Collateral Damage: B.A. Santamaria and the Marginalising of Social Catholicism

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B.A. Santamaria’s contribution to the removal of communists from trade union office in the 1940s and 1950s may have been less significant than his marginalising of the Distributist school of Social Catholicism of which he was a long-time advocate as deputy director of the Australian National Secretariat for Catholic Action (ANSCA) from 1937 and director from 1946. Distributism was approved by the Catholic Hierarchy as the aim of Catholic Action, spelt out by the bishops in their early Social Justice Statements and fostered through ANSCA agencies including the National Catholic Rural Movement (NCRM), the Catholic Social Studies Movement (CSSM) and the Young Christian Workers (YCW).

ANSCA’s initial ‘bottom up’ approach was later subordinated to an attempted assumption of control of the Labor Party through influence fortuitously accruing from the replacement of communist union officials by CSSM operatives and sympathisers, which others including the YCW opposed. When the opportunity for establishment of meaningful Distributist institutions finally arrived with the emergence of the largely YCW-inspired credit union movement in the middle 1950s, the Distributists were too distracted, exhausted and internally divided by the turmoil within and around the Church and the Labor Party to avail themselves of it. Rarely can so comprehensive a defeat have been snatched from the jaws of victory.

T.S. Eliot’s play Murder in the Cathedral includes an exchange between its doomed Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas A’Beckett, and the last of four spectral tempters who test and taunt him. The final tempter warns Beckett:

And later is worse, when men shall not hate you enough to defame or to execrate you, but pondering the qualities that you lacked, seek only to find the historical fact – when men shall declare that there was no mystery about this man who played a certain part in history.

Thus also B.A. Santamaria. Santamaria’s undoubted contribution to the removal of communists from trade union office in the 1940s and 1950s may be judged ultimately to have been less significant than his marginalising of Social Catholicism. Marginalised in particular was the Distributist philosophy through which the English Catholic writers Hilaire Belloc and Gilbert and Cecil Chesterton gave political expression to the teachings of the papal encyclical Rerum Novarum, and of which Santamaria was himself a longtime, out-spoken and hands-on adherent.

Maisie Ward wrote in her 1944 biography of Gilbert Chesterton that:

In Australia, Distributism has given a fresh slant to both Labor and Catholic leadership. … Most important, however, of all the Australian developments has been the approval of the main Distributist ideal by the Australasian Hierarchy as the aim of Catholic Action.
So totally has Distributism been lost to memory that its content and context require explanation. What was Distributism? How did it arise and evolve, by whom has it been advocated and how did it achieve a level of influence in Australia of the pervasive character ascribed to it by Maisie Ward?

Distributists favour a ‘society of owners’, where property belongs to the many rather than the few, and correspondingly oppose the concentration of property in the hands either of the rich, as under capitalism, or of the state, as advocated by some socialists. In particular, ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange must be widespread.

Distributism emerged as one element of the widespread revulsion and agony of conscience over poverty and dispossession in late Victorian and Edwardian England, and the social teachings that Pope Leo XIII set out in his encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, in part at the instigation of the great English cardinal, Henry Manning. The encyclical’s significance has been summarised by the prominent Anglo-Catholic scholar and sometime Distributist of the inter-war period, Maurice Reckitt. Reckitt wrote: ‘*Rerum Novarum* is the charter of Social Catholicism, and stands to that movement in the same relation as the *Communist Manifesto* of Marx and Engels does to revolutionary socialism’.

Manning was an ultra-montane conservative in religious matters, who served as the majority whip for the adoption of the doctrine of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council in 1870. He was also a social and political radical, whom Sir Charles Dilke, the chairman of the royal commission on working-class housing on which he served in 1884, described as the commission’s ‘greatest revolutionist’. His intervention in the London Dock Strike in 1889 was instrumental in the settling of the deadlocked dispute and the securing for the strikers of their celebrated ‘dockers’ tanner’.

Manning – assisted by Dublin’s Archbishop Walsh – was responsible for the encyclical’s translation into English. His aim was to ensure that its message was fully understood and accepted by English Catholics, not least by lending his interpretation of it a distinctively English flavour. A commentary on the encyclical that he contributed to the *Dublin Review* in July, 1891 gave sombre expression to the encyclical’s rejection of asymmetrical workplace power and destitution in the presence of abundance:

> By degrees, it has come to pass that working men have been given over, isolated and defenceless, to the callousness of employers and the greed of unrestrained competition. The evil has been increased by rapacious usury, which though more than once condemned by the Church, is nevertheless, under a different form, but with the same guilt, still practised by avaricious and grasping men; and to this must be added the custom of working by contract; and the concentration of so many branches of trade in the hands of a few individuals, so that a very few rich men may have been able to lay upon the masses a yoke little better than slavery itself.

Nor did Manning’s advocacy fail to elicit a response among those of his co-religionists who had tried other paths to reform and found them wanting. His protégés included the young Hilaire Belloc, who sat at his feet during frequent visits to the Archbishop’s House, and absorbed from him much of the thinking which would ultimately find expression in such key Distributist texts as *The Servile State* (1912) and *An Essay on the Restoration of Property* (1936).
Belloc and his fellow founder Distributists, the brothers Gilbert and Cecil Chesterton, were former socialists, whose political schooling in and around the socialist movements of the day was instrumental in enabling them to develop the Distributist doctrines through which they sought to give effect to the teachings of *Rerum Novarum*. Gilbert Chesterton wrote that:

> It is my experience that the sort of man who does really become a Distributist is exactly the sort of man who has really been a Socialist.
> … Mr Belloc had been a socialist; my brother had been a Socialist; I had been a Socialist.8

Distributism was in a very real sense one of several breakaways from the state socialist orthodoxy of the day, comparable to the guild socialist and syndicalist movements which it also in other key respects closely resembled.9 It also was as hostile to capitalism. In Gilbert’s eloquent summation:

> To say that I do not like the present state of wealth and poverty is merely to say that I am not the devil in human form. No one but Satan or Beelzebub could like the present state of wealth and poverty.10

The need for change was seen to be far-reaching. Gilbert was in no doubt as to its urgency:

> The thing to be done is nothing more or less than the distribution of the great fortunes and the great estates. We can only avoid Socialism by a change as vast as Socialism. If we are to save property, we must distribute property, almost as sternly and sweepingly as did the French Revolution.11

> If we leave things as they are, there will almost certainly be a crash of confiscations. If we hesitate, we will soon have to hurry. But if we start doing it quickly we shall have time to do it slowly.12

Belloc agreed as to ends, but in time became less sanguine. His 1936 Distributist text *An Essay on the Restoration of Property* was notable for the modesty of its aspirations:

> The restoration of Property must essentially be the product of a new mood, not a new scheme. It must grow from seed planted in the breast. It is too late to reinfuse it by design, and our efforts must everywhere be particular, local, and, in its origins at least, small.13

The ageing Belloc’s diminished hopes for Distributism and managing of his many disappointments may well have been reflective in part of the personalist school of Catholic philosophy which the Distributist world view had by then largely subsumed. As the French personalist Emmanuel Mounier wrote in his *A Personalist Manifesto* in 1938:

> The central move of any personalist revolution is not, then, to unite incoherent forces for an attack upon the coherent and powerful front of bourgeois and capitalist society. It is rather to implant in the vital organs,
at present diseased, of our decadent civilisation the seeds and ferment of a new civilisation.\textsuperscript{14}

**Mutualism**

Distributism was also pluralist and supportive of diversity and a mixed economy. Distributist values anticipated the E.F. Schumacher doctrine of ‘small is beautiful’\textsuperscript{15}

In practical terms, small shops were preferred to chain stores, smallholder farming to agribusiness, and self-employed craftsmen and small workshops with working proprietors to larger enterprises and corporations. Where ownership of productive property on an individual or small scale basis was impractical, a mutualist or co-operativist model was preferred. As the American Social Catholicism and Distributism scholar, Dermot Quinn, has noted:

> Co-operatives were essential to the Distributist ideal. They combined ownership, labour for profit, reward for initiative, a degree of self-sufficiency, elimination of waste (as in the duplication of equipment or use of unnecessary middlemen) and a strong commitment to reciprocal self-help.\textsuperscript{16}

In Gilbert Chesterton’s vision of his Distributism:

> Even my Utopia would contain different things of different types holding on different tenures. … There would be some things nationalised, some machines owned co-operatively, some guilds sharing common profits, and so on, as well as many absolute individual owners, where individual owners are possible. … Even while we remain industrial we can work towards industrial distribution and away from industrial monopoly. … We can try to own our own tools. … In so far as the machine cannot be shared, I would have the ownership shared, and the profits of it shared.\textsuperscript{17}

The mutualist and co-operativist connection was a source of major strengths for Distributism, but also of significant vulnerabilities. Co-operatives and other mutualist entities are commonly formed as a means of enabling their members to access goods or services which otherwise would be unavailable to them or unaffordable. For example, the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers – the 28 cotton weavers who founded a co-operative store in Toad Lane in Rochdale in 1844, and thereby gave rise to the UK’s extensive consumer co-operative movement – were responding to a pressing social need for affordable access to such household necessities as food and fuel.

Credit co-operatives, now known generally as credit unions, were a response to the need for affordable bridging loans for smallholder farmers, and later for affordable consumer finance. Friendly societies were initially a response to the need for funeral benefits and, later, for unemployment benefits and medical and hospital care. Access to affordable life assurance was offered by mutual life assurance societies, as was access to affordable home loans by building societies. Processing and marketing co-operatives met a pressing social need on the part of farmers to capture value added to their produce beyond the farm gate. Worker co-operatives were a response to the need for labour to hire capital rather than capital labour, and for workers to be the owners of their jobs and workplaces.
Trade unions had their origin as mutuals in the friendly society mould, and evolved over time as a means of enabling their members to obtain better working conditions and a just price for their labour. Labor Parties such as in Australia, the UK and New Zealand in this sense owe their inception to co-operativism and mutualism. The one-time General Secretary of the UK Labour Party, Morgan Phillips, famously remarked that the party owed ‘more to Methodism than to Marx’ but the greater debt is to Robert Owen. Over time, national associations of mutuals and co-operatives emerged, which in turn gave rise to the International Co-operative Alliance and the World Council of Credit Unions.18

Co-operatives and other mutualist bodies can be seen accordingly as exhibiting the attributes of both businesses and social movements. In modern management parlance and agency theory, the competitive advantage of Distributism and mutualism in their business capacity lies in their ability to minimise the ‘basic agency dilemma’ whereby divergences of interest between principals and agents incur costs which defeat or detract from the purposes for which the contracts between them have been created. Distributism and mutualism give rise to a ‘virtuous circle’, whereby all principals become agents and agents principals.19

Conversely, Distributist and mutualist enterprises are disadvantaged in their social movement capacity. Consistent with social movement theory, the typical lifecycle of a mutualist or Distributist enterprise falls into three stages. There is, in the first instance, a utopian stage where the urgency of the need and the vision and commitment of the founders energise their followers and bring the enterprise into being; secondly, a stage when the enterprise assumes a more formal and institutional character in order to more effectively go about achieving its objectives; and, finally, a stage – usually referred to as the ‘system’ stage – where bureaucracy takes over, and the survival and well-being of the enterprise assumes precedence over its original intended purpose. Social movement theorists characterise the cycle in its entirety as comprising a ‘generation-degeneration process’.20

What so many of the best-known examples of co-operatives and other mutualist enterprises – the major credit unions, agricultural co-operatives, mutual life assurance societies, building co-operatives and consumer co-operatives – now have in common with one another is the blind alley or ‘Rochdale cul-de-sac’ they have come to occupy, consequent largely on having gravitated from the hands of their members to those of bureaucracies. In the absence of any meaningful measure of member involvement and participation, they have become for all practical purposes indistinguishable from their conventional commercial counterparts.

In so doing, they have in most instances wholly or in part forfeited their niche advantage over their competitors in terms of the principal-agent relationship. Moreover, recent experience suggests that the Rochdale cul-de-sac is not, as has been supposed, a stable – not to say stagnant – condition which can be counted on to continue indefinitely, but rather one of extreme fragility and precariousness. It invites either commercial failure as in the case of some major European consumer co-operatives – the one-time elite of the co-operative movement – or being taken over and looted either from without or within by predatory demutualisers.21
Evolved Distributism and the Antigonish and Mondragon Experiences

In the event, the British Distributism movement withered on the vine with the death of Gilbert Chesterton in 1936 and the coming of the Second World War. His brother, Cecil, had pre-deceased him as a World War I casualty, in 1918. The movement’s demise occurred largely because its adherents were interested far more in talking about it than in giving it effect. However, the Distributist idea did not die with Gilbert as many supposed, but rather had emigrated earlier on to Canada. It was alive and well in Nova Scotia, and being carried forward there by the Antigonish Movement which two remarkable Catholic priests, Father Jimmy Tompkins and Father Moses Coady, established there in the 1920s and 1930s.

Coady and Tompkins created a new Distributism on the basis of adult education, Rochdale co-operation and Raiffeisen credit unionism. Their aim was to enable local communities to become ‘masters of their own destiny’ and enjoy ‘the good and abundant life’, by mobilising local and regional resources for regional economic development. Coady wrote:

> We start with simple things that are vital to human living and move on up the scale to the more cultural and refining activities that make life complete. Through credit unions, co-operative stores, lobster factories and sawmills, we are laying the foundations for an appreciation of Shakespeare and grand opera.22

If the Antigonish Movement ultimately asked more of consumer co-operation and credit unionism than they were able to deliver, that in no way detracts from the energy its adherents devoted to their cause, nor from the short-to-medium alleviation of suffering, the enhancement of human dignity and the restoration of hope that they accomplished.23

It remained for a further notable priest, Don Jose Maria Arizmendiarieta, to make Distributism work, through the great worker co-operative complex – now the Mondragon Co-operative Corporation – that he founded in the Basque region of Spain. The essentials of the Mondragon story are simple. What began in 1956 as a handful of workers in a disused factory, using hand tools and sheet metal to make oil-fired heating and cooking stoves, has now become a massive conglomerate of some 160 manufacturing, retail, financial, agricultural, civil engineering and support co-operatives, with jobs for some 66,000 workers and annual sales in excess of $US15 billion. Modern, evolved Distributism, as exemplified by Mondragon, is, in a sense, most usefully understood as the form in which socialism of the mutualist, associative and communitarian kind originally embraced by Belloc and the Chesterton brothers has been re-born, following the well-intentioned but ultimately counter-productive flirtation with statism that so comprehensively distracted and diverted it for the greater part of the twentieth century.24

Australian Responses to *Rerum Novarum*

Manning’s interpretation and advocacy of *Rerum Novarum* were embraced in Australia by his fellow Primate, Cardinal Moran. Echoing the urgent tenor of Manning’s *Dublin Review* article, a lecture on the encyclical delivered by Moran to a packed audience in Sydney’s New Masonic Hall in August, 1891, favoured social reform by constitutional means, but cautioned that:
if, to remedy a manifest injustice and to redress the crying hardships under which a great majority of the people are oppressed, a revolution be necessary, then a revolution for me will have no terrors.25

Even so, for all Moran’s championing of the encyclical, the extent to which its significance and content were internalised elsewhere in the local Hierarchy or there was awareness of them at the parish level may not have not been profound, and little interest in them was exhibited by either his successor in Sydney, Archbishop Michael Kelly, or Melbourne’s Archbishop Daniel Mannix, for whom their significance was at best secondary to the Irish concerns that so largely fuelled sectarianism and diverted attention from the Church’s social message well into the second half of the new century.

A relevant anecdote from the historian John Molony reads:

Many years ago, Bishop Basil Roper told me a story of an event in his life which he much regretted. Before the First World War he was a young priest at the cathedral presbytery in Ballarat, Australia. One day, he was called to the parlour where a young man awaited him with a small document in his hand. It was a copy of *Rerum Novarum* and the young man wanted the priest to explain its contents to him. The priest was forced to tell him that he could not do so because, although he was aware of Leo’s encyclical, he was unable to explain it as he had never studied it. The young man went away unsatisfied, according to the bishop, ceased from that day to interest himself in the social teachings of the Church to which he belonged. It was regrettable because he was James Scullin who later, in the very week of the Wall Street crash in New York in 1929, became the first Catholic prime minister of Australia.26

Bereft of leadership such as a Manning or Moran might have provided, adherents of Social Catholicism and admirers of Belloc and the Chesterton brothers such as the early NSW Distributist P.J. Cleary were largely distracted by the chimerical quest for a distinctively Catholic political party, which culminated disastrously with the establishment of the Democratic Party in New South Wales in 1919, and its subsequent crushing defeat at the 1920 and 1922 state elections. It was a further decade before significant advocacy of Social Catholicism and Distributism re-emerged, consequent largely on the coming of the Great Depression of the 1930s and its attendant collapse of confidence in capitalism.

**The Campion Society**

The Depression years fired the imaginations and consciences of the remarkable group of Catholic intellectuals, led by the young lawyer, Frank Maher, who established the Campion Society in Melbourne in 1931 as ‘a training school for the leaders of Catholic thought and action throughout Victoria’.27

In the eyes of the Campions, as of Manning, Moran and the founder Distributists before them, capitalism and communism were each as great an evil as the other. A representative statement of the Campion viewpoint circa 1936 reads:

Communism is NOT our great adversary. The exalted position of Public Enemy No. 1 is reserved for Capitalism, not because it is a system which
The Distributist affiliations of the society were clear-cut, falling as they did into ‘two prevailing streams of thought’:

first, there were the papal encyclicals, especially *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931); secondly, there was the work of the English Catholics of the Distributism school led by the aging Hilaire Belloc, whose *The Servile State* (1913) had contained a head-on attack on capitalism leading inevitably to slavery. Besides Belloc, the works of Gilbert Chesterton were read with interest as were those of Christopher Dawson, Christopher Hollis and the English Jesuit Father Martindale.29

Nor was the society’s influence other than far-reaching. In the view of some:

For some eight years, from 1931 to 1938, it exerted an influence unparalleled by that of any other Catholic lay association in Australia’s history. Indeed, it is doubtful if anywhere in the world there existed an entirely lay-led organization which could boast a comparable record of achievement.30

It was the Campions who most energetically argued the case for Catholic Action and authored the recommendation for it to be placed on a national footing through the appointment of an Episcopal Committee on Catholic Action (ECCA) comprised of bishops and a lay national secretariat – the Australian National Secretariat of Catholic Action (ANSCA) – that was adopted by the bishops at their 1937 Plenary Council. The nascent body was so largely staffed by society members as for its historian to conclude that ‘for some time the distinction between the two bodies was merely nominal’.31

Significantly, however, the Campion advocacy of Catholic Action was tempered by a clear understanding of its limits and constraints. The society’s reservations reflected the distinction drawn in particular by the personalist Catholic philosopher, Jacques Maritain, between the activity of Catholics acting officially in the name of the Church, and the activity of individual Catholics who might bring their Christian ideas and influences to bear upon secular institutions, but who did not commit the Church in any way.32 In the view of the society as expressed in its submissions to the bishops: ‘It should be pointed out clearly that the Secretariat cannot undertake to direct political action among unionists or control the policy or tactics of Catholic groups of unionists.’33

Relected also was the principle of subsidiarity – the principle that higher levels of organisation should not assume on behalf of lower levels functions that the lower levels could perform for themselves – as also introduced by *Rerum Novarum*, and elaborated in the further encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* in 1931. The political implication of subsidiarity – that, in order for change to be effective, it should be from the bottom up rather than the top down – was seen by the Campions as being axiomatic for both Distributism and Social Catholicism more generally.

Even so, the Distributist ascendancy within ANSCA was short lived. The establishment of the Catholic Social Studies Movement (CSSM) by Santamaria in...
1941 as a means of combating communism and communists within the trade union movement marked a turning point, whereby anti-communism became in proverbial terms the tail that wagged the ANSCA dog. Maisie Ward’s celebration of ‘the approval of the main Distributist ideal by the Australasian Hierarchy’ coincided with an increasing relegation of the principles and values which underpinned it, to an at best secondary status. The tactics of Santamaria and his associates in turn provoked the creation of opposing alliances both within the Church and externally, and brought about his undoing. The justification for his actions which he advanced through avenues such as his articles for the Bombay Examiner on 18 June and 25 June, 1955, was shown to be mistaken. The Vatican ruled against him, and majority opinion among the bishops distanced itself from him. The CSSM was removed from ANSCA and reborn independent of the Church as the National Civic Council.

ANSCA

Santamaria joined the Campion Society in 1931 and was introduced to Distributism by its more senior members. The society appointed him to the position of editor of its news-sheet, Orders of the Day, in 1934, and the following year he announced the establishment of the Catholic Worker as a publication on the model of the weekly of the same name which had been introduced two years earlier by Catholic reformers in New York. Intimations of an authoritarian bent and intolerance for opposition or dissent may have been implicit in the circumstances of the new paper’s inception. Frustrated with what he saw as interminable discussion and delay on the part of a 20-member committee appointed by the Campions to supervise the project, the fledgling editor brought out the first issue of the paper behind the backs of his colleagues, and presented them with it as a fait accompli. The incident foreshadowed a loss of trust in Santamaria on the part of key Campions and Catholic Worker editorial board members, which ultimately estranged them from him. His links with the paper were finally severed in 1941, when he and his former editorial board associates agreed to go their separate ways.

Following the establishment of ANSCA in 1937, the bishops made Maher its first director and Santamaria became his deputy. In 1945, Maher resigned as director, and was succeeded the following year by Santamaria. Appointment to ANSCA ushered in Santamaria’s finest hour. As he was to attest in later life, his Distributist inspiration and enthusiasm stemmed overwhelmingly from the Antigonish example. He was not alone. The magic and magnetism of the Antigonish Movement in its heyday is now insufficiently understood. As Coady’s biographer, Michael Welton has so vividly recalled:

Antigonish, now a rural town like so many others, graced by malls and fast-food outlets, glowed with a radiant light in the 1930s and 1940s. … For an evanescent historical moment, the Antigonish Movement captured the imagination of the world. Journalists, liberal-minded religious leaders, papal authorities, eastern seaboard intellectuals, professors, theologians, social reformers, wild-eyed dreamers, co-operative leaders and innocent youth came from far and wide to witness the ‘miracle of Antigonish’. Hard minds and doubting hearts were transformed by the co-operative miracle as tourists witnessed rustic lobster factories, credit unions and co-op stores springing up in communities with previously unremarkable histories.
Within Australia, Antigonish texts such as Coady’s *Masters of Their Own Destiny* and the Rev. Fr J.G. Murtagh’s 1944 Catholic Truth Society pamphlet *The Story of Antigonish* reached widespread and appreciative audiences in mainly Catholic circles.

The vision of a Distributist new social order was spelt out in the Social Justice Statements that ANSCA drafted for the bishops between 1940 and 1954. Consistent with the key tenets of the social encyclicals, Distributism and the personalist philosophers, the Social Justice Statements advocated a distinctively Distributist widespread ownership of property including workers owning and controlling their workplaces, which were to be grouped through Industry Councils, along lines broadly reminiscent of the medieval guilds which Belloc and the Chesterton brothers so greatly admired and eloquently championed. Their Distributist agenda was codified and accorded its most explicit expression in the 1943 statement *Pattern for Peace* and the 1945 statement *The Land is Your Business*.

*Pattern for Peace* set out recommendations to the government of the day which included:

- the formation of industrial councils as the instrument for the control and regulation of industry.
- that industrial policy should be directed to the most widespread distribution of the ownership of production (a) by means of co-partnership of workers in industrial enterprises; and (b) by marshalling the incentive resources of the nation to secure the greatest possible reduction in the size of industrial units consistent with efficiency in production
- that the right of the worker to share in the control of the policy of the industry in which he is engaged shall be made effective by his participation on terms of equality with the employer in the industrial council.
- that special measures are called for in the public control of monopolies and the regulation of ‘Big Business’ to curb the power derived from immense financial resources.
- that each industrial council will seek to preserve the class of small owners in the industry which it controls.
- that family farms, linked together by a network of co-operative institutions, shall be recognised in principle as the basis of our rural civilisation.

*The Land is Your Business* stated:

We want co-operatives to develop – and to develop fast. We want buying co-operatives, selling co-operatives, insurance co-operatives, credit co-operatives and co-operatives of half-a-dozen other kinds.

It recommended that:

Every State should pass legislation on the lines of the NSW Co-operation Act, which recognises and regulates co-operatives of all types, and encourages their development. In addition, all Governments should establish or extend Agricultural Extension Services so that farming communities are continually being trained in the methods of co-operation. … The Government can also help by assisting financially all those movements which are engaged in the extension of co-operatives.
It is unlikely that the bishops or Santamaria entertained high hopes of a positive response to the Distributist elements of the Social Justice statements, either from the Labor governments of the day whose focus – winning the war apart – was squarely on their full employment and welfare state objectives, or from the predominantly protestant conservative parties whom they saw as being innately hostile to their faith. Prior to – say – 1946 the statements were for primarily internal consumption. Principle and necessity – subsidiarity and the likely inattention or incomprehension of governments – dictated that the Distributist agenda should be pursued aside and apart from government. It was only with the emergence of intimations of a more extensive and effective political leverage at the hands of the CSSM in the second half of the decade that issues of more general appeal came to be introduced into the statements, and a wider audience to be courted.41

The National Catholic Rural Movement

Concurrently with the drafting and issuing of the Social Justice statements in which in many instances he played so large a part, Santamaria sought to give practical effect to a predominantly agrarian Distributism through the National Catholic Rural Movement (NCRM) that ANSCA launched in 1940. The NCRM agenda initially embraced a range of policies for the furthering of smallholder farming and rural communities, including in particular support mechanisms such as co-operatives and credit unions on the Antigonish Movement model, and was later broadened to encompass advocacy of large-scale decentralist, regional development and ‘nation-building’ projects such as the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme.42 The approach attracted significant support, with membership of NCRM groups peaking at more than 5,200 in 1946, and remaining above 4,000 well into the 1950s.43 Less happily, the membership aggregates to some extent belied the NCRM’s effectiveness, with reports from organisers repeatedly highlighting a greater willingness on the part of Catholic farmers to join the organisation than to apply its precepts to the conduct of their businesses. Similarly, the NCRM resolved at its 13th National Conference in 1953 that ‘NCRM groups should expand the credit society movement on a grand scale and that a Federation of Credit Societies be formed to ensure the maximum utilisation of the full resources’,44 but ultimately played a lesser role in the establishing of credit unions and furthering of credit unionism than its fellow ANSCA agency, the Young Christian Workers (YCW). Santamaria and the NCRM succeeded in securing the enactment of the Victorian Co-operatives Act 1953 by the Labor government of the day, but were rebuffed in their subsequent approach to the government for an allocation of 60,000 acres of vacant Crown land at Caradale in Gippsland for smallholder settlement by predominantly Italian migrants.45

The NCRM’s difficulties in matching outcomes to aspirations have been seen by some as stemming in part from ‘a case of Santamaria dominance’. In the view of T.R. Luscombe, a one-time administrative secretary of the NCRM, who was, in general, sympathetic to Santamaria:

There was certainly no room for the non-conformist or individualist. The acid test of loyalty consisted of the acceptance of policy as defined and imposed from the top.46
Luscombe’s observation reflects an increasing impatience on the part of Santamaria with the inability of his NCRM operatives to more rapidly wear down the perceived resistance of its grassroots adherents, and his increasingly insistent questioning of the bottom up approach to change of which he had initially been so firm an adherent. A letter he addressed to his lifelong friend and mentor Archbishop Mannix in 1948 reads:

unless Catholic Action genuinely aims at the creation of a Christian social order by means of a large scale action in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres, we are wasting our time. 47

Not least, he fell out with the YCW, whose fiercely defended independence, resolute gradualism and retention of its ‘bottom up’ principles he increasingly resented and sought to subvert.

The YCW

The YCW owed its inspiration and inception to the organisation of the same name established in Belgium in 1919 by the 37-year-old charismatic Flemish priest and future cardinal, Father Joseph Cardijn. Cardijn set out to win back for the Church the working-class respect and confidence it had so largely forfeited, and enable lapsed Catholic workers to recover their faith. The decision to establish an Australian YCW was taken at a meeting of ANSCA in Melbourne in 1941, largely on the initiative of the Northcote curate, Father Frank Lombard, who became its chaplain.

Later the same year, the ECCA approved the incorporation of the YCW as one of five ANSCA specialised agencies, along with the NCRM, the Young Christian Workers – Female, which shortly was renamed the National Catholic Girls Movement (NCGM), the Schools Movement which became the Young Christian Students (YCS) and the largely unsuccessful National Christian Workers Movement (NCWM). Each specialised body had a part-time lay secretary, and an Episcopal Chairman in the person of a designated Hierarchy member to whom it would be accountable. Within two years, the YCW was organised round 47 leaders’ groups, with some 4,000 members who were attracted in part by its extensive range of social and sporting activities. 48 Its growth continued into the 1960s, with the establishment of networks of parish groups in every state other than NSW.

The YCW conceptual framework – ‘Jocism’, as derived from the French Jeunesse Ouvriere Chretienne – gave practical expression to the principle of subsidiarity and the social encyclicals more generally, through the organisation’s ‘Enquiry’ or ‘See, Judge and Act’ technique of changing essentially hostile environments through the transformation of individual consciences – of enabling its members to apply moral standards within their workplaces and working lives. It also championed the establishment of co-operatives as a means of achieving economic justice and social reform, and prepared proposals for a saving scheme, which would enable young people to save for the future.

The scheme was abandoned consequent on wartime controls, but foreshadowed the establishment of the credit unions to which the YCW was to return ten years later with triumphant success. Significantly, YCW members who were involved in the preparation of the scheme later re-appeared as prominent credit union movement
identities. Like the Campions before it, the YCW was insistent throughout that its Catholic Action status precluded it from involvement in politics. Its Episcopal Chairman – and Mannix’s Coadjutor Bishop in Melbourne – Justin Simonds, stated that: ‘Catholic Action is a purely spiritual apostolate for the salvation of souls and the extension of the Kingdom of Christ, and can never become a political activity’. Maher confirmed that ‘Catholic Action is forbidden by its nature and by its Statutes and its mandate from undertaking political or economic activity’. Santamaria disagreed. His rejection of the YCW’s resistance to political involvement was adamant. His priority was for the specialised movements including the YCW to co-operate to the full with the CSSM in its mobilisation against communism. The dispute was protracted, embittered and a debilitating distraction for both sides from their respective ANSCA mandates.

As early as 1945, a letter from Santamaria to Simonds read that it was ‘imperative for the CSSM to have the assistance of all Catholic Movements and of their members as long as the crisis lasts’. Two years later, he was warning Archbishop Mannix that:

At the moment there is a real danger that members of the youth movements may be told that if they belong to the Industrial Movement they cannot simultaneously be members of leaders groups in Catholic Action. This seems to be wrong in principle, while in practice it would mean that the very people who should be trained in action for future leadership of industrial life will be disqualified from fulfilling that task because of their very loyalty to Catholic Action. There is a real danger that as those who are now active in the Industrial Movement advance in years, the people who should carry on will not be there to do so.

Returning to his theme on a note of heightened concern in 1952, he wrote again to Mannix that consequent on the YCW’s stand:

The problem is simply that the life-blood of the Secretariat and the Social Studies Movement is being drained off, and that in a relatively short time – whatever the Bishops may wish – it will be unable to recruit members in sufficient numbers or of sufficient ability to do its work. For many years now, as a result of the deliberate and avowed policies of those who control the YCW, all the leaders of this organization have been taught that there is something reprehensible about the activities of the Social Studies Movement. … Today, it is clear that it has involved the Church in an absolute disaster. We are winning union elections in all States. A relatively large number of full-time union positions have had to be filled. We are now facing the situation that we no longer have the men to fill them. As a result, the Church us now deprived of positions of industrial and political importance. … It is worrying, to the point of distraction, to find that we are able to win the positions, and then see the fruits of victory dissipated in this fashion.
And there was more. Subversion of the CSSM were seen to have spread to the Catholic secondary schools and the universities, in which regard the letter alerted Mannix to the existence of:

a definite plan of action, in which the chaplains of the Universities of Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, and a number of close supporters, are involved to destroy the influence of the Secretariat, the Social Studies Movement and the Campion Society in these universities.

It followed in the writer’s view that:

If the secondary schools and the universities are finally closed to us, and this is added the long-standing boycott by the YCW, I would submit to Your Grace that we have no future. Quite apart from the numbers involved, the loss of intellectual quality will be irreplaceable.

The letter concluded:

I may sum up by saying that my colleagues have never been afraid of the Communist Party. But they are more than afraid of this organised internal dissention which can destroy all of our work and which can never be tracked down and answered.

It was all to no avail. Santamaria’s intransigence and importunities were ineffectual. The YCW retained its independence and gained new allies, as opposition to the CSSM within the Church deepened and intensified.

Grab for Power

Tragically for Distributism, the impulse on Santamaria’s part to more draconian solutions was undeterred. Fortuitously, his frustrations coincided with the seeming opportunity and means to remedy them. The campaign to defeat communist officials in trade union elections in which ANSCA was also involved, through the agency of the CSSM, was resulting in the replacement of the communists with CSSM operatives and sympathisers. Indirectly but inexorably it was thereby altering the balance of power within the union-dominated ruling bodies of the ALP, in favour of the ANSCA agenda which was so largely Santamaria’s creation and of which he was so passionate an adherent and advocate.

Nor was Santamaria slow to recognise the magnitude of his opportunity. His December 1952 letter to Mannix, denouncing the obduracy of the YCW and its allies, also set out in unambiguous and uncompromising terms the grander – in the view of some grandiose – outcomes which he now saw as being within his reach. The letter – the Watergate-style ‘smoking gun’ of the Labor Split saga, undisclosed until the publication of quotations from it in 1983, and only as of 2007 for the first time fully accessible – read:

For the last three years, however, it has been recognised that the possibilities of the Catholic Social Studies Movement are far wider than the defensive battle against communism … The Social Studies Movement should within a period of five or six years be able to completely transform
the leadership of the Labor Movement and to introduce into Federal and State spheres large numbers of members who ... should be able to implement a Christian social program in both the State and Federal spheres ... This is the first time that such a work has become possible in Australia and, as far as I can see, in the Anglo-Saxon world since the advent of Protestantism.55

It was not to be. In the event, Santamaria’s grab for control of the ALP exceeded his grasp. His analysis under-estimated the extent of the antipathy towards the CSSM and its ALP Industrial Groups allies that was developing consequent on their perceived exceeding of their mandate – on their having been put to use for purposes other than those envisaged in their original brief, or to which many even among their more ardent supporters saw themselves as having consented.56 Determination to oppose and defeat communist office-holders in union elections did not necessarily also imply support for Social Catholicism in the distinctive Santamaria mould even on the part of many – perhaps most – of his fellow Catholics.

As Michael Hogan notes in the introduction to his edition of the collected Social Justice Statements, ‘A modern reader will find many attitudes which could be categorised as sexist, racist and jingoistic’ – albeit in circumstances where ‘The Australian Catholic bishops were not alone in holding those attitudes in Australia in the 1940s and 1950s’.57 Nor did Australian attachments to notions of a ‘fair go’ and the fitness of things necessarily sit easily with the prospect of so sweeping and decisive an influence being exercised over a major political party by a man who adamantly refused to belong to it.58

And there was more. Memories lingered of the young Santamaria’s sympathy for Mussolini and stridently partisan championing of Franco in the Spanish Civil War – sentiments that recall the characterisation of Belloc by the early Chesterton biographer, Dudley Barker. Barker wrote:

In all this, Chesterton was pushed by Belloc, who was soon to be detecting Masonic Plots against the noble Italian, and who, during the Civil War in Spain, could acclaim Franco as the saviour of us all.59

Was the Santamaria who had so vehemently denounced the atrocities of one side in the Civil War while turning a blind eye to those of the other necessarily to be trusted with so great a power as control of the ALP seemed likely to confer on him?60

It was by no means sectarians alone who detected a whiff of authoritarianism about Santamaria’s Catholicism.

Not least, the CSSM and the Industrial Groups were needlessly engendering opposition to themselves by standing candidates against union officials other than communists or communist sympathisers. A key motivation for many non-communist unionists in siding against the CSSM and the Groups at the time of the Split, and subsequently supporting or countenancing Unity Tickets with communists to defeat ‘Grouper’ candidates in union elections, was their either having been deprived unfairly of their livelihoods as officials by the use of the Labor Party’s name against them, or having witnessed colleagues thereby displaced, and their determination to ensure that the exploitation of the anti-communist cause for purposes other than anti-communism was frustrated or terminated. That their tactics were frequently ill-advised and counter-productive in no way invalidated their cause for complaint.
The Smoking Gun

Hubris was inevitable. Nemesis followed. On 5 October, 1954 a press release by the Labor Leader, Dr Evatt, attacked ‘a small minority group of Labor members’, whom it accused of being ‘disloyal to the Labor movement and to the Labor leadership’ and so ‘deflecting the Labor movement from the pursuit of established Labor objectives and ideals’. The statement continued ‘It seems certain that the activities of this small group are largely directed from outside the Labor Movement. The Melbourne News-Weekly appears to act as their journal’. With Evatt’s subsequent identification of his antagonists as a ‘Santamaria-Keon-McManus group’, the Split was imminent.

The substance of Evatt’s charges was effectively identical with Santamaria’s undertakings in his ‘smoking gun’ letter to Mannix. Even so, Santamaria was in part able to deflect them by outright denials, fudging of the issues and complaints over Evatt’s failure to produce the evidence that he knew was safely sequested, in his own and Mannix’s files. A key aspect of the fudge was in misrepresenting the charges against him as being to the effect that the CSSM had been conceived in order to assume control of the ALP rather than that – as had in reality occurred – its subsequent success had been exploited opportunistically in order to achieve a takeover that at the outset had been unforeseen. In this way his adversaries were made to seem to be opposing anti-communism rather than legitimately protecting the independence of the party against a mainly external influence.

Santamaria was also more fortunate than the disgraced and deposed President Nixon, in that the disclosure of his ‘smoking gun’ letter to Mannix was for so extended a period delayed. The letter’s effect, had it come to light concurrently with the Split, can be gauged by the reactions to the disclosure of quotations from it in Gerard Henderson’s 1983 Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, on the part of Santamaria’s onetime close associates and admirers, Henderson himself and Dr Frank Knopfelmacher.

In Henderson’s view, the letter unmasked Santamaria as having pursued what proved to be the ‘unrealistic’ objective of creating ‘a Catholic social order … within an Anglo-Saxon democratic society … in a secretive and conspiratorial manner’ … through operating techniques ‘which involved the infiltration of organizations by minorities in a way that was somewhat reminiscent of the organisational principles of Lenin’. Knopfelmacher – the high profile Melbourne University academic and most outspoken anti-communist public intellectual of his day – was less restrained. His review of Henderson’s book for ABC Radio 2 in 1982 reads:

After reading Henderson, it is no longer possible to sustain the thesis that Evatt was a Communist sympathiser, as I had hitherto sincerely believed. … The wealth of astounding revelations … reveal that before and throughout the Split, the principal aim of the Movement was not Australia’s security but her conversion to, or political manipulation into, a fundamentalist brand of Catholicism. … Henderson’s story convincingly supports the following conclusion: A fundamentalist Catholic outfit, supported by part of the hierarchy, set up a secret organisational weapon for the purpose of penetrating and dominating the traditional domiciles of Australian Irish Catholicism – the unions and the ALP – and, through them, Australia.

That related sentiments and perhaps certainties were also entertained within the Hierarchy is evident from an address by Simonds in 1954. Simonds – no friend of
Santamaria or the CSSM and a staunch defender of the independence and integrity of the YCW – stated at a luncheon following the installation of Eris O’Brien as Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn that:

I am sure that he [Eris O’Brien] will set his face against any attempt to involve the Church in underground political intrigue. Anything of that nature is completely foreign to his character, and he is too well vested in history to imagine that the Church’s divine apostolate gains any permanent fruit when any of her misguided children seek to capture power in her name.64

In the view of some, the aspirations and activities of Santamaria and the CSSM as regards the ALP may have done no more than reflect the mechanisms of winner-take-all faction politics within the party, and help create a new kind of right wing faction which was other than under their control. Evidence newly brought to light by Patrick Morgan in his B.A. Santamaria: Your Most Obedient Servant: Selected Letters 1938-1996 indicates otherwise.65 Morgan’s cross-referencing of the substance of the ‘smoking gun’ letter with others of broadly concurrent date corroborates the commonsense conclusion that, in addressing himself privately to the friend and mentor whom he had revered throughout his adult life, Santamaria ‘wrote what he meant and meant what he wrote’. Luscombe wrote in his Builders and Crusaders that Santamaria ‘doubtless sorrowed at the political destruction of many men, Federal and State Members of Parliament, who tied their allegiance to Movement supported policies’:

The 1954 split in the Labor Party cut short the political careers of a group of men who could have retained office if they had been prepared to sacrifice principle to expediency. Santamaria was too honest and sincere not to suffer with them.66

But was Santamaria frank with them about his intentions, as spelt out in the letter to Mannix? And had they been fully taken into his confidence, would all or any of them have persisted in their political apostasy?

Luscombe also wrote that ‘one unfortunate result’ of the Split was that:

the figure of Santamaria is firmly fixed in the minds of numerous Australians as a sinister political manipulator, a Machiavellian character who would have imposed his own Fascist-like dictatorship on Australia if his plans had not been foiled.67

But was he too less than fully informed about Santamaria’s intentions? And had the letter to Mannix been public knowledge when he wrote, might he not have arrived at a less sweeping exculpatory assessment?

And does not the insistent attributing by some of responsibility for the Split to those resisting the externally directed takeover of the ALP rather than those instigating and implementing it – to Evatt and his associates within the party rather than to Santamaria and the CSSM – defy description other than as bizarre?
Collateral Damage

Distributism can now be seen to have been an unintended casualty of the Split – collateral damage, consequent on friendly fire. The subsequent establishment of a mainly Catholic breakaway party – the Democratic Labor Party (DLP), which denied Labor office federally until 1972 – so much polarised opinion, sowed distrust and marginalised the influence of Catholic social thought and thinkers as to at one stroke bring about an erasure of Social Catholicism and Distributism from the agenda of Labor politics from which to date there has been no recovery. Australia is today a far cry from Maisie Ward’s evocation of a time when Australian Distributism contributed ‘a fresh slant to both Labor and Catholic leadership’.

The irony is that, but for Santamaria’s grab for power, significant progress in the establishment of Distributist institutions may well have occurred. Concurrently with the Split, the patient adherence of bodies such as the YCW to their ‘bottom up’ strategies was beginning to bear fruit. Green shoots of Distributist initiative were emerging from the previously inhospitable soil of the wartime and post-war years, in both the international and national spheres.

In the middle to late 1950s, families in Catholic parishes in outer suburban Melbourne were encouraged by mainly YCW activists to form parish credit unions, as a means of averting the usurious exploitation of the hire purchase rackets of the day. Home-buyers of the day could qualify – albeit at the cost of often protracted queuing – for mortgage loans re-payable over 30 years at a fixed interest rate of 3½ per cent. However, when furnishings, a car or other consumer durables were required, they would instead be referred to a hire purchase company – frequently a subsidiary of the bank which was already their home loan provider – for hire purchase finance at interest rates which were grossly and punitively disproportionate.

Characteristically, families gathered round card tables in their church foyers after Mass, to pool such savings as they had, and in turn queue to borrow at interest rates which were affordable for them. Parish credit unions, like other mutuals, are thereby seen as having arisen in response to the need for a service which otherwise would have been over-priced or unavailable. A little later, neighbouring non-Catholic households looked over the church fences, saw what a good thing the parishioners had going for them, and sought and secured admission, thereby causing the parish unions to become community credit unions. Later again, some trade unions recognised that workplaces were as much communities as were suburbs, and industrial credit unions were established. Over time, individual credit unions linked with one another in local chapters and state and national associations. So obviously have credit unions served the public interest that they currently number some 3.5 million members, with assets under management in excess of $34 billion.

Significantly, the early credit unions included a distinctive Antigonish component – the Australian Antigonish Movement – which sought to apply credit unionism along distinctively Distributist lines to the meeting of wider needs such as housing, jobs and regional economic development. The Distributist consciousness within the credit unions and in particular on the part of so great a number of its YCW adherents was exemplified by the annual three-day residential schools which the Association of Catholic Co-operative Credit Societies (ACCS) – later the Victorian Credit Co-operative Association (VCCA) – conducted at the Warburton Chalet. So highly valued were the residential schools and their YCW-style formation function
that, when the Chalet burned down in 1973, the VCCA went close to bankrupting itself in an unsuccessful bid to provide a purpose-built replacement at Jubilee Lake in Daylesford.69

Moreover, the rapid growth of the credit unions coincided with a precipitous decline of the previously widespread Rochdale style consumer co-operatives, to which the perversely fractious wider co-operative movement had hitherto looked for such leadership as its affiliates were prepared to accept. Deeply mired and bureaucratised in the third or ‘system’ stage of their ‘generation-degeneration’ social movement theory cycles, and struggling to compete with their ever more numerous and glamorous supermarket rivals, the consumer co-operatives were with few exceptions shortly to vanish and be lost to popular memory as near totally as if they had never existed. The way was open for the credit unions to stamp the wider mutualist movement with the sense of Distributist purpose and direction which so great a number of their founder members so passionately espoused.70

Internationally, Arizmendiarrieta was putting in place the foundations of Mondragon’s quintessentially ‘Evolved Distributist’ worker-owned manufacturing co-operatives which were shortly to harness a likewise Distributist credit unionism, to fuel their explosive development into today’s mighty Mondragon Co-operative Corporation. Mondragon attracted international attention increasingly from the late 1960s, and sporadic references to it appeared in the CSSM – and later NCC – journal Newsweekly, albeit rarely over Santamaria’s by-line.71 Was his uncharacteristic reticence as regards Mondragon perhaps reflective of disappointed hopes and night fears such as Murder in the Cathedral’s Fourth Tempter ascribes to its humbled monarch, Henry II: ‘The old king shall know it, when at last breath, no sons, no empire, he bites broken teeth’?

And may not the period between the subsuming of Victoria’s Association of Catholic Co-operative Credit Societies into the secular Victorian Credit Co-operative Association at the 1966 ACCCS AGM and the announcement of the abandonment of the Jubilee Lake project by the VCCA at its AGM in 1981 have marked a turning point – a last chance – beyond which the window of opportunity for Distributists and Distributism had commence to close or already was unavailable?72

Had the Distributists within the CSSM and the NCRM been less exhausted and distracted by their political and ecclesiastical pre-occupations consequent on the Split, and instead applied their considerable organisational and inspirational talents to backing or supplementing the YCW in the provision of leadership for the nascent credit union movement, a clear sense of direction might have been imparted to the credit unions, such as would have ensured a continuation of their evolution along Distributist lines, and averted the state of capture by the finance industry which currently threatens to result in their demutualisation.73

From the acorns of the nascent credit unions some mighty Distributist oaks along the lines of Mondragon might have arisen. Adaptations of the Mondragon model, reflective of local needs and circumstances, might by now have become going concerns in decentralist locations such as Rockhampton, Wollongong or Geelong.

Co-operatives and mutualism were in historical terms as much part and parcel of the philosophical and intellectual inheritance of social democrats and democratic socialists within the ALP as of the party’s Distributists. A key Santamaria error and manifestation of his hubris was in emphasising the differences rather than the
similarities between non-communists within the ALP – in positioning Distributism as a distinctively and tribally Catholic doctrine rather than one whose co-operativist and mutualist roots social democrats and democratic socialists so largely shared. His tactics offer an instructive study in the high cost of unintended consequences. Rarely can so comprehensive a defeat have been snatched from the jaws of victory.

Nor was it in foregone opportunities for Distributism alone that the costs of hubris and insincerity – of conflating Distributism with the CSSM and the Industrial Groups – were incurred. For example, the Kirner Labor Government in Victoria was only narrowly restrained from inadvertently wiping out the state’s credit unions in the aftermath of the Pyramid Building Society debacle. Federally, the Keating Labor government stripped the credit unions of the tax advantages that the Whitlam government had 20 or so years earlier conferred on them, and enacted financial institutions legislation that has resulted in the rejection of all but three of innumerable subsequent attempts to establish new credit unions. Efforts to up-date co-operatives legislation along user-friendly lines on the part of the states, or secure the enactment of national legislation, have largely been frustrated or ignored, and the looting of co-operatives, building societies, mutual insurance societies, friendly societies and other mutualist and Distributist entities by demutualisers has been allowed to run rampant without legislative impediment.

Santamaria’s response to the marginalising of Distributism for which he bears primary responsibility was to turn his back on it. Successive editions of his memoirs trace the diminution of his enthusiasm. Whereas the initial memoir in 1964 outspokenly celebrated the indebtedness of his generation of young Catholics to the ideas of Belloc and Chesterton, Santamaria was already by 1981 heavily qualifying the Distributist connection with the reservation that:

> Although it was later to be written that I was profoundly influenced by the writings of Belloc and Chesterton, in fact whatever influence there was came from the readings of others and listening to their discussion.

The final edition of the memoirs in 1997 was less circumspect. Responding to a friendly reference to his Distributist convictions by the onetime ALP Leader, Bill Hayden, he wrote: ‘In fact whatever economic ideas I express are not “Distributist” in the Chestertonian sense of that word’. It was a low-key farewell to so long-standing and central an affiliation.

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Endnotes


6. An increase of the former rate of pay to 6d per hour. For a first-hand account of the dispute and Manning’s role in its settlement, see B. Tillet, Memories and Reflections, John Long Limited, London, 1931, pp. 119-56.


12. Chesterton, What’s Wrong with the World, p. 293.


19. For Distributism and agency theory, see Mathews, Jobs of Our Own, pp. 10-12.

20. For co-operatives and other mutualist bodies as social movements, see P. Devetierre, Co-operative Development: Towards a Social Movement Perspective, University of Saskatchewan Centre for the Study of Co-operatives, Saskatoon, 1992.

21. For the Rochdale cul-de-sac see Mathews, Jobs of Our Own, pp. 169-73.


25. Quoted in Duncan, The Church’s Social Teaching. See also P. Ford, Cardinal Moran and the ALP, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1966.
27. Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, p. 11.
29. Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, p. 11.
31. Ibid., p. 93
32. Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, p. 16.
34. Derived from an address by Santamaria to the CSSM National Conference in 1952, and ultimately acknowledged by him to have been erroneous.
38. For full texts of the Social Justice Statements, see M. Hogan (ed.), Justice Now! Social Justice Statements of the Australian Catholic Bishops 1940-66, Department of Government and Public Administration, University of Sydney, Sydney, 1990. For an interesting if acerbic commentary, see Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, pp. 41-66.
40. Hogan (ed.), Justice Now!, pp. 71, 75
41. For the thinking behind the NCRM, see B.A. Santamaria, The Earth Our Mother, Challenge Press Ltd, Coburg, Vic, 1945.
42. For the thinking behind the NCRM, see B.A. Santamaria, The Earth Our Mother, Challenge Press Ltd, Coburg, Vic, 1945.
45. In Enabling legislation – the Land Settlement Bill 1953 – was introduced and debated but lapsed following a dramatic incident in which the Minister for Lands, R.W. Holt, tore up amendments to the Bill on the floor of the Parliament, left that Chamber saying ‘I can’t go on’ and subsequently resigned from the Cabinet. Holt alleged – and Santamaria denied – that Santamaria and the Cabinet Secretary, Frank Scully, had threatened him with the loss of his seat if the legislation was not enacted. For a concise account of the incident, see R. Murray, The Split: Australian Labor in the Fifties, Cheshire, Melbourne, 1970, pp. 96-100. For the full texts of statements by Holt, Santamaria and Scully, see T. Truman, Catholic Action and Politics, Georgian House, 1959, Melbourne, pp. 138-40.
47. Santamaria to Mannix as quoted in Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, p. 28.
48. Duncan, Crusade or Conspiracy?, p. 70.
50. Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, p. 29.
51. Ibid., p. 29.
52. Ibid., p. 30.
55. Morgan, B.A. Santamaria, pp. 73-79. Extracts from the letter were quoted previously in, for example, Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, G. Henderson, ‘B.A. Santamaria, Santamarianism and the Cult of Personality’ in P. Ormonde (ed.), 50 Years of the Santamaria Movement: A Conference Held at the State Library of NSW, Eureka Street Papers no. 1, Jesuit Publications, Richmond, Vic., 1992, and Duncan, Crusade or Conspiracy.
56. Henderson, ‘B.A. Santamaria, Santamarianism and the Cult of Personality’, pp. 51-52 quotes an unpublished document by Santamaria, Report on the Political Situation and on the National Policy of the CSSM, as listing among his political opponents other than the Communist Party ‘(i) the old school of Catholic Labor politicians; (ii) such moderate trade union leaders as ACTU secretary Albert Monk and the key officials of the Australian Workers Union; (iii) the Sydney press; and (iv) freemasonry’. Luscombe, Builders and Crusaders, p. 187, expands the category to include ‘Communist fellow travellers, left-wing Labor men, well-meaning idealists and anti-Catholic sectarians’. These are formidable inventories, but perhaps not exhaustive.
58. See, for example, Santamaria, Santamaria: A Memoir, p. 72.
64. Henderson, Mr Santamaria and the Bishops, p. 38.
66. Luscombe, Builders and Crusaders, p. 192.
67. Ibid., p. 193.
68. For the Australian Antigonish Movement, see Runcie, Credit Unions in the South Pacific, p. 138, and Lewis, People Before Profit, pp. 17-19.
69. Ibid., pp 135, 137, 148.
72. Lewis, People Before Profit, p. 131.
75. Santamaria, The Price of Freedom, p. 43; Santamaria, Santamaria: A Memoir, p. 16.