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A NEW CONCEPT OF UNIONISM: THE NEW SOUTH WALES
BUILDERS LABOURERS' FEDERATION 1970-1974

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This thesis is dedicated to my friend Dave Shaw,
builders labourer, who was killed on a Sydney
building site on 20 December 1978, aged 23.

INTRODUCTION

Most theses begin with an explanation as to why the writer feels the subject matter justifies a prolonged and detailed analysis. For millions of Australians such an explanation would be unnecessary in this case. Green bans, builders labourers and even Jack Mundey are household words. Yet no record of that exciting period has been written. This is one.

Between 1970 and 1974, the N.S.W. Branch of the Builders Labourers' Federation operated outside the traditional confines of the Australian trade union movement. A new concept of unionism was being practised. Thoroughly caught up in New Left ideas of equality, personal liberation, participatory democracy, environmentalism and direct action, these unskilled manual labourers used their industrial (and physical) muscle to put their Union's advanced social and economic policies into action.

Significant among these policies were the introduction of limited tenure of office for union officials, the right of women to work in the industry, the premeditated demolition of non-union construction, the struggle for workers' control on job-sites, and the use of the Union's power to aid groups such as prisoners, homosexuals, aborigines, students, migrants, women and residents.

However, what the Union will be remembered for was their practical application of the concept of the social responsibility of labour - the green bans. These bans blocked "development" projects said to be worth \$3,000 million¹ and saved Sydney from much of the cultural and environmental rape suffered by other cities. The bans were a deliberate confrontation of the power of Capital. The labourers were disputing the employer's right to build what he liked where he liked and they were prepared to defend physically their position. Their environmental action is generally considered to be the first of its type in the world and the effect of their pioneering activity is still being felt.

So different was the B.L.F. from the traditional Australian union that the arbitrary division between "union" and "public" was almost obliterated. The Union and its supporters became a social movement - a force which attracted the devoted support of disparate elements such as inner-city pensioners, North Shore hairdressers, Marxist academics,

¹ This is the figure commonly accepted by the establishment media. Both the Union and the M.B.A. have used this figure in their publications. See later chapters.

hippies, housewives and even Patrick White and Margaret Mead.

The B.L.F.'s devotion to direct action and its leadership's ability to practice when in power what so many have preached in opposition raises many important theoretical questions. Is revolutionary unionism possible? Were the B.L.F. revolutionary? By what criteria does one evaluate revolutionary actions in a non-revolutionary situation? Were they destined to be destroyed?

The reason I was drawn to write about the B.L.F. was because, like so many of the "intelligentsia" who became involved with the Union, my own political ideology was drastically altered by the experience. They demonstrated to me the truth of the Marxist adage that revolution will come from the working class. They also demonstrated the tremendous power that a united working class can wield. They convinced me that "new left" ideals such as altruism, humanitarianism and egalitarianism could co-exist within the same structure as the traditional union virtues such as a good sense of tactics, the power of oratory, toughness under pressure and hatred of the boss.

It was only when I became involved in the union movement as a delegate to the N.S.W. Labor Council and observed other unions in action that I realised how truly remarkable the B.L.F. were. No other Australian union has been able to catch the imagination or inspire the devotion that the B.L.F. did. Barrister, Rod Madgwick, remarked on their "moral force". Anarchist, Wendy Bacon, was attracted by their "direct action approach". Students and pensioners, in fact everyone who came in contact with them, commented on their accessibility. Many of those who became involved found it hard to pin point how the B.L.F. and the green ban movement had influenced their thinking. Resident activist Ian Milliss mused that "they taught me about the sensible use of violence", and at the other end of the scale, the "matrons of Hunters Hill" discovered that a union of manual labourers was more sensitive to the natural beauty of Kelly's Bush and more aware of the historical and ecological need for its preservation than were conservative politicians and magazine editors.

It seemed that there was no social movement in Sydney in the early seventies in which the N.S.W. B.L.F. were not active. In many ways the B.L.F. became the centre of radical activity during the vacuum which occurred after the Vietnam and Springbok campaigns. For many students it was their one and only experience of a real "worker-student

alliance".² Builders labourers were the only blue collar workers most of us had ever met. Wharfies and miners were mythical creatures of legendary militancy. We never met rank and file wharfies and their union officials wore suits and sat in sedate wood and leather offices with single roses in specimen vases. The builders labourers on the other hand were with us often; building barricades for draft resisters; slapping on green bans in support of women's studies or expelled homosexuals; or just socialising. Their office was as open to us as it was to their members. They supported us so we supported them.

When the end came in March 1975 the N.S.W. officials vacated their office in Trades Hall in 24 hours. I ended up with much of their archival material in my sitting room, holding it in safekeeping in the hope that someone would use it one day. I certainly did not intend to. I felt I was far too close to the subject to be able to write about it. I do not believe in objective truth or value-free social science but I had spent five years embroiled with the B.L.F., both politically and socially. I had cried along with the 2,000 others at the final Town Hall meeting. My feelings towards Gallagher could not be put on paper.

My thesis supervisor, Don Aitkin (I was originally writing about the Korean War) told me that this was a silly attitude and that I was in a unique position to write an academic thesis on an exciting and important subject. Not only did I have in my possession most of the Union's archives, but I had lived through the experience myself. This placed me in the position, he said, of being something akin to a participant observer - a valuable perspective to have. I eventually agreed with him and in about mid 1975 I abandoned the Korean War and began looking for the rest of the archives. Some of these I found in extraordinary places. The Executive Minutes from 1963 to 1971 I eventually discovered in the cellar of the Sussex Hotel with beer dribbling over them.

Finding the archives was not my major problem. The status of participant observer, or maybe just sympathetic voyeur, had brought problems with its undoubted advantages. To begin with, because much of

2 In discussion of areas such as "working class" and "middle class" co-operation I have used the terms in their "cultural" sense. Without wishing to canvass the complex area of class analysis I would refer the reader to Stuart Macintyre, "The Making of the Australian Working Class" An Historiographical Survey, Historical Studies, Vol. 18, No. 71, October 1978, pp.233-253; and R.W. Connell and T.H. Irving, Class Structure in Australian History, pp.3-12, for relevant discussion.

my research was to be in the form of interviews, my open identification with the N.S.W. B.L.F. made it difficult to obtain access to certain people. For instance, when I asked for interviews with the major figures in the "Maoist" opposition group³ only Les Robinson consented and even he refused to speak about Federal Intervention. My difficulties in this area have been largely overcome by Pat Fiske who interviewed M.B.A. officials, Federal union officials and D.L.I. employees for her film on the B.L.F. and made her transcripts available to me.

Another problem was that my close association with internal building union policies laid my academic work open to attack, both verbal and physical. The worst example of this occurred in early 1980 when my house was broken into and most of my taped interviews stolen. This caused a delay of several months while interviews were repeated but unfortunately some have been lost forever.

The advantages of close involvement, however, outweighed these disadvantages. It is important to stress though that I am not writing this thesis within a participant observer perspective. Rather, I am bringing to the subject a background of information which the conventional academic researcher is usually denied. I understand the ideological atmosphere of the period and the emotions generated by particular events. My familiarity with building industry "psychology" and left internecine politics has been invaluable. So much of what is documented is ideological in content. One would have to understand both its style and its purpose for correct analysis. My claim is that my privileged position allowed me this understanding. My knowledge enabled me to impose a broader perspective on the information I collected from other sources.

The particular practical advantage that my status afforded me was the way in which my interviews were treated. Firstly, it enabled me to speak with some people who might not have permitted others to interview them and secondly because those interviewed were also my friends there was a relaxed atmosphere during these sessions. This helped inarticulate people to become more talkative, and shy people to become more frank. Because they knew that I was basically sympathetic to their cause and would try not to misrepresent their statements, this minimised their defensive attitudes. It encouraged candour and even criticism of the Union that would not otherwise have been forthcoming.

I could also be assured that, because of their friendship with me

³ Correspondence: M. Burgmann to L. Robinson; J. McNamara; and J. Ferguson, 2 February 1978.

they would not "spin me a line" or pull my leg, a fate which other researchers in this area have suffered. Because I knew the particular personal and political perspective of each respondent I was able to gauge why certain statements were made and what their implications were. I was not likely to commit the gross solecisms which reliance on purely documentary evidence can sometimes cause. A good example of such a potential error occurred when I came across a newspaper report where Jack Munday had revealed that his favourite hobby was "going down to the pub and perving at the barmaid".⁴ Because I realised that under no circumstances could Munday have possibly made a statement to that effect, I simply deleted that item from my chapter on women with a view to later verification. In due course I discovered that the sentiments expressed had not been mouthed by Munday but by a very different "Jack", Sir Jack Egerton.

I was able, and for this I am grateful, to check continually the accuracy of my information, not only with the B.L.F. activists but with officials from other building unions, particularly the F.E.D. & F.A., the P.G.E.U.A. and the A.W.U. The fact that I am not, and never have been a member of the C.P.A. or any other "revolutionary" party⁵ has also been helpful because the sectarian responses which such affiliations can elicit were absent.

Finally, because I was there during the significant events I can describe some incidents in greater detail than would otherwise be possible. I actually tape-recorded the more important meetings, including the final handing over of power in March 1975.

While the research provided its own problems and pleasures, the writing did also.

Of course in the process of writing many of my original views were changed as were many of the original questions I felt needed answering. For instance, after starting with a firm belief that the new brand of militancy had arisen out of the economic conditions of the time, I was eventually persuaded by my data that the C.P.A. had played a much larger role than I had imagined.

The questions which have interested me in this thesis are: the economic and ideological conditions which produced the "new concept of unionism"; the way in which the Union carried out its philosophy in day

⁴ The Australian, 11 October 1973.

⁵ I have been a member of the A.L.P. for ten years.

to day activity; the forces which the ruling class can bring to bear on such a union operating within capitalist society; and finally a debate within the framework of socialist theory on the nature of revolutionary unionism.

I hope that like John Foster's study of a particular town in Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution, my detailed study of one particular union may illuminate much more general questions, particularly arguments about revolutionary strategy.

The thesis is in two main sections: Part I the narrative and Part II the analysis.

The narrative section is informed by certain theoretical questions. I have not presented a complete chronology of occurrences but rather chosen those areas of the Union's day-to-day activity which best illuminate the theoretical areas discussed later. Thus I have included in the narrative prolonged discussion of the B.L.F.'s relations with other unions, particularly in the building industry; and also examined in detail industrial policies of particular significance such as their encroachment strategy on workers' control issues. I have also paid particular attention to the various ruling class offensives that were launched against the Union.

Approximately 70% of the thesis is taken up by the "narrative", which may seem excessive; but this was unavoidable because virtually no secondary source literature exists on the subject. Sources are given in considerable detail, so this material can be presupposed in the later discussion.

The Union's policy on women in the industry is treated in detail because, apart from green bans, it was probably the most remarkable action they undertook. It also aptly illustrated many of the leadership's general problems, and allowed me to examine the Union at probably its weakest point. The green bans themselves are not treated so extensively because much has already been written on this subject. Further, the main focus of the thesis is not the green bans as such but the union which became socially aware enough to enforce them. From that perspective the most significant point about the green bans is that they were physically defended; and descriptions of these confrontations are provided.

There were of course many other areas of the B.L.F.'s activity which I would have liked to pursue in greater detail: among them internal

Union democracy, the Union's relationship with the C.P.A., the participation of migrant members in the Union's activities, and the tactics employed by both sides during Federal Intervention. But the Union travelled at such a pace and achieved so much in such a short time that I have been forced to make choices.

Major Sources.

Working with B.L.F. documents has not been entirely unalloyed pleasure. What in most working class organisations is an annoying habit has been raised to a refined art form by the B.L.F. - that is the Union's imprecise attitude towards its organisational and administrative paper work. It is quite obvious from the Union's archives that the majority of builders labourers regarded written records as a somewhat pointless exercise and certainly not worth fussing about. They could not even get their own name right. An amusing example is provided by two letters from the Industrial Registrar regarding the Union's Annual Returns. In 1967 the Registrar acknowledged receipt "of a document purporting to be the Annual Return of the Australian Builders Labourers' Union" but pointed out that "as the name of the Union registered under the Trade Union Act, 1881, as amended, is the Australian Builders' Laborers' Federation, N.S.W. Branch, the said document is returned herewith".⁶ The following year the Union got closer by calling themselves the "Australian Builders Labourers' Federation" but this still did not satisfy the Registrar, nor did the fact that the Union had filled out the wrong address.⁷

Because the Union itself used the form Builders Labourers' Federation most often, that is the convention that I have adopted but in quotations and names of documents, such as the journal Builders Laborer, I have copied whatever is actually used. Even the journal changed its spelling and exact title in cavalier fashion from issue to issue. The only point on which the Union officials showed any preference at all, and even then not consistently, was the fact that no apostrophe should follow "builders". "The Federation belongs to the labourers" they would argue, "but the labourers don't belong to the builders". When the Union's name changed in 1973 to the Australian Building Construction

6 Correspondence: J.E. Whitfield, Industrial Registrar, Department of Labour and Industry, N.S.W. to The Secretary, Australian Builders' Laborers' Federation, N.S.W. Branch, 4 May 1967.

7 Correspondence: K.R. Fetherston, Acting Industrial Registrar to The Secretary, Australian Builders' Laborers' Federation, N.S.W. Branch, 27 March 1968.

Employees and Builders Laborers' Federation, the N.S.W. leadership hardly used the new name at all, partly for ideological reasons and partly because they were too busy to bother.

Apart from the Union's haphazard attitude to the niceties of legal requirements and grammatical pedantry,⁸ the primary sources posed other problems. The Executive and General (Branch) Meeting Minutes from 1963 to 1971, although 1154 pages long, were sometimes more confusing than informative. Good minute-taking is a difficult skill, and rarely found among builders labourers. Those years when Dick Prendergast wielded the pen are particularly cryptic. His penchant for phrases along the lines of "Bro. A made an observation and Bro. B replied" left many baffling questions unanswered; but the anonymous minute taker who recorded scenes such as "Bro. X spoke and Bro. Y was asked to leave the room" during the heated debates on the South Australian debacle⁹ wins the prize for laconic precis.

No Minutes actually exist before 1963. The 1961-63 Minutes were somehow mislaid during the Union's abrupt move from Trades Hall in 1975 and almost all records before 1961 were burnt by the old right-wing leadership before handing over office after the 1961 election.

The other primary sources which I have used have been gathered from a large number of places. Every poster, pamphlet, letter or other piece of documentary evidence which was lent to me by helpful unionists has been photostatted, so that either the original documents or photostats of them are in my possession. This means that a reasonably restored archival record of the Union's recent history now exists. Academic libraries were not helpful (Mitchell only holds the 1912 union journal), but various union and left group records were made available to me and were more fruitful.

I believe that there would be little documentation relating to the Union in the period 1961-75 that I have not seen. I tried very hard to collect all ephemeral material produced by other groups about the builders labourers, particularly from those opposed to the Union such as the Federal B.L.F., the B.W.I.U. and the Master Builders' Association.

I have consulted all the Sydney daily newspapers and occasionally,

⁸ Further information as to how I have dealt with these vagaries is contained in Notes on Footnoting, etc.

⁹ Munday, when queried about this debate, explained "Oh yes, I remember that every time Les got up to speak Dick would hit him". Obviously much remains unrecorded.

when appropriate, provincial or interstate papers. I have also looked at the publications of the C.P.A., the C.P.A. (M-L), the S.P.A., the M.B.A., and the Federal body of the A.B.L.F. I have also used appropriate weekly and monthly commentaries. I have perused Court records where necessary, and used C.B.C.S. publications for enlightenment.

These sources have been supplemented by 73 interviews I conducted over a six year period (1975-1981) with 46 B.L.F. members, five B.L.F. office staff, nine non-B.L.F. building union officials, one Federal B.L.F. official, one employer representative¹⁰ and eleven resident activists and other supporters. Of the 46 builders labourers, 26 had never worked as officials for the Union. Of the twenty officials interviewed, many had only been officials for short periods because of the Union's policy on temporary organisers. I have therefore discussed in depth with a considerable number of rank and file militants their own feelings and attitudes about what occurred. I also asked them how other labourers on their job-sites viewed certain acts such as the green bans and women in the industry, to get some indication, even if second-hand, of the response of the not-so-active members.

This is certainly not a representative sample of builders labourers. In fact there are some regrettable omissions. For instance, I would have liked to find and interview more than two non-British migrants; but although I made several attempts, I was unsuccessful. Firstly, most migrant builders labourers are "unticketed", and move out of the industry fairly rapidly. They are therefore hard to track down. The majority of my respondents were qualified labourers (i.e. dogmen, scaffolders, etc.), and therefore in the industry for life. Secondly, the migrant labourers were no different from the non-migrants when it came to appointments. Nearly half of all appointments I made with builders labourers were not kept. I soon learnt that you do not set a date a week ahead with a builders labourer. You arrange to meet the next day or better still you waylay them in the hotel after work.

When it came to the actual interviews, I often chose hotels or places where the B.Ls would feel comfortable. Sometimes this was my home and sometimes their home.

I began each interview by asking the labourer their own personal

10 The employer representative wished to remain anonymous. Consequently he is identified in footnotes as "Anonymous Source: Senior Employers' Organisation Official". Because of his anonymity I treat his information with due care and use it essentially in a supplementary fashion.

history - when they left school, what their parents were, when did they become B.Ls etc.

Certain areas - the 1970 strike, the green bans, women, the Federal body, the B.W.I.U., the C.P.A., decision-making procedures and workers' control - were touched on in all interviews. I tried very hard, without leading, to discover what the labourers felt were for them the most significant actions of the Union.

The interviews differed considerably in length. Several sessions lasted more than four hours, most around a very small cassette recorder which I simply turned on and placed between us, never touching it again except to change cassettes.

The conventional problem of "rapport" in interviewing was non-existent: the labourers were very enthusiastic. They were pleased that I was writing about what was for many of them the most exciting time of their life. Several stressed to me that my interview had started them thinking, and often they would return days later with more interesting stories or some forgotten leaflet to show me. Ordinary union members do not write election pamphlets or set out policy in union documents. Nor do they write their memoirs. Yet their experience in struggle is as valid as that of the leadership.

The tape-recorded interviews (except for those stolen) are in my possession and transcripts have been made.

Because of the nature of the primary sources, the documentation differs greatly from chapter to chapter. In the appendix which deals with the 1950s I have been forced to rely almost entirely on oral evidence. I have been cautious in this "reconstruction of the past", adopting a critical attitude to uncorroborated statements but giving due weight to the fact that even "Maoist" Les Robinson agreed substantially with the information supplied by the other respondents.

In the section which describes the 1960s most of my documentation comes from either the N.S.W. Executive Minutes, the Branch journal or the Federal Conference Minutes. It is only in the 1970s that newspaper reports become at all frequent - sometimes of avalanche proportions. This period is also rich in ephemeral literature from the B.L.F. and other unions. Thus, the period with which the thesis is most concerned is very richly sourced. Although I have not been able to interview either Norm Gallagher or Pat Clancy, I have used sufficient material from the Federal B.L.F. and the B.W.I.U. to represent the point of view they were putting at the time.

Secondary Sources

There are two narratives of events written by activists in the building industry. Taming the Concrete Jungle was published by the N.S.W. B.L.F. in 1973. Pete Thomas, a C.P.A. member and long term union journalist, was an enthusiastic supporter of the Union, although he has worked before and after 1973 for those unions associated with the S.P.A.

Thomas sets out the reasons for the book's publication in these terms:

...builders laborers and their leaders...have come under frenzied attack from those who measure everything by money...In the attempts to discredit the union and its policies, sections of the mass media act as amplifiers for Establishment propaganda...The unions on the other hand, have only limited means to make known the justifications of their attitudes and actions...It is in the hope of being able to do something towards remedying this that this booklet is being published.¹¹

The book is valuable as a guide to what the leadership felt were the significant issues. It goes into detail about the green bans and the hazardous nature of the building industry. It also discusses the economics of the industry with expertise. However, because of its propaganda intent, it remains polite to the point of omission about the problems the Union was undergoing with its Federal body and fellow building unions. Not a criticism escapes Thomas's comradely pen. All is sweetness and solidarity.

I originally assumed Thomas's book would be a reliable source of facts and dates and a pointer towards further material. It mentions at least briefly most of the pre-1973 events of significance. However, after discovering what I felt were a few minor discrepancies I approached the author who cheerfully informed me:

Good heavens, of course there will be mistakes. I kept asking someone in the Union to read it before it was printed but they were far too busy. They just said "I'm sure it's O.K. Go ahead."¹²

The second source, Six Turbulent Years, by the Building Industry Branch of the S.P.A. is also polemic in tone and also inaccurate. The book purports to be "a basic theoretical analysis of a period rich in lessons for the Australian Labor movement generally".¹³ It is, in fact

¹¹ Pete Thomas, Taming the Concrete Jungle, p.8.

¹² Interview: Pete Thomas, 16 January 1981. It is a tribute to Thomas's skills as a journalist that there are only a few trivial errors. Both the state of the Union's records and the hectic atmosphere during the period of writing would have constituted major difficulties.

¹³ Building Industry Branch of the Socialist Party of Australia, Six Turbulent Years, p.2.

little more than a sustained attack on the N.S.W. B.L.F. and its leaders.

The danger of using such a source for any purpose other than to illustrate the spleen generated by the issue, can be illustrated by close examination of just one page.¹⁴ Page 41 claims that the N.S.W. Branch was "heavily in debt" because "expensive legal actions taken by the N.S.W. Branch through the Equity Court had all proven unsuccessful". This statement is untrue on three counts. Firstly the N.S.W. Branch was financially in an excellent position until the final days of Intervention. Secondly, the legal actions were not "expensive" because both barristers Rod Madgwick and Jimmy Staples donated most of their services free of charge. Finally, (and the anonymous author must have been aware of this) the N.S.W. Branch won every Equity Court case that occurred. In the second paragraph the book refers to a general strike which the N.S.W. leadership had called in April 1975. As the N.S.W. leadership had vacated office in March 1975 this would have been difficult. Next it is said that "less than 700" attended the final strike meeting. All other estimates of attendance ranged between 1,500 and 2,500.

Six Turbulent Years leaves the reader in little doubt as to its purpose. It is not a "basic theoretical analysis" but a piece representing the attitude of the B.W.I.U. I say the B.W.I.U. because the Building Branch of the S.P.A. consisted almost entirely of officials of the B.W.I.U. and the preface to the book was written by Tom McDonald, the State Secretary of the B.W.I.U. The criticisms contained in the book hardly differ at all from literature produced explicitly by the B.W.I.U. I have therefore taken the book to be reflecting the views of the B.W.I.U. leadership throughout my analysis.

There are two academic studies of the B.L.F., in the form of unpublished honours theses from the University of Sydney. The first, by Geoff. Anderson¹⁵ is particularly interesting as it discusses the Union in its pre-green ban days. He writes of it as a traditionally militant union with advanced political and social policies. He is mainly interested in its operation as an organisation because his theoretical interests concern organisation theory.

Another reason for its significance is that Anderson himself worked

14 Claims made here about the facts of Intervention are documented in chapter 8.

15 Geoff Anderson, The Builders Labourers' Federation of N.S.W.: A Study of a Militant Union, B.A. Honours Thesis, Government Department, University of Sydney 1971 (unpublished).

as a builders labourer during vacations and hence brings to his work a clear understanding of the building industry ethos.

The second thesis by Caroline Graham¹⁶ is also interesting but for different reasons. She tackles the entire period from 1968-1975 and also tries to discuss all the areas of the Union's activity. Within the confines of an honours thesis this is obviously an impossible task. She is able to discuss only in a peremptory fashion, important issues such as inter-union relations and the day-to-day industrial struggle. However, the strength of the thesis lies in her fine grasp of the Union's significance and the atmosphere of the time. Her treatment of the C.P.A. and the Union is also well informed.

The various works concerned with green bans are less interesting because they do not deal at any length with the B.L.F. The Australian Conservation Foundation publication Green Bans¹⁷ contains some rather grim but obviously "arty" photographs and a journalistic commentary by Peter Manning. The little that is said about the Union is approving and supportive but not at all analytical. Green Bans by Richard Roddewig,¹⁸ an American lawyer, has few redeeming features at all. It is remarkably inaccurate. Although published in 1978 Roddewig writes:

Norm Gallagher and the Victorian Builders' Labourers have not been given the attention they deserve. It appears now that Melbourne, not Sydney, will be where the green ban movement works out the permanent mechanisms by which unions will have a say in making urban conservation policy.¹⁹

The "permanent mechanisms" by which Gallagher resolved his green ban policy was to lift every ban in Sydney well before 1978 and despite Roddewig's geographical distance he should not have been so ill-informed.

Academic commentary on the green bans has mainly come from Leonie Sandercock.²⁰ Again, little is written specifically about the B.L.F. but she provides an interesting account of the significance of the green bans from an urban sociologist's viewpoint.

16 Caroline Graham, Anatomy of a Revolutionary Union: A Post Mortem on the B.L.F. 1968-1975, B.A. Honours Thesis, Government Department, University of Sydney, 1975 (unpublished).

17 Marion Hardman and Peter Manning, Green Bans: The Story of an Australian Phenomenon.

18 Richard J. Roddewig, Green Bans: The Birth of Australian Environmental Politics. He is mainly interested in environmental law formulation.

19 Ibid., p.ix. Gallagher's Melbourne bans have never been physically defended in the way the Sydney bans had to be. His bans are judiciously placed so as to minimise pressure from the employers or the state. I discuss his retreat under pressure from certain bans in later chapters.

20 See my bibliography for articles and individual chapters by Sandercock.

There is also very little literature specifically concerned with the building industry. Ruth Johnston's study Partners at Work²¹ purports to survey building workers in Western Australia but unfortunately she has only surveyed building tradesmen. Nevertheless I have found her data marginally useful and referred to it in later chapters.

A work which should have been more useful is Stephen Frenkel and Alice Coolican's discussion of the N.S.W. construction industry.²² Although the chapter deals with the period immediately following the green ban period, their attempt to create a model which would explain patterns of conflict within the industry has grave flaws. Most of these I discuss in later chapters; but here it should be noted that they virtually ignore the role ideological factors play in determining how unions will behave industrially and how they will relate to each other; and they accept too readily the concept of "strategic power" as a generalised explanation for industrial strengths and weaknesses.

In conclusion I found little useful material in most of the secondary literature. On the other hand, the theoretical literature on syndicalism, revolutionary unionism and socialist strategy I found extremely relevant. As W.A. Howard has pointed out "trade union theory ...has rarely seemed to touch on Australian unions of the 20th century",²³ and even less so has Marxist trade union theory. However because most writers seriously concerned with the concept of revolutionary unionism are British I found their work basically applicable to the Australian situation, despite the influence of our obtrusive arbitration system.²⁴

In my discussion with the B.L.F. within the syndicalist tradition and on the possibilities for revolutionary unionism I have relied heavily on writers such as Hyman, Holton, Hinton, Fletcher, Coates, Topham and Anderson as well as the traditional revolutionary theorists Marx, Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Gramsci. These sources are dealt with in my final two chapters. However it is important to point out that in

21 Ruth Johnston, Partners at Work: Building Workers, their Union and their Employers.

22 Stephen Frenkel and Alice Coolican, "Competition, Instability and Industrial Struggle in the N.S.W. Construction Industry", in Stephen J. Frenkel (ed.), Industrial Action: Patterns of Labour Conflict.

23 W.A. Howard, "Australian Trade Unions in the Context of Union Theory", Journal of Industrial Relations, Vol. 19, No. 3, September 1977.

24 See Ibid., pp.263-269 and also R.J. Hawke, "The Growth of the Court's Authority", in J.R. Niland and J.E. Isaac (eds), Australian Labour Economics Readings, pp.16-49, for a discussion of the effect that the arbitration system has had upon Australian trade unions.

choosing what to include in my narrative account I have been greatly influenced by what these writers believed to be the significant areas of a Union's activity.