

They don't make politicians like 'Jack' Brookfield anymore. From mining underground in Broken Hill he 'rose like a meteor in public life' to be possibly the most extreme anti-politician ever to be elected in this country. The Great War and the years that followed saw unprecedented political turmoil in Australia, and Brookfield was in the thick of it. By the time he was fatally shot at Riverton in South Australia, Brookfield held the balance of power in NSW and had played major roles in many of the era's main political and industrial events: the Big Strike, the plot of the 'IWW Twelve' to burn down Sydney, and the bitter national conscription debate.

'Percy Brookfield was a giant among labour leaders. In life, as in the manner of death, he made personal sacrifice the measure of his political commitment. Morally and physically fearless, his probity withstood parliament. Paul Adams has given us a biography as thoroughly gripping as it is thoroughly researched. Inspiration floods from its pages'.

—Humphrey McQueen

'Both the radical life and untimely death of Percy Brookfield are the stuff of Australian labour legend. Finally, we have a biography that, while stating the case for Brookfield, richly contextualises and analyses his brief but turbulent career in trade unionism and radical politics. In this fine book, Paul Robert Adams has created a vivid portrait of a militant working-class leader who inspired both great hatred and deep affection. The author creates a richly detailed portrait of an extraordinary place, the great mining town of Broken Hill, during extraordinary times, the First World War, the gravest crisis the world had ever known'.

— Frank Bongiorno

'It is an extraordinary oversight that this man, with such a crucial role in state, labour and local politics, should have been overlooked for so long'.

—Erik Eklund

'This is a book that should be read by all Australians interested in their nation's history'.

—David Day

Dr Paul Robert Adams was born in Broken Hill. He holds a PhD from The University of Sydney and currently teaches media at The University of New England.



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ISBN 978-1-921450-22-8



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