed in strategic positions in the economy. With the national income largely dependent on a narrow range of export products and with most other production scattered across many small-scale enterprises, these positions were held by the transport unions, the miners and the freezing workers. Of the transport unions, the seamen and watersiders took the lead because of their position in the export trade. In general, it has been the strategically placed unions which have initiated the major struggles in New Zealand's trade union history, while the economically weaker unions have not had the strength to be much more than onlookers in these events. As already noted, the militant unions never comprised more than a minority of trade union membership. The more passive majority therefore played a major role in shaping the movement taken as a whole.

A further factor in the isolation of the militants was that unionisation of the workforce was only partial even after compulsory membership was introduced by the Labour Government in 1936. Using Roth's figures for membership of unions registered under IC&A (Roth, *ibid*:169) and census figures for wage earners, the percentage of wage-earners unionised under the Act for 1916, 1921, 1926 and 1936 are 24.3%, 27.3%, 24.8% and 43% respectively (see Appendix B, Table

3). Ununionised workers often shared in the current anti-worker attitudes. For instance, while the participation of farmers as special constables in the 1913 strike is well known, they in fact formed only a minority of the specials. The largest group, (32%), was made up of clerks and salesmen, (Barrowman,1983) - 'mincing clerks with high collars and cuffs' as the Maoriland Worker described them, (Maoriland Worker, 12 November, 1913 quoted in Barrowman,ibid). Thus a significant section of the working class was sufficiently imbued with bourgeois ideology to support the employers against fellow class members.

Fairburn gives evidence of a lack of class consciousness in the New Zealand working class. He shows that in comparison with Britain and Australia, New Zealand in the 1920's had the lowest rates of trade union membership, (Fairburn,1985:11), and worker involvement in strikes, (ibid:15). Even among unionists, strike ratios from 1900 to 1929 were well below that of other countries. New Zealand's mean yearly proportion of strikers compared with the number of unionists for the period was 4.8%. For the UK it was 16.1% and for Australia, 18.2% (ibid:16). The pool of unemployed, too, were always a crucial factor in union battles. Because the militant few have been unable to win the support of the passive majority, their struggles have too often ended in resounding defeat. This division in economic situation and tactics expressed itself up till 1937 in separate umbrella organisations in the private sector. The Red Federation and later the Alliance of Labour led the self-styled militants, while the smaller craft unions organised themselves in the Trades and Labour

Councils..

Unions of state employees, while not covered by the IC&A Act, were not mere bystanders in industrial struggles. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants and the Locomotive Engineers, Firemen and Cleaners' Association, (EFCA) were present at the 1916 conference of transport workers which approved the constitution of the Transport Workers' Advisory Board, the nucleus of the later Alliance of Labour. This was despite the railway workers' reputation for scabbery among the rest of the labour movement. The ASRS in 1920 staged a successful rail strike for the equivalent of the cost-of-living bonuses granted by the Arbitration Court to the private sector unions in 1919 and 1920. They joined the Alliance of Labour straight afterwards. The Post & Telegraph Employees Association tried to do so in the same year but, as already noted, were denied permission by the government (Roth, *ibid*:46).

The railway unions were bedevilled by splits. The EFCA had broken away from the ASRS in 1908. In 1924, the ASRS struck for higher wages but the EFCA failed to support them and they were forced back to work with a lengthened working week and an imposed withdrawal from the Alliance of Labour. The railway workers were further split at the conclusion of the 1924 strike with the recognition by the government of the Railway Tradesmen's Association. This association promised the government not to withdraw its labour, (*ibid*:47f). These splits weakened the efforts of Big Jim Roberts of the Watersiders Federation to build a united transport workers'

organisation.

The history of the industrial labour movement 1915-1937 is the history of its total transformation. Instead of the split between the two wings, the Alliance of Labour and the Trades and Labour Councils, it becomes a united movement, not only within itself but with the state in the close collaboration between the trade union movement and the Labour government. Thus, by the end of our period, there was a high degree of incorporation of the trade union movement by the state. The Waterside Workers Federation both reflected and took a leading role in this development.

In July 1914, the United Federation of Labour held an Open Conference for all unions in an effort to reorganise after the defeat in the 1913 Waterfront Strike. The socialist objectives of the Red Federation were ditched and unions were organised into District Councils similar to those of the previous Trades and Labour Councils' Federation, (Roth, 1973:42). This retreat by the less favourably situated unions from the heady radicalism of the days of the Red Federation was not surprising in the face of defeat and political repression.

But this form of organisation did not suit the more militant industrial unions and they started to regroup independently. The transport unions, led by the watersiders, took the lead.

In 1915, Jim Roberts re-established the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation. In 1916, he sought to revive industrial unionism generally so that eventually all New Zealand Workers would be organised 'along lines of class and industry.' In June, a conference of watersiders, railwaymen, drivers and tramwaymen set up a Transport Workers' Advisory Board. The United Federation of Labour was deliberately excluded for its parliamentary flabbiness, as was the newly-formed Labour Party. Roberts expressed the traditional syndicalist contempt for parliamentary activity when he greeted the election of Semple Fraser and Holland to Parliament with the remark: 'If we have elected our 'rats' to Parliament, it is a good means of getting them out of the way,' (Roth, *ibid*:44). The economic demand of war-time was giving the key transport unions more economic leverage, thus rendering them immune to the political constraints to which less favoured workers were subject. At this time, these strategically-placed unions could well afford to reject the parliamentary road chosen by their erstwhile fellow-unionists. At the same time, the miners were organising themselves nationally, as were the freezing workers and the farmworkers. (These became the New Zealand Workers' Union in 1919).

In 1919, the Transport Workers' Advisory Board, now including the seamen, met with the Miners' Federation and formed the New Zealand Alliance of Labour. This excluded all unions not organised on industrial lines. It was organised nationally around industries in preparation for the day when workers would take control, (Stone, 1948:47). Craft unions and arbitrationism were the devils to

be exorcised. It was strong on rhetoric but paralysed in action. In fact, the Alliance can be seen as an attempt by essentially non-militant unions to develop industrial organisation on more 'efficient', 'modern' lines according to changes in the economy (Stone, 1948:42). The Alliance's basic position, that unions must organise industrially in preparation for the day when they would take over the management of industry is pretty identical to that adopted by the Open Conference held by the UFL in 1918. This emphasis on efficiency and modernity in line with technological development shows how the trade union movement basically accepted the contours imposed on it by capital. As we shall see, these views were those of the watersiders and clearly reflect the leading role played by them in shaping the direction of the New Zealand trade union movement at this period.

The emphasis of the Alliance was on building organisational links rather than undertaking organised action. It was based entirely on national union officials residing in Wellington. The Alliance was very much a paper organisation with little rank-and-file involvement. Indeed, it is doubtful how far the rank-and-file were aware of its existence. Despite the much vaunted organisation into industrial departments, these did not function at all, apart from the Transport Workers' Advisory Board. Its constituent union membership was in constant flux with unions affiliating and disaffiliating according to the varying pressures exerted by their members (Slade, 1983:3). In the case of the state employees' unions, like the ASRS and the Post and Telegraph Employees', these pressures were exerted by the state.

The WWF, however, remained the backbone of the Alliance throughout. It was very much 'their' baby.

The general direction of the Alliance was dominated by Roberts and the watersiders from its inception in 1919 to the split in 1936. They adopted a cautious stance. The miners and the seamen, led by McLagan and Walsh respectively, represented a more left tendency from the mainstream position set by the watersiders. This ideological split produced intermittent conflict right through the history of the Alliance culminating in the split in 1936.

In 1922, in the throes of the 1922-23 Seamen's strike, Walsh attacked the Alliance, saying 'Up to the present time, the Alliance of Labour has not justified its existence,' (Walsh, 1983:47), while Lew Glover, the watersiders' representative on the executive of the Alliance implicitly censured the Seamen's Union for taking action without getting the consent of the Alliance first, (Walsh, 1983:48). Walsh surmises that the seamen asked the watersiders not to black non-union ships or strike, because the seamen did not expect to get help in any case if they sought it (ibid:45). Whether this lack of militancy in tactics was a measured assessment of tactical possibilities as opposed to a class collaborationist position, will be considered in the later analytical chapters.

In 1924, the New Zealand Worker, (the Maoriland Worker, now owned by the Alliance of Labour,) refused to publicise a Marxist study group led by Walsh and others. In response to this partisan policy, the

Seamen's Union, through its membership of the board of the New Zealand Worker and its invested capital, claimed a right to a say in editorial policy (Bollinger, 1968:154). So the battle between the two political tendencies in the Alliance was carried into the affairs of its newspaper.

Essentially, it was a battle between social democratic and communist politics, for Roberts was by this time active in the New Zealand Labour Party, while Walsh and McLagan were still in the Communist Party. In 1926, the miners, with the support of the seamen, sought to reform the constitution of the Alliance of Labour. They wanted to establish a federated structure with more rank-and-file control, (Roth, 1973:48). This was along the lines of the old Red Federation. But Roberts defeated this challenge and the Alliance remained a leader-based organisation.

In 1934 the miners walked out of the Alliance and Roberts and Walsh conducted a fight to the finish over the question of the relationship of the trade union movement to the Labour Party and the method of reorganising the freezing workers after their unions were smashed in 1932. This led to the split in the Alliance in 1936. Walsh established his supremacy in the new Federation of Labour, while Roberts was left to put his energies into the Labour Party. By this time, the ideological divisions were not Communist Party vs Labour Party but over which wing of the labour movement should dominate - the industrial or the parliamentary wing. Walsh was a trade unionist, while Roberts' allegiances now leaned much more to the

Labour Party, (Roth,1973:54). This split reverberated inside the WWF. Lew Glover, the president of the WWF had joined Walsh in the division in the Alliance. While Walsh won the fight against Roberts for autonomy of the trade union movement from the Labour Party in the wider trade union movement, Roberts and his 'Get behind the Labour Party' position won out within the WWF and Glover was forced to resign from the Federation.

A basic weakness of the Alliance was its constitutional requirement to consult member unions before taking action. It was thus prevented from acting quickly and decisively when circumstance required (Slade,1983:21,22). The fact that member unions required this constitutional requirement reflects a limited development of class solidarity among nominally 'militant' unions. Not only did the Alliance have to consult member unions before taking action, but in practice it demanded that individual member unions consult it before taking steps which could involve other member unions. They were expected to hand over the conduct of their dispute to the Alliance. Time and time again, affiliates refused to do this. This led to particular bitterness in the case of the 1932 freezing workers strike, when the freezing workers refused to hand over the conduct of their dispute. The Alliance unions instructed their members not to black meat slaughtered by the strike breakers who had marched into the jobs of the striking freezing workers. The leadership of the Alliance and the watersiders came under bitter attack from the freezing workers and there was internal strife within the watersiders' own organisation when rank-and-file members initially

refused to handle the scab-killed meat. There were stoppages at Auckland, Wellington, Gisborne, Napier, Wanganui, New Plymouth and Dunedin in support of the freezing workers, (RP,B43/12). Roberts defended the union's position by saying their policy was to fight on the job to avoid the wharves being taken over by scabs. As Stone notes, the failure of the affiliated unions to hand over their disputes to the Alliance was indicative of their lack of confidence in the ability of the Alliance to mount an effective fight, (Stone,1948:78).

The New Zealand Workers' Union, with strong ties to its Australian counterpart, had other ideas on union organisation. They wanted to establish One Big Union of all workers without differentiation by industry, as required under the Alliance of Labour constitution. The New Zealand Workers' Union was to be the core union which all other workers would join. In an effort to establish its own organisation, the New Zealand Workers' Union refused to join the Alliance of Labour, but after a few years' power struggle, finally affiliated in 1924.

The Alliance was formed at the peak of the post-war boom when direct action gave promise of success. The Court of Arbitration also awarded two cost-of-living bonuses in 1919 and 1920. These were minimal, however, and employers were well able to pay. By the end of 1920, wool prices had slumped and the employers were strongly resisting further increases. In 1922, civil servants had their wages cut by 10% and in the same year, with an amendment to the IC&A Act,

the Court of Arbitration was given the power to take into account 'the economic conditions affecting any trade or industry,' (Richardson in Oliver and Williams, 1981:217). The Court withheld a rise in anticipation of a drop in the cost-of-living. This incensed workers and the Alliance of Labour gained more support. In 1922, the workers' representative of the Court of Arbitration resigned in protest at the 20% cut in shearers' wages. However, because of the slump conditions, the Alliance was unable to lead the direct action which was required if the Court was to be by-passed. McCullough, the workers' representative, who had resigned from the Court, was eventually replaced by another workers' representative (George, 1969:95).

The early 20's saw a number of defeats of Alliance unions. The freezing workers, miners, seamen and railwaymen all were defeated between 1922 and 1924, chiefly because of the expanding pool of unemployed who provided a ready supply of scab labour. For reasons already discussed, the Alliance was impotent in the face of this. The Miners' Federation was torn by splits as a result of the defeats and withdrew from the Alliance. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was forced to withdraw by the Government as part of the settlement. The loss of these two major constituents was moreorless the death knell of the Alliance of Labour as an active trade union force.

Meanwhile, the weaker, more conservative unions of the United Federation of Labour had sought their salvation on the political road

and looked to the Labour Party to achieve their aims. In the 1922 election, the Labour Party won all the poorer electorates and nearly doubled the total number of its seats, while non-voting declined sharply (Chapman, 1969:16). This was an indication that more workers were beginning to rely on the 'peaceful way', which was in any case more realistic in their industrially defenseless situation.

Later, in 1923, there was a temporary boom and the Alliance issued strike ballots in order to regain losses suffered in the Depression. Despite a good majority supporting strike action, the Alliance did nothing. It was disorganised and lost its credibility (Stone, 1948:62). The leading role of Roberts and the watersiders and their rejection of the strike weapon as 'an out-moded weapon' no doubt was the cause of this inaction.

In 1924, the Alliance held an Open Conference in an attempt to adapt its organisation to the requirements of their situation. They sought to establish a Miscellaneous Department to enable craft unions to join, and discussed ways of pressing the Court of Arbitration for rises. The need for a research office to challenge government statistics was raised. These were clear compromises with arbitration and craft unionism, but the militant rhetoric still terrified the Trades and Labour Councils and they declined to join (Stone, 1948:79). However, they also recognised the need for greater unity and set up the Trades and Labour Councils Federation in the same year. Ironically, the Alliance of Labour was still influential as a rallying point to maintain compulsory arbitration, (ibid).

Just as the Alliance was forced to come to terms, to some extent, with the Arbitration Court and the craft unions, it also had to reconcile itself to the 'rats' of the labour movement in parliament. Quite early on, it was forced by its economically weak position to agree to act in conjunction with the Labour Party. In 1924, the Alliance and the Party made a joint decision to set up a Labour Research Bureau. The following year, the Alliance set up a permanent committee especially to consider what legislation the trade union movement required and to advise the Labour Party accordingly. In the same year, Jim Roberts became a member of the executive of the Labour Party. Because it appeared that the Arbitration Court operated according to the will of the government in power, gaining political office seemed the solution. By the 1930's, the Labour Party was the dominant force in the labour movement. The 1931 Conference of the Party adopted a modified card vote form of representation of the unions, thus increasing their strength at Conference.

This development in relation to the Labour Party was exactly mirrored in the position of the watersiders. In fact over twenty years, the WWF had completed a total volte-face on the question of political action. At its inception, the WWF rejected any political alignment; Parliament was for corrupt, treacherous, time servers. But Roberts was on the executive of the Labour Party by 1925 and pushed for union and Alliance commitment to the Labour Party in 1936.

The Labour Party was considered by both wings of the labour movement not merely as a means of achieving bread and butter union aims, but

as a peaceful way of instituting socialism. Reliance on the parliamentary way was thus more reformist at this stage than outright collaborationist.

Throughout the 20's, the Alliance held a number of Open Conferences in an attempt to stem the tide of apathy and defeat and to build up unity. By 1927, there was real agreement on the need for effective arbitration (Stone, 1948:90). This was because chronic unemployment defeated any possibility of effective strike action.

In 1928, the government sponsored a National Industrial Conference of employers, government and workers. An Open Conference sponsored jointly by the Alliance of Labour and the Trades and Labour Councils' Federation was held prior to the Government's in order to arrive at joint policy. Only the miners, led by McLagan, and the seamen, led by Walsh, opposed arbitration. They felt they would be stronger outside the confines of the Court. The National Industrial Conference reached basic agreement on most substantial issues, (immigration and unemployment relief) but disagreed on compulsory arbitration. The employers now wanted arbitration to be voluntary, though of course, their motives were the opposite of the miners and the seamen. They wanted to take advantage of the vulnerability of the majority of the unions in the depressed conditions.

The 1930's brought the crash in overseas prices and the resulting Great Depression. State attacks completed the defeat of the trade union movement already hard-hit by the economic pressure of

redundancies and the resulting job-hungry unemployed. The government set up an Unemployment Board to administer unemployment relief. As a result of the Board's policies, the Public Works Department, local bodies and farmers sacked workers and reemployed them on relief rates. The Unemployment Board therefore reduced wages and was hated by workers.

The No Wages Reduction Conference convened by the Alliance of Labour and the Trades and Labour Councils in 1931, breathed fire and brimstone, threatened rent and mortgage boycotts in the event of wage-cuts and boycotts of all wage-cutting firms. However, nothing came of it. The unemployed, supported by the miners, pushed for a general strike, but this proposal was defeated. The demoralisation of the movement in the face of the economic constraints of the slump aided by political attacks was complete.

Meanwhile in 1930, the Communist Party had begun a fresh drive to organise the unemployed in the Unemployed Workers Movement (UWM). The UWM attacked the trade union movement and was feared and denounced by both the industrial and political wings of the labour movement. It was through the UWM that the NZ Communist Party had its strongest impact in this period. It operated outside and against the trade union movement. The attitude of the official trade union movement to the strategy promoted by the unemployed was that it was no time to attack the government and make demands. The public sympathy must be retained and the job was to find work, not demand handouts. The National Union of the Unemployed, set up jointly by

the Alliance of Labour and the Labour Party in opposition to the Communist-led Unemployed Workers' Movement, was not effective in organising the unemployed. Their frustration and suffering led to the 1932 riots in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. These were not a class-conscious challenge but were entirely unorganised - a spontaneous expression of pain and rage.

Even the strongest unions suffered severely from the combination of depression conditions and Government repression. The freezing workers were destroyed. They had wage cuts imposed ranging from 16% to 66%. (Roth, 1973:52). When they struck, they were easily replaced by scab labour and the companies speeded up the introduction of the chain system. (This replaced the previous system whereby each butcher slaughtered and dressed a whole beast - the solo butcher system. This was skilled work. With the chain, the operation was broken up into many different tasks, each done by a different butcher on each carcass as it was conveyed past him by the chain mechanism. The work was thereby largely de-skilled and permitted the use of unskilled labour as scabs.) Company unions were formed and it was not till 1936 that their national union was restored and they recovered their wage cuts. The strike was a source of bitter dispute with the Alliance of Labour, which refused to 'black' the scab-slaughtered meat until the freezing workers agreed to hand over control of the strike to the Alliance. As we have seen, the Alliance was subsequently badly split over the question of the method of reorganising the freezing workers after the strike. This split never healed and erupted in the 1936 walkout by Cook and Roberts from the

1936 Annual Conference of the Alliance of Labour.

The seamen and the miners were able to resist with minor success. The miners' wage rates fell by 10.8% from 1930 to 1933 while the seamen's fell 12.7% in the same period. This compared with a fall of 16.1% for most other workers (Roth, 1973:53). Even so, the United Mineworkers' membership fell from 4,000 in 1929 to below 2000 at the depth of the Depression. Many branches defected, (ibid:52). Total union membership fell during the Depression from 103,980 in 1928 to a trough of 71,888 in 1933, (ibid:169).

The watersiders were particularly hard hit. While their total membership fell a great deal less proportionately than in the trade union movement at large, (11% from 1930 to 1934, see Appendix B, Table 1), the amount of work available to each member fell drastically. With their entirely casual employment, their total earnings went down automatically with the reduction of trade and the consequent reduction in the quantity of goods imported and exported. Their total earnings fell even more when their wage rate was reduced in both 1931 and 1932. However, because they had some employment, they were ineligible for unemployment relief which made their plight desperate indeed.

Only a political solution seemed possible and when, in 1935, the Labour Government came to power on a landslide vote, the trade union movement was united behind it.

The election of the Labour government marked a renewal of the progressive, humanitarian, though paternalistic state tradition which the Liberals had inaugurated in the 1890's. This tradition has always been in conflict with the conservative, individualistic punitive element. This was represented by successive governments after Reform came to power in 1912. As has been argued, the working class shared in this conservative ideology. It is significant that it was not till 1935, when the Depression was already lifting, that workers were willing to support a Labour Government. The paternalistic control of welfarism inevitably conflicted with independent working class action. But such independence had been completely smashed by the Depression and the bulk of the labour movement welcomed the benefits of protection with open arms. As we shall see, the WWF along with the rest of the union movement, leaned over backwards in its support of the Labour Government.

The 1936 IC&A Amendment Act brought compulsory unionism and the possibility of registering a national union for the first time. In the same year came the 40 hour week and a minimum basic wage. As Stone has said, 'A paternalistic Labour Government was doing more for industrial labour than that movement had been able to do for itself since 1894,' (Stone, 1949:163). This situation is the opposite of the syndicalist position expressed by Cook of the NZ Workers' Union: 'You will gain more in one day by job action than can be obtained in 100 years of political action,' (quoted by Stone, *ibid*:50). It is this dilemma, the impossibility of attaining even bread and butter aims through direct action, which accounts for the reformism of New

Zealand trade unions. With its 'own' government in power, the trade unions were compelled to unite in order to speak to it with an undivided voice. This drive to unity led to a conference in 1937 to set up the present New Zealand Federation of Labour. But this was not before the split in the Alliance of Labour of the previous year resulted in two rival conferences led by Walsh and Roberts respectively. With the intervention of the Labour government, the breach was healed and the New Zealand Federation of Labour was set up at the Unity Congress of 1937. The rank-and-file gave the Federation whole-hearted support, (Stone, ibid:172). This was an advance on the old Alliance which had stagnated with the leadership ignoring the rank-and-file. On paper at least, by 1938, the Federation represented 175,679 workers (Roth, 1973:170). Large numbers of previously ununionised workers were brought into the movement. This swelled the opposition to the militants within the trade union movement.

War-time stabilisation policies, with Walsh as President of the Federation and Fraser as Prime Minister, developed the closest collaboration between the union movement and the state. This was later to reach its apotheosis in 1951 when the official trade union movement took a position to the right of the Labour opposition and cooperated to the full with a repressive employers' government to smash the watersiders, now leading a militant minority of the movement.

This union of the two wings of the industrial labour movement was the culmination of a 45 year courtship in which the militant wing had played hard to get and only finally concluded a marriage of convenience with the conservatives when repeated experience demonstrated the impracticability of an untrammelled single life. However, the terms of the marriage, while including a few mod. cons and labour saving devices, also brought an unrelenting in-law in the form of the state. The marital home became a prison as harsh as the outside world it was built to avoid and the two still had to solve the problem of living and surviving together. The militant wing of the trade union movement was faced with its recurring inability to take effective direct industrial action to achieve its bread and butter aims, let alone overthrow the capitalist system. It was therefore forced to come to terms with state arbitration and the conservative wing of the trade union movement which was so heavily reliant on it. Indeed, the conservative wing was created by arbitration. A politically sympathetic party in power seemed to take the sting out of the arbitration tail.

The key role of the transport unions in the trade union movement was an inevitable product of their key position in an export-based economy. The watersiders, in particular, reflected the contradictory effect on a union placed in a strong economic situation but hamstrung by inadequate union organisation and conservative attitudes among other workers. The contradictory positions adopted by the watersiders in the face of its dilemmas permeated the wider trade union movement through the watersiders' domination of the Alliance of

Labour.

The reasons for the dilemmas of the trade union movement in New Zealand and the solutions which it developed for itself must be found in the nature of the social forces with which it had to contend: economic dependence and underdevelopment, political repression and an anxious climate of opinion which sought security from any force for change.

Firstly, all internal economic activity was dependent on a small range of primary products at the mercy of world prices. The decline in production as a result of any fall in overseas prices naturally resulted in increased unemployment. No trade union could achieve its aims in a situation where there was a vast number of unemployed workers who could render useless the only weapon available to the working class, the withdrawal of its labour. Secondly, New Zealand industry was relatively undeveloped and small scale. Hence, few industries concentrated large numbers of workers or had the economic punch which is the basis of class consciousness and organised class struggle. Because there was a limited basis for the development of class consciousness, workers were more vulnerable to the dominant bourgeois ideology of classlessness and consensus. Because of this lack of an industrial capitalist class structure, the state has always taken what is for a bourgeois democracy an unusually dominant and often repressive role. Because the bulk of New Zealand unions were weak and small, they were in no position to challenge employer power with direct action nor did they wish to. They sheltered behind

the protection of the state and with their more sectional craft-based loyalties, gave no support to those unions able to take stronger action. The more militant unions were thus isolated and constrained by the conservatism and lack of solidarity of their fellow unionists, by the fluctuations of the capitalist dependent economy and by repressive government measures. A reformist political solution was therefore unsurprising.

It was in this historical context that the WWF was formed and within which it, in turn, played its significant formative role in the New Zealand trade union movement from 1915 to 1937 and the record of the development of their policies and the consciousness embodied in them is therefore a key to understanding the wider movement in those years. It is to the analysis of this development that we now turn.

BOOM 1915-1921

In 1915, when the watersiders regrouped themselves in the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation, they were in a good position to make gains in their living standards. While inflationary demand during war time brought about price rises which put pressure on watersiders' living standards, full employment and the loss of the reserve army of labour to military service, gave watersiders real industrial muscle. Consequently they were able to extract steady improvements in wages and conditions over this period. Unlike other unions less favourably placed in the economy, they were not constricted by the arbitration system.

WHAT IS

Economic

The watersiders' analysis of existing social relations is strongly Marxist at this period. A front page article of the August issue of the Watersider (WS) gives an extended explanation of the labour theory of value and the extraction of surplus value from workers by capitalists. The article concludes that it is at the:

'point of capitalist production that workers must find the remedy; labour must have more of that surplus value. This can be done by organising industrially so that labour can get increased wages, shorter hours and better conditions,' (WS, Aug 1916:1).

This point is made in the course of a discussion on whether taxation could be a working class remedy for exploitation at the point of production. It is asserted that:

'It is essential that the representatives of labour should state definitely if the workers are exploited on the job by the employer who buys their labour-power or at the shop where he buys the necessaries of life: on those points taxation must stand or fall as a working class remedy,' (ibid).

After considering the theory of surplus value, price controls and redistributive taxation are rejected as a solution to the high cost of living and argues, in any case, that taxation is used for:

'the upkeep of navies, armies, police, law and courts, judges, jails and all that repressive force which protects the wealth stolen from the working class. Taxation at best can only be a temporary relief; it is not a working class problem...you cannot emancipate the working class by abolishing the custom-house,' (ibid).

Similarly, on the question of monopolies and their ability to inflate prices, the same article says that neither legislation nor direct action are of use because:

'under the present system...Every student of industrial history knows that monopolies, trusts etc are the logical outcome of the competitive capitalist system and are necessary for efficient organisation of capitalist production...Taxation will not hurt monopolies - he that owns, has control,' (ibid).

Consequently, the only solution is organisation:

'Let Labour organise the greatest of all monopolies - the INDUSTRIALLY ORGANISED GIANT LABOUR TRUST. The brain and muscle of labour has created all wealth, workers must organise as a class to socially own and democratically control the industries and the wealth they have produced. Let our motto be: THE WORLD'S WEALTH FOR THE WORLD'S WORKERS,' (ibid).

The article contains a number of key concepts: labour is seen as the source of wealth; employer/worker relations are seen as exploitive and that exploitation takes place at the point of production; the state is seen clearly as an organ of capitalist oppression; this oppression can only be ended by the working class seizing ownership of industry. It must do this by its own independent action; under capitalism, it cannot rely on any other force to remedy its condition. Social relations are seen objectively in historical perspective. Thus monopolies are seen as historically necessary rather than as simply being immoral or unjust.

Thus, in terms of the typology, at this period, the WS analyses capitalism in terms of economic exploitation; the primacy of the relations of production in the social formation; class domination at the political level through the state; social relations as historical developments to be understood in rational terms; and the potential of human control of that development. These are all revolutionary dimensions as defined in the typology. The only factor which prevents this being a fully revolutionary Marxist analysis is the reliance on industrial organisation as the means of change. This

denies the importance of abolishing the bourgeois state for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

The theme of class exploitation and antagonism is taken up again in May 1917:

'Large landholders, food profiteers, money lenders, professional politicians and others who do no useful and productive work, but live on the earnings of the workers which they filch by various methods,' (WS, May, 1917:5).

The syndicalist inclusion of politicians in the line-up of exploiters is again significant and again mistakes the nature of the capitalist state and its parliamentary facade. This is a reformist feature of the consciousness of the watersiders.

A revolutionary materialist feature is the conceptualisation of economic phenomena as basic in society:

'The root cause of all the unhappiness that exists is economic,' (WS, Jan 1919:1).

An article in July 1919 entitled 'The Economics of Nature' stresses again the status of workers as 'economic slaves on whose labour capital is solely dependent'. But it chastises the 'apathetic behaviour and asinine hostility of the bulk of the working class' towards those 'who are concerned with the workers' welfare and their approaching emancipation from capitalistic camouflaged slavery.' The article says they are ignorant of:

'the evolutionary laws of social progress...When will the workers imbibe and exhibit recognition of the laws of Mother Nature?', (TW, Jul 1919:5).

While here social development is seen as a material historical process based on natural laws, the attitudes of workers themselves are not seen as part of this process. There is a strongly moralistic note of condemnation of the backward consciousness of the workers in the otherwise scientific objective position of the article. This moralism is less analytical and constitutes an element of a less revolutionary position.

By September 1919, we see a general shift to this more moralistic stance. In reference to the coal strike by New Zealand miners, the TW says:

'When wages and conditions of work and living in mining towns improve, the dispute will be over...the rush for profits has been mainly the cause of all labour troubles,' (TW, Sept 1919:3).

Again, in March 1920, an article entitled 'More Industrial Efficiency and Production' says:

'So long as the necessaries of life are produced for profit, it is useless to ask for efficiency or for increased production; there is no material incentive for the workers to do so. When the workers are assured that the necessaries of life will be used primarily for the use and welfare of the people as a whole, then there will be efficiency, increased production and industrial harmony,' (TW, Mar 1920:1).

We can see a number of changes here from the previous article. This piece leans much more heavily on sarcasm and moral outrage. There is less analysis of the present structure of social relations. While production is seen as exploitive of workers and for the profit of capitalists, the question of what to do about it is left quite unspecified - a rhetorical gesture to expose the injustice of capitalist social relations is deemed sufficient. Nor is a complete overturn of those relations contemplated. Only a 'portion of the results of the workers' efficiency' is required. The aim of assuring production 'primarily' for the use and welfare of the 'people as a whole' is significantly more vague than working class organisation 'to socially own and and democratically control the industries and the wealth they have produced' as proposed in 1916. There is also an appeal to capitalist ideals of efficiency, productivity and class harmony.

All these signify a shift away from the earlier more revolutionary analysis. It is significant that this takes place as the war-time economic boom has passed its peak and unemployment is on the rise again. By 1921, with the Depression in full swing, the TW announces that the 'Capitalist system is tumbling in pieces...The root cause is economic.' This still acknowledges the materialist basis of society on production and the historically specific nature of capitalist relations and is therefore a revolutionary element.

In the August 1916 article already discussed, the capitalist class is seen as one:

'We are not interested in the quarrel between the 'feudal-minded' land-owning class and the modern commercial exploiters as to which section shall pay the less share for the war of their own creation; that is their business,'

(WS, Aug 1916:1).

However, with the Depression, the TW focuses on the financiers as the key exploiters. In August 1921, it said:

'It may be true that some of the actual farmers are working at a loss; but this is due to the greed of the fellow who farms the farmers and not to the starvation wage paid to farm hands at the present time,' (TW, Aug1921:4).

While this true as far as it goes, it neglects the more fundamental analysis of exploitation at the point of production.

In September 1921, the TW accuses the international bankers of forcing down wages. Australian and New Zealand banks were refusing credit and calling in loans. Overspending on the part of the workers was being blamed, yet:

'there was little left of the toilers' wages when these economic highwaymen took their toll as payment for life's necessities,' (TW, Sept1921:2).

Moral outrage and rhetoric predominates and the analysis pinpoints one part of the bourgeoisie only as responsible for economic ills. The growing preponderance of moralising over analysis shows in this respect a move towards reformism.

Mechanisation was another problem which the TW regularly analysed. The issue of May 1917 has an article comparing the number of workers needed to do different kinds of production by hand and by machine respectively. Machinery is valued for doing away with drudgery and long hours. It is suggested that the wealth of natural resources in New Zealand has held back the development of scientific, mechanised production. 'Who,' asks the WS,

'has appropriated the billion pounds' worth of labour-power displaced by machinery...[This] has made the Trust Kings and Industrial Magnates,' (WS, May 1917:3).

This is not exactly accurate in terms of Marxist economics but the fact of class exploitation is emphasised:

'The workers of today have no objection to the machine, but they have a serious objection to be labelled part of the machine and to be used only as instruments for the production of profits,' (ibid).

Thus class exploitation is pin-pointed and condemned but progress in the development of the productive forces of social labour is welcomed. This reveals an underlying historical materialist analysis. The solution, says the WS, is again, that:

'The workers must organise for working class ownership and democratic control of the machine and the job,' (ibid).

So the need for overturning class relations is acknowledged. In this respect, the analysis is revolutionary, but the method is the non-revolutionary syndicalist one of 'organisation along lines of class and industry,' (ibid).

War was seen as a product of class society and in the interests of capitalists:

'We are not interested in the quarrel between the 'feudal-minded' landowners and the modern commercial exploiters as to which will pay the less share for the war of their own creation,' (WS, Aug 1916:1).

The Waterside Workers Federation was particularly opposed to conscription as was the whole labour movement. Of the Military Service Bill, the August 1916 issue of the WS asks:

'First, the workers must consider whose interests do those responsible for the introduction of Conscription into New Zealand represent. Are they working class interests? WELL, HARDLY,' (WS, Aug 1916:1).

In July 1916, the WS stated that in fact there were enough men enlisted for military purposes under the voluntary system. The reason for conscription was not therefore military, but was an attack on trade unionists' civil rights, and on all the 'reforms...and privileges the workers for generations have fought for,'

(WS, Jul 1916:1). Besides:

'Have they conscripted the vessels to carry supplies...or troops to fight the shipowners' greatest foes? No! Of course, they have not; these are vested interests and must not be interfered with,' (ibid).

This echoes the labour movements's anti-conscription slogan: 'Conscription of Wealth before conscription of Life.' Thus it is not so much imperialist war which is opposed, but its use to stifle the organisations of working class defence. It is, therefore, an example of trade union consciousness within the confines of bourgeois relations and is not as revolutionary as it sounds. Apart from this, despite the world war in this period, there is next to no analysis of capitalism as a world economic or political system.

Political

The WS expresses clear views on the nature of the state and the political system under capitalism. In December 1916, the Arbitration Court is declared roundly to be:

'an institution for the oppression of the workers, (expressly founded by the Master Class to keep the toilers in their place),' (WS, Dec 1916:1).

In October 1921, the 20% cut in shearers' wages by the Arbitration Court was seen as:

'just another instance of the way the court leans towards class privilege. [The Court decision would] help to eliminate whatever confidence existed amongst the workers in it as an institution,' (TW,Oct1921:1).

Workers had a class obligation to organise in their own interests along lines of class and industry and cease to rely on the Court.

Political institutions are seen to be:

'the result of long ages of legislation in the interests of the propertied class';

and political parties,

'being composed of ambitious men...are hotbeds of intrigue, corruption and self-seeking...with the people but pawns in the game,' (WS,May1918:4).

The same article goes on to question the effectiveness and commitment of the Labour Party:

'Were Labour members imbued with the necessity of reforming Parliament...the toilers in the ranks might well rest content,' (ibid:5).

Here the failure of Parliament as an agency for working class interests is explained in terms of the moral failures of the individuals who occupy it. This is an idealist, individualist explanation, not a materialist one in terms of the social formation and its structure, and is a non-revolutionary feature.

Ideological

How did the watersiders perceive the nature of ideas in society and in what terms did they challenge those opposed to working class interests? The watersiders and other militant unions were regularly attacked by the Press and right-wing politicians and organisations. The TW devoted considerable space to exposing the class basis of these attacks and offering a working class perspective. The daily press is regularly attacked as an agency of ruling class propaganda. Thus workers are urged to stop:

'perusing the columns of the perverted press,'
(TW, Jul 1919:5).

The daily Wellington paper, The Dominion, is described as:

'the official organ of Torydom, Masseydom and cockeydom,'
(TW, Aug 1921:4).

Sarcasm is a favoured weapon of the TW. Thus when Colonel Mitchell MP launched an attack on the watersiders for supposedly going slow, he is described as an expert in 'goslowology', and the TW 'praises' the 'infallibility of this sociological Pope'. By satirically exposing both the pretensions to knowledge of this critic of the watersiders and his lack of knowledge, the TW both challenges the ideas expressed and the signposts of expertise and authority set up by bourgeois society. Thus not only is this particular critic exposed, but the status of all recognised statesmen, scientists and religious authorities is brought into question. The readers of the

TW are implicitly constructed by the extreme and cumulative irony as more knowledgeable, by virtue of their practical experience. Thus, in the face of their position as members of an exploited and dominated class, the workers' power and strength to know the world and their own exploitation is increased, while that of ruling class 'experts' is diminished.

A range of right-wing organisations launched ideological attacks on the unions and watersiders in particular during this period. Chief among them was the New Zealand Welfare League, dubbed the 'Hell-Fire League' by the TW. Right-wing organisations like the Welfare League expressed the ruling bourgeois ideology which was so anti-worker and had such a strong hold on New Zealand culture at large at this period. The watersiders had to combat this ideology and expose its pretensions to neutrality.

The 'Hell-Fire League' had accused the Wellington Watersiders Union of 'going-slow, pilfering, raising the cost of living, Bolshevism and disreputability'. The TW says:-

'The reason for all this camouflage is obvious. The different sections of economic highwaymen, otherwise profiteers, have made the conditions of living to the average citizen so hard, that they are attempting to cover up their criminal extortion by accusing the wage workers of all trouble,' (TW, Jul 1920:2).

Thus ideological mystification and distortion is exposed by tracing out the class interests and origins of the purveyors of the distortions. This clear understanding of the class basis of ruling

ideology constitutes in this respect a revolutionary analysis.

In another article in the same issue of the TW, the ideological response of the acting Prime Minister, Sir Francis Bell, to the Alliance of Labour deputation on immigration is exposed through sarcasm:-

'The acting Prime minister waxed patriotic regarding this question [of immigration]. The good old flag and the Empire were introduced. He would not prevent a British worker from landing on these shores,' (ibid).

Patriotism, a major component of New Zealand bourgeois ideology at this period is thus fundamentally challenged. Patriotism asserts the priority and unity of the nation as a community. The TW is rejecting this and exposing it as a mere cloak for class interests.

The TW thus regularly and systematically exposed the class interests behind various pronouncements of the media and organisations of the ruling class. Through its sarcastic style, it deprived these organs of some of their prestige and power in the eyes of its readers. The heavy irony and declamatory style empower the reader and strip the various organs of bourgeois ideology of their haloes of respectability and rightness. At the ideological level, therefore, it strengthened the ability of its readers to challenge bourgeois ideas.

WHAT SHOULD BE

Short term

What, then, were the kinds of demands the watersiders made in this period? What sort of goals did they have in the short term and what do these tell us about the degree of challenge the watersiders were willing to issue to capitalist exploitation?

The most obvious site of struggle between employer and worker is that over wages. The watersiders always discussed the wage rates to be sought in the next wage round in terms of the constraints facing the union. Thus, at the 4th Annual Conference in January 1919, there was an initial remit for a rise of 6d an hour - a 65% rise in the rate. An amendment was proposed raising this to 1/- an hour. Roberts said:

'We have to consider what we can get - would the other unions support us? There is a lot of unorganised labour about. We have to measure our weapons more carefully than the master-class has to,' (RP, B28:23).

The amendment was lost. While 65% may seem a large wage demand, workers had been suffering from war-time inflation, but at the same time the conditions which produced this, gave the watersiders considerable leverage.

At the 7th Annual Conference in December 1921, when the economic boom had collapsed, an initial remit for wage rises of 3d, 4d and 6d per hour was amended to 1d per hour with efforts to level up the lower

pay rates found in some ports. Roberts again took a relatively conservative line, pointing out that bonuses had been withheld in November 1920 and May 1921. 'What action should be taken?' he challenged the Conference. He said the Alliance of Labour had discussed joint action but had made no decision, (RP,B31:92,93). It is significant that at both these conferences, Roberts' position prevailed. This cannot be said to have been a vigorous militant one. His leadership was aimed more at stability and balance rather than outright struggle over the share of value produced. The lack of militancy in such favourable conditions must be seen as a manifestation of a relatively collaborationist position. The watersiders' position was throughout our period stamped with Roberts' personal vision which he imposed with his undoubted charisma and authority. This dependence on Roberts indicates an element of leader-domination and is a non-revolutionary feature.

There was also a demand for improvement in working conditions during this period which met with considerable success. There are two options for any union faced with poor conditions of work: to demand a higher rate of pay for the poor conditions or to demand better conditions. Often, demand for a higher rate is a way of fighting for the abolition of the condition in question by applying a penalty on the employer. For instance, the 5th Annual Conference in December 1919 discussed the question of maximum weights to be lifted by watersiders. The Conference wanted a limit of 200lb for bags of produce; if the weight was over the limit, they would refuse to handle the bags unless 6d extra an hour were paid, (RP,B29:134). By

the 6th Conference in December 1920, the limit was set outright at 200lb, but a move to reduce it to 140lb was defeated, (RP,B30:72). This single example illustrates well the kind of steady pressure being applied by the watersiders in this period to improve their harsh conditions of work. These covered dangerous and obnoxious cargoes, manning levels, safety, work in wet and windy weather and lack of dining and other facilities. The tendency was always to prefer an improvement in working conditions over simple money compensation. This is demonstrated in a discussion on cement at the 7th Annual Conference in 1921. The original remit called for 6d extra an hour for loading cement. This was amended to a demand for double-walled bags to eliminate the dust nuisance it produced (RP,B31,1921:90). This is very much a pro-producer position. The priority for the watersiders was to protect their only commodity, their labour power. To be satisfied with a monetary payment for a working condition which eroded or destroyed it, would have been much more in the interests of the employer. This is because the latter had a plentiful supply of labour power and their priority was to minimise their costs at the expense of the worker. This strong defence of working conditions is a revolutionary feature.

A similar position on the protection of their labour power at the expense of the employer was taken up over sick and accident insurance. The question of compensation and maintenance while incapacitated through sickness or accident was naturally a live one in such a dangerous industry. At the 2nd Annual Conference in 1916, a remit called for the Executive to formulate a proposal for an

accident insurance scheme. This was lost and was opposed on the grounds that this should be a charge on the shipowners and employers, (RP,B27:49). Again, this position shows a strong awareness of the fact of economic exploitation and the need to limit it.

The question of control and decision-making over the acceptability or otherwise of various working conditions was important. For instance, at the 2nd Annual Conference in December 1916, it was resolved that the decision on whether the weather was too wet for work was to be made by a majority of workers directly affected by it, (RP,B27:90). Again, both in respect to improved conditions and the push against capital's control of those conditions, this shows a pro-producer position. By assuming greater control, the watersiders could better protect themselves. Again, this is a revolutionary feature.

The main feature of waterside work at this period, as we have noted, was its casual nature. Steady pressure was applied to limit hours of work, the hours of engagement, and to gain payment for time lost while waiting for work. Very many remits in this period were aimed at limiting and then eliminating nightwork, Sunday work and work on Saturday afternoons. The initial tactic was to demand a penalty rate for work performed at undesirable hours and then to demand that such hours be eliminated.

The main thrust was to control and then to abolish the auction block system of employment. Continual efforts were made to equalise the distribution of work. As already noted, this system was open to

victimisation and bribery and offered widely varying amounts of work to different union members. Within the casual employment system, equal distribution of work required limitation of union membership to maintain a reasonable wage. This was because if union membership was open to all comers, the amount of work available had to be shared among too many workers. But the union did not gain the right to do this until the 1924 Award.

This dilemma was a direct result of casual employment. Membership limitation was a necessity in the conditions of the particular labour market occupied by watersiders while exclusion of fellow workers, especially at times of economic downturn, went very much against the grain of solidarity characteristic of the watersiders.

A more fundamental way of dealing with casual employment was to push for schemes whereby the union itself would contract to load and unload ships and thereby have complete control, not only of the engagement of labour but of the organisation of the work and the payment of wages. In 1917 the union was well aware of the contradictions of such schemes under capitalism. The WS of September 1917 put it thus:-

'It must be distinctly understood that control of labour under a "wages system" does not mean the emancipation of the workers; the toilers are still labour sellers to a master. The difference between union co-operative control and the present system is: under the present system the union bargains for the price per hour to be paid for labour and the conditions under which the workers shall be employed. Under a co-operative system the distribution of labour, wages, control of the job and general supervision would be under the control of the union. That is the

control under the "wages system". The control which should be the ultimate aim of all labour organisations - social ownership and democratic control of the job where the workers are employed - is a very different proposition to co-operative control of waterfront labour. For under a "wages system" of control, the workers supervise the job while they are making profits for the shareholders in the business; under a system of social ownership, the workers would manage the industry for the benefit of society as a whole. As the probability of social ownership in the near future is not very certain, the question the waterside workers have to consider is: Will it be better for them as an organisation to have control with the limitations pointed out, or to still continue under the hourly rate fixed for the class of work the men perform?' (WS, Sept 1917:1).

This shows a clear understanding of economic exploitation under the wages system and is a revolutionary analysis. The paper rejects a union contract piecework system which would only cause sweating and speed-up. This again indicates a strong pro-producer position and is therefore a revolutionary feature.

The WS sees a co-operative contract system as the only way of eliminating the "auction block" and competition among the workers for employment. But 'the great objection,' says the WS, 'is the limitation of the membership of the union.' This limitation would be essential to make the system work. But 'No doubt a system could be devised that would give satisfaction in this direction,' (ibid). Again, the contradictions are being faced. They are dealt with head-on, so to speak, and are not mystified in any way. The merits and demerits of two types of scheme of union control were hammered out at the 4th and 5th Annual Conferences in January and December 1919, (RP, B28:144; B29:55ff).

These debates fully reflect the dilemma of a union trying to exert some control within the capitalist system: If workers take some control without payment, they are doing the capitalists' work of supervision and maintenance of exploitation without any recompense. If there is recompense, they have greater incentive to collude with that exploitation. As already noted, the Federation in its debates did not evade these dilemmas. However, the push for cooperative contracting as distinct from permanent employment on a weekly wage, represents an essential accommodation with capital. It cannot be seen as a struggle against it and is therefore a reformist feature.

The 5th Annual Conference in 1919 adopted a proposal for a national co-operative stevedoring association to be registered under the Companies Act and with a wide range of objectives including the setting-up of co-operative stores,

(RP,B29:161). This latter indicates a pre-occupation with the point of distribution as a place for dealing with the inequalities of capitalism. It is of a piece with the efforts to take over from the capitalist some of the areas of exploitation and control, without issuing a fundamental challenge to capitalist relations. So, in this respect, the watersiders manifested a tendency to collaboration.

At the 6th Annual Conference in December 1920, a revised version was brought forward after negotiation with the employers. The scheme was changed beyond recognition. It was no longer a union co-operative but a scheme for co-operation with the employers under their control!

(RP,B30:14).

Clearly, employer resistance had put the scheme originally proposed out of reach. However, it is significant that even at this early period, a "social partners" model of working was adopted alongside a revolutionary economic and political analysis. In any case, it is very similar in principle to the Disputes Committees procedures which the Federation adopted from its inception in 1915. These will be discussed in the section WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

Let us summarise, then, the nature of the short-term goals which the watersiders set themselves and the degree of challenge these mounted to bourgeois power. There was a strong uncompromising pro-worker demand for improved conditions and payment for work. The push for control and the willingness to oppose employer power was much more ambiguous, however. While the employer was seen as exploitive, the theme of the employer as partner was an underlying thread and the level of struggle cannot be described as militant. As noted in a previous chapter, while militancy is not in itself revolutionary, a revolutionary union challenges capital as far as possible in tactically appropriate ways. A lack of militancy in situations when it could be used to advantage is therefore a symptom of a non-revolutionary position. This fundamental collaborationism is apparent on closer analysis as we saw earlier with the wage demands in 1919. It finds vivid expression in the transformation of the co-operative contracting scheme into a partnership with the employers.

Long Term

This is necessarily of less importance in analysing consciousness than an analysis of WHAT IS and WHAT IS TO BE DONE. The latter are material practices open to objective examination while the future is more speculative. Therefore little space will be devoted to this but the vision of the future will simply be noted and the degree of mutability of the present conceptualised by the Watersiders' Federation as shown in the TW.

Economic

The masthead of the Watersider, (this was the initial name of the Federation newspaper until it became the Transport Worker in 1919,) from its first issue in May 1916 carried the slogan 'The Ownership and Control of Wealth is vested, by right, in the Workers,' but by May 1918 this had disappeared. However, there are regular references in the paper to the abolition of capitalism:

'The labour movement must stand for the abolition of the system which compels the wage worker to sell his only commodity - labour power - in the market like a pound of pork or mutton,' (WS, Nov 1918:1).

'The workers must ...finally abolish wagedom altogether,' (TW, Sept 1919:3).

'Workers must unite to obtain more of the surplus value they create and eventually the full product of their labour,' (TW, Mar 1920:5).

Thus the watersiders see that the exploitive relations of capitalism can be overthrown and that workers have the power to do this. This is a revolutionary feature.

Political

Similarly, parliament must be superceded:

'Labour cannot rest content with existing institutions,'
(WS, May 1918:4).

Its substitute was to be the One Big Union:

'When the One Big Union has control of fixing wages and conditions, it will take quite naturally the place of existing Parliaments. It seeks to absorb other forms of working class organisation, just as the class conscious proletariat seeks to absorb all the existing artificial classes and create the one class of the future - the working class,' (WS, Jan 1918:3).

This is the pure syndicalist vision of the trade unions becoming the political organs of the future. This completely misconceives the nature of trade unions under capitalism and the degree they are constrained by their role as collective sellers of labour power for sections of the working class. This syndicalist concept is economist since it assumes that economic processes alone can bring about social ownership and that therefore working class organisations around the economic struggle, the trade unions, can complete the transformation and be part of the new society. As noted before, this neglects the role of the state in maintaining bourgeois relations. This negation is to be accomplished by the spontaneous development of the economic

forces alone. This analysis basically rejects the need for conscious negation of capitalist relations. By mistaking the nature of capitalist relations at the political level, the watersiders adopted a less than revolutionary stance.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

Economic

Intra-class By far the greatest preoccupation of the TW at this period is the question of organisation. This represents a strong commitment to solidarity and cohesion, a revolutionary feature.

The setting up of The Watersider in 1916 was itself intended as an organising tool, a means of uniting all the watersiders and hopefully the transport unions into a united organisation. The Watersider was renamed the Transport Worker in 1919 in recognition of its circulation among most of the other transport unions.

In its first issue in May 1916, the WS stated its aim to be to:

'educate workers in the waterfront to organise on a class union basis on lines of industry,' (WS, May 1916:1).

The paper was to build common understanding and unity. 'Organisation along lines of class and industry' was the slogan throughout this period. Industrial unionism was the only 'scientific' form of organisation to match changes in production. Organisation around craft skills was being rendered obsolete by technological

development. The One Big Union slogan of the Industrial Workers of the World was regularly used:

'The One Big Union must come. Modern conditions will force it. Modern machinery eventually will do away with the Craftsman and replace him by the Machinist,' (WS, May, 1916:1).

Not only was the technology developing in reaction to this inevitable process, but so were class relations. Again, industrial unionism was the only answer:

'Modern Capitalism grouped into Trusts and Combines, will force the workers to combine to counteract such capitalist combination,' (ibid).

A series of articles in 1921 demonstrated the class solidarity of the shipping companies by detailing their interlocking interests. The TW urged readers to take this 'lesson in industrial unionism,' (TW, Sept 1921:5).

Present in this analysis is the idea of material historical development which can be scientifically understood and acted on by the workers in their own interests. It therefore embodies from our typology the dimensions of objectivity, human potency and historical, changing nature of social relations. These are revolutionary features.

But industrial organisation was not seen simply as a defence for the present struggles but as a preparation for the future:

'We are educating the workers to finally take control of the industries they are engaged in,' (WS, June, 1916:1)

and

'The OBU - representing all the workers - will be the Parliament of the future - a workshop, not a talkshop,' (WS, Jan 1918:3).

The implications of this analysis will be discussed under political action, since for the Watersiders' Federation, economic action was political action:

'The moment we become united as one class against our economic oppressors, capitalism must pass into oblivion,' (WS, May 1917:5).

Against the ideal of all the workers organised along lines of class and industry, was the reality of the workers organised and divided by craft loyalties. Invective was unleashed on craft attitudes. The TW lamented that despite the fact that the 'old order of things is in the melting pot,' there had been no reform in craft conservatism. The attitude 'my job, my craft and, worse still, my master' still prevailed (TW, May 1920:1).

Craft unionism and arbitration were linked as were industrial unionism and opposition to arbitration. In an article urging the abolition of the Arbitration Court as an obsolete institution, the TW considers the plight of small craft unions which could not survive

outside the arbitration system and says they are all in the position to join with a stronger industrial organisation. Even within the arbitration system, unions would get more from the Court if organised industrially, says the paper (WS, July, 1918:4). This latter remark is a significant concession to arbitration and foreshadows the increasing accommodation with arbitration which, under the whip of depression, was to become a feature of the watersiders' position.

Craft unionism and arbitration unions are seen as leader dominated, organised by officials for officials (WS, June 1916:1). Craft union officials are seen to have interests separate from those of their members and are the focus of the attack on craft unionism. This was noted in reference to the reaction of some officials to the resignation of the workers' representative, Mr McCullough, from the Court of Arbitration in protest against the 20% reduction in shearers' wages in 1921. The TW said the 'overwhelming majority of workers' would support Mr McCullough, but:

'There are a few officials who were loud in their lamentations lest the dear old Court should suffer injury...the small unions, they plead, would go out of existence if the Arbitration Court were abolished. Yes, we repeat, and the small and weak minds which unfortunately guide their destinies at the present time would go out with them all with advantage to the labour movement,' (TW, Oct 1921:1).

'The personal jealousies and differences between Labour officials and would-be Labour officials were preventing unity. Remove this barrier and the workers of New Zealand will organise, and fight as a class within one year from now,' (TW, Sept 1921:1).

The moral castigation of union officials as individuals is an idealist approach and hence non-revolutionary. The commitment to the One Big Union concept, uniting workers along lines of class and industry, showed strong solidarity. These represent revolutionary features in terms of the typology. This was not mere rhetoric. The Waterside Workers' Federation was instrumental in setting up the Transport Workers' Advisory Board in 1916. At the 2nd Annual Conference in 1916, a remit was passed to approach the railworkers, seamen, carters and tramwaymen to form a Transport Workers' Federation (RP,B27:27). (At this period, of course, carts not trucks were the means of road transport of goods; hence their drivers were carters.) This never came about, but this was not for lack of trying on the part of the watersiders. The Federation did vote to join the purely consultative body, the Transport Workers Advisory Board at the same conference (RP,B27:120). The union newspaper, the Watersider, was specifically aimed at all transport workers and the seamen, drivers and tramwaymen all contributed regular pages or columns in it during this period. As noted above, it was for this reason that the paper was renamed the Transport Worker in 1919. These unions maintained their contributions throughout this period 1916-1921.

The Watersiders' Federation promoted ties and contacts with other unions. At the 2nd Annual Conference in December 1916, a remit was passed that an approach be made to the Coal Miners' Federation to reach agreement to stand together should either organisation be in conflict with their employers (RP,B26:126). A similar approach was made to the Australian Waterside Workers' Federation (ibid:126). The

Federation took the initiative in setting up the Alliance of Labour in 1919. Continual efforts were made through the Alliance to organise all New Zealand unions on an industrial basis but these were regularly frustrated by unions dependent on arbitration.

Solidarity and class loyalty were not confined to New Zealand. For instance, considerable monetary assistance was sent to the Broken Hill miners in Australia in support of their strike in 1919-20. The Federation sent £1879 (TW, Aug 1920:7). This sort of substantial support was very much a stand on principle, since there was no immediate gain to be made by the watersiders. As already noted, the Federation sought links with Australian watersiders. They also sought to establish relations with the watersiders' organisations in America and Britain. This was more a bread and butter concern, since clearly the support of these workers would be needed should cargo be loaded by scab labour in a New Zealand waterside dispute on ships bound for their ports. All these moves show the strength of class and industrial solidarity of the watersiders and is a revolutionary feature.

However, there were also divisions. Issues of demarcation arose from time to time with other waterfront unions, in particular, the Seamen's Union. This would occur over the unloading of smaller boats, particularly onto lighters in midstream. Casual workers employed by the Railways Department often did substantially the same work as the watersiders but for a different employer. This was finally resolved when the railway casuals decided to join the

Watersiders' organisation. Permanent employees of the Harbour Boards were also a problem when they did watersiders' work.

In the wider New Zealand labour scene, the divisions between the Alliance of Labour and the NZ Workers Union (NZWU) over industrial organisation surfaced in the TW. The NZWU wanted to be the core of a single union covering all workers without regard to industry, and refused to join the Alliance of Labour, while the Alliance wanted the NZWU to affiliate as an agricultural industrial department of the Alliance. The class-based proposals of the NZWU were utopian and not based on objective analysis of actual industrial divisions and consciousness at the time. The Watersiders Federation in its leadership of the Alliance was on this score more materialist, objective and reasoned than the NZWU. In these respects, it was nearer the revolutionary end of the typology.

The question of solidarity with workers outside the current New Zealand work force - the migrants and the unemployed - inevitably presented dilemmas. The issue of immigration concerned the watersiders because of its impact on employment levels which affected their casual employment conditions so directly. The immigration policy of the Government is seen to be a deliberate one to intimidate workers into accepting wage cuts, (TW, Sept 1921:2). British workers were welcome if there was work available, but if there wasn't:

'They are not playing the game as trade unionists and are assisting the organisations of employerdom to lower the standard of living of the New Zealand wageworker,' (TW, Aug 1921:2).

Immigration is not seen as the cause of unemployment, however.

'As long as the present system holds, there will be unemployment,' (TW, Aug 1921:2)

A pure spirit of internationalism was just not realistic in a situation in which the Government and employers were actively trying to expand the supply of labour to depress wages and working conditions. The basic function of trade unions is to seek to establish some control of the market in labour-power. An oversupply of labour renders them powerless. The historical reality is that labour markets, in terms of the price they set for labour-power, are not world wide but operate within national boundaries and trade unions must operate within the labour market within which they find themselves situated. In this situation, the watersiders, faced with their totally casual employment conditions, had absolutely no room for manoeuvre and were bound to push for a policy that was somewhat sectional. If the watersiders had submitted to an over supply in the labour market, they would have been forced to surrender even further to capitalist wage reductions and would have been deprived of any leverage against capital. This position merely reflected the constraints of their situation. A lack of a purely internationalist perspective in this regard is therefore not collaborationist.

The concern with unemployment and the unemployed was very much in terms of the same concern to protect their position in the labour market:

'An unemployed army is a real danger and menace to the standard of living of employed workers,' (TW, Aug 1921:2).

Also

'Unemployment endangered class unity because unemployed members of an industry criticise the union instead of the system,' (ibid:1).

At the 1920 Annual Conference, a remit was passed opposing the employment of 'Asiatic' labour on ships between Australian and New Zealand ports. In the discussion, concern was expressed at 'drawing the colour line', but the threat of cheap labour overrode this concern. Again, the question of establishing some control of the labour market was dominant, (RP, B30:78).

The question of attitudes to women as members of the working class may seem irrelevant in the discussion of the consciousness of a male-only union a period where it seems unlikely that any woman would have applied for membership. However, since the character of their consciousness was in part a product of just this male exclusiveness, the views held about women, though very infrequently expressed, are not without interest. The September 1919 issue of the TW contains a report of a strike by San Francisco telephonists in which some "girls" had scabbed.

'One lady (?) [sic] said her brothers' social position at Berkeley would suffer..'

The article then went on to note that:

'hundreds of New Zealand girls [sic] are afraid to join a union lest it should injure their own social position. They are satisfied with low wages to maintain a respectable social standard - a sort of feminine paradox,' (TW, Sept 1919:1).

It is first of all significant that such a slight item should be printed on the front page. In this prominent place in the paper, women are noted as irrational - preferring respectability despite low wages - and are identified with the bosses. The positioning of the article implies a generalisation about women as a whole. The female scabs are not seen as male scabs might be - as enemies within and therefore as objects of hatred. They are perceived more as external to the working class, to be challenged, like capitalists, with satire and ridicule. This is a class-divisive element and therefore non-revolutionary. Naturally, not too much can be made of a single article and more will be drawn from the regular column for women which appeared in the 30's.

Internally, the organisation of the Waterside Workers' Federation proceeded apace during this period. It was not legally possible to register a national union under the IC&A Act at this time but a resolution was passed at the 2nd Annual Conference in December 1916 to 'consider the adviseability of forming a New Zealand Waterside Workers' Union,' (RP, B27:64). This was reaffirmed at the 4th Annual Conference in January 1919, (RP, B28:79) and at subsequent conferences. Steps towards unity included the adoption of the Watersider as the official paper of the Federation in December, 1916 (RP, B27:79) and the adoption in November 1921 of a universal

membership ticket which enabled watersiders who held it to move to any affiliated union of the Federation without paying for another ticket, (RP,B31:53). All these moves indicate a commitment to national organisation. However, ports seem to have valued their independence and identity. All the unions were port unions, ranging in membership in 1915 from 39 at Kaipara to 1735 at Wellington, (see Appendix B, Table 1). In that year, eight of the 19 registered unions had a membership of less than 75. In the light of this, it is significant that regional unions, which it was legally possible to register under the IC&A Act and which would have been more economic, were never formed. In fact, at the 4th Conference in January 1919, a remit was passed to allow unions to establish branches in each industrial district, (RP,B28:76), but this does not appear to have taken place to any extent and some very small unions continued to exist. No further discussion of the question of the formation of regional branches appears in the minutes of the conferences.

Representation at Conference was by a quota per union which was not proportional to numerical strength. A remit at the 7th Conference in December 1921 to have voting according to the latter principle was lost on the grounds that the Auckland and Wellington unions would make all the decisions, (RP,B31:51). This again indicates a support for port identity and a resistance to loss of disproportionate control of Federation policies by the smaller unions.

Summarising, then, the features of the watersiders as far as their relations within their own class was concerned, we may say that there

was a strong emphasis on solidarity and on building organisational links with other workers and within their own industry. This commitment to solidarity and cohesion is a revolutionary feature in terms of the typology. How far this was expressed in joint action we will see in the discussion on the position of the watersiders on the question of relations with the employing class.

Interclass What, then, were the methods used by the Waterside Workers' Federation in pursuing its goals? Did it use whatever methods were objectively possible or did it confine itself more within bourgeois methods?

As noted earlier, the main constraint on the watersiders was the extremely casual nature of their employment. Since to walk off the job merely allowed in scab labour, the strike method was one to be used with extreme caution. Thus in September, 1919, an article appeared in the TW declaring the strike to be an 'antiquated method of settling disputes'. It was 'crude and unscientific,' (TW, Sept 1919:3). Again, in September 1920, the strike was described as a 'barbaric weapon'. A 'scientific' approach was needed (TW, Sep 1920:7).

This position raises several issues. First, the appeal is to a scientific approach, an objective analysis of the historic situation of the watersiders. It therefore endorses reason as a tool of human liberation. This is a revolutionary feature. Yet the actual analysis is not so scientific. To see a strike as inevitably leading

to defeat is scarcely objective in the light of historical experience. Strikes and the threat of strikes have always been a key working class weapon leading to advances in wages and working conditions for working people as well as defeats. Besides, in New Zealand, the miners and the railway workers both struck with success in this period. The blanket rejection of strike action at this period must be interpreted as an essential lack of militancy in the Federation's stance.

While strike action was difficult for the watersiders, provocation of a lockout was not. To provoke a lockout response from the employers had the real advantage of not allowing scabs on to the job. As well, it took advantage of the casual labour conditions. Since the watersiders were hired only when cargo was available, a backlog of cargo was no skin off their noses. On the contrary, it could give them overtime at the conclusion of the lockout. It is therefore indicative of a lack of militancy that this tactic was not used more often by the watersiders. While, as we have observed, militancy and revolutionism are not identical, a revolutionary position must include militancy where appropriate. This lack of militancy on the part of the watersiders at this period reflects a basic unwillingness to place real pressure on capital in a revolutionary manner in terms of the typology. It is in this regard collaborationist.

For the watersiders, the key to progress is seen as 'the great transformation of the mind' so that workers would 'stand loyally by their class,' (TW, Mar 1920:7). Yet, as indicated in an earlier

chapter, changes in the 'mind' can only take place in the course of struggle, in the course of seeking to grasp and change the world in practice. Only then can the mind and consciousness also grasp and comprehend the world. Consciousness is not a passive receptacle for "ideas". To advocate education at a verbal level without a basis in practice is idealist and moralistic. It is a rejection of a materialist notion of consciousness. This position is at the collaborationist pole of the typology.

This cautiousness in action is reflected in the remit passed at the 6th Annual Conference in December 1920 which instructed:

'all affiliate unions not to involve the Federation in any industrial dispute without referral to the National Executive and, if necessary, the individual unions for decision,' (RP,B30:62).

It would be impossible to institute direct action of any kind under this kind of restriction.

However, the weapon proposed instead of strikes, the boycott, is scarcely 'scientific'. It would depend purely on cooperation and consensus, achieved by rational, idealist persuasion. There would be no material sanctions which the working class or a union could impose to establish a disciplined and united action. Further, the boycott operates purely at the position of distribution of value extracted by capitalists, not at the point of production, where exploitation and expropriation takes place. This reliance on persuasion and the focus of struggle on the point of distribution are collaborationist

features.

The strikes of other workers were supported in this period. The Secretary reported to the 5th Annual Conference in December 1919 that watersiders refused to work scab-manned ships during the Australian seamen's strike. One ship was held up for 7 weeks until a union crew was brought over from Australia (RP,B29:11). As already noted, the strike of the Broken Hill miners received considerable financial support. Similarly in NZ, during the miners' dispute in 1920, some waterside workers' unions took action and there was a lockout on the Wellington wharf for several days over the watersiders' refusal to load imported coal.

Verbal support, at least, was given to the railway workers in the 1920 strike. The TW congratulated the railway unions and said the strike was 'one of the most important events in the history of the trade union movement in New Zealand,' (TW, June 1920:2).

Thus there is evidence of some active support for the struggles of other workers and is a measure of revolutionary cohesion.

Arbitration was unequivocally rejected in this period as a means of achieving union goals. The unions of the Federation were forced to remain registered under the IC&A Act because of the threat of bogus unions registering if they withdrew their registration. However, by the end of 1921, with the depressed economic conditions, the writing was on the wall. The watersiders feared already what in fact was to

happen - that the employers would force them back to the Court. At the Annual Conference in December 1921, the delegates left it to the executive to decide what to do should the employers cite the Federation before the Arbitration Court. When taken in isolation, this rejection of the Arbitration Court as a means of achieving union goals on the grounds that it was a class institution, might be seen to constitute a revolutionary position. However, it has to be considered in the context of the Federations's other methods which are described below.

A favoured method of pushing for improvement was irritation tactics on the job. However, these would lead to lockouts when taken past a certain point of tolerance on the part of the employers. Several local lockouts were noted in the Secretary's Report to the 5th Annual Conference in December 1920 (RP,B30:12). February 1921 saw a national lock-out by the shipowners in response to an overtime ban by the union. This ban was to force the employers to meet the Federation to improve on their wage offer of an increase of 1d per hour. This latter had been rejected by a ballot of union members. The lockout crumbled. As the TW pointed out, the employers lost considerably (TW, Apr 1921:1), while the backlog of cargo gave the watersiders steady work for some time to come.

Used in conjunction with irritation tactics on the job, was the system of Disputes Committees. At each port, there was a Local Disputes Committee consisting of three representatives of the union and of the employers respectively. Points at issue were to be

referred to these Disputes Committees. If the dispute could not be resolved there, it was referred on to a National Disputes Committee consisting again of three representatives of both parties. The official policy was to use these committees and keep on working, but as noted earlier, the executives of the various unions had considerable difficulty holding the relatively unruly rank-and-file in line. In any case, action on the job was necessary to condition the climate in which these Committees operated.

Pettit records the debate in the Wellington Union over Disputes Committees and direct action. The Executive put a motion to a meeting of members:

'That in future all disputes come through the proper channel for settlement, that is, through the Disputes Committee and the men stay on the job till the dispute is settled,' (Pettit, 1948:85,86).

While the motion was passed, one of the members who disagreed said:

'If we are frightened of a lock-out, we ought all to be shot, and let the "Port Nicholson" stay there and rot,' (ibid:86).

These disgruntled ones have considerable justification. In a period of economic boom, and given that, as we have seen, lock-outs were more favourable to the watersiders than strikes, why should there be such caution and concern to keep work going in the face of a breach of the Agreement? Disputes Committees do not involve the decisions handed down in a dictatorial manner as Arbitration Court decisions

do. But they certainly entail the notion of employers and workers as social partners, very much a collaborationist concept within bourgeois structures.

The level of class struggle, then, of the Federation was not at all militant or revolutionary, given that this period was strong economically and offered opportunities for successful action. The watersiders could not be said, in Gramsci's terms, to have made all efforts to 'launch a successful offensive against Capital' even within capitalist domination (Gramsci, 1968:39).

Political

Given that the watersiders saw a need for a fundamental reorganisation of social relations, what were the methods which they favoured? What was their approach to specific political questions?

As our discussion has already shown, the watersiders rejected parliament as a means for political change, favouring industrial organisation instead. The WS admitted grudgingly that :

'Undoubtedly, Labour has secured much by representation in Parliament [in Australia but the] ranks of the Party may indeed enquire whether they or the paid representatives get most of the benefit,' (WS, May 1918:5).

The front page article in the same issue declared:

'There is no space in the Watersider for political platforms of various political parties. There has been criticism from the parliamentary Labour Party. Their cries of "Bolshevik", "anti-political", sound like the capitalist press,' (ibid:1).

The WS claims to be much more radical:

'Labour cannot rest with existing institutions - political or economic - however democratic they may be said to be,' (ibid:5).

Capitalism is said to be:

'too powerful for any Government to overcome, no matter how radical. First let us, by industrial organisation take away some of the power of capital by striking at its most vulnerable spot - Profits. This we can only do by uniting as a working class against the blessed Trinity of capitalism - rent, interest and profits,' (WS,May1917:5).

This is an entirely economist solution. It denies that the state has an effectivity of its own in maintaining capitalist relations. That is, it denies the importance of the state as a political structure to maintain in stability the fundamentally contradictory and antagonistic economic class relationships which would otherwise blow the capitalist social structure apart.

Another article in August 1920 is entitled 'Political or Industrial Democracy - Which?'. It restates the same theme of industrial organisation but with a less revolutionary resolution:

'Political democracy is very much a myth and will remain so as long as [the worker's] present economic shackles bind him to the capitalist system,' (WS,Aug1920:1).

What was needed was economic democracy. The wage worker needs a say in management to achieve co-operative economic democracy, (ibid). It

is claimed that the OBU would allow democracy from the bottom up. It is not a question now of attacking profits, but of having a share in saying how they should be extracted. This is a vision of labour and capital as social partners very much of a piece with the acceptance of Disputes Committees and the union-employer co-operative employment scheme.

Industrial organisation, as well, was a rehearsal for the time when capitalist relations were overthrown:

'The Watersider has shown [the need] to build up a scientific working-class organisation...also capable of controlling and directing the industry when the workers come into their own,' (WS,Aug1918:1).

Despite this unequivocal rejection of political action in the WS, this was far from unanimous at Conference debates. At the 4th Annual Conference in January 1919, a remit called for a plebiscite to be taken of the members of the Waterside Workers' Federation:

'to take political action with a view to returning Labour members to Parliament,' (RP,B28:32).

This was lost by only one vote, 10-11 (ibid:41). The question of affiliation to the United Labour Party drew the same voting figures (ibid:43). However, at the next Conference in December 1919, a request from the Labour candidate for Napier that Roberts speak at a public meeting in support of his candidature was declined, (RP,B29:110). Again in December, 1921, a motion that Conference

consider affiliation to the NZ Labour Party lapsed for want of a seconder (RP,B31:84). However, it is still significant that the issue was regularly raised.

Thus during this period, political action through the Labour Party was rejected. Instead, industrial organisation was seen as the source of power. Initially, this power was seen to be in the ability to wrest more surplus value from capital. Later the concern shifted to seeking a say in management, 'economic democracy'. There was no real analysis of how the capitalist system should be dismantled or even effectively resisted. This lack of an adequate analysis or strong class struggle indicate a growing collaborationism.

Ideological

What weight did the Federation place on the class struggle in the realm of ideas and how did it go about it? The Federation put a high priority on countering bourgeois ideology. In this, the TW itself was seen as an important weapon. The philosophy of the paper was to be practical, a form of education on the job.

'Growing knowledge among the workers is the generator of the seed of social revolt against their brutalising conditions and inhuman treatment,' (TW,Sept1919:3).

This understanding of ideas in class society having a class basis and the commitment to promulgating working class ideas was evident from the inception of the Federation with the issuing of the first Watersider in May 1916 by the Wellington Union.

At the 7th Annual Conference in December, 1921, the Federation, an affiliate of the Alliance of Labour, decided to invest £1500 in the Maoriland Worker Printery (RP,B31:73). This was recognition and practical support for the propagation of ideas from a working class point of view not only to their own organisation but to all workers.

The question of whether to permit advertising in the TW came up regularly. At the 5th Conference in December 1919, a proposal to seek advertising was turned down 10-15. Roberts was in favour of advertising as a source of revenue. The argument against advertising was that advertisers would then have some implicit control of the paper and the ideas which it expressed, (RP,B29:187). This position shows strong consciousness of the role of class power in shaping ideas and is therefore a revolutionary feature.

The vigour of the paper and the support shown for it by the affiliated unions is a measure of the importance attached by the Federation to class struggle in the realm of ideas and consciousness. But when this priority is contrasted with the relative lack of struggle at the material level, we see an idealist approach in practice - a reliance on changing the world through changing consciousness. And the method of changing this consciousness is itself idealist since it relies on the communication of ideas through idealist means - words as the expression of ideas - rather than changing ideas in the course of practical experience. This essential idealism of approach by the watersiders constitutes a collaborationist feature of their consciousness.

The consciousness of the watersiders at this period thus presents a mixed picture. The initial economic analysis was strongly Marxist and revolutionary and looked towards socialism as a definite goal. However, the socialist goal had faded by 1921. Class relations were seen to be exploitive and the State was seen as an organ of class oppression. However, even from the beginning, there was a well defined syndicalist approach to political action, rejecting it in favour of industrial organisation. The collaborationist concept of industrial partnership was present also from the beginning in the preference for Disputes Committees to settle disputes with the employers. There was no militancy despite the fact that this period offered considerable scope for success. There was explicit rejection of strike action. This again is evidence of a fundamentally collaborationist social "partners" approach.

The emphasis was on education through the paper and the development of organisational structure rather than organisation for action to transform consciousness and social relations. Again, this shows an essential lack of class struggle and is therefore a collaborationist feature.

The adoption of the joint employer-union scheme for managing waterside work was the culmination of the collaborationist practice evident earlier. The syndicalist political position is similarly collaborationist when organisational structure is not used in action.

Because this period constrained the watersiders less than those which follow, this lack of a class struggle perspective is particularly significant and can be regarded as diagnostic of a basically collaborationist position.

STAGNATION 1922-29

The period 1922-29, while showing a slight lift in the economy between 1923-25, was generally one of stagnation, deepening gradually into the Depression of the 30's. Gains made by the watersiders in the boom produced by the war, were attacked and eroded by the employers, but not without resistance from the workers. The consciousness expressed by the watersiders at this time is a consolidation of the more reformist trends already evident towards the end of the period 1915-21.

WHAT IS

Economic

A general critique of capitalist relations by the watersiders is still present at this period, but the TW is much less incisive about the fundamental dynamics of capitalist relations. The economic analysis concentrates more on matters of current government policy and on countering remedies proposed by employer interests, but does so largely from within the parameters of the capitalist system.

An article in March 1924 details the costs of the recent world war to workers, and says this is the result of:

'rule in the interests of the trust, combine, war lord and monopolist of private gain...This system causes trade strife, strikes, lock-outs, local, national and international disturbances resulting in civic disorder, bloodshed, war and war debts,' (TW, Mar 1924:1)

This is a fairly general level of analysis compared with the concrete explication of the theory of surplus value in the earlier period. Similarly, while the June 1922 lead article in its analysis of the cause of the economic depression dismisses various diagnoses of the depression offered by financiers and press and exposes class interests, it could barely be seen as a revolutionary analysis. Capital's claims that British gold shortages are the cause of depression are countered by the argument that the United States, with its vast gold reserves still has six million unemployed. War as a cause is dismissed as:

'the excuse given by those who should know better. The fact of the war causing depression is but an afterthought of the people who have made millions out of it; for during the war period, the same people stated in their press and from the platform that after we had won the war, there would be a new era and a world fit for heroes,' (TW, June 1922:1).

Wage cuts and the consequent reduction of purchasing power were to become a constant theme of the watersiders' analysis. This, however, ignores the fundamental clash of interest between workers and capitalists over the relative shares of value produced as represented in wages and profits. It neglects the objective erosion of profits by wages maintained in a period of capitalist crisis and the decline in investment consequent on such erosion. Such an analysis is not therefore revolutionary. However, the demands by capitalist authorities for reductions in wages are exposed as simply serving class interests.

Similarly, the demand by capitalists for more production for less wages is ridiculed as irrational and, again, serving class interests.

'The storehouses of New Zealand at the present time are full of goods and the factories in Great Britain are idle because there is no market for the goods if they are produced.'

More production for lower wages would only aggravate the problem (TW, June 1922:1). The real cause of the depression, says the TW, is the desire of financiers to go back to the gold standard to increase the interest on their war loans. To achieve this, they have withheld credits and crippled production.

'Trade depression will continue as long as they control credits,' (TW, June 1922:1).

Clearly, this analysis is now far removed from a revolutionary Marxist one. The cause of economic problems is specified at the point of distribution of surplus value in the form of interest, rather than at the point of production. The focus of this analysis on interest and debt is the sort of right wing "socialism" of Social Credit and National Socialism. These ideologies oppose big business and financiers but pose no challenge to capitalist relations of production as such.

Another article in May 1928 offers a more revolutionary Marxist diagnosis of the depression. The problems are said to be man-made:

'While the workers of the world were fighting each other at the behest of their masters, a few monopolised the means of production. They demand adequate profits before they will invest. But all human requirements can be produced and there is no reason for economic depression. The problem is that more is being produced than can be sold at a profit,' (TW, May 1928:6).

This is a much more Marxist explanation. It implicitly accounts for the failure of the economy on the declining rate of profit and is to that degree revolutionary.

The explanatory causes and emphases offered by the TW at this period thus cover a range and are somewhat inconsistent. So, while reformist, non-revolutionary analyses are dominant, revolutionary, Marxist elements still remain.

The question of wages and the standard of living are discussed with a sense of the interests of workers being opposed to that of other classes and with a view that this opposition is part and parcel of the capitalist system. The very naming of the system as such implies its impermanence and lack of inevitability and natural status.

An article in May 1928 challenges demands made at the National Industrial Conference by academics and farmers that workers should receive the 'value of what they produce'. The TW draws the distinction between this and the socialist demand that workers receive the value of what they produce:

'Under capitalism, the worker only receives wages barely sufficient to maintain himself and family...He is paid...sufficient...to maintain himself as a profit-maker for a master. The owners of the means of life see to it that only a comparatively small portion of the value added to a commodity by human labour power is paid in wages,' (TW, May 1928:1).

So what the farmers and academics mean by the 'value of what workers produce' is piece-work, a different proposition altogether. By all means, says the TW,

'Let us have wages based on the value of production,' (ibid).

So here we have still, as an underlying basic premise, the Marxist theory of surplus value and the entitlement of workers to the full value of what they produce.

In another article on the standard of living and wages in May 1929, the TW attacks the price index figures and says that the methods for calculating them are very poor. They merely:

'prove a useful instrument for the apologists for the capitalist system in their attempt to prove that high wages are the cause of the present depression,' (TW, May 1929:1).

The article points out that shares had sky-rocketed in a spate of commercial gambling and that industry was grossly over-capitalised. While again, alternatives to the capitalist system are implicitly indicated by the reference to it as a system in implied opposition to a natural state of affairs, the critique is very much at a moral

level against 'commercial gambling' and the overcapitalisation of industry. This moralising tendency, as we noted in the previous chapter, is indicative of a less than revolutionary position. The article goes on to assert that workers have the right to a decent standard:

'The labour which produces all the wealth...is entitled to the first consideration,'(ibid).

Again, the Marxist proposition that labour is the substance of all wealth is buried in the moral assertion of the workers' 'entitlement to first consideration'. Such moral assertions are a substitute for concrete proposals for action which workers can take within the constraints in which they are placed. It therefore proposes no class struggle and offers no challenge to capitalist relations.

This moralistic stance is continued in relation to unemployment. An article in May 1928 examines the specific position of the watersiders in regard to unemployment and the casual nature in which they are engaged. Watersiders had to make themselves available at the convenience of the shipowners free of charge. In these circumstances, unemployment gave the employers considerable power; but despite this constraint, the TW blames the workers. It says:

'It is not right to blame the tories for this. Workers themselves are mostly to blame because they accepted the position. If idle capital can be paid for, so can idle labour,'(TW,May1928:2).

While the latter statement is true, it is moralising directed at workers, placing on them the responsibility for their own exploitation. While they have a responsibility, by definition, as the oppressed class to resist exploitation, they simply lack power. Exhortation is not as effective as concrete proposals for action. Again, this offers no historical analysis nor any leadership around class struggle, and is therefore a more collaborationist feature.

But another explanation for high unemployment was also offered which totally neglects the relations of production as a cause. It centres around the immediate appearance of the labour market and blames immigration. An article in February 1927 says:

'The cause of unemployment is that the influx of immigrants into the country is too great for the development in industry to assimilate,' (TW, Feb 1927:2).

This reflects again the dilemma of trade unions in the labour market and their need to exert whatever control they can to mitigate its effects on the price of labour power. In this case, the union is forced by its role to work entirely within 'what is', i.e. the level of development of industry and its capacity to absorb new labour. It is impossible for it to adopt a future-oriented policy of internationalism and at the same time protect the price of labour power. This is another way of saying that in depressed conditions, it must forego a purely internationalist position in order to maintain the most effective challenge to capital over the amount of surplus value which it seeks to extract. However, this analysis

remains at the level of appearances of capitalist relations and does not link these with its inner dynamics, that the declining rate of profit is the source of the crises which produce unemployment. To see immigration as a cause of unemployment is to fail to grasp the nature of capitalist relations theoretically and is therefore non-revolutionary.

Despite this tendency, the TW retained at least to some extent a classical revolutionary understanding of unemployment. In a May 1928 article, it is stated:

'As long as we have capitalism, we will have unemployment. The very system itself breeds unemployment...It is in the interests of the masters to have a surplus of labour to compete for jobs and keep down wages,' (TW, May 1928:1)

This classic Marxist explanation based on the fundamental antagonism of interests between the classes is a remnant of a revolutionary analysis.

As in the period 1915-1921, the analysis of mechanisation reveals a historical materialist position. Mechanisation of cargo handling, which expanded during this period, was a real problem for the watersiders. Roberts notes in his 1928 report that 200 men were displaced by machinery that year (RP, B43/8:2). However, machinery is not regarded as bad in itself, even though under capitalism it causes unemployment. Machinery is seen as part of human social evolution.

'The history of Mankind is the record of a hungry creature in search of food...The human race has moved along the great white road of social evolution...No power on earth can stop the onward march,' (TW, Jan 1924:4).

This is the materialist historical view of human development which we have already seen. It is, however, historicist and economist in its assertion of the inevitability of the 'onward march'.

Again in May 1929:

'Every intelligent worker welcomes the advent of the machine...But as long as capitalism controls production, its aim will be production for profit, not use. When the working class controls the machine and production, the reverse will be the case,' (TW, May 1929:3).

This again stresses the historicity of modes of production and the capacity of human beings to control them for their own ends.

The analysis of 'What Is' at the economic level thus presents an inconsistent picture. Some articles state classic Marxist analyses, while others are much more confined to the present and analyse economic problems in terms purely confined to current capitalist parameters. The identification of bankers as the real cause of the depression is an example. Throughout there is a strong historical materialist understanding of social development, stressing human power to intervene in history. However, this tends to be economist, on the one hand, assuming this process to be inevitable. On the other, it is moralistic, blaming workers or capitalists for their actions, without reference to the historical conditions which give

rise to them.

Political

There is a shift in the analysis of capitalist political institutions at this period. They are not seen to be oppressive by nature of their situation in capitalist society; their oppressive nature is seen to arise from the way in which they are administered. This is a straightout reformist, Social Democrat position.

The nature of the capitalist state in general is indicated in a number of articles. In January 1924, an article on labour history indicates how the law has been used historically to prevent working people from organising. As examples of state repression the Combinations Acts and the Master and Servant Act are described, as are the Chartist riots, the martyrdom of the Tolpuddle labourers and the Peterloo massacre. These references also indicate a sense of the history of the trade union movement, thus enabling TW readers to link their struggles with those of workers from previous times. This linkage in historical understanding is a revolutionary feature.

One article in July 1926 refers to the role of the State in the British General Strike:

'Anyone who had doubts as to where a capitalist government stands when there is a conflict between Capital and Labour will have these doubts quashed very effectively after reading this [copy of the British Gazette],'
(TW, July 1926:5).

It is difficult to know what is meant by 'capitalist government' here - Tories or all governments of capitalist societies. Other articles indicate the former might be intended. In May 1924, for instance, an article on the Department of Labour's encouragement of dual unionism comments:

'This is what a Department of Labour under the Massey regime will do to a union,' (TW, May 1924:6).

The clear implication is that under a different political regime, the Department of Labour might operate less in opposition to workers. A government department is therefore not seen as inherently oppressive through its role in maintaining capitalist relations. This is thus a reformist position.

The union's position on state arbitration is always a key indicator of consciousness, since the arbitration system impinged so powerfully on union powers. In January 1923, the TW lambasted the Arbitration Court's decision on the watersiders' award, saying:

'The IC&A Act must be amended to prevent the Court of Arbitration or any other Court making a provision that places the wage worker in the same position as a chattel slave,' (TW, Dec 1923:1).

The force of the assertion lies in the windy rhetoric rather than the analysis. As we have noted, lack of analysis or proposals for action are a non-revolutionary feature. The solution now is seen to lie in the amendment of the Act. The State as a whole is therefore now

implicitly perceived as a neutral arbiter which can set up neutral institutions if the political will is there. Similarly, the December issue of 1929 complained that:

'No rules govern the Arbitration Court. It leans to the employers,' (TW, Dec 1929:7).

The TW implies that a neutral, 'fair' state is feasible and declares:

'We are not in favour of the IC&A Act as it exists. Drastic amendments are needed,'

and that:

'All industrial unions are organised under it and provision for a replacement is necessary if the Court of Arbitration is to be abolished,' (ibid).

Decisions at the Annual Conferences of this period concerning the arbitration system reflect this ambivalent position. At the 10th Annual Conference in December 1924, a remit that member unions cancel registration under the IC&A Act was lost but was referred to the Alliance of Labour to ask the member unions to take a vote on the issue. Such an evasion shows the tensions between rhetoric and the reality of surviving outside the Act when bogus unions could readily be registered instead. However, the issue came up regularly and this indicates how the watersiders chafed under the constraints of the Act. The same tension over arbitration is apparent at subsequent conferences. At the 11th Conference in the following year, a plebiscite on deregistration was deferred by only 13 votes to

11(RP,B33:26) until the next Conference. At that conference in November 1926, a motion to take the plebiscite was lost 11 votes to 15(RP,B20/1:38).

However, the years 1923-25 saw a lift in the economy. This could have offered more opportunity for independent action. It is a sign that the industrial muscle of the watersiders was not that tough when they were unwilling to take the plunge outside the Act at that time.

Clearly, there was a definite shift during the period 1922-29 in the analysis of the capitalist state. From an initial analysis of the state as inevitably an organ of capitalist rule, by the end of the period, the state was seen as a neutral instrument to be administered for or against working class interests. This is the quintessential trade union consciousness attacked by Lenin and constitutes a non-revolutionary position.

But while the union's revolutionary understanding of the state became diluted, it retained a more revolutionary stance in regard to international affairs.

The TW had regular articles concerning not only workers' struggles internationally, but on the international political scene in general. Thus, for example. the invasion of the Ruhr Basin by Belgian and French troops in 1923 was noted in a substantial article,(TWMay1923:6), while the futility of the League of Nations was commented on:

'It would seem that, after all, the League of Nations is just another capitalist machine to be operated against weak nations and the working class generally...The Socialist philosophy is the only safe line which the workers can act upon, namely, the abolition of the capitalist system and the international brotherhood of the wage workers of the world,'(TW, June 1923:5-6).

Militarism was definitely seen as a force serving the interests of the ruling class. The interests of 'the trust, combine, war lord and monopolist' were protected by:

'a system which causes...international disturbances resulting in civic disorder, bloodshed and war,'(TW, Mar 1924:1).

Along the same lines, the Federation passed unanimously a remit at its 11th Annual Conference in 1925 expressing its:

'entire disapproval of any industrial or political representative of the workers being associated with or present at any function in connection with militarism, navalism or any other ceremony not in accordance with the objects of the New Zealand Labour Party or the Alliance of Labour,'(RP, B33:36).

It is interesting to note that when this was referred as a remit to the 1926 Conference of the NZ Labour Party it was massively defeated(RP, B43/6:11).

Thus the Federation adopted a broadly internationalist stand, seeing workers' struggles connected in a totality with events around the world, and seeing these events as structured by capitalist relations.

Ideological

The TW continues its analysis of the role of bourgeois ideological agencies such as the daily press and the various Civic, Welfare and Loyalty Leagues. This is a more revolutionary position in the same vein as in the previous period.

It is evident from the pages of the TW that these agencies were more than usually virulent in the early and mid-20's, particularly in their attacks on the watersiders. The union devoted considerable space to countering their ideology and diminishing their authority. In March 1922, an article attacks the hypocrisy of the daily press in their representation of the watersiders' case hearings in the Court of Arbitration, pointing out that in previous years:

'the agencies of employerdom wailed against sittings behind closed doors, yet in the recent dispute, despite the fact that the Press was admitted, reporters were absent for much of the time,' (TW, Mar 1922:2).

The demand of the capitalist media for 'freedom of the press' is thus shown to be ideological, masking class interests. The class nature of the press is further asserted and its partiality exposed:

'Workers can expect little assistance from the daily press...They know that the [daily press] usually carry out their masters' work faithfully,' (TW, June 1922:8).

A pamphlet by the Loyalty League attacking the Labour Party as a Communist menace and describing members of the transport unions as 'dumb driven dogs' is countered by the TW with the statement that its:

'members are intelligent and educated. The efforts of the Loyalty League will not stop their progress or deceive them,' (TW, Nov 1925:5).

Watersiders, the article implies, are too bright and knowledgeable to be deceived in this way. This sort of comment also tends to empower union members who read it by assuming their ability to see through this propaganda and not be deceived.

An article in June 1922 takes a different tack and condemns workers for being deluded by capitalist propaganda. Speaking of the various diagnoses of the depression offered by bourgeois 'experts', the TW says:

'Workers parrot this stuff. The propaganda of the Press has done its work well...Workers are too indifferent to investigate the reasons why there is unemployment, therefore they accept without question, the pious platitudes of the financial kings, industrial magnates and their press,' (TW, June 1922:1).

Here workers are blamed and their mistaken ideas are seen as the chief source of their oppression. Ideology is granted more effectivity than a fully materialist analysis would allow. The TW alternates the stick and the carrot in its attempt to jolt its readers out of acceptance of bourgeois ideology.

The shallowness of the patriotism of groups like the Welfare League and the Progress League is exposed as a cover for class interest. The TW considers the attitudes of the Welfare League to the appeal by the Alliance of Labour for funds to support the British Seamen's strike in 1925:

'From the loyalty to empire of the Welfare League, we would expect that they would extend friendship to our brothers. But the League will fight in the interests of foreign shipowners and capitalists against workers...They are bought lock, stock and barrel by the owners of big business who subscribe to their propaganda fund,' (TW, Oct 1925:1).

Thus, as in the previous period, nationalism is shown to be a mask for class interest. The TW is therefore quite clear on the class nature of ideas in a class society. As before, it tends, however, to place too much emphasis on the ideological class struggle at the expense of concrete action and frequently castigates workers for their own oppression on the basis of their mistaken ideas.

WHAT SHOULD BE

Short Term

How did the watersiders in this period of economic stagnation, 1921-1929, see their short term interests and what demands did they make on capital?

Not surprisingly, given the unfavourable economic conditions, demands were much more muted in this period. With their casual employment, the economic decline hit the watersiders particularly hard.

As we have already noted, cooperative contracting was seen as one remedy for this lack of control of their employment conditions. It was also seen as a way for watersiders to receive the benefit of new technology instead of the brunt of it.

In October 1922 the employers had finally agreed to a scheme. This was to be given a trial run at Wellington. It was now called a 'Scheme for Centralised Control of Waterfront Labour' and was to be run by a joint committee of three representatives from the employers and union respectively, (Pettit, 1948:98-100). However, problems arose, largely because of differences between shipping companies over hiring, which left men unemployed on the stand. The Wellington men voted out the scheme after a very brief trial (ibid:101).

The contradictions of cooperative contracting under capitalism were noted by Roberts in his 1928 report. He said that cooperative stevedoring overseas had often reduced prices for handling cargo through competition with private stevedores, (RPB43/8:6). But Roberts avoided drawing the conclusion he could have: that this indicates that the commodity market mechanism, including that for labour power, cannot be evaded simply by workers controlling their own work process. This was a retreat from the earlier period when the contradictions of joint employer-worker ventures were confronted. This indicates a more collaborationist position.

Other moves to control the effects of casual employment included further efforts to limit hours of work. In 1926 the Lyttleton union

put up a particularly strong struggle to cut out work on Saturday afternoons. But the Federation put pressure on them to settle quickly for what they could get without balloting its members because it was feared that such a dispute could interfere with the coming wage round (RP, B20/3:154).

Another effort to improve working conditions was the action of the Napier watersiders in 1925 to win provision of a waiting room. They were applying pressure by refusing to put up workers for engagement. But fearing disunity, the Federation instructed them to work as provided in the award. Clearly there was a greater level of militancy over working conditions and therefore a stronger pro-producer position in a section of the membership than in the Federation as a whole, which laid greater emphasis on the wage round. This represents a more instrumental position on the part of the Federation as a whole and therefore is more collaborationist.

However, the defensive posture of the Federation was clearly a response to increased pressure from the employers in the declining economic conditions. One sign of this is the higher accident rate after the 1922 Award. The TW noted that the award had given the employers new powers of speed up and this had increased the number of accidents (TW, Apr24:2). Again in 1929, the TW noted the slow progress in achieving a new agreement with the employers:

'Money power is arrayed against the union. Every line in every clause is disputed,' (TW, May29:1).

In general, in this period there is nothing like the push for improved wages and working conditions noted in the previous chapter. The watersiders were very much on the defensive against employer attacks. While there were differences within the organisation on the extent of demands to be levelled at capital and the degree of pressure to apply to attain those demands, the period 1922-29, represents very much a holding operation for the watersiders with little opportunity to carry forward the push against capital.

The Federation sought to protect the labour power of its members in other ways. Various other approaches were taken on the question of compensation for accident, sickness and unemployment. The 15th Annual Conference in November 1929 sent a remit to the Alliance of Labour calling on them to establish a social insurance fund to be administered by the Alliance on a £ for £ subsidy to be sought from the Government (RP,B23:19Nov1929). At the same conference, there was a call that unemployment benefits should be the minimum living wage and that the casual earnings of watersiders should be supplemented to this level. (As already noted, watersiders were excluded from relief because technically they still were working despite the fact that the work available was nowhere near full-time.) The standard demands of the watersiders for compensation for injury at work were for full wages while on workers compensation and free medical care. These demands represented a call for proper compensation for the loss of the capacity to labour due to accident, sickness or unemployment. Such losses were held to be the responsibility of the industry or of the state. While not revolutionary as such, they do embody a strong

pro-producer position.

Wage demands form the basis of a fundamental contest with capital over the surplus value extracted. Basic wage demands are now couched in two ways. One is the entitlement in terms of justice to a decent standard of living:

'The men have a justifiable claim for a wage that will enable them and their dependents to live in reasonable comfort,' (TW, Jan 1925:4).

This appeal to 'justice' is abstract, idealist and neutral and makes no reference to class struggle. It is therefore collaborationist.

The same neutral position was adopted with regard to living standards. The TW regularly called for these to be investigated by an 'impartial' body. This was despite the fact that the TW repeatedly attacked the Arbitration Court and the existing price index figures (TW, May 1929:1).

The Federation's confused conceptualisation of the nature of the state in capitalist society is further evidenced in its discussion of the question of the lack of adequate housing for workers and high food prices. Contrary to the policy noted earlier, that wage rises, not price controls, were more in the interests of workers, the TW now demands price controls on foods, while Government issue of currency is seen as the remedy for the housing shortage. These measures rely on a state which supposedly operates above the class struggle. This

is the neutral, reformist view of the state which we have already noted.

With economic conditions very much against them, the watersiders had little leverage against capital in this period and they looked more to the state to protect their living standards. This constituted an increasing collaborationism.

Long Term

As has already been indicated, the long term changes envisaged to improve the lot of workers become vague in this period and the watersiders increasingly rely on state or other action within the terms of capitalist relations.

In June 1922, the aim of workers is said to be:

'to set the boss to work and run industry for the benefit of the whole community,' (TW, June 1922:8).

And in the same issue, workers are urged:

'to organise until they become a stronger power than the financial kings who now rule the world,' (ibid:1).

This culminates in March 1924, when 'labour rule' is declared to be the solution:

'Labour rule will remove the evils of master-class misrule...Labour rule will increase happiness and decrease sorrow, anxiety, sickness, war and death; Labour rule will guarantee to all the right to work and live without worry or anxiety as to the future, and will, in short, unite society into one brotherhood to equally share its burdens, joys, productions, comforts, pleasures and recreation,' (TW, Mar 1924: 1-2).

In May 1928, the TW demands:

'Workers must have free access to land and the machinery of production. They must not produce for parasites. The army of those employed in useless shop-keeping and duplicated distribution must be employed in production,' (TW, May 1928: 1).

This latter piece hints at the rational planning of economic activity which social ownership would make possible.

However, all these proposals are vague - 'labour rule', 'setting the boss to work' and 'organising to become a stronger power than the financial kings' - these formulations give workers little concrete guidance or understanding. The passage from the March 1924 issue is particularly remarkable for its rhetorical posturing and lack of specificity. Specific analysis of the nature of capitalism together with actual strategies for achieving 'production for use' would be needed to give these generalised statements the weight of a serious attack on capitalist relations. However, it is highly probable that the readership was growing more conservative in this period and more specific, and hence more radical, analyses would have been rejected by watersiders. Nonetheless, as a reflection of the Waterside Workers' Federation as an organisation, this lack of concreteness is

diagnostic of a reformist position.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

Economic

Intra-class The main development in the organisation of the Waterside Workers Federation in this period was the gaining of the right of unions to limit their membership. This was provided for in the 1924 award and this enabled the unions to balance the number of members with the work available. This led to an increase in organisational strength and cohesion and gave the unions more power in confronting capital. However, this organisational need often conflicted with the sense of loyalty and solidarity with older members who, for instance, might not have been able to perform all classes of work. The latter capacity was necessary because if insufficient union members were offering to work, the employers were entitled to hire non-union labour and, of course, if this occurred to any extent, union organisation on the job was threatened. Sensitivity to the exclusion of members is indicated by the rejection of a remit at the 11th Annual conference in December, 1925 which called for the exclusion from union membership of any member taking employment off the wharves for more than two months without sanction from the Executive Committee of the union (RP,B33:25).

However, the basic cohesiveness of the watersiders is shown in their reendorsement of the principle of a single union at the December 1925 Conference (RP,B33:28). Another significant indicator of the

cohesion of the Federation was its decision to vote on the acceptance of the 1925 award by a majority of the whole Federation, as opposed to union by union (ibid:11). This shows the ability of the Federation to act as a de facto union in some respects even if it was not so de jure.

The Federation maintained a steady push to control all waterfront work. The 11th Conference in 1925 decided to make efforts to enrol tally clerks in the union. Tally clerks for the Railways Department were often retired watersiders, while those for the shipowners usually had their own unions (Townsend,1985:19). This commitment to industrial unionism, carried out in practice is a revolutionary feature.

There are signs of internal division and dissatisfaction as well as cohesion in this period. The push for a national union was not unanimous and one of the largest unions, Lyttleton, opposed it for many years (Norris,1984:81). There were moves for dual unions in more than one port. As we have seen with the Napier men's fight for a waiting room and the Lyttleton union's opposition to Saturday work, the Federation took a strong line with affiliates who took a more militant approach than it was prepared to support.

There appears to have been a certain lack of observance of Federation policies by member unions. A committee report at the 15th Conference in 1929 on Federation discipline called for the right of the Executive to inflict totally unenforceable penalties to bring the

affiliates into line with Federation policy (RP,B23:26Nov1929). An indication not only of the 'bolshy' tendencies among member unions, but also of the heavy handed efforts to control them from the top.

Criticism of the Federation leadership came from militants as well as those simply disgruntled by lack of progress in the depressed economic conditions. Dissatisfaction with the level of militancy of the Federation is evidenced by the refusal of the Napier Union to send a delegate to the 10th Annual Conference in December 1924 after an unsatisfactory decision of the Arbitration Court was accepted by the Federation (RP,B19:5Dec1924).

In response to this criticism, there are regular side swipes at 'militants' in the TW. In March 1923, the TW said:

'The employers were also alive to the fact that it was necessary to cause dissension in the more militant of the larger unions. This they were successful in doing, for, in numerous instances, men were found to do the employers' bidding. This was usually done under the name of militancy, but it was most successful from the employers' point of view,' (TW,Mar1923:1).

Militants are now characterised as the bosses' agents - red-baiting in reverse. The January 1924 issue of the TW contains a cartoon (see next page) depicting the enemies of effective unionism and comments:

'The Court of Arbitration, the craft unionist, the mouth militant, the scandal retailer, the "legal junk man" all hold back unions,' (TW,Jan1924:1).



Capitalist: H'm, he is a fine, hefty fellow, but I shan't fear him until he rids himself of these pests

These are all indications of the resistance to union organisation and suggests that apathy and non-unionism were significantly widespread at this period. Roberts mentioned a critical minority regularly in his reports.

There are a number of indications that the Federation was an organisation dominated to some extent by its officials, though this was always in conflict with a rather unruly rank and file. In other words, policies tended to be set from the top. The TW therefore constantly hammered the need for unity, but this was to be unity with the leadership. The lead article in September 1928 says that criticism of the union is bad for unity. There was a need for 'comradeship' (TW,Sept1928:1). The same point is made in an earlier article in 1926. This says that industrial democracy is important and essential,

'But if democracy cannot be trusted to function effectively on its own behalf, then we must consider carefully whether a democracy should be allowed to injure itself by foolish propaganda and dissemination of information which will, in the end, be harmful to it,' (TW,Nov1926:1).

This kind of rejection of criticism and the hamfisted attempts at discipline we have noted are evidence of a leader dominance and bureaucratisation in the organisation. There were other indications of leader domination at this period. There were regular moves at conferences to allow space in the TW for candidates for Federation office to put their views to the membership. These were always turned down on the ground that publishing views in the TW which

opposed Federation policy would lead to disunity. This position necessarily stifled debate among the rank-and file of member unions and left control firmly in the hands of the existing leadership.

The 9th and 10th Annual Conferences in 1923 and 1924 rejected a remit that Federation officials be elected by rank and file direct rather than by conference delegates (RP,B19:9Dec1924). These decisions kept control in the hands of the officials of the affiliated unions. However, it is significant that the issue was repeatedly raised. Clearly, there were some leaders of member unions with less bureaucratic attitudes.

The same conference voted 1st class fares for the officials, executive and the staff of the Federation (ibid:16Dec1924). Delegates were paid full wages for attending the lengthy Conferences, (usually 13 sitting days) with no sittings on Sundays. So the leadership looked after itself well. We thus have a picture of a somewhat leader-dominated union trying to keep a relatively undisciplined, impulsive rank-and-file in line. Both these tendencies, individualism of membership and affiliated unions on the one hand, and leader domination on the other, represent collaborationist features. However, too much should not be made of these since the overall development was a growing cohesion.

The general principles of industrial unionism were still espoused, but questions of organisation took a much less prominent role in this period than economic analysis. The basic organisational aims

remained the same. In November 1928, the TW said:

'There is no interest in industrial unionism at present. There should be one union for each industry. Trade unions must organise in tune with economic development. Some argue for one union for all workers but this is too unwieldy and inefficient,' (TW, Nov 1928:1-2).

And again in May 1929:

'Workers knew more about industrial unionism 20 years ago...Our policy is still the same: organisation along lines of class and industry and recognition of the class struggle. Each industry should control its affairs in its own way and should only seek support from others when they have made efforts on their own behalf. There should be industrial unity within each department and other industries would not be involved without consulting the national organisation,' (TW, May 1929:8).

Such passages indicate a lack of response to organisational questions among the membership and workers at large. Thus there were more articles in this period than previously castigating the apathetic and the craft unionists.

Roberts expressed his frustrations at attempts at industrial organisation in his 1924 report. This is an indication of the real limits in terms of organisational and class consciousness of other workers which the watersiders had to contend with in their efforts to build organisation within the workers' movement at large.

'It seems futile for us to attempt to make any progress while the overwhelming majority of the workers are on the present Arbitration Court basic wage. On the other hand, we have tried in the past to assist these workers to obtain

a reasonable standard of living and as soon as we had assisted them, they did not help us in our work of industrial organisation,' (RP,B43/4:2).

The frustration is expressed in the traditional sneer at craft unionism. The TW deals it a side swipe in an article on the effectiveness of press propaganda:

'We may soon hear some craft union condemning itself for being the sole cause of all the unemployment and social misery throughout the world,' (TW,June1922:1).

And in March 1923, it says:

'Craft unionism has been absolutely ineffective in its struggle against that powerful, industrially organised union, the NZ Employers' Federation which has succeeded in reducing wages,' (TW,Mar1923:1).

We see here again the implicit argument that employers have organised as a class and this demands a similar response from workers. The TW then goes on to blame the craft unions for the failure of the industrial unions to effectively resist employer attacks:

'But why have the large industrial workers suffered equally with craft unions? This is because they are only industrially organised in theory and have no definite policy. As well, the acceptance by craft unions of wage cuts has forced the hand of the industrial organisations,' (ibid).

All this is true. But the lack of militancy of the Federation that we have already noted meant that it offered no lead. The difference

between the craft and industrial wings of the trade union movement was more rhetorical than real. This castigation of craft unions really amounts to scapegoating one section of the movement for its failings as a whole. This is a divisive tactic and detracts from the general push for industrial cohesion. It is, to that extent, less revolutionary.

Nonetheless, the commitment to industrial cohesion was there. This expressed itself in the general support for the Alliance of Labour, which was maintained during this period. At the 11th Annual Conference in 1925, it was resolved to pursue the basic wage only through the Alliance of Labour (RP,B33:54). An article in the TW in July 1926 bemoaned the fact that despite the unanimity expressed at the Open Conference convened by the Alliance in the previous year, nothing had been done (TW,Jul1926:1).

The same article supported the centralised control of the Alliance of Labour by pouring cold water on another Open Conference to be convened by the United Mineworkers. The TW opposed the federated structure proposed by the miners, saying that agreement was needed to establish a central body which would have the authority to prevent a member organisation involving the others in a dispute without their consent (ibid). This objection reveals the same cautiousness of the Watersiders' Federation which we have already seen and which characterised the Alliance of Labour, paralysing it in action.

The relations of the Waterside Workers Federation with the Seamen's Union were ambivalent. While the Federation gave general verbal support to the seamen in their strike in 1923, this involved very little commitment in action. They resolved not to do seamen's work and to do all in their power to persuade the 'free' labour on the ships to leave their jobs. They also resolved to give 'all possible assistance'; however, this was through voluntary levies only (RP,B32:6).

Differences in political tendency between the watersiders and the seamen were exposed with the fracas in 1927 in the Seamen's Union caused by the rival claims of Walsh and Young to the leadership. This led to a rescinding of transfers of membership from the Seamen's Union to the Watersiders' Unions (RP,B22/1:66).

Basically, this reflected the political alignment of the Federation with the defeated Young who stood for a more bureaucratic, conservative brand of unionism linked with the Labour Party. However, bridges were mended when the watersiders assisted the seamen in their dispute over the working of the 'Lawbeath' in 1929. This ship hired Asian seamen at a lower rate than the New Zealand award. The watersiders blacked the ship's cargo after the Seamen's Union referred the dispute to the Alliance of Labour. With this support from the watersiders, the seamen won their demand to have the New Zealand rate paid to all crews (Bollinger, 1968:174).

The Waterside Workers Federation regularly supported the struggles of other workers. Those conducted overseas drew more practical assistance, however. Local struggles, while backed in principle, attracted less practical support.

Thus, the Federation supported in principle the fight of the rail workers against wage cuts in 1924 with a strong article in the TW:

'If the government is successful in compelling the railwaymen to work a 48 hour week, then the other workers right throughout can expect a similar policy to be adopted by the Court of Arbitration in the near future. This makes the railwaymen's fight of immense importance to the average worker of New Zealand and, come what may, every support possible should be given to the railwaymen in their fight to retain the 44 hour week,' (TW, May 1924:2).

But there is no evidence of more active support.

The watersiders donated unstintingly to struggles of workers overseas. They raised £2083 to feed and maintain the striking British seamen in 1925. This was nearly half of the money donated by all of the unions of the Alliance of Labour combined (RP, B43/6:23). £376/5/1 was donated from union funds to the Australian Federation to assist with their fight against the Beeby award in 1928 (RP, B43/9:27). Again, the watersiders donated 25% of the £5600 given by all New Zealand workers to the striking British miners in 1926 (B43/6:24). These are substantial amounts, both absolutely and relatively, particularly in deteriorating economic circumstances.

No doubt the greater financial support given to workers in overseas struggles was a response to the greater duration of these disputes, which thus involved real suffering for the workers involved. The humanitarian impulse was always very strong with the watersiders. As well, the distant struggle, perceived in the 'abstract', is easier to support than the one close to home which could involve more material involvement and struggle.

Readers of the TW were kept informed on these strikes together with other strikes of international import such as the US coal and rail strikes in 1922 and the British General Strike in 1926 (TW,Mar1923:2; Oct1925:3;Jul1926:6; Nov1928:4).

The Federation continued its organisational ties with overseas unions. The 10th Annual Conference in 1924 resolved that clearances from the Australian Waterside Workers' Federation be accepted and that they be approached to reciprocate, (RP,B19/3:13Dec1924). Thus the Federation was taking the initiative in establishing links. But by 1930, shortage of work forced a limit to the number of clearances exchanged with the Australian organisation (RP,B23/2:6Dec1930). The need to establish some control of the labour market predominated over internationalism. But, in general, both at the level of ideas and knowledge and at the organisational level, the Waterside Workers' Federation maintained an internationalist stance. In this regard, therefore, they show a revolutionary consciousness.

Relations with those on the margins of the New Zealand work force, migrants and the unemployed, reveal again the dilemmas over labour market control we have already seen. However, there are some expressions of national chauvinism and outright racism.

On the question of unemployment and the unemployed, the TW said:

'Trade unionists must take a lead in fighting unemployment. For in protecting the interests of the unemployed,, they are protecting themselves, their wages and conditions of employment,' (TW, Feb 1927:3).

Again in 1928, an article gives a detailed description of conditions at work camps for the unemployed. In response to criticism of the Alliance of Labour for interesting itself in the unemployed, some of whom were said not to be unionists, the TW says:

'It may not be their fault that they are not unionists. In any case, it is still the duty of the trade union movement to demand justice for these men. These conditions are a menace to every trade unionist. Full union rates of pay and conditions are essential,' (TW, Sept 1928:6).

Here the concern for the labour market and the unemployed are not in conflict and the Federation was able to promote the interests of the unemployed and maintain class solidarity.

The question of immigration again presented the dilemma of labour market control and wider class solidarity. Commenting on new immigration schemes proposed by the Government, whereby British workers intending to migrate to New Zealand were being trained in New

Zealand agricultural methods in Britain, the TW says:

'The TW never has and never will have any objection to the immigrant...but there is no land here for immigrants. The New Zealand-born are entitled to land first and at least the same opportunities as the immigrant. There would be plenty of land in Great Britain for the unemployed, if it were not given over to deer parks and shooting preserves. Let the land be given over to agriculture,' (TW,Nov1928:2).

This disclaimer of objections to immigrants is not entirely convincing. The quip about deer parks and shooting reserves smacks more of a nationalistic sneer at 'poncy Poms' as an exposure of class privilege. This is a nationalistic, collaborationist view of immigration.

Certainly, there are definite indications of racism in this period. In March 1927, an article on 'Coloured Labour at Sea' is reprinted from the International Transport Workers Federation Newsletter. It points out that manning scales for 'coloured' workers are higher than for white workers because of the lower pay earned by 'coloured' seamen. While it is true that this exposes the inadequacy of manning scales for white workers, the article makes no demand for equal pay for the 'coloured' seamen. It simply points out the threat which the employment of 'coloured' seamen is to the working conditions of 'white organised seamen,' (TW,Mar1927:8).

Outright racism is expressed in another article in December 1926 which quotes a pamphlet issued by the White New Zealand League to unions to the effect that 'Asiatic' immigration would lower the European standard of living. Comments the TW:

'Certain it is that the Hindoos and Chinese and Japanese in many instances are inclined to live a lower standard than the average New Zealander,' (TW, Dec 1926:3).

Organisationally, that is, at the level of economic relations within the working class at this period, we have a picture of the Waterside Workers Federation cementing its organisational links both within itself and with other unions in New Zealand and overseas. However, it is somewhat bureaucratised with evidence of the leadership's striving to maintain a firm control over a rather restive rank and file. This restiveness appears to arise from both militant tendencies and conservative anti-union malcontents. Despite this relative leader domination and paradoxical lack of discipline, the overall picture is one of strong cohesion and must be seen as nearer the revolutionary than the collaborationist pole of the typology.

Inter-class By what methods did the Waterside Workers Federation seek to win their demands of the employing class at this period?

While early in this period 1922-1929, organisation and struggle is pursued, the thread of consensus noted in the period 1916-1921 becomes a dominant theme after the mid-20's. Thus, earlier in the period, in 1924, the TW urges:

'Better conditions must be struggled for,' (TW, Apr 1924:2)

and

'Fellow workers, work with might and main for unity and the higher standard of living which will follow,' (ibid).

But there is no specific course of action suggested and 'fair deals' and 'amicable settlements' rapidly become the ideal. Thus in November 1926, the TW says:

'A fair deal is best, otherwise the workers retaliate,' (TW, Nov 1925:1).

And of the Australian Watersiders' strike in 1928:

'An amicable settlement would have been easy, but the employers chose to compel the workers. It won't end at that. The sense of injustice will increase difficulties,' (TW, Nov 1928:4).

And again, in considering the suggestion for a second National Industrial Conference to follow up the one held in 1928, the TW says:

'There was a better understanding between employers and workers' representatives after the last National Industrial Conference,' (TW, Dec 1929:1).

The Court of Arbitration is castigated for 'creating disputes instead of settling them,' (TW, Dec 1929:7). All these comments implicitly set up the goal of understanding between the classes as desirable. Now the TW is concerned with class relations not so much in terms of class interest but in terms of an abstract idea of 'justice'. Retaliation is simply what will occur if this is not achieved. In denying the fundamental antagonism between capital and labour, the

Federation now espoused a collaborationist position.

In tandem with this 'social partners' collaborationism, is the neutral view of the state, already encountered. In fact, the two are aspects of the same position - a retreat from a class analysis. State intervention is increasingly looked to as a method of achieving immediate goals and justice. A remit was carried at the 11th Annual Conference in November 1925 that defective gear should be reported to the national organisation so that representations could be made to the Marine Department to have the necessary repairs made (RP,B33:1Dec1925). Previously, immediate cessation of work would have been the policy on all issues of safety. The Marine Department is now a trusted agency and independent worker action has been surrendered.

Price control is suggested (TW,Jan1925:2) in a complete turnaround from the previous policy which demanded adequate wages. Government issued currency is another solution, already noted (ibid). Deputations to Government receive more publicity. Two consecutive issues of the TW in October and November 1925 gave front page coverage to a deputation from the Alliance of Labour to seek a more reliable basis for calculating the basic wage. The very demand itself presupposes a 'rationally', 'objectively' arrived at figure by a supposedly neutral party rather than the maximum possible achieved in class struggle. The July issue of 1926 demanded that a Commission of Enquiry be set up to look into the standard of living:

'An intelligent and impartial Commission could sort it out,' (TW, Jul 1926:1).

Articles in September 1928 and May 1929 repeated the same demand (TW, Sep 1928:5; May 1929:1). All these strategies, in relying on the intervention of the bourgeois state to achieve union goals, surrender worker independence and are entirely collaborationist.

There was heavy reliance on the collaborationist Disputes Committees as a means of achieving union goals. The number of disputes considered by the National Disputes Committee rose sharply in this period. It is difficult to know whether this represented a shift in the form of struggle from on-the-job action to collaborationist Disputes Committees, or a sharpening of class struggle through the employers' taking advantage of the depression to attack working conditions. In any case, as a matter of policy, job action was the last resort. Roberts said in his 1925 report:

'Men should continue working while a dispute is before the Disputes Committee. This allows for a better settlement. The men can always take action if we cannot get satisfaction,' (RP, B43/5:16).

This indicates a heavy dependence on the leadership in negotiation. 'Satisfaction' according to the leadership might differ from that of the rank-and-file. If they complied with union policy, they would be deprived of their one weapon of independent action. So both in regard to leader domination and lack of independent class struggle, the union adopted a collaborationist stance here.

But on-the-job action which was in theory permitted by union policy was heavily constrained also. The 8th Annual Conference in January 1923 set up a committee to put forward action to deal with the 1922 Award handed down by the Court of Arbitration. The committee recommended the setting up of committees at each port, these committees to have absolute control of all action taken. No action was to involve the rest of the Federation in its dispute, however (RP,B32:13Jan1923). This latter placed a considerable limit on the scope of action. Nonetheless, as we have seen, it was successful and the employers were forced to sign a parole agreement (Pettit,1948:89). As already noted, direct action by the Napier men in 1924 to obtain a waiting room and by the Lyttleton men in opposition to Saturday work was firmly brought under control by the national organisation.

Despite this conservative attitude to direct action, the Federation fought hard against a remit at the Labour Party Conference that:

'only constitutional action be taken by the labour movement of this country,' (RP,B43/6:10).

Roberts told the 12th Annual Conference in 1926:

'We pointed out to the Conference that a strike was unconstitutional; also the go-slow or irritation tactics, and as far as the waterside workers were concerned, we would not agree to forego these rights,' (ibid).

Thus the right to strike was definitely retained, if only as a very last resort.

Arbitration was not entirely rejected as a means of reaching union goals. Despite the castigations directed against it and the regular assertions that 'workers could expect no good from that institution', the Federation was involved with the Court to a certain extent, using it if forced to by the employers. The watersiders regularly referred a limited number of disputes to the Court of Arbitration if unable to reach a satisfactory conclusion through the National Disputes Committee. In 1923, 18 of the 90 disputes handled by the National Disputes Committee were referred to the Court (B43/3:10). So, in the last analysis, the Court was preferred to direct action. 1923 was a year where there was some improvement in the economy and a vote of Alliance of Labour members had shown a willingness to strike. The preference for arbitration over direct action at this time again is indicative of the essential lack of militancy of the Federation. This is not to say that the concern for dual unionism was not a valid concern and reason for remaining registered under the IC&A Act.

In general, then, at this period, the Federation sought to work with employers as partners through the Disputes Committees or to have a 'fair' wage established by 'neutral' state agencies. Direct action was used very much as a last resort. This was a position which was not entirely produced by the historical constraints since the economic circumstances were not uniformly unfavourable at this time. This therefore reflects a strong collaborationist tendency.

Political

If strategies at the economic level were collaborationist, what was their nature at the political level? At this period we see a definite volte-face on the question of political action. The Federation voted for affiliation to the Labour Party and the Federation became increasingly involved in its internal politics. Political representation through the state came to be seen as a necessary support for industrial struggle. The relations between industrial and political labour were discussed in an article in the TW in November 1925. Looking at the situation of Australian workers and the Australian Labour Party, the TW says:

'The Australian worker would not have been in a position to struggle against a reduction in their wages had it not been for the political power that stood behind the trade union movement,' (TW, Nov 1925:3).

Politics had affected workers in New Zealand and had prevented the law of supply and demand affecting wages in their favour during the war. The TW concludes:

'Although sound industrial organisation is essential to protect the interests of the worker, its movement can be hampered or assisted considerably by the political party in power for the time being...Every vote cast for Labour was a vote in favour of a higher standard of living and a better life for the workers generally,' (ibid).

While the 8th Annual Conference in 1923 had voted in principle for affiliation to the Labour Party, (RP, B32:30), it was not till 1925 that a plebiscite of the members was conducted. This was evidently

not a burning issue for the rank-and-file, as only half of them voted. (Roberts recommended fines for non-voting, (RP,B43/5:7,8 - a further example of leader-domination). The push for affiliation to the Labour Party was not unconnected with Roberts' own elevation to the Party executive in 1925.

However, relations between the industrial and political wings of the labour movement did not run smoothly. Their aims were not as harmonious as the new theory of political action by unions presumed. The industrial movement did not find it easy to have its objectives adopted by the political party and remits of the Federation to New Zealand Labour Party conferences were regularly turned down. The aim was to make the parliamentary party an instrument for obtaining some of the objectives of the industrial movement. Roberts recommended in his report that the industrial organisations meet before the Labour Party conference to hammer out their policies, since he did not see this happening at the Party conference itself (RP,B43/6:11)

The TW bravely tried to argue that its policy on 'no politics' had not changed (TW,May1928:1). The article claimed that politics had always been secondary and in any case it was difficult to separate industrial questions from political ones. It was necessary to criticise governments even in an industrial journal, asserted the TW. Nevertheless, the November issue of 1928 unequivocally urged readers to vote Labour:

'Since only a Labour government can promote suitable employment and housing,' (TW,Nov1928:2).

And again in May 1929, the TW said that political action was still necessary, but it was the result of effective industrial action (TW,May1929:8).

Yet, as late as 1928, there was still an article which, in syndicalist vein, saw industrial organisation in itself as the key:

'When workers realise the necessity for that union comradeship...the day of emancipation is at hand,' (TW,Sep1928:1).

However, the general weight of the Federation's policy with its restraint on direct industrial action, was clearly in support of political methods. This is thus a collaborationist position.

With the increasing commitment to parliamentary Labour politics, the Federation shared the growing paranoia in the labour movement at large about Communist infiltration. The 13th Annual Conference in November 1927 sent a remit to the Labour Party Conference that candidates for office for the party in parliament, municipal or local bodies:

'should not pledge themselves to any other association, group or society,' (RP,B22/1-4:96).

The 15th Annual Conference in November 1929 threw out a remit that:

'conference insists that its delegates to all LRC's or kindred organisations be received irrespective of whether they are members of other working class movements,' (RP,B23/1-5:19Nov1929).

Roberts in opposing the latter remit, said:

'The object of the framers of the remit was simply disruption. Industrial organisations in other countries had been obliged to dump the communists from their ranks,' (ibid).

This is singularly dismissive. The characterisation of those who defend the right of the union to select whomsoever it sees fit to a political forum is indicative of a red-baiting mentality. It also indicates the real subordination of the union's right of selection to the behests of the political party. This is the reverse of the theory of political action which demanded that the industrial wing direct the political wing of the labour movement. This thus constitutes a significant shift in emphasis from working class independence and is therefore a collaborationist feature.

The turn to political methods of achieving industrial goals parallels, and is consistent with, the demand for 'neutral' state activity such as investigations into living standards. It embodies an instrumentalist, classless analysis of the state and of capitalist relations and is therefore collaborationist.

Ideological

The strength of the TW even in deteriorating economic conditions indicates a continuing commitment by the Federation to educating its members and countering employer propaganda.

The May 1924 issue of the TW set out the policy of the paper. It had to steer a course between being too far ahead of the membership or holding back its understanding:

'to our militant friends, we say that our aim has been to educate the worker in working class philosophy and to do this, we have to deal with the mass...We would remind [the militant worker] that during his efforts at individual propaganda, he had to descend from his high altitude of social theories and meet the uneducated on plain common terms before he could make a success of the job...To those who accuse us of being too militant and too outspoken, we would remind them...that there is no room for fine phrases and apologies...Why should we refrain from telling the workers they are wage-slaves when we know they are?...To that small minority, who accuse us of preaching a false philosophy...we say "Mend your ways...You are slaves...Some day a spark of intelligence will manifest itself in your brain and you will fight for and with your comrades in the labour movement,"' (TW, May 1924:1).

This is a practical objective approach - dealing with the understanding of workers as it objectively exists, not in a subjective or idealist manner, according to the will or wish of some leader or editor. In this respect, the position of the watersiders is materialist and this is therefore a revolutionary feature.

The Federation continued its commitment to the Maoriland Worker; the January 1923 Conference asked member unions who had shares in it to allocate them to the Federation so it could gain representation the

Board of Management of the paper (RP,B32:17Jan1923).

The 8th Annual Conference in 1923 referred a remit to the Alliance of Labour urging industrial and political organisations to set up a daily labour paper (RP,ibid). This again shows the priority given to working class education and the frustration which working class organisations experienced in the face of the capitalist media.

However, this commitment to struggle in the sphere of ideas is not matched by class struggle in practice, so, taken, as a whole, the watersiders' approach is idealist and therefore collaborationist in terms of the typology.

The period 1922 to 1929, backgrounded as it is by creeping depression shows a strengthening of tendencies in the consciousness of the Waterside Workers' Federation already apparent in the previous period. A revolutionary analysis of class relations and economic exploitation is still present, but in the most attenuated form. This retreat from a class analysis is matched by a shift in the analysis of the state. It is now seen as a neutral body capable of intervening in the interests of workers. This is paralleled by a dramatic shift to an acceptance and endorsement of political action to achieve industrial ends. Attitudes to arbitration were confused. There was constant condemnation of it as an institution; nevertheless, disputes were regularly referred to it in preference to taking direct action.

The form of delineation of existing social relations shifted increasingly from one of objective analysis to a moral or sentimental stance of condemnation as if the trumpets of outrage might in themselves bring about the collapse of the walls of the capitalist Jericho. This essentially idealist feature is evidenced again in the heavy reliance on the communication of ideas at the verbal level through working class organs such as the TW. This is at the expense of material class struggle.

The state of the economy prevented the kinds of advancement in wages and conditions achieved in the previous period; however, an organisational structure dominated by officials held back member unions willing to take more militant action from time to time. The underlying approach of the Waterside Workers' Federation was to seek a position as an equal social partner with employers, pursuing a 'fair deal' and a share in management and control of the work process. Despite some remnants of a Marxist analysis, taken as whole in this period, the Waterside Workers' Federation displayed an increasing collaborationism.

DEPRESSION 1930-34

This period is, of course, scarred by the great trauma of the Depression. For the watersiders, it was particularly harsh because despite the great drop in work due to reduced exports and imports, they did not qualify for relief. In this period, although the TW acknowledged that the Depression was calling into question the whole capitalist system, discussion and analysis is very much confined to immediate problems facing workers. Economic diagnosis takes up the content at the expense of concern with political, ideological and organisational questions. While political institutions are seen as the means to change policies and economic trends, their nature is now no longer analysed.

WHAT IS

Economic

An article in November 1934 gives an analysis of the political and economic crisis facing the world in terms of the whole economic system. It is entitled 'A Mad World - Lust for Domination and Power'. The article points out the paradox between the enormous productive capacity developed in human society and the discontent and starvation in the world and asks:

'Why cannot we have international peace? Why is there discontent throughout the world? Why is there starvation and misery in the midst of plenty?'

The TW answers its own question:

'All wars and all international hatreds are caused by commercial rivalry...If the nations of the world produced goods for the use of their own people instead of for the purpose of making profits out of their own people and the people of other nations, there would be no international commercial rivalries and therefore no war,' (TW, Nov 1934:1).

This places the cause of war firmly on the shoulders of the capitalist system. In this analysis, economic relationships are seen as basic to all social phenomena and other economic arrangements based on human needs rather than commercial rivalry are held to be possible. Thus, in this period, the TW continues its analysis of the capitalist system as a historically constructed and limited system placed in the context of long-term social development. This is further developed in an article in November 1931 entitled 'Our Crumbling Social System'. Chattel slavery and serfdom had also collapsed. These social systems were abolished because they were no longer adequate for the form of production (TW, Nov 1931:2). The notion of capitalism as a social system which is destroyed because of the contradictions which it produces within itself is classic historical materialism as is the idea of economic relationships shaping the other aspects of social formations. These constitute elements of a revolutionary analysis.

At this time, class analysis is generally materialist and analytical, although the bankers and money-lenders are held to be the chief culprits in the economic crisis. An article in November 1934 makes a general class analysis in classic Marxist terms:

'Broadly speaking, there are two classes of society - those who have no commodity to sell but their labour power and those who buy labour power,' (TW,Nov1934:1).

An earlier article in January 1934 poses the question:

'But can capitalism be saved? Might it not be better to burn our capitalist boats since they are leaking and no longer answer to the rudder?' (TW,Jan1934:9).

The question remains posed but unanswered; the TW thus shrinks from an assertion of a revolutionary solution.

Thus while the fundamental unviability of capitalism is asserted, the full consequences at the level of action are avoided. The article then goes on to analyse class relations at a more concrete, empirical level. Bankers and money-lenders are again castigated as the chief culprits:

'Bankers restrict production by demanding high interest rates,' (TW,Nov1934:2).

An article in November 1933 called for a reform of the monetary system and a state-owned bank, 'a bank which should be independent of the ramifications of any banking institution,' (TW,Nov1933:1). These are analyses at the level of distribution of surplus value in the form of interest, not at the point of production and are therefore reformist.

The TW notes the clash in class interests between the farmers and the industrial and financial capitalists. Based on this clash, the TW shows links in objective interest between farmers and workers, in contradiction to the frequently expressed antagonism between them. The same article in the TW emphasises the common interest between working farmers and workers in confronting the money-lenders:

'The workers have a common interest with the working farmers i.e. to eliminate the middle man who exploits both, and to check the depredations of the money-lenders, bankers and bondholders who are attempting to enslave producers on the land and workers employed in industrial production,' (ibid).

Such objective analysis draws useful political lessons and leads readers of the TW away from traditional, knee-jerk antagonism to farmers - an antagonism otherwise well warranted by experience of the actions of the farmers in working-class struggles. The approach here is more objective rather than subjective in terms of the typology, and hence more revolutionary.

Other articles are more vague in their diagnosis of the Depression and general class analysis. These lay the emphasis more on individual responsibility:

'Although this depression is caused by money-power, it is accentuated by some employers who have put off men in order that wages will be reduced,' (TW, May 1931:14).

'Money-power' is vague and unspecified. Blame is cast on individuals as if their actions were entirely voluntary:

'There is no doubt that political mismanagement by the people who own and control industry has created and will in the future create unemployment and lower the standard of living and make conditions harder for everyone,' (TW, Nov 1934:16)

'Why is there want? The answer is simple. We have allowed the control of production and distribution to get into the hands of a few people,' (TW, Jan 1934:2).

'A few people' is a rather attenuated indication of class exploitation. Thus the analysis is moving away from a revolutionary position.

The international scale of the Depression prompted new analyses of unemployment. Now mechanisation is seen as a cause and is analysed as previously in revolutionary Marxist terms. Mechanisation is said not only to throw people out of work but to reduce purchasing power at the same time, thus shrinking the market for goods (TW, Nov 1931:9). The TW says that workers receive a smaller share of what they produce than formerly because less labour is now needed to produce goods (ibid). Underlying this is again the classic Marxist analysis that workers only receive the value of the commodities required to maintain themselves. With mechanisation and the consequent reduction of the labour-time required to produce that value, the necessary labour time of workers is shortened. The TW states that because of the machine the problem of producing the necessities of life no longer exists, but that the problem of distributing them does

(TW, Oct 1932:10). This material analysis in terms of surplus value is a revolutionary feature.

A recurring theme in this period is the need to maintain the purchasing power of workers in order to build economic activity. Therefore the TW constantly attacks the wage-cutting policies of the government. Underlying this is the assumption that adequate wages need not attack profits and that therefore the interests of capital and labour are not necessarily antagonistic. This is therefore a collaborationist analysis.

'If goods are required and if people have purchasing power to buy them, a profit is assured. It is common sense to pay adequate wages,' (TW, Sep 1933:1).

'Labour is a commodity and is sold like other commodities. It is also the creator of the value of all other commodities. Prices in general cannot rise if the price of labour remains low,' (TW Oct 32:8).

While it is true that there must be purchasing power to buy goods and hence realise surplus value, as pointed out in the previous chapter, in terms of Marxist economics this is erroneous. Expansion of purchasing power is simplistically argued and assumes a harmony between worker and capitalist interests in the division of the newly produced value. This is a collaborationist feature.

The TW expressed a contradictory form of nationalism. On the one hand, it analyses and rejects imperial economic domination and corresponding loyalist colonial attitudes. On the other, this support for economic independence has a strongly nationalistic

flavour of class collaboration:

In response to the loyalist mentality, the TW said:

'For some reason or other, New Zealand lacks considerably in the direction of national independence. There has been far too much sentiment and political platitudes concerning the link with the Mother Country,' (TW, Nov 1933:1).

This was an accurate picture of the strong imperialist and loyalist sentiments of the time.

The TW challenged the agreement at the Ottawa Conference whereby Britain's export interests to the Dominions were to be protected by limitation of their secondary industries:

'Political freedom is meaningless unless economic freedom is allowed to the people of the country to produce their requirements in whatever manner they desire,' (TW, Oct 1932:1).

The TW drew the lesson for New Zealand workers:

'Will not the agreement mean a race between Great Britain and New Zealand for cheap production and does not cheap production in itself mean the displacement of human labour power and an increase in the army of the unemployed?' (ibid).

It is the overseas capitalists who are responsible for New Zealand's economic plight, not capitalist relations within New Zealand:

'The truth is that the bondholders overseas realise that if the workers have their standard of living, there is a danger that they will not be paid in full the interest and the principal on money loaned to New Zealand. The interest rates on the huge war loans have to be paid and the worker shall make his contribution by having less food, less clothing and less enjoyment,' (TW, May 1931:1).

The average New Zealand shipowner is not seen in this light. He is portrayed more as a 'regular Kiwi joker' like all New Zealanders, worker and capitalist alike. This is a collaborationist form of nationalism.

'The TW believes that the average New Zealand shipowner would be prepared to pay a reasonable wage to the waterside worker...it appears that it is the overseas shipowners that aim to lower the standard of life of New Zealanders,' (TW, Jul 1934:2).

This again assumes a harmony of interests between capitalists and workers based on common nationality and is a new development. Such an overt expression of collaborationism was not evident previously.

The underlying theme of economic analysis was that production should be for need, not profit. A constant refrain was 'the right of workers to apply their labour-power to natural resources to produce the necessities of life'. An article in October 1932 asked 'What is a job?' The TW answered that it was 'the amount of work needed for one worker to produce his share of the nation's product,' (TW, Oct 1932:5). The concrete concept of labour and its products is implicitly set against the capitalist concept of exchange value and profit. While this is a good deal less precise than a full analysis

of the exploitive nature of capitalist relations, it does allude to the contradictions between production for use and production for profit which underlies those contradictions. It is therefore a relatively revolutionary feature.

The TW asserts the relevance of all economic and political questions to trade unionists. In an article on the 1931 Annual Conference of the Watersiders' Federation, the TW says this is a key task facing trade unionists:

'We must combat the social and economic injustices arising out of our present system,' (TW, Dec 1931:1).

This is an indication of the sense of totality and connectedness of all social phenomena. This is also indicated in the news items on international issues which appear regularly. These are usually short but provide readers with a far wider context of understanding than the establishment media, for instance. This linking of trade union interests with other social forces is a revolutionary element.

The existence of analysis at the more fundamental level we have noted in some passages side by side with more vague assignment of 'blame' in a moralistic manner for the depression, suggests that there is a tension between the more fundamental analysis and the pressure to produce critiques and solutions within capitalist relations.

So in this period of economic crisis, while the TW presents some clear Marxist analyses, there exist side by side with these, more confused proposals for solving the contradictions of capitalism without its overthrow.

Political

The analysis of political institutions remains the same as that in the period 1922-29 in that they are not seen as inherently oppressive. These institutions are said to operate against workers because they are controlled by anti-worker interests.

There is a certain equivocation in the treatment of the Arbitration Court. It is granted some uses in the past, (TW, May 1931:12; Oct 32:2), but now is said to 'protect the interests of bondholders, rather than workers,' (TW, May 1931:12), and is 'used to reduce wages,' (TW, Sep 1931:4). However, there is no evidence in previous issues of the TW that such advantages were noted. On the contrary, the earlier attacks on the Arbitration Court were quite unequivocal.

In April 1932, the TW comments on the amendment to the IC&A Act which abolished compulsory arbitration, and among other provisions, allowed for piecework contracts outside the award between individual workers and their employers. This amendment thus totally undercut union organisation and there would seem to have been little advantage in remaining under the Act. The TW considers outright rejection of industrial conciliation and arbitration:

'It would be better if workers asked for the abolition of industrial conciliation and arbitration altogether,' (TW, Apr 1932:5).

But it goes on to express the hope that every union will make the same decision to stay away:

'There could be no good purpose served if some go to the Court and some stay away,' (ibid).

It is implied here that the Federation would not recommend deregistration if most other unions did not do likewise. Since this was an unlikely prospect, this provides an alibi for inaction, and arbitration is not rejected outright.

Similar equivocation is apparent in an article in 1934 which asks whether compulsory arbitration will be restored. It says that restoration can give no benefit - it was responsible for chaotic industrial relations in any case. This latter point appeals to bourgeois notions of class harmony and is therefore collaborationist. But the article does concede:

'If compulsory arbitration is to be of use to workers, it must apply in depression,' (TW, Jul 1934:4).

This allows some utility to the Arbitration Court and contradicts the anti-arbitration rhetoric.

Similar equivocation is evident in the analysis of parliament. On the one hand, the rhetoric rejecting the institution, on the other, an underlying endorsement of it as a means for workers to attain their objectives.

Thus an article in syndicalist vein in September 1931 expresses doubts about any utility at all for workers in parliamentary institutions:

'On the other hand, we have always recognised the limitations of the political machine...We doubt very much if the granting of adult suffrage has ever been beneficial to the workers. In the first place, they have relied too much on political action to obtain for them the standard of living to which they are entitled,' (TW, Sept 1931:8).

However, the same article contradicts this position by implying that with a workers' party at the helm, it would not necessarily operate against workers:

'The parliamentary machine which will function against every interest of the workers if this machine is controlled by the employing class,' (TW, May 1931:12).

This is the qualification we have met in the previous period. Thus the anti-parliamentary rhetoric is exposed as just that: rhetoric.

The explanation for parliament's failure to serve workers' interests is laid at the door of individuals. An article in November 1933 puts some of the blame for the slump on political rulers for their lack of

concern:

'If our past and present political rulers were as much concerned about the common people as they have been and are about overseas money-lending and private banking institutions, this country would at present be in a far better position from the economic view point,' (TW, Nov 1933:2).

This is a moral appeal of the sort we have already noted. It is emphasised by the assertion that:

'Labour members of Parliament have done what they could,' (TW, Jan 1934:14).

Thus individuals representing labour can do better. This position ignores the structural power exerted by and on these institutions and reduces the issue to a matter of individual decision making. These individuals can then be berated from a moral position for their individual failings. This is an entirely idealist approach. So again we have the reformist notion of the State as a relatively neutral instrument available to be taken over by a working class party to be used to protect the interests of workers.

There is also discernible at this period the idea of the state not simply as such an instrument, but as a power above classes, representing the 'community'. An article in November 1931 says that capitalism even now needs a measure of socialism to prop it up; as an example, the article notes the necessity for the state to support the unemployed. But the notion of state intervention under

capitalism as a 'measure of socialism' contains the implication of the state as a power 'in the public interest', a classless state. The same notion is present in an article in January 1934 which looks at parliament in abstract idealist terms:

'Members of Parliament are civil servants for the people of New Zealand and should rule for the community as a whole,' (TW, Jan 1934:14).

This, too, is an appeal to an abstract notion of community quite opposed to a class conception. This view of the state as a representative of the community is at this time only implicit. Later, under the Labour Government, it becomes a full-blown assertion.

Hence, at this time analysis of the political structures of capitalism by the watersiders shows a measure of confusion. There are elements of syndicalism, idealism and state instrumentalism. These are consistent with the general retreat from a class analysis evident throughout our period of study. These signs of collaboration at the political level match those at the economic level.

Ideological

But at the ideological level, there is continuity in analysis and technique with the previous periods discussed in that the media are seen to express class interests:

'The daily papers are carrying on propaganda for the usurers and the bankers,' (TWJune1932:8).

Again, bourgeois authorities are belittled by the sarcasm, and, by the same token, the intelligence and competence of the workers reading the TW is implicitly extolled:

'No slump in so-called remedies' (TWSept1931:11);

'Economic Fallacies Propounded by Paid Professors' (TWNov31:1);

'Economic Quackery - There are various nostrums prescribed by the apologists for our present absurd system of managing or mismanaging society,' (TW, Aug1930:3).

The class ideology of legality is exposed by noting the double standard adopted by bourgeois authorities depending on whether this legality serves bourgeois or working class interests. The TW responded to the 1931 amendment to the Finance Act giving the Court of Arbitration power to reduce wages by angrily pointing out the double class standard in regard to contracts and agreements:

'At the present time, we hear quite a lot of talk about honouring our agreements in connection with loans. Every employer you meet will tell you that success in business is due to the fact that commercial men honour agreements. Surely an award of the Court of Arbitration is an agreement; in fact, it is statutory law...Yet these people who talk so much about honouring agreements, disregard, at the first opportunity, every agreement made with the organisations of the wage workers...The attitude of the Employers' Federation and the attitude of the capitalist politicians generally in connection with the present demand for wages reductions is the most class-biassed policy ever enunciated in this or any other country in the world,' (TW, May, 1931:1).

The emphasis in this period is to provide short term diagnoses and remedies for the economic crisis facing workers. The elements of a more fundamental analysis are left suspended without concrete proposals for action. Clearly, such action would be needed if the consciousness of the watersiders were to be described as revolutionary. However, as we have noted, the climate of opinion in which the watersiders were situated was strongly saturated with bourgeois ideology. It would have been idealist and subjective to propound revolution when the organisation and consciousness was simply not there and would have totally isolated the union leadership from its members, much as the Communist Party was isolating itself from workers in general. Nonetheless, even acknowledging that action was so constrained by the economic, political and ideological conditions, the analyses offered by the TW are confused and offer no effective counter to bourgeois ideology. Ideologically, therefore, the Waterside Workers Federation is increasingly collaborationist.

WHAT SHOULD BE

Short Term

The immediate problem facing the watersiders during the Depression was the lack of work which drastically reduced their total earnings. However, this little made them ineligible for unemployment relief. This shortage of work was exacerbated by a degree of mechanisation. With the reduction of work, the question of limitation of membership also became a vexed issue, reflecting the powerlessness of the

watersiders in their conditions of casual employment. To limit union membership was to throw too many members on the scrap heap, while not to limit it meant underemployment for all. The demand for the shorter working day and higher wage rates together with work equalisation schemes were all efforts to deal with the problem of shortage of work and casual employment.

The 17th Annual Conference in 1931 adopted a policy for a 35 hour week with the hours of ordinary time to be 8am to 4pm. This was reaffirmed at the 18th Conference in 1933. A Committee set up at that Conference reported:

'While we realise that the unemployment misery and poverty which exists throughout the world today is primarily due to the competitive social system under which we live, and that the real remedy is the establishment of a cooperative system of society under which goods will be produced for use and not for profit, we are of the opinion that...our immediate policy should be the reduction of the daily hours of work and the restoration of wage cuts to increase the purchasing power of workers,' (RP,B37:145).

The insolubility of capitalist contradictions is still acknowledged here while practical immediate steps are proposed. Within the constraints faced by the watersiders, this reflects a relatively revolutionary approach.

The 1930 Conference discussed the question of a more equitable distribution of the little work which was available. This discussion revealed the problems involved. The watersiders were aware that more equal distribution of work did not deal with the problem of

unemployment, nor did it make demands of capital. One delegate opposed the scheme saying:

'These schemes are only designed to draw money from the high paid men to eliminate distress among the lower paid men...If we reduced them all the same dead level, the best fighters and best unionists would be driven out,' (RP,B23/1-5:1Dec1930).

Roberts said:

'The weakness of the scheme was that they took nothing from the industry,' (ibid).

Roberts suggested two schemes, one for a minimum wage and the other for equalisation of work and conditions, (ibid). This proposal met the difficulty raised by the previous speakers but, as he pointed out in his Report of that year:

'The employers will equalise wages and allow rotary schemes and bring down wages to the bare existence level for all before they will agree that the industry should pay a guaranteed weekly wage to waterside workers,' (RP,B43/10:5).

The constraints were severe indeed. Another interesting objection was that:

'such schemes involved too much discipline both individual and in the mass; much of the independent spirit would be done away with,' (RP,B23/1-5:2Dec30).

This reflects the measure of individualism fostered by the casual labour conditions. This relative lack of discipline is a somewhat collaborationist feature.

However, the scheme finally adopted by the Conference called for joint union and employer control with equal representation from both sides with a guaranteed wage. Schemes which classified workers into permanents and casuals were rejected as unjust, (ibid). So while this embodied a collaborationist social partners approach, it represented a demand on capital in terms of a guaranteed wage and a refusal to have worker cohesion split by differential classification. These are more revolutionary elements.

The question of cooperative contracting for cargo work was not prominent in this period. Again, in the depressed conditions, such schemes were more a way of sharing the poverty than improving the situation of watersiders as a whole, and would therefore neither have challenged capital nor improved the lot of workers.

The watersiders protected their labour-power as well as they could and paid considerable attention to questions of compensation for loss of work due to accident, sickness and unemployment. The Unemployment Insurance Act was condemned both for the method of financing unemployment relief through a flat rate levy on workers' wages and for using such revenue to subsidise farmers and local bodies instead of the unemployed themselves. The Conference called for unemployment sustenance to be paid to watersiders on the basis of total time lost each month by men engaged in the work. It also called for a graduated unemployment tax and a tax on the unimproved value of all land for unemployment relief. These demands, while unobtainable in practice, reflect a strong pro-producer position, a sense that

workers had a right to demand that those with property should compensate those without it for a situation which was not of their own making. This pro-producer position is a revolutionary feature.

The Depression thus confined the watersiders to a few key demands which they were ill-situated to press and which were purely defensive. The constraints were too severe to characterise their policies as collaborationist.

Long Term

At a time when the crisis of capitalism might be expected to produce serious concrete suggestions for fundamental social change, these are less evident than at previous periods, particularly 1915-1920. The general references to 'Our Crumbling Social System,' (TW, Nov 1931:2) and to 'the revolutionary change taking place' (ibid) are accompanied by only the vaguest proposals for alternatives.

The need for a total change in social relations is occasionally affirmed. A speech by Ernest Bevin asserting the inadequacy of the private profit motive and the need for socialism which would have service to the community as its basic motive is reported, (TW, June 1932:7).

In reporting the riots in Queen Street, the TW notes how they bring the whole economic system into question.

'Every repressive act...can only hasten the day when the system that causes unemployment shall go and be replaced by a system under which production is for use and not for profit, where the people of the land shall be the first consideration and money kings and usurers will not be recognised,' (TW, May 1932:2).

Again, the historical contingency of the capitalist system and its mutability are asserted and alternative forms of society are envisaged. This is the same formula of production for use rather than profit. These are revolutionary features.

But alternative forms of society to capitalism are posed in rather undefined terms and rest on appeals to nature, common sense and justice, rather than an analysis of the barriers to their realisation. Thus, in an attack on bourgeois remedies for the slump, the TW asks:

'Cannot these economists conceive of any other form of society but the blessed trinity of capitalism - rent, interest and profits?...The workers demand the right to apply their labour power to the natural resources and agencies of production and for that labour power and the services they render, they demand the right to live natural lives. Their claim is so just and contains so much common sense that it cannot be denied much longer. If it is, there is bound to be a repetition of the bloody revolutions which have previously taken place in human society,' (TW, Sept 1931:11).

This is idealist and empty, without concrete content. The only concrete proposal is the syndicalist one of workers' control:

'Since the social system...has broken down, the rightful heir to control the agencies of production now is industrial labour...Industrial organisation should have the management ability in the production of goods,' (TW, Nov 1933:10).

and

'As years go by, Labour Conferences will give more consideration to economics and to the best means to end the system which had brought the present sorry mess in human society throughout the world...As the failure of our present social system becomes demonstrated, the industrial organisations must in their own defence carry out the policy of taking over the functions of production in the interests of the community,' (TW, Dec 1931:1).

Yet this leaves the question of the transition to socialism unsolved. The proposals for these fundamental changes, indefinite as they are, take very much second place to immediate remedies within capitalist relations. Since the crisis was calling these relations into fundamental question, this emphasis is relatively collaborationist.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

Economic

Intra-Class While the same theme of the need for industrial organisation continues in this period, the question of organisation takes a much less prominent place in the content of the TW which, as we have noted, was dominated by economic analysis at this period.

Craft unionism is again declared to be obsolete on historicist grounds:

'Present day conditions will kill craft unionism, whether those who foster it like it or not,' (TW, Nov1933:9).

'Craft unionism is rendered obsolete by the machine,' (TW, June1932:1).

Unions cautious in fighting the wage cuts are chastised:

'Many trade unions have not shown enough grit and courage. It is a mistaken policy to agree to a lower wage rather than have no agreement at all,' (TW, Oct1932:2).

However, since the watersiders themselves put up little struggle at this period, this castigation is divisive, a mask for their own lack of action. This divisiveness is a relatively collaborationist feature. Trade union officials are blamed for this lack of action:

'Trade union officials blame the workers but the workers are not at fault. The facts must be placed before them. They are not organised properly or educated,' (ibid).

This asserts faith in the ability of workers to join in struggle and is a solidaristic feature; however, the castigation of union officials, given the constraints of the period, is moralistic and divisive, and lacks a structural analysis. This is again collaborationist aspect.

Class solidarity, both with employed and unemployed workers is affirmed. As previously, the need for industrial unionism is asserted in a number of articles, (e.g. TW, May1931:12; May1932:3; June1932:1). This is specifically seen as class organisation:

'We must build up class and industrial unionism to arouse class consciousness so that workers recognise their class interests,' (TW, May 1932:3).

Unemployed organisations are supported, provided they are organised in conjunction with the trade union movement:

'But if some unemployed organisations continued to scandalise and abuse trade unions, it would only create a breach,' (TW, May 1932:2).

This was a reference to the undoubtedly divisive tactics of the communist-led Unemployed Workers Movement.

The internal cohesion of the watersiders was further developed in this period. In 1931, the Federation took another step towards a single national union by drafting a set of rules and a constitution to be submitted to member unions (RP, B24/1:20 Nov 1931).

The Federation's unity was under stress, however. A card system of voting was proposed because it was cheaper, but Roberts opposed it on the grounds that it was unfair to small unions and could break up the organisation (ibid). Essentially it was feared that if the voting strength of small unions was reduced proportionately to their membership, they would leave the Federation. Thus, the clinging to autonomy by the small unions prevented a fully democratic representative voting system and indicates that they gave higher priority to their own organisation than to a national body. This

lack of cohesion is a collaborationist feature. Consequently, the matter was postponed to be dealt with in connection with the setting up of a national union.

The straitened financial circumstances of the Depression finally forced a shift to Biennial Conferences after 1931, while the system for pooling Conference expenses broke down as individual unions became unable to pay their share. Moreover, there was criticism of the national leadership. This was evidenced by articles in the TW, which defended the leadership's position, (TW, Nov 1933:9; Sept 1933:9). Criticism emerged particularly in connection with the Federation's handling of the freezing workers' strike in 1932 when several member unions of the Waterside Workers' Federation refused to handle meat killed by free labour. It was against Federation policy to 'black' the meat until such time as the Freezing Workers handed over their dispute to the Alliance of Labour (RP, B25/1:25 Nov 1932). The policies of inaction and lack of struggle pursued by the leadership were certainly not supported unanimously.

Similar criticisms were made of the Alliance of Labour for its inaction. Since the Watersiders Federation was the leading force in the Alliance, it defended its policies as its own. An article in September 1933 heralds with double column headlines an agreement negotiated on behalf of the shearers by the Alliance of Labour. It points out that this success was possible because the NZ Workers Union handed over the dispute unreservedly to the Alliance (TW, Sept 1933:9). The lesson was drawn that had the freezing workers

done the same, they would have received the same support.

The freezing workers' strike in 1932 and its aftermath was a key industrial struggle in this period. It had its impact in the Alliance of Labour, leading eventually to its split and on the Watersiders Federation with the eventual removal of Glover from the leadership in 1936. The lack of support for the freezing workers by the watersiders and the Alliance was purportedly based on the refusal of the freezing workers to hand over their dispute to the Alliance. However, in the wake of the strike, the Federation reaffirmed its policy of staying on the job to fight disputes, (RP,B37:152). This suggests a fundamental reluctance to take action even with unified support and is a collaborationist feature.

An interesting development in this period is the establishment of a regular column for women in the TW in August 1930. While these addressed women as housewives and helpmates for male workers, they also addressed them as workers in their own right. Recipes were always included, but articles ranged over a wide variety of topics, including women in Nazi Germany (TW,Oct1933:17); the struggles of women workers (TW, Apr1933:17; Aug1933:15; Mar1934:15; Jan1934:17), equal rights for women (TW,Oct1933:17); women in parliament (TW,Oct1933:17); the right of married women to work (TW,Feb1934:17); reports on international Women's Congresses (TW,Apr1934:15; Aug1934:19) and public health (TW,Nov1934:19).

These wide-ranging articles for women members of the families of watersiders reflect an understanding of class beyond the work-place, and while the role of women within the family is not questioned in modern feminist terms, for this period, these articles reflect solidarity with women as workers and are a relatively revolutionary feature.

The status of women is implicated in the question of the family wage. This has consequences for women but for the watersiders, it was primarily a question of maintaining the price for labour power in the labour market. Thus, whereas, as we saw, in November 1929, the Federation sent a remit to the Labour Party Conference opposing the introduction of a child endowment on the grounds that it would lower the wage rate, at the 17th Conference in 1931, differential rates of pay for single and married men were opposed on the grounds that equal service deserved equal pay (B24/1:21Nov1931). While the question of equal pay for women naturally did not arise for the watersiders, we can see from this policy that the demand for a family wage is not inconsistent with a demand for equal pay for men and women. The family wage demand is not here concerned with keeping women in economic dependence but with maintaining the price of labour-power.

This period reflects again a continuity of policy on the principles of industrial organisation espoused from the beginning and as an expression of class cohesion and solidarity, is a revolutionary feature.

Inter-class

The degree and form of resistance to employer attacks were sharply constrained by depressed economic conditions. However, in any case, policies of negotiation and cooperation with employers were the preferred mode of obtaining union objectives. In May 1930, the TW asserted that it was impossible to organise production efficiently unless workers were more or less satisfied:

'The trade unionists recognise the fact that unless an industry is a paying proposition, we cannot, under the present system, obtain higher wages. Therefore trade unions have sought to establish cooperation...Job action was relied on in the past; now the emphasis was on peaceful bargaining and negotiation. Union officers are bitter. They preached industrial peace and made efforts to keep work going. This is not popular and officials now question their wisdom when they have been snubbed by the Court of Arbitration,' (TW, May 1930:7).

This is the quintessential 'social partners' position which has been evident as an underlying theme throughout this study. The tone is one of moral injury and injustice, far removed from an analytical understanding of the Court as a class institution. There is no other course of action proposed. The article seeks to instil in its readers an attitude of being injured victims who have moral right on their side. Given the lack of specific proposals for action, it is hard to see what such outrage might accomplish. Perhaps the implication is that if enough workers are outraged, they will apply this as a ballot box pressure on government to change policies. This is far removed from independent working class action and involves already a heavy reliance on state intervention on behalf of workers. Set beside the above article, an assertion in May 1932 that 'direct

industrial action is the only option,' (TW,May1932:2) sounds hollow and unconvincing.

An article in January 1934 complained that the Government had ignored three deputations from the Alliance of Labour in the previous session of Parliament (TWJan1934:13). Again, complaint remains at the moral level without objective analysis.

In opposing the restoration of compulsory arbitration in July 1934, the TW promotes the Disputes Committees system operated by the watersiders. The TW says:

'Disputes would then be settled by trained negotiators, not pleaders, as with the Court,' (TW,Jul1934:4).

Disputes are here seen as a technical matter to be decided by those with the training and expertise. There is no sign of class struggle now.

Despite the still regular, routine opposition to the Arbitration Court, cross citation of the employers was the only action adopted in retaliation to wage cuts in 1931 (B24/1:12Nov1931), while a proposal for an immediate cessation of work should the Court support the employers was, quite realistically, rejected. However, at the same conference, Jim Roberts opposed even a go-slow in his report. He said there was no desire for this measure in the industrial movement at large. Only the watersiders, miners and seamen supported it. But, he said, the overwhelming majority of unions did not.

'It is better to obtain the general support of all the unions in any minor action we may take than to sacrifice the industrial workers who were prepared to take industrial action,' (RP,B43/12:9).

This is very much the policy of 'wait and see what the other fellow does' regularly attacked in the TW. In any case, a go-slow could only lead to a retaliatory lock-out, a form of industrial warfare which, as we have seen, was well suited to the watersiders' casual employment conditions. However, the leadership always fought for a continuation of work. In noting that some member unions were refusing to carry out the instructions of the Federation in regard to the freezing workers' strike, Roberts said:

'There is the possibility of a general lockout until such time as our men decide to work the agreement,' (RP,B25/1:52).

Thus, no kind of work stoppage was to be entertained.

In 1931, a letter was received from the United Mineworkers of New Zealand asking the Waterside Workers Federation to take strike action with the miners in the event of further wage reductions. It was resolved to let the letter lie on the table and that it be not published. It was referred to the Alliance of Labour with no further action to be taken (RP,B24/1:25Nov1931). The lack of publicity given to this letter and the difficulties in maintaining continuation of work during the freezing workers' strike, suggests that the 'no action' policies of the leadership were not shared by a significant

proportion of the rank and file membership.

The policy of 'remaining on the job and fighting on the job' was reaffirmed in the wake of the 1932 Freezing Workers' strike (RP,B37:152). However, in view of the position expressed by the leadership on go-slows and lockouts, it is hard to imagine what such action would entail.

So again in this period, there is an essential lack of class struggle which cannot be entirely attributed to the Depression and the constraints on active struggle which it imposed. This constitutes, therefore, a collaborationist feature.

Political

The Waterside Workers Federation continued to firmly support the Labour Party in this period, but was dissatisfied with the level of control it had over the Party's policies. Relations were particularly strained at the 1930 Conference because the Labour Party had employed as Assistant Secretary, W.Bromley, who had defied the labour movement by accepting a position on the Unemployment Board. In response to this, a request from the Labour Party to receive a deputation from the Party was turned down, (RP,B23/1-5:24Nov1930). A remit was passed at the 1931 Conference demanding more voting powers for the trade union movement in the Party (RP,B24/1-2:20Nov1931). Roberts said in his report:

'I am one of those who believe that a Labour Political Movement can be used in the interests of the wage-workers, However, I hold the definite opinion that an industrial organisation is more important and, above all, I would advise trade unionists to insist that the Political Movement shall take its definite instructions on all industrial questions from the Industrial Labour Movement,' (RP, B43/11:29).

So the rationalisation of following the parliamentary road was that the industrial movement would do the driving. This again is based on a non-revolutionary analysis of the nature of parliamentary democracy and the State, whereby the state is viewed as an autonomous instrument free of the economic constraints of the capitalist structure. It is, on the contrary, seen as having independent power over that structure. Consequently, it is thought possible for workers to take possession of the state apparatus through the ballot box and in this way control and tame capital.

The political road is regularly urged despite the usual disclaimer that 'The TW does not often discuss political matters' (TWNov1934:15). In November 1934, the TW called for workers to become active and financially support the Labour Party in the next election (TW, Nov1934:15).

In September 1931, there was still a remnant of the old syndicalism:

'There should be industrial representation in Parliament and not geographical representation,' (TW, Sept1931:8).

Opposition to communist influence in the trade union movement continued in this period. This was particularly in connection with the Brisbane Maru dispute in 1931 and the freezing workers' strike when communists attacked Roberts both at union meetings and in the columns of the Red Worker (the Communist Party paper) (RP,B25/1:18Nov32). For example, the TW quotes an article sent by a New Zealand communist writer to the Bulletin of the International of Seamen and Harbour Workers, (the Communist opposition to the International Transport Workers' Federation). The TW comments:

'Certainly those who supplied this report from New Zealand would lead the people overseas to believe that they counted for something in the transport industry in New Zealand, but at a recent meeting at Wellington when a show of hands was called as to how many supporters this bunch of scandalisers had, only two out of a meeting of about twelve hundred indicated that they supported the union-busting tactics which are being attempted by a few malcontents,' (TW,Oct1932:5).

As we have seen, there was considerable rank-and-file resistance and criticism of the official 'do nothing' policy in the face of employer attacks and communist activities had some fertile ground on which to work. Red-baiting was a way of dealing with criticism and is therefore a sign of leader domination, a collaborationist feature.

The rejection of the communist political solution to the crises of capitalism while wholeheartedly adopting a labourist one, is again symptomatic of the lack of class struggle in the position of the Federation.

politically, then, in this period, the Federation consolidated its position of seeking to gain union objectives, in collaborationsit fashion, in part through representation in Parliament.

Ideological

In this period, the TW expanded considerably the number of pages contained in each issue. From a regular eight pages it grew to sixteen, twenty and occasionally 24 pages for a 'bumper' Christmas issue. But this extra space was largely taken up with extra advertisements. The policy against advertising had been reversed back in 1923 but clearly the management of the paper had not pursued it until the 30's. Photographs now appeared, often of port facilities and activity or union personalities, but also some which were quite irrelevant to union issues, such as scenic spots. The general style of presentation of the paper changed, too. There were now large banner headlines across the front page, where previously these had been single column only. This more sensational presentation matched the economic and social crisis which the paper reported and commented on. Christmas issues frequently had a coloured cover and a photograph. In December 1932, the cover was a glossy full page advertisement for Ovaltine. This was scarcely designed to wake up readers and alert them to the inner dynamics of the capitalist system! While the content was generally similar to the previous period, the shift in the style of presentation indicated a relative depoliticisation of the impact of its contents; the total impact of the paper is now less bluntly critical - the sensational graphics of the headlines are paradoxically soporific in the context

of the greatly increased space devoted to advertising. A subtle but significant shift has occurred from a paper which stimulated thinking and activity to one which now assumes and promotes passivity. This is the most important indication of a shift in the consciousness in general expressed by the watersiders.

The consciousness of the Waterside Workers Federation at this period 1930-34 is a consolidation of the themes and tendencies we found in 1921-29 - a shift away from objective analysis to more abstract moralising. This parallels the increasing commitment to the concept of Capital and Labour as social partners with a consequent lack of class struggle. The push to achieve union goals through parliamentary as well as industrial methods is stepped up. The increasing collaborationism of the Federation is reflected most strongly in the change in presentation of the monthly newspaper, the TW. It begins to resemble more and more the bourgeois press both in its dependence on advertisements and the sensationalism and trivialisation of its presentation - 'The Medium is the Message'.

While, as we have noted, some revolutionary features remain, the general trend is again toward a growing collaborationism which cannot be accounted for solely on the basis of the undoubted constraints facing the Waterside Workers' Federation.

LABOUR GOVERNMENT 1935-1937

This period sees the lifting of the Depression and the coming to power of the Labour Government. The changed economic and political context confronting the watersiders exposes and emphasises tendencies which we have already noted - a lack of class struggle at the economic level and a total commitment to political action by the Labour government to achieve union goals. In the sampled issues of the TW, there is now little trace of the classic Marxist analysis which was still to be discerned in the period 1930-34.

WHAT ISEconomic

During this period, there remain some minor traces of a generally historical materialist approach underlying economic analysis. Thus:

'Mankind has struggled through the ages and has harnessed the forces of nature,' (TW, Jan 1935:1).

In an article on the general nature of capitalism, the TW says:

'Machines have increased production but leave people hungry. Capitalism has created new sciences and techniques which will, in themselves, overthrow the present social order,' (TW, June 1935:3).

This is the economist, technologically determinist analysis which we have already seen. It appears again in the analysis of Fascism. Fascism is analysed as the:

'political gangsterism of the magnates of capital...But it cannot override economic laws and save capitalism,' (TW,May1936:18).

Roosevelt's New Deal is seen as an interesting experiment in running capitalism in a planned way, a non-capitalist way. Roosevelt is identified as a bourgeois politician trying to save capitalism in the face of bourgeois opposition, (TWMar1936:21). The TW is implicitly asking whether capitalism can be saved from its own nature which is eventual self-destruction. This is an assertion again of the historically contingent and specific nature of capitalism at the same time as it is asserting teleological laws of capitalist development.

However, the identification of state intervention of the New Deal type as 'non-capitalist' implies an analysis of the state which we have already seen, the state as an instrument above and apart from class antagonism and exploitation.

In terms of class analysis, bankers are again identified as the chief exploiters. 'The Thralldom of the People to Money Power' is the title of one article on bankers and banking (TW,Mar1937:10). An article in May 1936 demands State control of currency and credit as a solution:

'Private ownership has abused the monopoly it obtained of currency and credit. It has failed to supply enough currency to distribute and utilise the expanded supply of goods. This intensified the Depression...Currency and credit must be placed on a new scientific basis - that is, the ability of the people to produce goods and render services to the nation,' (TW,May1936:5).

Idealism and state instrumentalism are again seen in the theme of moral irresponsibility of the owners of capital, and a view of the state as capable of countering this. The appeal to actual labour and production, use values, as the basis for the issue of currency as a measure of exchange value, hints at non-capitalist relations, but these are unattainable by the means of the proposed social issue of credit. This is the confused non-revolutionary kind of analysis we have already seen. The theme of rational production for human needs against the ultimate irrationality of the pursuit of exchange value as the motivation for the production of use values is again evident in the analysis of the world-wide nature of the Depression:

'All countries are busy feeding all countries but their own and at cheaper prices to foreigners than to their own. Such is capitalism and the gospel of production for profit instead of for use,' (ibid).

Another theme which is reiterated is that of economic independence from Britain:

'Let us cut this clap-trap about the Mother Country and patriotism and preference,' (TW,June1935:1).

The TW says Britain is protecting its own interests; it won't take New Zealand's surplus goods anymore. Thus New Zealand's domestic market becomes more important. This requires adequate wages (TW, June 1935:1-2). This is the argument repeated so regularly in the TW - the need to maintain purchasing power and increase wages. As we have noted, while it is a necessary union demand, since it assumes harmony between wage demands and the pursuit of profit, it is a collaborationist feature.

There are regular references to the threat of Fascism as an anti-working class force (e.g. Jan 1936:9; May 1936:19; May 1935:6; Feb 1936:22,23; Mar 1936:8) as well as many minor news items on political and economic developments around the world. Trade union interests are thus seen to be linked with international events. The watersiders donated £300 to the Spanish Distress Relief Fund (RP, 543/16:13). However, this is a small sum when compared with the large amounts which we have noted, given in the depths of the Depression, to overseas industrial struggles. This suggests that among rank-and-file watersiders, political consciousness was not nearly as developed as industrial consciousness. Thus while the official organ seeks to expand the horizons of members and establish links between various historical phenomena in a materialist manner, this was considerably ahead of the consciousness of the membership. However, this leading role is a progressive one towards the revolutionary pole of the typology.

The analysis of economic relations in this period combines the paradox we have seen of explanation in terms of the moral irresponsibility of individuals with explanation in terms of the inevitable laws of historical development. Both these features, economism and moralism, are relatively collaborationist features.

Political

With the coming to power of a Labour Government, not unexpectedly, a further shift takes place in the analysis of the nature of the state. The concept which was seen emerging in the period 1930-34 of the state, not merely as a potential working class instrument, but as a classless representative of the 'community', now becomes a dominant theme.

An article in March 1937 looks at the duty of workers to the State. Service to the State is identified as service to the common good - 'the grandest concept of human life,' (TW,Mar1937:3). The article says that the State has difficulty in reciprocating the duty owed by workers because of the 'Tory legacy'. Shortcomings in the State's functioning as a representative of the 'community' are thus tacitly acknowledged but explained away as the fault of the Tories. This view of the State as classless, above and independent of class antagonisms, is purely collaborationist; in fact, it is a nascent Fascist concept.

The response to the 1936 Amendment to the IC&A Act makes explicit in analysis the tacit acceptance of arbitration which we have noted in

previous chapters. The reintroduction of compulsory arbitration is accepted because:

'the larger unions would be selfish indeed to oppose the reintroduction of this measure to protect weaker unions,' (TW, May 1936: 15).

Compulsory unionism is accepted because:

'It will compel all workers to join. so they will no longer be able to receive the benefits without contributing' (ibid).

This intervention by the state in industrial matters is now fully endorsed and state support is preferred to industrial action to maintain union organisation. The Labour Party's occupation of parliament is implicitly deemed to have changed the nature of these institutions. This is dependence on the bourgeois state, not independent working class action and is therefore a collaborationist feature.

The concept of efficiency is analysed in class terms. Making the distinction between its meaning for workers and employers respectively, the TW accuses the Arbitration Court of operating under the definition of efficiency which supports capital interests. The Labour government is absolved from responsibility in the functioning of the legislation in the hands of the Arbitration Court. Commenting on the reluctance of the Court of Arbitration to award a 40 hour week as provided in the IC&A Act amendment on the grounds of the need for

efficiency in industry, the TW says that 'efficient running of industry' as a condition for the introduction of the 40 hour week must be interpreted as the Legislature intended, to absorb unemployed labour, not as the employers interpret it, the ability to make a profit (TW,Jul1936:13). The TW is leaning over backwards not to blame the Labour Government for essentially making the introduction of the 40 hour week subject to capitalist criteria and interests.

The Labour Government can do no wrong. In response to press attacks on Savage's overseas trip to the Imperial Conference, the TW says:

'If they knew anything about Imperial politics, they would realise very soon that human relations between people of the Commonwealth of Nations are the greatest factor in world politics today,' (TW,Mar1937:1).

This is devoid of analysis and is simply a knee-jerk reaction in fulsome defence of Savage.

So, in general in this period, loyalty to the Labour Government clouded political analysis and the view of the State as a class state is now completely absent. These are outright collaborationist features.

Ideological

As in previous periods, the promoters of bourgeois economic measures are exposed as speaking for class interests rather than as the objective academic advisers they claim to be. Thus an article in July 1935 is headed 'Apologies of Paid Prophets' and goes on:

'Subsidised economists are responsible for policies which have not produced the goods,' (TW,Jul1935:1).

And in May 1936:

'Some Quack Economists - Do so-called economists know their business or, like lawyers, do they plead as paid?' (TW,May1936:1).

Thus the integrity and expertise of bourgeois ideologues is attacked. Women are seen as having a special ideological role related to their role as homemakers and child-rearers:

'Women are concerned with the everyday struggle and the plight of wasted youth. Let them remind the young of the lessons to be learned and oppose the propaganda in school texts,' (TW,Jan1935:15).

So at this period of the first Labour Government, while Marxist analyses of the economy and the State have entirely disappeared, only in the ideological sphere, does a measure of class analysis remain.

WHAT SHOULD BE

As the economy was pulling out of the Depression, the watersiders concentrated on restoring the wage cuts of 1931 and on shortening the working week. They did this with considerable success, greatly improving their conditions and wages.

Wages were restored to their 1931 levels in 1936 (RP,B39:25Nov1936) and a guaranteed wage was established with the bureau system for the engagement of labour in 1937. The bureau system was a joint union employer venture which equalised work and provided economic security. It was a major advance in that it did away with most of the evils of casual employment and gave the watersiders much more control over their employment conditions. This assisted the strength of their organisation, in eliminating the possibility of victimisation, so rife under the previous system. The guaranteed wage which was part of the new system was a significant economic gain.

However, the 40 hour week, won in 1936, brought higher wages rather than shorter working hours, due to expanding trade. While this might appear to be a preference for immediate cash payment over the need to preserve the quality of their labour power, this was an effect of the bureau system. Employers were unwilling to pay a guaranteed wage to the number of workers who were required at peak periods. Thus, with the limitation of membership under the bureau system, the 40 hour week was in conflict in practice with preference to unionists. If there was extra work, should union members work overtime or should non-union labour be employed? Thus a limit of 40 hours per week of actual work was rejected at the 1937 Conference (RP,B39:1Dec1937). This decision placed the need to maintain organisational control by the collective over the need to protect leisure time. The acceptance of the necessity of overtime is not, then, to be interpreted as a collaborationist position.

Leisure time and labour power were still protected over the question of Saturday afternoon work. The 1935 Conference considered a remit to abolish Saturday afternoon work. Roberts opposed this, saying:

'We are the only country in the world that does not work around the clock...A refusal to work Saturday afternoons would be a serious bar to a working agreement,' (RP,B26/1:16Dec1935).

This is another example of the collaborationist tendencies of Roberts' leadership. The remit was amended to demand a 3 1/2 hour minimum payment for work started after 12.30 pm on Saturdays (ibid). As we saw earlier, a penalty payment for a poor working condition was a strategy towards its eventual abolition. Saturday afternoon work was finally abolished in 1937 (RP,B39:1Dec1937). But casual work habits died hard, the 'freedom' offered by unstructured work being valued above the assurance of annual holidays. Thus, a remit for two weeks paid annual holiday, put forward at the 1937 Conference, was amended to seek a monthly payment on a pro-rata basis. In this respect, a measure of individualism remained and was a minor collaborationist feature.

Cooperative stevedoring was still a demand. It was argued that it would give a guaranteed wage, sick benefits and superannuation (RP,B39:10Dec1937). While it was a demand within capitalist parameters, with prosperity returning, cooperative stevedoring under union control represented a significant encroachment on capital when there were profits to share rather than losses. It was therefore a progressive feature, nearer the revolutionary pole of the typology.

Discussions on the use of the Federation's Legal Aid Fund reveal contradictory tendencies, combining both pro-producer and anti-producer attitudes. Demands on the Federation's Fund for members on Workers Compensation were still heavy. On the one hand, concern was expressed that malingerers might be milking the fund, (RP, E26/1:12Dec1935). This is a typically boss-oriented view of workers. But the demand for compensation as a State service was again raised (ibid). This latter is a pro-producer position.

The lift in the economy thus enabled the watersiders to greatly improve their wages and conditions of work. They achieved decasualisation and a guaranteed wage much earlier than watersiders and dockers in other parts of the world. (In Britain the 'auction block' system of hiring lasted right into the 60's (Wilson, 1972:13). Decasualisation was a major advance and provided the basis for the strong militancy of the forties. With their strong pro-producer push, the watersiders made considerable gains from capital. While not revolutionary as such, it is closer to that pole of the typology than to collaborationism.

Long Term

In this period, the watersiders still retain long term perspectives. These remain the same as those we have already seen: to develop industrial unionism to prepare for cooperative management of industry by trade unions on the basis of cooperation. In January 1935, the lead article says:

'While we must fight the every day struggle for better wages and conditions, we must never forget that our real objective must be production of goods for use instead of profit...Service to the people will take the place of wage slavery when the people realise that factories are idle because they exist for profit, not use,' (TW,Jan1935:1).

'The functions of trade unions must be widened beyond wages and conditions to become socially necessary agencies in production, distribution and the rendering of services to the nation,' (TW,May1936:3).

'Many industries today could be operated by the union or unions if they were industrially organised. There is only one cure for mass irresponsibility and that is the collective responsibility of the workers to do the work,' (TW,Mar1937:2).

As we have repeatedly noted, this is a collaborationist analysis of the capitalist state. The key factor in change is still ideological. In the view of the TW, the new system will arrive 'when the people realise', as if it were simply a matter of voting for it at the ballot box. The structural barriers to change and its nature, are ignored.

But the distinction between workers' control of socialised industries and joint worker-employer management of privately owned enterprises is very hazy indeed. To become 'socially necessary agencies' is not the same as taking over ownership. Thus the same article goes on:

'Changing methods of industrial production are better managed through industrial organisation of workers. There is more harmony of production if it is industrially organised. It is preparation for cooperative production,' (TW,Mar1937:2).

But whether the cooperation is with the bosses or with fellow workers in social ownership is quite unclear. Another article in the same issue asserts the need for workers to have a 'voice' in business:

'Workers are entitled to a collective voice in the business in which they are employed. They have a right to serve the community even if it does not suit the business concerned,' (ibid:4).

The 'business concerned' is still on the scene so the question of the expropriation of capitalists and the struggle for power is thus consistently evaded. Thus even the long-term perspectives are now thoroughly collaborationist.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE

Economic

Intra-class This period sees the final de jure formation of a national union in February 1937 (RP,B29:25Nov1937). However, as Roberts reported to the 1935 Conference, all but three unions had agreed to pool their funds two years before and the Federation had been operating as a national union since 1933 (RP, B38:19Dec1935).

The Federation showed a strong degree of leader domination. Big Jim Roberts maintained a strong hold on the policies of the organisation throughout the period covered by this thesis. This was evident in the fact that remits rarely went against the position he supported. When he was called away to a dispute during the 1937 Conference, a motion to continue the Conference in his absence was lost (RP,B39:8Dec1937). This is a strong indication of his considerable

charisma and the dependence of the delegates on his leadership. Federation policy and the content of the TW carry the unmistakable stamp of the ideas he expressed in his reports.

Another sign of leader domination is the rejection of a remit at the 1935 Conference to have the national Executive elected by a plebiscite of the rank and file. It was argued against the remit that big unions would outvote small ones (RP,B26/1:18Dec1935). This represents both a clinging to union autonomy and the maintenance of control in the hands of the officials of member unions. These features of leader domination are collaborationist.

The Watersiders' Federation continued its policy of building industrial organisation and cohesion outside its own body. It took the initiative in organising other waterfront labour. In 1937, a nation-wide Harbour Board Employees Union for the permanent employees of the Harbour Boards was set up through the efforts of Roberts (Townsend,1985:19). The use of these 'permanents' by the Harbour Boards if labour was short had been a longstanding threat to the watersiders' organisation. The development was thus a significant step forward in waterfront industrial organisation. This consistent push for widening union organisation is evident throughout the period covered by this thesis and is a relatively revolutionary feature.

The Watersiders' Federation was embroiled in the upheaval in the Alliance of Labour, over the question of reorganising the freezing workers' unions in the wake of the 1932 strike. The faction led by

Walsh and the seamen defeated that led by Roberts and the watersiders, and with the formation of the Federation of Labour in 1937, Roberts, denied a role in the new organisation, devoted his energies to the Labour Party, of which he was President from 1937 to 1950. Thus, at the end of our period, the watersiders were no longer the leading force in the trade union movement at large that it had been since 1916.

While Roberts was defeated in the wider trade union movement, he remained firmly at the helm of the Waterside Workers Federation. The split in the Alliance had repercussions in the watersiders' organisation, where the President, Lew Glover, had taken Walsh's side against Roberts and was forced to resign in May 1936 (TW, June 1936:16).

The enmity between Roberts and Walsh emerged again in a bitter demarcation dispute with the Seamen's Union in 1937. The Seamen's Union came to an agreement with their employers that they were to have coverage of work that watersiders already covered under their agreement. Roberts said to the 1937 Conference that it was acceptable for seamen to do the work, provided they did it under the Watersiders' agreement. This was not unreasonable since under the Watersiders' agreement this work was paid 2/8 per hour while under the Seamen's agreement it was 1/7 per hour (RP, B39:10Dec1937). This was a basic question of extracting the maximum price for labour-power rather than preserving sectional rights.

The Federation maintained its international perspective throughout this period. The major concern in connection with the international labour movement was the rise of fascism and its attacks on trade union rights (RP,B39:25Nov1937). It is this concern that underlies the regular articles on fascism in the TW. In calling for a broad trade union organisation in New Zealand on the model of the British TUC, the TW said:

'We need an organisation to deal with fascism should it arise in New Zealand. Fascism has crushed the trade union movement in many countries,' (TW, May1936:3).

Thus, the struggle against fascism is seen to be very much a trade union issue. Again, the Federation was alive to the interconnections between trade union interests and other social forces and consistently pointed them out to its readers. This continuing ability and willingness to make links between various phenomena in social formations is a revolutionary feature.

Inter-class With the lifting of the Depression, the watersiders had much more scope for struggle for gains from capital. However, the opportunities which this offered were not pushed as far as they might have been.

Roberts said in his report to the 1937 Conference that the employers were refusing to negotiate in the National Disputes Committee and were breaking the current agreement (RP,B43/17:19). But he rejected job action as a solution because 'it would be against the best

interests of the Labour Government' (ibid). However, rank and file watersiders thought otherwise. Roberts complained to the same Conference that watersiders supported press attacks on them by taking action on the job 'when the trouble could be adjusted easily to the benefit of the men'. Roberts said that more industrial discipline was needed especially since the Labour Government was being attacked through the actions of the watersiders (RP,B39:10Dec1937).

The watersiders were able to restore their wage cuts and win the 40 hour week without recourse to the Court of Arbitration. However, the above indicates that the Union did not push its advantage as far as it could for fear of the effects on the Labour government. Thus more weight was being placed on political action through a 'workers' party than on independent working class struggle which the improved economic circumstances made possible. This simply exposes more clearly the lack of class struggle we discerned beneath the Depression constraints.

Political

Political activity through the Labour Party and loyalty to it became a leading feature of watersiders' policies in this period, with industrial organisation and struggle subordinated to it.

An article in July 1935 sees trade unions as having functions under capitalism beyond bread and butter issues but this extension of their role was to make their voice heard in the formation of state and local body politics. Thus an article in July 1935 said:

'The socialist view of working class activity is that as a class, workers will either benefit or suffer from any social legislation enacted. The laws today favour class privilege. Trade unions must embrace all spheres - the election of Members of Parliament, the initiation of laws, local politics, education, health etc,' (TW,Jul935:4).

These issues are very much concerns of the state. The TW is saying that it is now the role of trade unions to transcend their bread and butter aims by being participants in capitalist state decisions, a very different approach indeed to the transcendence of immediate trade union aims to become 'levers for the emancipation of the working class' as asserted by the classical revolutionary theorists. For trade unions to take on a revolutionary role, they must use their leverage to overthrow the capitalist state, not collaborate with it. This support of the capitalist state is a distinctly collaborationist feature in terms of the typology.

The task of the trade union movement was to assist the Labour Government to build socialism. After the election of the Labour Government, the TW said:

'The return of a Labour Government demands a change in policy by the trade union movement and a new outlook from the working class point of view generally. We must abandon the policy of hostility to Government and cooperate with the Labour Government in its present difficult job...We need to cooperate to achieve Labour's grand objective - socialism,' (TW,May1936:2).

The notion that the Labour Governments's objective is to build socialism and that it could do so by use of the capitalist state is quintessentially social democratic and non-revolutionary. The concept of socialism assumed here is the one we have previously noted, state activity. This completely ignores the class nature of the capitalist state. The purpose of industrial organisation was not now industrial struggle with employers but now was to:

'be a big influence in deciding who shall be elected to public bodies,' (TWJul36:19)

and

'to give practical cooperation to the Labour Government,' (TW,May1936:2).

Industrial struggle was to be limited to assist Labour politically but also to:

'assist it in assuring higher efficiency in every productive agency and this in turn will assure economic security and a higher standard of life for New Zealanders,' (TW,Mar1937:1).

This position is now a purely collaborationist one involving active assistance to capitalists to extract surplus value. The 'higher standard of living' which could follow from such collaboration could only occur through workers yielding a larger proportion of the expanded value they create to the capitalist class. Hence, they would increase their relative immiseration and increase the power and wealth of the class which ruled and exploited them. So now, not only

is there a totally neutral analysis of the capitalist state as an instrument to serve working class interests, but because the state is nominally under the control of a working class party, production itself is now seen to serve those interests. This is despite the fact that it is in private ownership by a property owning class and the new value socially created is siphoned off into private hands. Implicit here is the idea that the legal and political superstructure is more fundamental in the dynamics of the social formation than the economic infrastructure, the relations of production. This is diametrically opposed to the Marxist historical materialist concept that economic relations are fundamental and is thus a collaborationist position.

Given this analysis, the constant sniping by the Communist Party was not surprising. The favour was returned from time to time in the TW (e.g. May1935:7; Apr1935:12; May1935:16; Nov1935:17; May1936:6). However, to put this in perspective, there were many more articles on the threat of fascism.

At this period then, within the context of the coming to power of a Labour Government, we see a further shift in political strategy. Now, not only is political action through the Labour Party favoured, but economic action is subordinated to this. In the previous period, political action was seen as a support and servant of the industrial struggle, not its director.

Ideological

The TW was financially very successful in this period. Roberts reported to the 1937 Conference that though the paper had expanded to 32 pages, there was not enough space for all the advertising available. He reported that the TW account stood at £4530, an enormous sum at that time (RP,B39:62). However, and no doubt, it was not a coincidence, this commercial success was matched by the blandness of the presentation and political line which we analysed in the previous period. The hoarding of the £4530, which could well have been used for organising purposes, is a strong indicator of the degree to which struggle at the level of consciousness has displaced struggle at the material level. This is further evidence of an outright collaborationist position.

This period sees the culmination of a shift in consciousness, the roots of which we discerned as far back as the boom period 1916-21. It was less obvious at that time because of the accompanying Marxist economic analysis and the verbal adherence to socialist goals. This shift involved an intensification of collaboration with capitalists as 'social partners'. This led to a complete turnaround in political direction. The Watersider Workers Federation moved from a position which rejected the utility of all political action to one which entirely suppressed economic struggle in favour of complete reliance on political action. This position, together with the accompanying elevation of consciousness as a prime focus, indicate a thoroughgoing collaborationism. This is not contradicted by a remaining commitment to industrial unionism and a generally internationalist outlook.

Organisation was not a tool for action but remained largely a bureaucratic structure. Thus, the overall picture in this period, despite a number of progressive features, is definitely collaborationist.

CONCLUSION

In our concluding chapter we will attempt to weave together the three strands of this thesis - the historical forces in operation in New Zealand 1915-1937, the level of struggle or lack of it with which the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation met those forces and the typology developed to assess the level of that struggle.

In the earlier section of this thesis, we developed a typology, a series of conceptual elements, to use as an analytical device to assess the consciousness of trade unions. The typology consists of a range of elements, each with a revolutionary and collaborationist pole. Any particular union can exhibit incoherent and contradictory conceptualisations of these various elements. Thus, some of its concepts may be more revolutionary while others may be more collaborationist. However, the characterisation of a union's consciousness involves a qualitative balancing of these various elements; they cannot be considered in isolation from each other.

Trade union consciousness was defined as the concepts embedded in the official words and actions of trade unions as organisations, that is to say, their practices. Since the purpose has been to gauge the degree of revolutionary consciousness, we have been concerned to expose the degree of struggle against capitalist domination and exploitation which such practices might or might not embody. If a union is shown to struggle, if it:

'makes all the indispensable moral and material preparations for the working class at a given moment to be able to launch a successful offensive against capital and subject it to its law, then the trade union is a revolutionary instrument' (Gramsci, 1968:39, my emphasis).

The emphasis is on how a union functions within the historical conjuncture in which it is situated and the degree of struggle exhibited against it. Thus a union could be described as revolutionary even though its situation might not be so. The nature of the historical situation is thus crucial to the assessment of the revolutionary nature or otherwise of a trade union as its own practices within that situation.

The union selected as a case study, the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation, occupied a strategic place in the New Zealand economy, having the power to cut the flow of overseas trade on which the New Zealand economy was so heavily reliant. However, their own employment fluctuated with the extreme variability of that flow and they prospered or suffered accordingly. As well as boom and bust economic conditions, the watersiders and the trade union movement as a whole faced active political intervention by the state to weaken workers' organisation and an anti-worker climate of opinion. In these conditions, the trade union movement was divided and weak and unable to resist government attacks during economic downturns.

The watersiders played the leading role in the Alliance of Labour, reputedly the more militant of the two umbrella organisations of trade unions. However, they were not the most militant within that

organisation. They were in regular conflict with the miners and in particular the seamen who supported a more militant approach to class struggle.

Taking the period 1915-1937 as a whole, the watersiders held a fundamentally reformist position to the point of collaborationism. But this was overlaid by some Marxist analysis and class struggle rhetoric. In the earlier boom years of our period of study, the analysis of existing class relations at the economic level was uncompromisingly Marxist. Workers were seen to be exploited at the point of production and divisions within the ruling class were seen to be subordinate to that primary conflict of interest. The solution for workers was specifically socialist - to organise to:

'socially own and democratically control the industries and wealth they have produced,' (TW, Aug 1916:1).

However, even at this early stage, the political structures, while seen as instruments of class rule, were analysed in quite non-revolutionary terms. Parliament was seen as a refuge for the corrupt and self-serving and, for this reason, was in no way to be relied on to assist workers. Its class nature was seen to be in the moral failings of individuals, not its structural position in capitalist society. Industrial organisation 'along lines of class and industry' was the key. It was to be a preparation for governing the future socialist society - an 'industrial parliament'.

Social systems were seen to be in the process of historical development and were not eternal or given. They were governed by laws based on the development of production. These could be discovered by the use of human reason through science. Thus craft unionism was said to have been made obsolete and industrial unionism was the scientific form of organisation to match the development of the technology. There was often an underlying evolutionary model of history, a view of society analogous to an evolving natural organism. Capitalism was crumbling and socialism was seen as a natural and inevitable culmination to social development.

The reliance on trade unions as a basis for socialist transformation mistakes their role in capitalist societies. Trade unions lack the independent position of the revolutionary party which allows the latter to negate capitalist relations. The evolutionary model of history, together with this reliance on trade unions as agents of social revolution, therefore amounts to a thoroughgoing economist position. It ignores the role of the state in maintaining capitalist relations and consequently lacks an appropriate strategy for overthrowing that state.

Throughout our period, ideas promulgated by establishment media and authorities were exposed as serving capitalist interests. Considerable financial and organisational resources were devoted in the *TW* and the Maoriland Worker to presenting a working class point of view. Workers were alternately castigated for their foolishness as dupes of capitalist propaganda or flattered as far more

knowledgeable than bourgeois authorities. The struggle against bourgeois ideology thus had a high priority.

The generally Marxist position rapidly took a back seat as depression and stagnation hit. It disappeared entirely in the period of the Labour Government. Economic analysis now concentrated more and more on immediate ills and their solution. This took the form of castigation of 'financiers and bondholders from overseas' and state issue of credit was proposed along the lines of Douglas Social Credit, which was a popular position within labour circles in the thirties. It is a totally reformist position.

Similarly, at the political level, the state was no longer seen as inherently a class state; gradually the state came to be seen as having the potential of serving working class goals if it was in the 'right' hands. It thus came to be seen as a neutral instrument, potentially able to be used in the interests of workers. With the election of the Labour Government, the concept of the state showed a further shift. It was now seen as an embodiment of the 'community', a concept devoid of class content.

Linked to this development was a progressive vagueness about the nature of the future society under socialism. Instead of the specific goal of social ownership of industry, the formula came to be 'production for use instead of profit'. Under the Labour Government, workers were urged to increase production and build a higher standard of living to assist in the building of 'socialism'. This is a

totally collaborationist position, a corollary of the idea of the state representing the 'community'.

However, this was not an entirely new development. Elements of collaborationism are evident at the beginning of our period in the use and reliance on Disputes Committees as a means of achieving union objectives. The strike weapon was rejected as 'unscientific' and, in unfavourable economic conditions, even the reviled Arbitration Court was preferred as a last resort, as opposed to striking, to defend union interests. This was so even in somewhat more favourable conditions as we saw in 1923. The 'social partners' approach was particularly evident in the transformation of the schemes for union contracting for stevedoring work into joint control schemes with the employers.

Organisation along lines of class and industry was a constant theme right through the period. Initially this was presented as the means of preparation for a transformation to socialism. However, since, as we have seen, the means of achieving union goals were primarily by negotiation, this notion of organisation was actually a form of bureaucracy with the emphasis on organisational links and lines of authority. Despite the rhetoric, organisation was not an instrument of action. It was in fact regularly used to hold back the action of member and other unions. We saw this in the freezing workers' strike, in the Lyttleton union's fight to abolish Saturday work and in the Napier union's efforts to win adequate accomodation on the wharf.

Organisationally, the Waterside Workers' Federation presented a paradoxical combination of domination by the leadership and a lack of discipline among the somewhat individualistic rank-and-file. Throughout the period of study, the figure of Big Jim Roberts towers over the Federation figuratively as well as physically. It is clear that, in a large measure, he mapped out the direction and policies of the Federation. Our analysis has shown this to be an increasing collaborationism, confirming the verdict of Johnny Mitchell, former executive member of the Federation, who said of Roberts that he was 'left in words, right in practice' (Mitchell, interview:18May1984). While his ideas prevailed, they did not go unchallenged and, as we saw, disagreement was regularly expressed.

Despite his domination of Federation policies, it should not be concluded that these were simply the result of the charisma of this one powerful individual. That the watersiders allowed their organisation to be dominated by a single leader in this way is a statement about that organisation. Shortly after the end of the period of study, in 1941, Roberts was ousted from the leadership. With changed historical conditions, his collaborationist approach was rendered obsolete, and more militant tendencies in the union won the support of the membership. Thus the largely collaborationist policies, while formulated by Roberts, were in fact the policies of an organised collective, the New Zealand Waterside Workers' Federation.

In our period, the overall strategy of the watersiders saw a shift from exclusive dependence on negotiation at the economic level to the exclusion of political action, to the use of political action as a support to industrial activity, till finally, under the Labour Government, industrial activity was entirely subordinated to political methods. This latter involved a fully collaborationist policy at the economic level.

The strong stress on the ideological struggle through the TW was a logical concomitant of the lack of struggle at the economic and political levels. Little real concrete action against capital was either proposed in the TW or carried out in practice. The delusions of workers were seen as key obstacles to socialism. As the strategy to overthrow capitalism, the emphasis was on exposing it with vigour and sarcasm. But this was increasingly based on moral outrage and indignation in contrast to the more objective analysis of the earlier period.

Despite the fact that the ideas conveyed were often Marxist, the Watersider Workers Federation showed an over-reliance on the communication of ideas as a form of struggle. Since this was a substitute for class struggle in practice instead of its informant, this once again reveals the essentially passive, reformist position of the union. It is also idealist in that it relies on a change of consciousness to change the world rather than material transformation.

The historicist economism of analysis at the economic level was thus combined with a voluntarist, moralistic analysis at the political and ideological levels. In this contradictory fashion, the question of conscious action to achieve socialism was consistently avoided.

But if the watersiders did not engage in sharp struggles with employers, as did the miners, seamen, freezing workers and railwaymen, they did not incur the damage to their organisation suffered by these unions. Hence, in terms of its role as a trade union, it was most effective. It made considerable gains for its members and maintained its level of membership and organisation a good deal better than most during the depression holocaust.

The New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation 1915-1937 was constrained by economic depression, political repression, employer attacks and a weak, divided trade union movement. The watersiders confined themselves in practice to bread and butter aims and did not function as a 'lever for the final emancipation of the working class'. We thus have picture of a union which used a fair degree of revolutionary rhetoric but which was in practice reformist and finally collaborationist.

Nonetheless, the revolutionary rhetoric and vision of an alternative society did exist within this fundamental reformism. The watersiders considered a range of social issues and analysis as relevant to their objectives. In their awareness, if not in material practice, they transcended purely bread and butter goals. Theirs was no business

unionism and they thus present a paradox.

The typology has enabled us to expose this paradox. Because it consists of a range of elements, it has highlighted the varying combinations of revolutionary and collaborationist positions adopted by the watersiders in regard to those elements. Because the typology constitutes a continuum rather than a number of discrete categories, it has made it possible to delineate the shifts, sometimes subtle, sometimes dramatic, which occurred in the consciousness of the watersiders in the period under study. The typology also provides a consistent framework which, if applied to different unions at different historical periods, would permit useful comparisons to be drawn.

The approach in this thesis has been to study the official policies of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation as both a product and a significant force in shaping the consciousness of its members. We have not been concerned to demonstrate that these policies expressed the opinions of the members as individuals. Even if it had been possible to conduct a survey of individual attitudes, this would not have been relevant to this project.

This focus on organisationally expressed consciousness has not, however, been a process of reification, a view of the union as something separate from its members. A trade union organises its members in a collective which supercedes their atomised individuality. As we saw with the leading role of Roberts, while

trade unions may appear to be shaped and dominated by individuals, they are in fact collective, historical products. To have attempted to consider individual members or leaders separately from their organisational expression would have been idealist and historically meaningless.

This study of the watersiders, a reputedly militant union, has revealed it to be the opposite. It therefore, like previous studies mentioned (Mills, 1977; Porzolt, 1983), brings into question the craft/industrial union, militant/moderate distinction so well established in New Zealand historiography.

This thesis has only been in the nature of a preliminary sinking of a drill in the search for the oil on trade union consciousness in New Zealand. Future research could usefully compare the position of the watersiders with that of the miners or the seamen, with whom they were in regular political conflict. Such a comparison could expose more clearly the extent to which the watersiders failed or succeeded in challenging capital as much as permitted by the constraints we have outlined in the period 1915-1937. Alternatively, the position of the watersiders 1915-1937 could be compared with their subsequent more militant period of the forties culminating in the 1951 lockout under the leadership of Barnes and Hill. Further exploration of other craft unions would also be useful. Thus a historical map of the consciousness of the New Zealand trade union movement could be gradually drafted.

However, the real theoretical and historical challenge is to establish the material basis of the consciousness displayed. What were the forces which made the trade union movement what it was and is? Much current research and theoretical work is directed at the forces tending to the incorporation of trade unions within capitalist structures and many would deny any revolutionary potential to trade unions. However, those who do so need to explain why all unions are not business unions, seeking purely instrumental ends and how it is that trade unions regularly transcend simple bread and butter aims, in verbal practice, at least. It is necessary to explain the paradox presented by a union like the watersiders, why they had more than a nodding acquaintance with Karl Marx's ideas and why these seemed at all relevant to their trade union activities. If the watersiders exhibited rhetorical smoke without revolutionary fire, then the fire which did produce that smoke must be searched out.

APPENDIX AData Base and Sampling Methods

The task in this thesis has been to use the typology developed to analyse the degree of revolutionary consciousness of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation 1915-1937, that is the degree of class struggle it presented to capital. The definition of consciousness used in this thesis is the concepts embedded in the practices of the trade union under study, these practices to be analysed in relation to the historical context. Since the focus of this thesis has been sociological, not historical, the full range of data appropriate to a full historical study has not been used. The data base was therefore limited to the TW, the monthly newspaper published by the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation from May 1916-1951, together with the minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Federation, (these were biennial after 1931). While the period of study is 1915-1937, the minutes of the 1st Annual Conference of the Federation in December 1915 were not available, and with the first issue of the TW in May 1916, the study has effectively covered the period 1916-1937.

Initially, a total record was made of the articles in the TW 1916-1937, noting the title or key topic together with the column space taken up by each article. This provided a summary and checklist of the total contents of the paper.

There are three approaches which could be taken in selecting material for more detailed study from this data base.

A. The Typology

Historical, tactical and organisational issues could be selected which exemplify dimensions of the typology, e.g. articles on parliament and arbitration to exemplify analysis of state institutions; the position of the union in regard to selected struggles of other unions as a test of solidarity; minutes of conferences to assess the comparative use of strike action, arbitration, deputations or disputes committees as modes of obtaining union objectives. These would entail study of both the TW and union decisions recorded in the minutes. To make the data more manageable, as regards the TW, study could be limited to front page articles only, articles of a certain length, certain years, certain months. This approach has the following drawbacks:

(a) Articles are not confined to single ideological elements. A whole range of theoretical elements can be displayed in an article broadly on a single empirical topic. The listing of the total contents does not provide enough information to select accurately.

(b) It is arbitrary to pre-select articles on the basis of ideological elements since these can only be determined after more detailed study.

(c) Different methods would need to be used to deal with different typological elements - it lacks simplicity and coherence.

B. Historical

Years could be selected on historical criteria external to the union's existence which would demonstrate its responses to various conditions. Thus, two years split over time where economic conditions were favourable could be selected to compare the union's responses to conditions which offered relatively more room for freedom of action. Thus 1919 could be compared with 1937. Similarly, two years involving unfavourable conditions, (e.g. 1922, 1932) could be compared to show the change in the unions's responses, if any, to conditions which were very constraining. This could involve a full historical study of those years, or could be confined to the TW. Confinement of study to the TW over four years would be too scanty a basis for study. It is questionable, too, whether selecting isolated years is a valid historical procedure. This method would not give a picture of development over the whole period and might well not expose all the elements of the typology.

C. Systematic Sampling

The study could be confined to the TW. The TW consists of 8 tabloid pages in its earlier years, but expands to 12, 16, 24 pages and more in the 1930's, though this expansion is more than compensated by the increased space devoted to advertising.

A single article is open to considerable analysis and the option is between more articles studied at less depth and fewer articles at more depth. The former option would give greater depth of coverage and sense of development, while the latter would probe more thoroughly. Thus, studying the total content, a systematic sample taking three issues at random out of the twelve published every year would produce one kind of result, while taking every other year or a random sample of one out of every five years another. The strength of systematic sampling is that it is :-

(a) flexible as to depth and breadth

(b) gives a true pattern of development

(c) gives a valid picture of the content of the paper

(d) gives full opportunity for all the elements of the typology to be used.

The weakness of this approach is that it would not allow the follow-up of responses to a particular issue which could take up several consecutive issues of the paper. It might miss out quite significant events in the life of the union or responses to significant events external to it. In other words it is somewhat arbitrary.

In the event, a combination of these approaches was adopted. A random sample was taken of three issues out of the twelve published each year 1916-37. (There were only ten issues unobtainable in that period; these were in 1916, 1917, 1922 and 1923. In these years, only two issues were selected). A number of categories of material were omitted to make the quantity of material more manageable. This included all articles of less than one column length, all fictional, verse and satirical material, together with all material of purely local importance (i.e. restricting study to material of national relevance only). As well, in the early years, the pages and columns contributed by the other transport unions were also omitted. The omission of satire and verse for practical reasons means that a rich source of material expressing consciousness has had to be ignored. In particular, the verse contributions of 'The Mixer' would make a study in itself of the social history of waterside life and the consciousness of watersiders.

These articles sampled from the TW provided the basis for using the 'What is' and 'What should be - long term' sections of the typology. For actual decisions on concrete goals and strategies - the 'What should be - short term' and 'What is to be Done' sections of the typology - the discussion and remits in the minutes were used, together with backup where appropriate from articles in the TW.

This sampling method was not rigidly adhered to, however. Where reactions to significant historical events were not thrown up in the sample, the total listing of the TW was used to select articles which

discussed that particular issue. An example was the Federation response to the 1932 IC&A Amendment Act. Similarly, where some of the elements of the typology were not illustrated in the sample, other articles which did so were used. Examples were the articles evidencing racism in December 1926 and March 1927.

Even this sample provided an excess of riches for the detailed analysis adopted. It is often only with detailed discussion of specific words and phrases that consciousness can be exposed. Thus, for reasons of space, further selection was still required. Those articles or remits which were finally used were chosen for their vivid embodiment of elements of the typology.

As noted in the introduction, this thesis makes no pretence to be a full historical study. However, from the material chosen, it is hoped that an accurate profile of the consciousness of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation has been outlined.

APPENDIX BTables

TABLE 1 Membership of N.Z. Waterside Workers' Unions 1915-1935

<u>Union</u>	<u>1915</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1917</u>	<u>1918</u>	<u>1919</u>	<u>1920</u>	<u>1921</u>
Auckland	967	1460	1154	978	1380	1342	1494
Bay of Islands	-	-	-	-	-	11	27
Bluff	264	294	201	173	230	222	267
Dunedin	645	442	370	287	355	391	383
Gisborne	197	162	149	165	188	208	298
Greymouth	54	208	214	188	195	230	215
Hokitika	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kaipara	39	65	69	92	21	83	79
Kawhia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lyttleton	441	390	309	431	535	418	808
Mapua	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Napier	206	126	134	102	114	116	292
Nelson	63	74	68	69	74	93	94
New Plymouth	73	56	68	93	88	136	167
Oamaru	60	47	59	63	84	102	91
Onehunga	52	66	84	66	72	68	85
Opotiki	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Patea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Picton	66	55	68	51	65	69	93
Port Chalmers	398	787	616	433	482	505	409
Takaka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tauranga	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Timaru	165	-	80	96	198	204	153
Tokomaru Bay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Waikokopu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wanganui	124	87	126	101	187	173	165
Wellington	1735	1901	1787	2213	2270	3080	2460
Westport	71	77	80	84	84	100	100
Whakatane	-	-	-	-	-	-	82
Whangarei	-	-	-	-	-	15	16
Total Membership of NZWW Federation	5620	6297	5636	5685	6622	7566	7778

TABLE 1 Membership of N.Z. Waterside Workers' Unions 1915-1935

<u>Union</u>	<u>1922</u>	<u>1923</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1925</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1927</u>	<u>1928</u>
Auckland	1352	1289	1412	1370	1378	1313	1310
Bay of Islands	79	95	-	20	-	61	57
Bluff	251	221	263	274	262	274	258
Dunedin	283	419	281	302	345	302	282
Gisborne	244	204	193	200	170	171	170
Greymouth	208	182	190	180	170	170	173
Hokitika	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kaipara	50	40	40	42	49	30	28
Kawhia	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lyttleton	788	706	652	653	672	706	710
Mapua	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Napier	313	358	305	267	294	287	266
Nelson	88	81	88	97	89	87	88
New Plymouth	165	165	195	224	200	200	200
Oamaru	103	95	88	77	77	80	77
Onehunga	78	57	65	68	60	50	59
Opotiki	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Patea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Picton	75	73	56	60	60	52	55
Port Chalmers	264	241	290	279	229	248	208
Takaka	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tauranga	-	-	-	-	-	32	28
Timaru	163	142	177	157	130	130	130
Tokomaru Bay	-	-	41	25	-	42	34
Waikokopu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Wanganui	134	203	184	182	174	163	158
Wellington	1778	1247	1721	1450	1870	1710	1660
Westport	105	99	100	98	102	101	100
Whakatane	17	57	60	57	16	16	12
Whangarei	38	11	15	20	15	20	17
Total Membership of NZWW Federation	6576	5985	6416	6102	6362	6245	6080

TABLE 1 Membership of N.Z. Waterside Workers' Unions 1915-1935

<u>Union</u>	<u>1929</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>1932</u>	<u>1933</u>	<u>1934</u>	<u>1935</u>
Auckland	1310	1353	1269	1150	1145	1120	1200
Bay of Islands	32	38	39	38	48	49	53
Bluff	247	252	248	250	250	248	248
Dunedin	280	294	280	263	260	260	260
Gisborne	158	157	157	151	160	160	165
Greymouth	185	184	173	170	155	140	150
Hokitika	-	-	-	-	14	17	14
Kaipara	28	20	20	20	28	28	28
Kawhia	-	-	-	6	6	6	6
Lyttleton	711	715	707	620	625	636	628
Mapua	-	36	32	12	45	18	-
Napier	254	245	226	250	250	250	249
Nelson	86	82	70	69	62	67	69
New Plymouth	225	210	200	217	217	217	210
Oamaru	77	77	77	65	65	57	55
Onehunga	55	55	44	41	42	35	40
Opotiki	-	-	-	-	15	15	15
Patea	-	-	15	31	30	20	19
Picton	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
Port Chalmers	212	221	221	230	232	228	232
Takaka	-	30	25	15	10	16	22
Tauranga	5	13	14	18	14	18	17
Timaru	130	146	130	130	130	130	130
Tokomaru Bay	34	34	29	29	29	28	28
Waikokopu	60	65	53	27	27	30	30
Wanganui	150	163	144	151	143	145	137
Wellington	1715	1686	1523	1595	1420	1397	1385
Westport	113	114	108	105	105	104	95
Whakatane	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
Whangarei	15	15	15	15	22	20	22
Total Membership of NZWW Federation	6143	6238	5874	5796	5597	5552	5624

Source: Annual Reports, Department of Labour. AJHR, H.11, 1916-1936.

TABLE 2 Membership of Wellington Waterside Workers' Union as a % of the
Total Membership of the N.Z. Waterside Workers Federation.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Wellington</u> <u>Membership</u>	<u>Federation</u> <u>Membership</u>	<u>%</u>
1915	1735	5620	30.9
1916	1901	6279	30.2
1917	1787	5636	31.7
1918	2213	5685	38.9
1919	2270	6622	34.3
1920	3080	7566	40.7
1921	2460	7778	31.6
1922	1778	6576	27.0
1923	1247	5985	20.8
1924	1721	6416	26.8
1925	1450	6102	23.8
1926	1870	6362	29.4
1927	1710	6245	27.4
1928	1660	6080	27.3
1929	1715	6143	27.9
1930	1686	6238	27.0
1931	1523	5874	25.9
1932	1595	5796	27.5
1933	1420	5597	25.4
1934	1397	5552	25.1
1935	1385	5624	25.0

Source: Annual Reports, Department of Labour, AJHR, H.11, 1916-1936.

TABLE 3 % of Wage Earners in Trade Unions

<u>Year</u>	<u>1916</u>	<u>1921</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1936</u>
Total Wage Earners	295,085	357,477	401,545	431,230
Total Union Members	71,587	97,719	99,667	185,527
% Unionised	24.3%	27.3%	24.8%	43%

Sources: Union membership: Roth, 1973:169

Total Wage earners: New Zealand Department of Statistics: 1916: Pt. IX, p. 35; 1921: Sect. XV, p. 144; 1926: Vol IX, p. 9; 1936: Vol. X, p. iv.

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