

**W. E. A. SERIES, NO. 3. A
HISTORY OF TRADE
UNIONISM IN AUSTRALIA**

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W. E. A. Series, No. 3. A History of Trade Unionism in Australia by J. T. Sutcliffe

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A HISTORY OF
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IN AUSTRALIA

By

J. T. SUTCLIFFE

Secretary to the Federal Government Basic
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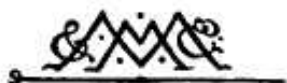
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The scarcity of authoritative Australian books on economic, social and political problems has been severely felt during the development of the Workers' Educational Association in the Commonwealth. On the foundation of the Federal Council of the W. E. A. in 1918, a means of overcoming this difficulty was sought. Among the professors, lecturers and tutors who have so readily assisted the tutorial class movement, some had collected valuable material bearing on these problems. Through the Federal Council it was thought possible to assemble this material for publication in a series of monographs intended for the use of students in tutorial classes and elsewhere. Thus has the W. E. A. Series of publications been founded, and it is hoped that its utility will extend beyond the immediate needs of the members of the W. E. A. to the growing number of students of social problems in Australia.

The chief aim of the series being to encourage investigation in a field of study hitherto surprisingly neglected in Australia, the W. E. A. does not accept responsibility for the views expressed by the writers therein. Its purpose is to stimulate thought, not to propagate doctrines. A disclaimer of this kind may appear odd in a preface, but our experience of the persistency with which our critics insist on attributing to the Association the opinions of those who happen to be connected with it, has convinced us that it is necessary.

G. V. PORTUS,
General Editor.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The subject matter contained herein was submitted to the University of Melbourne, and was awarded the Harbison-Higginbotham Scholarship in 1919. It is the result of extensive research work, during the course of which all possible sources of information have been drawn upon. The Bibliography printed at the end of the book furnishes particulars of the many publications consulted. Of the early history of Australian Trade Unionism practically no published information is available. This necessitated search through newspaper files.

My thanks are due to Mr. Gerald Lightfoot, M.A., LL.B., with whom I collaborated some five or six years ago in the preparation of a short history of the same subject, for permission to use the material then jointly collected in this more extensive investigation.

I am under a very great obligation to Professor Meredith Atkinson, M.A., of the Melbourne University, for invaluable help and advice, in the preparation of the matter for publication.

I also wish to express my thanks to many Trade Union Officials in all States, who have willingly rendered such assistance as they were able. They are so numerous that to mention them all would make much too long a list.

In a task which has entailed such a large amount of research work, and the examination of many conflicting reports and opinions, I cannot hope to have altogether escaped mistakes or wrong interpretations. I look upon this work as a preliminary step to a more exhaustive and intensive investigation into the subject of Trade Unionism, and should be grateful to receive criticisms or corrections in order that, should another edition be needed, they can then be dealt with.

I would like to add a word of appreciation of the Workers' Educational Association. I owe more than I can adequately express to that movement, and it is a great satisfaction to me that this book is to appear in the series of publications issued under the auspices of that Association.

J. T. SUTCLIFFE.

Melbourne, April, 1921.

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I.—INTRODUCTION.

(1) General.

Trade Unionism occupies a position relatively stronger in Australia than in any other country in the world, as the following table shows:—

TRADE UNIONS.—TOTAL MEMBERSHIP AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS PER 1000 INHABITANTS, 1914.

(Labour and Industrial Branch, Bureau of Census and Statistics, Report No. 7.)

Country	Membership in thousands	Population in thousands	No. of Members per 1000 inhabitants
Australia	523 ..	4,941 ..	106
United Kingdom	3,960 ..	46,036 ..	86
*Germany	4,841 ..	65,426 ..	74
New Zealand	74 ..	1,090 ..	68
Denmark	156 ..	2,860 ..	54
†France	1,499 ..	39,660 ..	38
Holland	228 ..	6,114 ..	37
†Switzerland	127 ..	3,781 ..	34
*Belgium	214 ..	7,571 ..	28
*Italy	972 ..	95,288 ..	28
*United States	2,605 ..	95,411 ..	27

*1913 Figures. †1912 Figures.

As might be expected, the movement has had a marked influence upon the economic and social development of Australia in the past, and will, undoubtedly, be called upon to play a most important part in the solution of economic and social problems arising after the war. Its development has proceeded on lines peculiar to Australia