

Labor Pains



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Ruth Corcoran
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

This volume chronicles the increasing divisions inside the Labor Party that came to a head in the disastrous split in 1916 over conscription for overseas military service. The central figure of this era was William Holman, who became Premier in June 1913 when James McGowen retired from that office. Before conscription became the central issue Holman had come to be heartily detested by many in the extra-parliamentary party, largely because of his refusal to do anything to abolish, or curb the power of, the Upper House. The AWU and its journal, *The Australian Worker*, led the criticism of Holman and his Government during these years. For a few years Holman's superb political skills guaranteed his survival. However, by 1916 Holman's enemies had organized a tightly disciplined modern faction, the 'Industrial Section', (later the 'Industrial Vigilance Council') to take control of the Executive and Conference and force policy changes on Holman. When the conscription issue reached a climax with the first plebiscite ordered by Prime Minister Hughes, the party at Commonwealth and State level split. Both Hughes and Holman were expelled from the party, continuing in office in new Nationalist administrations, leaving a factionalised Labor Party to begin the process of reconstruction. See Labor Pains Series link, to the right, for details of other Volumes. A NSW Sesquicentenary of Responsible Government publication.

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