

be carried out under a system of day labour. Reeves's phrase 'colonial governmentalism' is a truer description than 'state socialism'. This dependence on the state had consequences in the development of labouring-class expectations.

*Unionists:* The chronic labour shortage meant that wages in Australia were higher than those obtaining in Britain. This experience conditioned class consciousness. The motto of the unions speaks volumes for their purpose. Although the wording changed from 'United to relieve not combined to injure' to 'Defence not Defiance', the meaning remained clear. Union leaders wanted nothing better than to talk to their employers; and when the employers refused to talk, the officials and rank-and-file wanted the government to make them.

*Laborites:* The Labor parties that emerged after 1890 were in every way the logical extension of the petit-bourgeois mentality and subordinated organisations that preceded them. There was no turning point. There was merely consolidation, a confirmation of much that had gone before. Nothing in the behaviour of the Labor Party in the 1920s gave any indication that it had changed. Thirty or so 'state enterprises' were not 'socialism by stealth'. They were never intended to replace capitalism. More telling was the rich tradition of strike-breaking by Labor governments.

*Afterword:* This evolutionary line of argument is rejected in favour of an account of the origins of the Labor parties which relies on the disruptions produced by the switch from free trade to monopolising capitals (Lenin's 'Imperialism') in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The Labor parties are seen as a response to this rupture, not as the outgrowth of the previous hundred years. The version of this self-criticism given in 1986 was amended in 2003 to include the current phase of so-called globalisation.

## PART ONE



## ONE

# Nationalists

We are guarding the last part of the world, in which the higher races can live and increase freely, for the higher civilisation.

Charles Pearson, *National Life and Character*

Seventy years ago Brian Fitzpatrick published his pioneering *The British Empire in Australia*. The argument that follows could best be summed up by reversing his title to *Australia in the British Empire*. Fitzpatrick presented Australia as the victim of British imperialism, whereas it was a willing, often over-anxious partner. The connection between Australia's prosperous optimism and the expansionist confidence of pre-1914 capitalism will be discussed below. What will be shown here is that Australian nationalism was the chauvinism of British imperialism, intensified by its geographic proximity to Asia.

To the extent that international relations have entered into previous discussions of Australian nationalism they have been concerned with Australia's growing independence from Britain. It is rare for this idea to be elaborated and almost unheard of for it to be explained except by resort to an analogy in which Britain is the mother country and Australia is the child who reaches maturity, flexes its muscles and engages in several other pleasing metaphors. There is nothing wrong with analogies if they illustrate an argument which has been demon-



strated. In the case of Australian nationalism, the analogy has all too often been the only evidence offered.

It is central to the present discussion that anti-British feeling was not the mainstay of Australian nationalism, nor was such feeling widespread. Where it existed it was a response to Britain's imperial role. Australia's primary concern before 1904 was that Britain should protect her from predatory European powers, and after 1904 that it should protect her from Japan. Most anti-British and anti-imperial feelings arose because Australia was not always treated as if she were Britain's only responsibility. Before 1920, Australians were suspicious of Britain's loyalty to the Empire.

Anti-British and anti-imperial sentiment in Australia must be seen against this background. Many Australians believed that the British government would put the interests of her polyglot Empire above those of Australia, and that Australia would be betrayed in the diplomacy of empire. This fear is what William Lane was driving at in *Boomerang*, 25 January 1888, when he said that Australians wanted to be left alone:

We don't care whether Canada loses her fishing monopoly or not; or whether the Russian civil servants replace the British pauper aristocracy in Hindustan offices; or whether China takes missionaries and opium dealers together and sends them packing; or whether the sun sets on the British drum-beat or not — so long as the said drum-beat keeps away from our shores.

This outburst was the most extreme response to the distrust of Britain's intentions. Better to cut loose at once, Lane reasoned, than wait to be sold out unprepared. The more usual attitude was to cling to Britain in the hope that blood would prove thicker than gold. The small group of anti-imperialists in Australia before 1914 was far from being nationalist, and the nationalists were only anti-imperialist in the limited sense that they were distrustful lest Britain's global interests should endanger Australia. Just as William Lane's socialism was not connected with Marx's, neither was his anti-imperialism re-

lated to Lenin's. Even at the moments of greatest disagreement it was always 'the Cabinet' or some particular official who was opposed. Never did Australian nationalists shed their race patriotism and reject the British people.

This acceptance applies to 'new chums' in Australia as well as the folks at Home. Much of the evidence that Australians disliked 'new chums' comes from Alexander Harris who, as a 'new chum' himself, was quite well treated by the 'old hands'. The emphasis of colonial disdain was on the 'new' rather than the 'chum'. English immigrants could become 'old hands' within four years of their arrival; William Lane, for example, was a rabid Australian patriot in a shorter space of time. Within Australia, Henry Lawson defended the 'new chum', especially the upper crust, in poems such as 'The New Chum Jackeroo' and 'A New John Bull'.

It is more important not to confuse disdain for 'new chums' in Australia with opposition to Britain's power throughout the rest of the world. Lawson's early verse 'The Distant Drum' sums up the ambiguous attitude that Australians had to British power:

Let Britannia rule for ever  
O'er the wave; but never, never  
Rule a land great oceans sever  
Fifteen thousand miles away.

Britannia's naval supremacy was seen as the precondition of Australian independence.

Attachment to Britain was by no means restricted to conservatives, any more than nationalism was the exclusive preserve of radicals. Mr Justice Higinbotham, who walked from his chambers to the Melbourne Trades Hall to make a weekly contribution to the strike fund in 1890, observed:

Apart from sentiment, we get from the old country many more benefits both in times of peace and war than we give to her. It is our clear interest to cleave to her as long as she is willing to leave us freedom.



The official report of the second Inter-Colonial Trades Union Congress held in Melbourne in April 1884 was prefaced by 'The British-Australian Cantata' dedicated to the Earl of Rosebery. After suitable greetings had been exchanged, 'Britannia' and 'Australia' joined in singing:

By noble bonds of race,  
By closer ties of blood,  
That nought can e'er efface,  
We Britishers have stood  
Together in the past;  
And in the future will  
Our Greater Britain last,  
Till Time himself stand still.

Other instances show how widespread British race patriotism was among Labor men, including some usually thought of as being on the left. The first Labor premier of New South Wales, McGowen, brought the various elements of this thinking together when he said that 'While Britain is behind us, and while her naval power is supreme, Australia will be what Australians want it, white, pure and industrially good'.

George Pearce, Labor Defence Minister, spoke in similar terms in 1910 when he welcomed the first Royal Australian Navy vessels at Fremantle. Although the establishment of an Australian fleet was the culmination of fears about British unreliability, Pearce told his audience that there was no surer guarantee of the carrying out of the higher ideals of humanity which his party was trying to realise than the Union Jack, the symbol of Empire. It would be a calamity to English speaking people and the world if the Union Jack should be humiliated by any foreign power. They had to look further afield than the mere defence of Australia and be prepared to defend that Flag and all that it represented.

It is also interesting to note that Pearce was quite happy with the Committee on Imperial Defence because it produced results. Consequently, he was totally unmoved by Richard

Jebb's strictures against its imperial bias and unconstitutional nature. The niceties of national pride meant little compared with preparing for war.

Most surprising of all are the views of Maurice Blackburn, a radical Labor politician. In June 1916, that is, after the Easter Rebellion, he expressed support for the British Empire because 'loose voluntary unions of states with common institutions and language are a step towards internationalism'. (Stan Keon later pictured Blackburn with 'A red flag in one hand and a Union Jack in the other'.)

Australian-British relations, especially at the official level, were not roses all the way. Typical of the events that were magnified by Australians into evidence of Britain's deceitfulness was the withdrawal of imperial troops from New Zealand while the Maori wars were still in progress. A catalogue of British 'sins' will be traversed below. Particular attention will be paid to conflicts relating to colonial immigration restriction Acts and the annexation of New Guinea. The rift that developed because of Britain's increased friendship with Japan receives fuller attention in Chapter 5.

#### RESTRICTIVE IMMIGRATION

Anti-British feeling stirred over colonial demands for a 'White Australia' policy, during the struggle for which the distinction between the 'British Empire' and 'Britain's Empire' became of practical importance. This conflict commenced with the difficulty of excluding from the goldfields Chinese who came from Hong Kong, since they were British subjects. The problem intensified as Britain established treaties with the Chinese government, which expected its nationals to be accepted as equals in Britain's colonies. A Chinese Imperial Investigating Commission toured Australia in 1887-88 to study the position of Chinese nationals. Australians looked upon this action as an



unwarranted interference in their affairs — an interference which could occur only because Britain placed commercial considerations above those of blood and race.

At the 1897 Colonial Conference, Joseph Chamberlain attempted to gain equal immigration rights for Indians with the argument that 'the traditions of the Empire make no distinction in favour of or against race or colour'. (It, therefore, could not have been racial prejudice that led Queen Victoria to decline a proposal of marriage from the Emperor of Abyssinia.) Although Chamberlain did not press the point, he increased colonial suspicions regarding the sincerity of British race patriotism. Indians, however, were not the real substance of the dispute. That honour was reserved for the Japanese, with whom Britain had signed a commercial treaty in 1894. For the treaty to become effective in the colonies it required their individual endorsement, which only Queensland, much to its regret, provided.

Other colonies were not content with negative prescriptions and set about producing legislation which would positively exclude Japanese immigrants. Some of these Bills were so blatantly offensive to Japan that the Colonial Office refused them royal assent and eventually hammered out a formula which was acceptable to the Japanese but resented in Australia. These negotiations were complicated by the ineptitude of the British Minister in Tokyo, Sir Ernest Satow, who unwittingly misled the Japanese in regard to Australian pliability. Needless to say, this error was not seen by the Australians as innocent or unintentional.

As Professor Yarwood recognised, it is easy to

appreciate, therefore, the later decision of the Commonwealth to conduct at least its own preliminary negotiations with Japan on Immigration questions, a move that was regarded by the British Government as a challenge to its special responsibilities in the field of diplomacy.

This step was but one of the instances of Australia having a

foreign policy of its own long before Dr Evatt. Significantly, it occurred in the field of race relations.

Even crusty old conservatives such as Sir William McMillan, Member for Wentworth, told the House that he was prepared to follow the example of the United States if Britain ever placed the interests of India over those of Australia in relation to immigration. He did not think this outrage would happen and defended himself against charges of disloyalty. Yet rather than allow Asians to land in Australia, he felt it was better to cut loose from Britain.

## NEW GUINEA

The attempted annexation of the eastern half of New Guinea by the Queensland government in 1883 should be seen in the context of Australia's emerging 'Monroe doctrine', outlined below. The case shows that Australian nationalism was not anti-imperialist but was merely opposed to non-British expansion. Anti-British feeling arose because Britain appeared to submit to European pressures.

Inevitably, there was a procession of 'scares' in relation to New Guinea long before 1883. A Melbourne adventurer, Colonel Scott, tried unsuccessfully to interest Bismarck as well as the president of France and the Tsar in the area. Stories of a French expedition in 1876 gained currency but were denied and certainly never actualised. Colonial pressure for British annexation was rarely absent. Until 1883, Britain could always avoid saying 'yes' on financial grounds, since the colonies were unwilling to meet the cost of administration. Matters came to a head when the Premier of Queensland, McIlwraith, received a copy of *Allgemeine Zeitung* with which he convinced himself that a German annexation was as imminent as his colony's elections. To forestall the German advance, McIlwraith took possession on Britain's behalf in the belief



that once the flag had been hoisted it would never be hauled down.

McIlwraith's precipitate action probably cost him total victory. The financial question had been settled, but Britain was not to be stampeded. The British prime minister, Gladstone, followed an ambivalent policy. Perhaps his gravest objection to colonial annexation of New Guinea stemmed from his recognition of the appalling treatment that Aborigines and Pacific Islanders were receiving in Queensland. Gladstone's old friend, Sir Arthur Gordon, at that time High Commissioner for the Western Pacific, wrote to him deploring any suggestion that Queensland could be considered a fit and proper authority for native peoples.

British unwillingness to support Queensland did not indicate a lack of concern. When the Italian *chargé d'affaires* in London called on the Foreign Secretary in May 1883 to discuss the possible establishment of an Italian penal settlement in New Guinea, he was warned off in no uncertain terms. At the other extreme, Gladstone even flirted, probably out of malice, with the notion that the presence of Germans in New Guinea would be in Britain's interest as it would bind Australia more securely and more submissively to Britain. This proved to be the case.

After Britain's failure to endorse McIlwraith's action, he arranged with the Premier of Victoria, Service, to call a convention of all the colonial premiers. This body met late in November 1883 and established the Federal Council, which was a precursor of Federation in Australia. The meeting also enunciated Australia's 'Monroe doctrine' for the Australasian area.

Despite assurances to the contrary, a German expedition occupied the north coast of eastern New Guinea in September 1884. In November, Britain declared its protectorate over the southern coast. A boundary was eventually established. For

the next thirty years Australia had a common border with Germany because, it was believed, Britain had not really cared.

Although McIlwraith did not see the letter that the Colonial Secretary, Lord Derby, sent to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Grenville, on 6 March 1885, McIlwraith's experience would have led him to recognise the bitter truth of Derby's sorrow that 'we can do no more for Australia, but agree that the question of Egypt overrides all others'. General Gordon had been killed six weeks previously.

Relations between Britain and Australasia maintained their uneasy appearance, but their substance can be discerned by examining Australia's response at crucial moments of stress: the Sudan campaign, the Boer War, the Boxer Rebellion, Federation and the First World War.

## SUDAN

The Australian response to the Sudan campaign was related to recent disappointments over New Guinea. Some who opposed sending troops based their objection on Britain's decision to place the defence of Egypt before the security of Australia. Commenting on the Sudan campaign, the *Age* thought it 'lamentable that the Cabinet which has undertaken this burden upon itself cannot be induced to acquire a bloodless dominion in the Pacific'. Far more numerous were those who supported the sending of Australian troops in order to stiffen future British imperial resolve.

While the major Australian sacrifices in the Sudan were made by the fifty horses on loan from the Sydney Omnibus Company, public debate raised all the elements that were to be the stuff of nationalism for the next thirty years. Speakers extolled the military virtues and claimed that Australia was being transformed into a nation of heroes: one Member of Parliament felt that the sins of Botany Bay would be washed away



by the waters of the Nile. From the other side came talk of the machinations of Jewish bond-holders in the Suez Canal Company. This anti-Semitism reappeared in the *Bulletin's* anti-Boer War propaganda, and again in Frank Anstey's *Kingdom of Shylock* during the Great European War.

Most important, though, was the attitude of dependence on Britain that the acting premier of New South Wales, Dalley, invoked: 'As members of the Empire we are defending ourselves and all most dear to us just as much in Egypt as if the common enemy menaced us in this colony'. In a splendid article, B. R. Penny has shown that the general line of reasoning was that the fate of Australasia ... might be settled in the Soudan, in Egypt, in Afghanistan, in Cape Colony, or in the English Channel. Let England be defeated and humiliated, no matter where, and the colonies would suffer for it.'

Those who opposed sending the New South Wales Contingent accepted the premise of this argument but drew a different conclusion. Involvement in Britain's wars would 'cause Australia to be identified with England's quarrels and thus ... bring a hostile army to (y)our own shores'. This was accepted in part by the *Sydney Morning Herald*, which on 30 April 1885 said that the people of New South Wales would not have assented to the dispatch of the Sudan Contingent if the war had been with Russia:

Not because they would have been lacking in sympathy for the mother country, but because the men's presence would have been required here, and because the interests of the Empire would have been best served by keeping them here.

The pattern is clear: the primary concern of 'imperialists' and 'nationalists' alike was the defence of Australia. They disagreed on how this end might best be accomplished. Yet the imperialists who based their strategy on Britain's continued strength were not impervious to the problems that their com-

mitment involved. Nor were they so imperial-minded as to follow Britain blindly in each and every conflict.

## BOER WAR

Australian support for Britain in the Boer War further illustrated the peculiar nature of Australian nationalism. The jingoism of the conservatives need not detain us: the Australian Natives Association, at first cautious, eventually raised companies of volunteers and subscribed the largest fund within the Empire for the families of war dead.

More pertinent is Richard Jebb's 1911 observation, in *Studies in Colonial Nationalism*:

Some of the most wholehearted supporters of the sending of contingents were nationalists who knew that the undertaking of responsibility would develop national self-respect, and the respect of the authorities in London for Australian nationhood.

Here again is the policy of taking out insurance with a great and powerful ally.

Radical support for the war was widespread. South Australia's liberal premier, Kingston, initiated moves for that colony's contingent. Initially, the Trades Hall Party had been unenthusiastic but fell into line with full support for Britain after 'Black Week', that is, after it appeared that Britain might be defeated. Like most Australian nationalists, the South Australian Labor Party accepted that any defeat for Britain meant a danger to Australia.

A similar pattern emerged in Queensland where the *Worker* claimed it was a 'simple matter to see through the plot of the Jew capitalists' and attacked the handful of Laborites who supported the war. The defeats of 'Black Week' changed all this: Dawson, leader of the Labor Party, seconded the premier's motion to send extra Queensland troops, declaring that the struggle was now for British supremacy in Africa in the face of



a 'continental conspiracy against the Empire'. As the one-time president of the New South Wales Trades and Labour Council, E. W. O'Sullivan, argued:

... the conflict between the British and the Boer must, therefore, be regarded not as a fight against a few score thousand brave and hardy farmers, but as a war to uphold the British prestige all over the world.

Opponents of the war were not necessarily anti-British. O'Sullivan's compliment to the Boers as 'brave and hardy farmers' was shared by many Australians who saw in the Boer the visage of the bushman who would soon be needed to drive the invading hordes out of Australia. Although 'Banjo' Paterson supported Britain and Lawson defended the Boers, both shared an admiration for the men of the veldt who manifested so many typically Australian characteristics. In the 1890s, British commander of the New South Wales armed services, Major-General Edward Hutton, lauded Australians as 'the beau ideal of Mounted Riflemen'.

According to Norman Lindsay, the *Bulletin's* opposition to the Boer War depended almost entirely on its editor, Archibald, as most of his staff were pro-Britain. There can be no questioning the intensity of Archibald's campaign. However, it must be seen against the background of Archibald's reasoning. He regarded the Boer War as the product of the greed of international Jewry and labelled the volunteers 'Cohentingers'. Lawson's opposition embraced a different form of racism:

If you come across any niggers, learn to sleep calmly notwithstanding the fact that a big, greasy buck nigger (a perfect stranger to you) is more than likely to crawl in, without knocking, through a slit in the tent, any minute during the small hours, rip out your innards with a nasty knife, and leave without explaining.

(*Australian Star*, 28 October 1899)

In Victoria, the Labor weekly *Tocsin* for 2 January 1902 returned to one of its favourite reasons for opposing the war:

Over 200 Hindoos are working in the Mallee district as farm labourers for 10s per week. No wonder that out-of-work white farm labourers have to go to South Africa to fight, notwithstanding that the result of the war there will mean that the cheap nigger will displace the white man.

Radical support for the Boers was often nothing more than support for the White Australia policy.

Opposition to the war came from a small but undetermined group. Only six of the seventy-five members of the House of Representatives voted against the government's 1902 resolution supporting Britain's actions in South Africa. Even opponents such as Senator Pearce adopted a 'yes-no' attitude by speaking against the war and then voting for it. Pearce was careful to point out that his opposition was confined to giving *unlimited* support to Britain. Any motion of assistance should,

having regard to the safety of our future actions ... (be) worded in a more general way. While we must be loyal to the Empire we must remember that our first duty lies to Australia. The Ministry who rules the destinies of the Empire in Westminster may not always have the best interests of this part of the Empire at heart.

Like other opponents of the Boer War, such as Hughes, Earle and Holman, Pearce would leave the Labor Party in 1916 because of his support for conscription.

Holman voiced stringent opposition to the British war effort. In reply to an interjection and intoxicated with his own rhetoric, he declared his belief that 'this is the most iniquitous, most immoral war ever waged with any race, I hope that England may be defeated'. The *Worker* defended Holman's speech as

an unanswerable indictment of the Rhodesian policy in South Africa, and ... the only serious attempt made during the debate to review the history of the trouble. When the crowd has become hoarse with singing 'Rule Britannia' and begins to think matters



over, Mr Holman's slip will be regarded more kindly than at present, and those who stand firmly against the creation of a military caste in New South Wales will have their reward.

The *Worker* could not deny the popularity of the war: 'Meanwhile the drum and the trumpet, "Soldiers of the Queen" and "Rule Britannia" carry all before them.'

### BOXER REBELLION

Not all Australia's imperial enthusiasm was directed towards Africa. There was sufficient to send a naval contingent to China to help put down the Boxer Rebellion. Supporters of the expedition in the New South Wales Parliament 'conjured up chilling pictures of the "yellow peril" and insisted that white soldiers (not Indian Troops) must vindicate the honour of the white race'. By this time many race patriots agreed with criticisms from the wags who sang:

We don't want to fight,  
But, by jingo, if we do,  
We'll stay at home and sing our songs  
And send the mild Hindoo.

Opponents of the scheme argued from a similar standpoint:

The real trouble in China would come when the great powers fell out among themselves over the carving of the Chinese Melon. Australia must be ready to defend her shores if this happened and to aid Britain if she were really hard pressed.

Yet again we see the nature of Australian anti-imperialism, which accepted British domination of the world as a precondition for Australian independence.

The colonial governments were most anxious for their natives to participate, as the venture would provide valuable experience. Significantly for Australia's distrust of Britain's military capability, British niggardliness over pay and organisation diminished Australia's ultimate contribution.

### FEDERATIONISTS — IMPERIAL AND NATIONAL

Differences between the Imperial Federation League and the Australian Natives Association (ANA) were once considered to be significant. The Imperial Federationists were presented as British loyalists battling against the aggressive nationalism of the ANA. C. S. Blackton has shown that the area of disagreement was more apparent than real. There were even some prominent joint members, including Alfred Deakin and the ANA president, Purves.

The origins and growth of the 'imperial federation' idea in Australia are pertinent to the present argument. The concept was first raised in the 1840s by a liberal editor in Sydney who saw it as a means of strengthening Australia's security. In 1868, this argument was repeated in an attempt to retain British troops in Australia. This element became important in the arguments that raged till 1914, in which the imperialists believed that Australian security could be best guaranteed by tying Australia as closely as possible to Britain, which would then be obliged to come to Australia's aid.

According to Blackton's account of the first meeting of the Imperial Federation League in Melbourne in June 1885, 'Jingoist speakers voiced exaggerated fears of France and Russia, and of the need for Imperial Tars and Tommies to hold Australia's coasts'. *Young Australia*, the League's journal, constantly restated this defence argument, sometimes with realistic appraisals of Australia's position and sometimes with sensational articles on 'an imaginary descent of Russo-French forces on Australia's naked coasts'.

After the League's collapse in the 1890s, individual advocates of imperial integration continued to propagate the line that only Britain could save Australia from 'the Jap, the Cosack and the Frank'. This alarm was the substance of G. C. Craig's *The Federal Defence of Australia*, published in 1897, wherein the author claimed to have information indicating



Russian ambitions in New Zealand, a French appetite for Queensland and Teutonic plots to seize Western Australia and Fiji. Australian domination of the Pacific was as central to the Imperial Federationists as it was to the ANA.

The League's chief critic was the *Bulletin*, which agreed on the reality of threats from abroad but suspected the Imperial Federationists of being equivocal on coloured immigration. According to the *Bulletin*, 23 April 1887:

Imperial Federation was a monstrous plot to institute aristocracy and privilege in democratic Australia, to destroy the decency and liveliness of the working man by opening the country to 'leprous Mongols' and every unwashed tribe of the British dominions.

There was no disagreement, however, when *Young Australia* engaged in an outburst of anti-Semitism at rumours of an influx of Russian Jewish refugees in 1888.

Even on defence matters the disagreements were largely the product of misunderstanding. The League's view was that, in the event of war, British forces would defend Australia. The *Bulletin* saw imperial federation as a device to denude Australia of fighting men in the defence of Britain's nigger Empire. In fact, both sides were concerned with Australia's security and differed only on how it could be guaranteed.

Australian Federation made imperial federation more attractive to nationalists such as Deakin, who became the president of a reconstituted League in 1905. A united Australia would be better able to pressure Britain into recognising Australian requirements. Gone were the grandiose schemes for an Imperial Parliament. In their place were cold formulae for the defence of Australia.

Arguments in favour of Australian Federation were not dissimilar to arguments for and against imperial federation. Defence played a major part in all three. Britain's failure to annex New Guinea gave new force to the view that 'in order to speak with a united voice, which would be heard in Downing Street,

in regard to what were then called "our foreign relations", it was necessary that we should have a central representative body'. The Federal Council established in 1883 proved inadequate for the task. Six years later, Major-General Edwards reported that 'the colonies have now been brought face to face with the fact, that an effective system of defence cannot be established without Federation'.

As much as radicals such as O'Sullivan disliked the terms of the constitution proposed in 1898, they were prepared to accept it because of the international 'menaces' that they considered overwhelming. Some weight was given to their fears by a sombre speech from Lord Salisbury, by extensions of the fortifications at Hong Kong, and by Russian armament around Port Arthur. Hughes saw 'defence' as one of the two virtues to be gained from Federation.

After 1901, such anti-British feeling as there had been declined because Australia was 'independent'. The emergence of an acceptable trading pattern removed another cause of discontent. C. P. Grimshaw's conclusion is perfectly accurate, though a trifle apologetic:

Once it became almost universally accepted, as it was by 1900, that Australian nationalism was compatible with continued Empire membership a form of Empire imperialism became a component of the nationalism of possibly the majority of Australians, and to underestimate this element is to misinterpret Australian nationalism at that time.

That caution would apply to Australian attitudes for decades to come.

## THE GREAT EUROPEAN WAR

Significant as these minor wars were for what they revealed of Australian sentiment, they are necessarily dwarfed by the Great War. Fisher's oft-repeated and oft-quoted pledge of 'our



last man and our last shilling' was far from hollow rhetoric. The call was approved by the sixth Commonwealth Conference of the ALP, which resolved that 'during the coming year [the King's] reign will be crowned by victory for the British and Allied armies in the great war of freedom and the realisation of an enduring peace'. More importantly, the promise was translated into action. Of the first 53 000 enlistments, 23 000 were unionists. Peter Bowling, the coal-miners' leader who had been taken to gaol in irons in 1909 when he had been a bitter opponent of Hughes, was none the less a virile supporter of the war and eventually had five sons at the front. George Black dedicated his booklet on *The Origin and Growth of the Labor Movement in New South Wales* to the memory of Sergeant Edward Larkin, MLA for Willoughby, who had fallen while leading his men at Gallipoli.

Patriotism was by no means the preserve of right-wing Labor. Clifford Hall, of the Hobart United Labourers Union, in 1915 expressed the view that Labor's parliamentary representatives had done 'nothing' towards 'easing the burdens of those who elected them'. Hall was killed in action. Almost 64 per cent of the ALP were tradesmen or labourers. Official Labor support for the war was sufficiently strong in 1918 for every parliamentary Labor leader in Australia to attend the Governor-General's conference on recruiting. Among union organisations, only the Industrial Council of Queensland and the Tasmanian Trades and Labour Council declined.

Even after the Labor Party split late in 1916, the majority of anti-conscriptionists remained pro-war. (This division paralleled the attitudes of the soldiers at the front.) Queensland's Premier Ryan consented to a suggestion that the first thousand men recruited in Queensland after 22 May 1918 be named the 'Ryan Thousand'. Senator Ferricks, one of the few members of parliament to express opposition to the war in 1914, accepted voluntarism as a tactical manoeuvre in his subsequent battle

against conscription. This strenuous support for recruiting shows how deep the attachment to Britain was.

It is by no means clear who really was against conscription. Frank Tudor, who was to become leader of the anti-conscriptionists, resigned from Cabinet, not because he opposed conscription but because he considered that talk of conscription had seriously interfered with voluntary recruiting. Moreover, it seems fairly certain that Tudor was not only pro-war but pro-conscription as well. George Pearce recalled that Tudor told him that he knew 'conscription was right, but that Richmond [his electorate] won't stand for it'.

Tudor was by no means alone in his lack of resolve. J. H. Fenton left the Caucus room with Hughes but returned shortly afterwards because he could not find where the conscriptionists were meeting. Three Tasmanian senators, Guy, Long and Ready, who stayed with the Labor Party in 1916, allowed Hughes to use them in 1917 in an attempt to prolong parliament. As the official war historian observed: 'There was, thus, not quite an epidemic among Tasmanian senators, but a breakdown in the health of three of them'. Another Tasmanian politician, 'King' O'Malley, tried to sit on the fence and was notable in the 1916 campaign for his absence.

The obverse of pro-British sentiment was an anti-German feeling which ran high at all levels of society. Some patriots smashed their German pianos. Melbourne University dismissed its two German lecturers and the academic staff swore themselves to total abstinence for the duration. Before 1914, sections of the Socialist International had agreed to industrial action in the event of war. With some honourable exceptions (for example, Lenin's Bolsheviks) this measure of internationalism was betrayed. Nowhere was its spirit more outraged than in Australia, where there were nine recorded instances of industrial disputes leading to stoppages of work because employees objected to working with Germans. In addition, there were numerous occasions upon which strikes were threatened



if Germans were not dismissed. The strikes ranged geographically from quartermen at Townsville, to Cockatoo dockyard workers, to railwaymen at Newport, Victoria.

German atrocities were manufactured for the Commonwealth government by the journalist Critchley Parker to such good effect that they convinced the Minister for the Navy, Joseph Cook, that:

The Germans are a foul brood. They kill babies. They torture and mutilate prisoners. They destroy and defile. They sink unarmed ships, fire on crews and passengers, strike medals for the Lusitania. They say treaties are scraps of paper. They are fearful liars and the Champion bullies of the world.

Anti-German hysteria was not confined to poorly educated workers or gullible politicians. A man as sensitive and cultured as Chris Brennan became a vocal pro-war propagandist and produced a dirge entitled 'A Chant of Doom', the essence and quality of which can be gauged from its chorus:

Chime his fame and chime his name;

Rhyme his title, rhyme his shame;

German faith and German trust;

German hate and German lust:

— Bury the Beast unto the dust.

Brennan's anti-German feelings were intensified by his marriage to one.

A letter which Brennan wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* (7 December 1917) defines the intellectual progress of many other pro-Boers:

I have written on this subject purely as an Australian, who desires no other abiding city than the city of his birth. But among other things, I was an obscure and undistinguished pro-boer, as the term was, a convinced and unrepentant one, say of the type of Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. Now, when a man comes along and tells me that those times are back on us again I can only stare at him in amazement ... While writing as an Australian, I cannot forget that I am Irish in blood and bone. My belief in Home Rule has survived

even the great betrayal of 1891. The Sinn Féin I have judged entirely from their own statements and those of their apologists, and have condemned them only for their alliance with Germany. This is their crime, their sin.

While conscription and Ireland were moving a body of Australians away from loyalty to Britain, the war convinced previous doubters that the interests of the Empire and Australia had to be treated as one.