



# The Queensland Journal of Labour History

No. 1  
September 2005

## **The Brisbane Labour History Association**

The Brisbane Labour History Association was formed in 1990 to encourage and promote the study, teaching, research and publication of labour history as well as the preservation of labour archives. There are no limits on the study of labour history and the diverse membership reflects the many different areas of concern.

The Association is affiliated with the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. Membership is open to all individuals and organisations who subscribe to the objectives of the association.

The Association organises seminars, lectures, meetings, conferences and publications on themes of labour history.

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No. 1, September 2005  
ISSN 1832-9926

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Design and Layout: Janis Bailey

Printed by Uniprint, Griffith University

This publication is supported by the Department of Industrial  
Relations, Griffith University

# President's Foreword

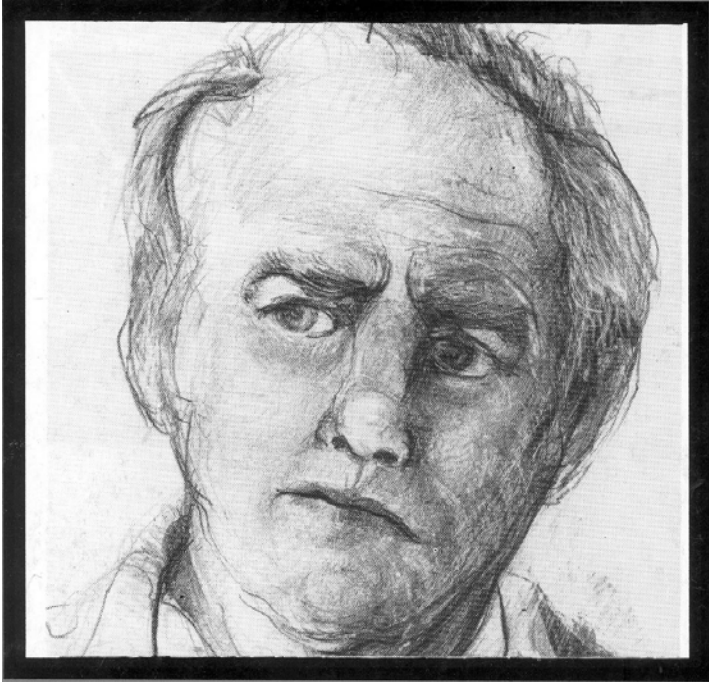
## Greg Mallory

It is with great pleasure that I write the Foreword to the inaugural issue of *The Queensland Journal of Labour History* (hopefully in the future simply referred to as "The Queensland Journal"). Ever since the Brisbane Labour History Association (BLHA) was re-formed in 2000, I have held the strong belief that the BLHA should produce a journal along the same style of the Sydney Branch's *The Hummer*. In March 2002 the revived BLHA produced its first Newsletter, which not only informs members of current events and issues in labour history, but contains smaller articles on a variety of labour and social history topics. The newsletter will continue but it is now timely to move into the production of a journal.

The first issue consists of two articles from members. Bob Reed gives a fine account of his involvement in the Painters and Dockers Union from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. His article is informative and humorous in its description of the various characters and events that

defined that union. Claire Wagner's article on Queensland's bullockies gives a detailed account of their work, their class position, their involvement in the 1891 shearers' strike, and their relationship with the labour movement. There are three book reviews, two on unions and one on a series of letters between Judith Wright and Jack McKinney. I have written an account of my adventures with Jack Munday in launching my book, *Uncharted Waters*, around Australia. In retrospect I find a number of these adventures humorous and hope readers do also. On a sadder note, I have written an obituary of Phil O'Brien, Brisbane-based long time union and peace activist, who died last year. This is the first obituary written for Phil.

I would like to thank the Department of Industrial Relations at Griffith University for its support of this venture and the editors Janis Bailey and Helen Ester for producing this fine publication. I also thank Secretary-Treasurer, Ted Riethmuller, and other members of our committee for supporting this project.



**Phil O'Brien  
1920-2004**

# Phil O'Brien

## Obituary

Greg Mallory

*He was one of those rare officers who was so objectionable that he had few friends, if any, even among his own ranks. In the desert he rightly earned the title of Doover Dan, a nickname which described his usual haunt. His courage could be summed up easily – he had none! After discharge he became an executive with a firm in Brisbane city. One day a large number of striking workers were marching up the street when Doover Dan came out from behind huge glass doors to hurl abuse at the strikers. Bad luck for Doover, one of the marchers was in the same unit in the desert. He called to Dan: 'Get back down in your doover, Dan, you dingo bastard.' Dan was stunned and his face went about six different colours.*

The above quotation is one of many that are contained in Phil O'Brien's 1992 autobiography *Towards Peace: A Worker's Journey*. In the Preface to his book Phil stated that

his life consisted of three "wents":

*I went to school, I went to the war and I went into the Waterside Workers' Federation.*

His book tells that story.

Phil O'Brien passed away September 2004 after a long illness. He was born in October 1920 in Sherwood and lived most of his life in the Sherwood/Graceville area. During this time he visited many parts of the world, firstly as a soldier during World War II, and later on as an Australian World Peace Councillor.

I met Phil O'Brien in the early 1990s when I was researching material on the Waterside Workers' Federation for my Ph.D. I arrived at his place with the full intention of conducting an interview with him, but he said there was no need to do that as he had written his life story and he then took me down to his shed in the backyard where we discussed a range of issues while drinking a bottle of rum. At this stage his story

was in draft form.

After leaving school and working in a number of jobs Phil joined the army in October 1939. He spent time in Greece, Crete, the Middle East, Turkey and then New Guinea, Lae and Borneo. During this time Phil kept a daily diary recording all aspects of the war from the funnier moments to the ones where men were killed around him. Phil went close to being killed on a number of occasions. These experiences had had a profound experience on him by the time he was discharged from the army in 1945.

In 1946 Phil married Joyce Blumel and they moved into a house in

Graceville. After working at several jobs and experiencing various forms of exploitation, Phil joined the Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF) in 1948. During the next ten years, Phil became active in the affairs of the union and by 1958 he was elected to the Brisbane Branch Executive. Phil ran on a unity ticket with Communists, ALP members and non-party candidates. In one election, Jim Killen, Liberal Party member for Moreton, proclaimed in Parliament that seven communists had been elected to the Brisbane Branch Executive. Alby Graham and Phil Healy, the two communist members of the ticket, complained that it was a disgrace that the other five had not been paying their party



**A Peace Float at a 1960s May Day march. Phil was active in the Waterfront Peace Committee.**

Photo: Grahame Garner



dues. Phil was never a member of any political party.

During the 1950s and 60s the WWF was very active in social and political affairs, having an active women's committee, various sporting clubs, a Workers' Club and an active Waterfront Peace Committee. Phil became Secretary of the Peace Committee in the late 1950s and held weekly peace socials from 1960 for a number of years. In 1959 Phil attended a National Peace Conference held in Melbourne organized by the Association for International Cooperation and Disarmament (AICD). Other participants were the English author J.B. Priestley and Nobel Prize winner, Professor Linus Pauling.

In 1962 Phil and Trades and Labour Council Secretary Alec MacDonald joined 24 other Australian and New Zealand delegates to the World Peace Council in Moscow. The Premier of the Soviet Union Nikita Khrushchev addressed one of the sessions. After the conference Phil enjoyed the hospitality of the Russian people by visiting Lenin's tomb (where Phil refused to queue jump), and meeting with members of the USSR-Australia Society. One memorable day was spent with Frank Hardy where he visited a church in the morning, the horse races in the afternoon, and the Bolshoi in the evening. He drank Russian beer with Hardy in the after-

noon during Frank's mad betting spasms and subsequently fell asleep at the ballet. The President of the Soviet Sea and Rivers Union arranged for Phil to go to Leningrad to visit the waterfront. In Leningrad Phil was the guest of the union and was interviewed on television and spoke at a public meeting commemorating Poland's liberation by the Soviet army.

On returning to Brisbane, Phil was immediately involved in a Peace cavalcade to Canberra. Phil's peace, union and political activity brought him to the close attention of Queensland's infamous Special Branch. In 1970 Phil was nominated as a World Peace Councillor and attended a council presidential meeting in Warsaw. Once again Phil met with local unionists. He was the first Australian wharfie to make an official visit to Poland.

Phil was also involved with the anti-Vietnam and anti-conscription movement in Brisbane which brought him into contact with many student activists, including Brian Laver, Mitch Thompson, Jim Prentice, Dick Shearman and Jim Beetson. In 1967 the Waterside Workers' Federation Branch welcomed students to march with them after the President of the Trades and Labour Council, Jack Egerton, had banned students from marching. The students and the unionists had a close but sometime fiery relationship,

however they were able to work together to make the 1970 Moratoriums a great success.

Phil retired from the waterfront in 1976 but was soon involved in political activity surrounding the circumstance of Bjelke-Petersen banning street marches in Queensland. Phil was arrested with many other demonstrators and placed in Boggo Road jail. During his time in jail, he built up a good rapport with other inmates.

In 1984 and 1985 Phil and his wife traveled around Australia and took part in a number of peace and union demonstrations and pickets.

Phil was a great activist for the causes of peace and unionism in the world. What always struck me about Phil was that he was always a

Sherwood/Graceville person. After living such an interesting and well travelled life, he always returned to the area. After meeting such famous people as Paul Robeson, Jessie Street, Frank Hardy and Francis James, he remained an ordinary working-class person who played bowls in the local area, mixed with people he went to school with and was a member of the local RSL. In his later years I would often see him cycling around Graceville, just as he did as a young man prior to World War II.

Phil had the honour of having a set of Housing Commission units in Sherwood named after him, in recognition of his work in the local community.

Phil is survived by his wife Joyce, and his three sons Jim, Alan, Dennis and their families.

\*\*\*\*

# SEMINAR REPORT

## Unions and Industrial Relations Legislation: the Past and the Future

**Rae Frances**

Over 100 trade unionists, labour activists and labour historians gathered at the Terminus Hotel, Brisbane on 12 March 2005 to discuss the Federal Government's anticipated industrial relations legislation once it gains control of the Senate in July. The event was organised by Greg Mallory and the executive of the Brisbane Labour History Association.

The day began with a welcome to country by Bob Anderson, who reflected on the role of Aboriginal people as both workers and unionists in Australia. Then Margaret Lee, labour lawyer, gave a lucid outline of the anticipated reform agenda, based on her reading of the 40 bills rejected by the Senate since 1998 as well as recent public statements by the Howard Government. The prospect of even greater stripping back of awards, further restrictions on industrial action and the involvement of unions in bargaining and a unitary system of arbitration in place

of the existing Federal-State systems adds up to a challenging time ahead for Australia's unionists and workers. Indeed, it was generally agreed that the Howard Government was about to launch the greatest assault on the union movement since the suppression of the great strikes of the 1890s.

The next speaker was the legendary Jack Munday, veteran of the Green Bans campaigns of the 1970s. Although still recovering from surgery, Jack gave an inspiring speech, reminding the audience of the victories that are possible for unions when they widen their agenda to include concerns beyond the narrowly economic: the environment and civil liberties, for instance. When unions have done this in the past, he argued, they have been able to secure valuable allies for workers outside the union movement. He also reminded the audience of the need for solidarity in the face of the coming challenges. In response, Andrew Vickers, representing the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Engineering Unions (CFMEU), also struck a positive note, pointing out that employers only launch anti-labour offensives in times of economic decline, so the current relatively comfortable economic climate may blunt the zeal for implementing the new legislation.

I attended the seminar as the President of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History.



**BLHA President Greg Mallory introduces Jack Munday at the March Seminar 2005 Seminar on IR Reforms and Unions**

Photo: Ted Reithmuller



**ASSLH President Rae Frances addresses the gathering at the Seminar**

Photo: Ted Reithmuller

I spoke after lunch, offering my thoughts on the role that labour history can play in the future of the labour movement. I stressed the importance of alliances between academics and unionists in researching and disseminating labour history, both amongst workers and the wider community.

Hughie Williams, Federal President and Queensland Secretary of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), with his usual wry humour, offered some valuable suggestions regarding industrial action, particularly in regard to securing public support. Like the TWU, the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) finds itself a particular target of the Howard Government. Howard Guille, Queensland State Secretary of the NTEU, surveyed the probable impacts of the new industrial relations legislation, combined with the government's proposed higher education reforms. Staff and students face an increasingly market-driven system, including the entry of overseas 'providers' into the Australian 'market'. The NTEU is working to devise detailed tactics to fight the erosion of education quality as well as the widening gaps in the pay and conditions of employees within the sector.

The day concluded with a panel discussion which included Senator Claire Moore, Andrew Vickers and Jason Stein from the CFMEU. Claire Moore had to field many dif-

ficult questions regarding the attitude of the Australian Labor Party to the Government's industrial relations agenda.

Other highlights of the day included rousing renditions of traditional and contemporary workers' songs from the Trade Union Choir and the lively participation of the audience in both the formal and informal discussions. Many new contacts and alliances were made, and plans formulated. The spirit of co-operation and solidarity was particularly prominent, and it is only to be hoped that we can build on this during the inevitable struggle that lies ahead.

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**This article was first published in *Labour History* No. 88, May 2005, at pp. 243-244. We thank the author and the Editor for permission to reprint it.**



## **A recent National Tertiary Education Union rally**

Photo: NTEU website



**Part of the crowd at the well-attended IR Seminar**

Photo: Ted Reithmuller

# **Back to the Shed: A Personal Journey Through The Painters and Dockers Union 1977 – 1991**

**Bob Reed**

## **Introduction**

The Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union of Australia (FSPDU) was, by anyone's standards, an extraordinary industrial organisation. The Union was formed in Balmain, New South Wales, in the turbulent industrial furnace of the 1880s. The Balmain peninsula in those days was far from the genteel middle class retreat of today. The area was highly industrialised and its working class population principally engaged in the industries of shipbuilding and ship repair. It was from those industries that the Painters and Dockers Union sprang.

The early years of the Union are well set out in Issy Wyner's 1983 book *With Banner Unfurled*,<sup>1</sup> a highly literate and well-researched work by a former official of the Union. It is worth noting, for those interested in political and industrial irony, that the Painters and Dockers Union ap-



pears originally to have been formed by a breakaway group within the Balmain Labourers Union, the residual group going on to become part of the Federated Iron Workers Association (FIA).

The Union initially appears to have been composed of workers who performed labouring duties for shipwrights, although it later expanded to include all manner of labouring work within the shipbuilding and ship repair industry, including the skilled work of riggers, dogmen and scaffolders. This is not to say that the work of painters and dockers was not of the arduous kind, often filthy work and frequently dangerous. Cleaning of oil tanks, sullage tanks and double bottom tanks was typical painter and docker work, often performed in cramped and foul conditions. As the long-standing Federal Secretary of the Union, Terry Gordon, once quipped, 'We aren't angels but we don't do the work of angels'.

**'We aren't angels but  
we don't do the work  
of angels'.**

The Union ultimately became registered with what is now the Australian Industrial Relations

Commission (AIRC), under the *Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1904* (Commonwealth). Branches were subsequently formed in all mainland states except Western Australia where a kindred union, the Coastal Dock Rivers and Harbour Works Union, was for many years run by the legendary Paddy Troy, whose life and times are admirably portrayed in Stuart Macintyre's biography.<sup>2</sup> It was said that Paddy would not bring the Western Australian organisation into the FSPDU because of his inability to see eye to eye with Terry Gordon, the equally legendary secretary of the FSPDU for some 40 years from about 1946. Both were communists. Although I never met Paddy Troy, he was obviously a man of strong will and strong opinions. I did see Terry Gordon in action in his later years and had the odd beer with him. Terry was a fiery Scot with a firm socialist, some might say Stalinist, disposition and I have no doubt that it would have been easy for him and Paddy to have engaged in some figurative head butting. It should be said that the relationship remained fraternal and that by the 1970s the Secretary of the Western Australian union was attending Federal Council meetings of the FSPDU.

## **The Roster System**

The FSPDU was a small union but its industrial power, at least from the 1940s, lay in the fact that the Fed-

eral industrial awards governing the employment of its members contained provisions obliging employers to recruit all employees required for the relevant duties from rosters operated by the various branches of the Union. The principal ports in which branches operated were traditionally Sydney (NSW branch), Newcastle (Newcastle branch), Melbourne (Victorian branch), Brisbane (Queensland branch), Port Adelaide (South Australian branch) and, at the height of its ship building phase, Whyalla with its own branch. These branches were supplemented by sub-branches in regional ports, the most notable being that in Port Kembla.



The roster system was of course the envy of kindred unions and gave the FSPDU enormous industrial power, not the least of which was the capacity to continue to send back to work members whom the employers re-



garded as unsuitable, whether from a political standpoint or otherwise. The roster system originated in about 1940 during the Second World War when a regular supply of labour in naval dockyards was essential. Although other unions such as the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) and Seaman's Union of Australia (SUA) also maintained roster systems for many years, neither had Federal award protection and in each case the system was ultimately watered down or resumed by the employers to the point where it either did not exist or was subject to complete employer discretion.

**... Raymond Henry Winning, known to all and sundry, affectionately or not, as 'the Pig'.**

### **My Introduction to the Union**

I had the privilege to be a member of the FSPDU for some 16 years from 1977, although my active participation in the ship repair industry and the affairs of the Union began to diminish from about 1988. I joined the Union in 1977 through a knock down from a current member who happened to be in a relationship with my then wife's mother. That was the way one joined in the Union in Brisbane. Membership was limited to provide a reasonable living to the existing membership base and, because of the roster system, membership was controlled by the hierarchy of the Union; that is, the executive

and the management committee. In effect, the power of admission to the Queensland Branch lay in the hands of the Branch Secretary and in 1977 that position was filled by

the towering figure of Raymond Henry Winning, known to all and sundry, affectionately or not, as 'the Pig'. At that time, Ray was the only paid official of the Queensland branch, although a Vigilance Officer (VO) was employed from time to time depending upon the branch's financial resources.

The Evans Deakin Shipyard at Kangaroo Point closed in about 1976, reducing the available amount of work in the port. By 1977, the principal place of employment was Cairncross Dock, a commercial dry dock facility then operated by the Department of Harbours and Marines (later the Port of Brisbane Authority). The availability of work depended on whether there was a ship being worked on in the dock. Work might be with the dockyard directly or with contractors employed to perform certain repair work in board. The principal contractors were Peters Ship Repair Services, Patricks and United Ship Repair Services (formerly Australasian United Steam Navigation). Peters Slip at Kangaroo Point was a smaller yard providing regular employment and, for a short time,

Hornibrooks operated a yard at Bulimba. Peters and Patricks would often obtain work on ships berthed in the river. Some of this work was related to the stevedoring side of the industry that is, lashing cargo, fine cleaning of holds and repair of ships' running gear.

Labour in each port was engaged through a 'pick up' centre which in Brisbane was referred to by one and all as 'The Shed'. Brisbane's pick up centre was located at Kangaroo Point opposite the old shipyard (now Dockside) and, far from being a shed, was a substantial two story block building housing offices, a hall where members waited for work to be called, and a downstairs area containing a flatette for a caretaker. Later in the 1980s, a bar was constructed in the downstairs area.

Labour was hired through a roster system whereby employed members registered for work and had their numbers placed on a roster board in order of registration. All labour in the Port of Brisbane was casual, although at that time the major employers maintained a core group of permanent casuals, or 'bulls', who were supplemented by casuals from the shed when the volume of work required.

Soon after joining the Union, I worked

for six months without a break at Cairncross Dock as ship after ship entered the dock for a 'hair cut and shave' and other work. Work was available seven days a week if you wanted it. The usual working day Monday to Thursday was 7.00 am to 9.00 pm with anything outside the hours of 8.00 am to 5.00 pm being overtime. Fridays was usually 7.00 am to 3.00 pm at which time everyone was paid (in cash) and, except for the hungriest or most subservient, adjourned to the pub. Saturdays and Sundays were all paid at overtime rates and the preference of the young gang in which I worked, affectionately known as 'the hippy gang', was to take one or two days off during the week and work the weekend and any other available overtime.

The Union's formal political position was firmly on the left. The maritime group of unions, comprising Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF), Seaman's Union of Australia (SUA), Federated Ship Painters and Dockers Union (FSPDU) and other smaller seagoing unions, was in full swing and was a strong lobby

group within the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) both at branch and national level. Ray Winning at various times was a member

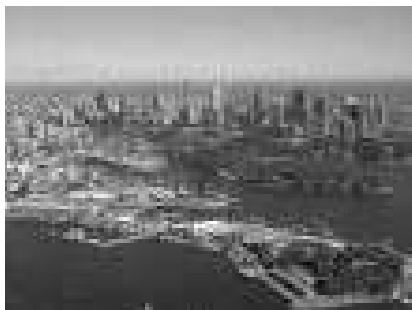
**... a core group of permanent casuals, or 'bulls', who were supplemented by casuals from the shed.**

of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), as was a young Gary Howcroft. Rank and file CPA members of the Union included Lulla Davis, Keith Welsh and later Kevin Waller. Ray Winning's performances at Trades and Labour Council meetings, then well-attended hotbeds of debate, were legendary. Jeff Slowgrove, longtime official of the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union (LHMU), tells one story of Ray nominating himself at one meeting for a raft of positions, for none of which he was eligible, and then declining the only position for which he was eligible on the basis that he did not wish to oppose his good comrade Jim Steele of the SUA.

It should be underlined that anybody who took Ray Winning for fool, either industrially or politically, did so at their own peril. Ray was a man of little formal education who grew up in circumstances of dire poverty in Newcastle. He rose during his early days to the position of head delegate at the naval dockyard at Garden Island in Sydney at a time when the workforce probably numbered in excess of 5 000. I am not sure when Ray came to Brisbane, but it is said that his journey north involved matters of the heart.

## **The Sydney Years**

After a year working in Brisbane I transferred to the port of Sydney for



reasons also associated with affairs of the heart. I was to spend the years 1978 to 1980 in that port and served two years on the branch committee of management. Sydney was a different kettle of fish altogether, a much bigger port with significant membership at Garden Island Dockyard (about 300) and Cockatoo Island (over 200) as well as a variety of smaller yards such as Goat Island, Storey and Keers, and Howard Smith. Most of these members had permanent employment which still had to be organised through the roster system. Casual work was available when the work volume increased at the permanent yards, particularly Cockatoo Island, and for short term jobs which regularly occurred around the harbour.

The Sydney years were a great experience. The branch was run by Secretary Issy Wyner and the Vigilance Officer (VO) Bob Galleghan. Issy was an interesting character. In his early years he had been a Trotskyite and an associate of 'Diamond' Jim McClelland who described Issy as 'a rare specimen for Australia: a Jewish proletarian'.<sup>3</sup>

He had at some point been a member of the ALP and for many years was a councillor on Leichhardt City Council where he formed a left wing rump with another well known figure, Nick Origlass. On that note, I also worked briefly with another Leichhardt councillor, Bob Hefferman, who was the leading hand at the Sydney Ferries Yard. At that time, Bob was a right wing Australian Labor Party (ALP) figure in, as I recall, the Rozelle Ward which had become notorious for branch stacking.

Bob Galleghan was described to me by Ray Winning before I left Brisbane as 'non aligned'. In Sydney, I discovered that Bob was a Moscow line communist who could, after a few beers, frequently be heard to rail about the might of Russia and the 22 million of its people who had perished in the Second World War. I found Bob to be generally a good bloke and, as VO, he ran the roster and had the greatest contact with the rank and file. Bob had, in the late 1970s, led a march of painters and dockers to the Rozelle wharves in an attempt to persuade WWF members not to load a shipment of yellowcake (uranium ore).

The Sydney pickup was situated at 36 Mort Street, Balmain, which also



housed the Federal Office. Terry Gordon would make occasional appearances there, as he would at quarterly stop-work meetings which were held at the Sydney Town Hall and involved a half day stoppage so that members could attend. Stop-work meetings were lively affairs and the debate was later continued at the Criterion Hotel in Sussex Street. There is a great story of a session at the Criterion after a quarterly stop-work meeting some years before my time, during which Alec Galleghan, Bob's cousin, spied Bob Hawke, then ACTU President, drinking in the private bar. Alec marched into the private bar and commenced to harangue Hawke for drinking in the private bar with Labor Council types rather than out in the public bar with his rank and file constituents. Hawke apparently refused the invitation to join the painters and dockers, or *dockies* as we were known. Given our knowledge of Hawke's history, and my knowledge of Alec's personality, I firmly believe the story to be true.

While in Sydney, I also came to meet and associate with most of the banned members of the New South Wales branch of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) including Jack Munday, Bob Pringle, Joe Owens, Tony O'Beirne, Tony Hatfield and Dean Barber. I had met Tony Hatfield in Brisbane where he was working as a dockie in 1977 following his expulsion. It is probably a little-known fact that the Paint-

ers and Dockers Union was one of the few to support Munday and his supporters in their struggle to remain members of the BLF and all expelled BLF members were offered work as painters and dockers. Many took this up and some remained. Hatfield and Barber had been dockies prior to their time in the BLF and had played strong roles in the 1976 Garden Island strike. Dean was quite a character, a rough diamond who spent his boyhood years in an orphanage and who told me that, at the height of the Federal intervention into the New South Wales BLF by Victorian State Secretary Norm Gallagher's henchmen, he advised Munday that the only way to defeat Gallagher was to take him on physically. As we know, that didn't happen. I later worked with Dean, or *Dino* as he was better known, at Cockatoo Island and also in Port Adelaide.

Mention of the Sydney years would not be complete without mention of John Rainford, a brilliant trade unionist who for many years was the head delegate at Garden Island, quite a feat for a member of a minority union in such a huge workforce which at the time numbered at least 3 000. John was a Scouse seafarer who made his home in Australia and managed to sponsor a good number of his relatives over the

years, many of whom ended up working as dockies. After Issy Wyner's retirement in the early 1980s John became a paid official of the New South Wales branch and later worked for what was then called the Australian Metal Workers' Union (AMWU) and the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU), where I believe he is currently employed.

**... the radical transformation of the roster system ...**

## **Back To Brisbane**

I transferred back to Brisbane in early 1981 for family reasons although, because of work shortages, I occasionally returned to Sydney for a stint at Cockatoo Island where there was an abundance of work due to the construction of a Navy supply vessel.

The single most striking difference about the operation of the Union which had occurred in my absence was the radical transformation of the roster system. During a campaign over several months in 1980, Ray Winning and Gary Howcroft, then VO, had convinced a majority of members to vote to disband the bull system and overhaul the roster system. Under the new system, members would voluntarily terminate any existing employment on Wednesday night and re-roster for work on

Thursday morning. Members returning to the roster would be placed on the roster in accordance with the hours worked during the previous week with the least number of hours being highest placed and so on. The simple rationale for this move was an equalisation of the work amongst the membership. Winning had done a quick survey of the earnings of members in the previous financial year and discovered that the highest earner in the port earned about \$27 000 while the lowest earned \$6 000.

I still regard this coup as the single greatest act of industrial democracy that I have seen. It can only be described as socialism in action. The system continued to work well for the remainder of the branch's existence, although there were frequent disputes concerning mundane matters such as the calculation of hours and a perception that members 'close to the Pig' were being favoured for work which cropped up at times outside the normal pick up hours (7.00 am to 10.00 am). I recall one incident in which an irate young member stormed into Winning's office and slapped him across the face with a thong because of some perceived injustice which no one at the time, with the possible exception of Winning, understood. No official action was taken against the member who, no doubt as a result of counselling by his father, absented himself from the pick up for a reasonable period.

**The 1980s  
saw some  
lean times ...**

A notable dispute during the early 1980s involved the vessel *John Hunter* which was stranded in the dock for seven weeks as a result of a strike by AMWU members over the sacking of a delegate. Painters and dockers endured an enforced layoff although generally supporting the strike in principle. Fortunately for dockies, there was some work available down river from time to time, although seldom enough to survive on.

The 1980s saw some lean times and much of the problem was directly attributable to the move by Australian shipping companies to have many of their vessels docked overseas, chiefly in Singapore. It also seemed hardly coincidental that many of the new vessels being constructed for Australian shipowners were little more than a metre too wide to fit into Cairncross dock, the largest commercial dry dock in Australia. This problem led to a campaign to widen and lengthen Cairncross dock, a campaign which tragically was met with almost complete indifference by both the conservative National Party and Liberal Party in Queensland, as well as the Australian Labor Party (ALP) federal governments. The lean times led to the loss of Gary Howcroft who, with a young family, went off to work on the construction of the Tarong Power Station where, under the tutelage of veteran communist trade un-

ionist Hughy Hamilton, he became a Federated Iron Workers of Australia (FIA) delegate and the site's most prominent union activist. Gary later went on to join the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) and was for many years the branch assistant secretary.



## **Port Adelaide**

On another occasion, when work was thin, a mate and I transferred to Port Adelaide in the belief that there would be work on the construction of a new ferry to service Kangaroo Island. The South Australian branch was small, with less than 40 members. All work was casual and sporadic, although there were some extremely well paying jobs. The four months or so spent there were a period of frustration due to long periods of idleness. The Painters and Dockers Union were ultimately frozen out of work on the ship construction due to an extraordinary decision of Commissioner Merriman of the then Commonwealth Con-

ciliation and Arbitration Commission who decided that, because the ship sections were fabricated in a shed and hauled on bogeys to the construction site, the work was engineering work rather than ship building work and that the labouring component was work covered by awards of the FIA rather than awards of the FSPDU. The decision was upheld on appeal.

## **The Death Of The Union**

Cairncross dock ceased operations in about 1987 due to a structural fault in the caisson or dock gate. The Port Authority seemed unwilling to spend the necessary amount on a replacement gate and the dock lay idle. The slipway at Cairncross also ceased work due to an unwillingness by the Port Authority to maintain that facility. From that point, the Queensland Branch of the FSPDU went into serious decline. The pick up shed at Kangaroo Point was sold to the developer who at that time was commencing to construct the Dockside complex. In true socialist fashion, the proceeds of the sale of the pick up shed were distributed equally amongst existing members of the Union's funeral fund, which included current members and retired members who paid a small fee to remain active in the fund. The Union's two houses at Amity Point on Stradbroke Island were later sold and the proceeds similarly divided.

The Union's operations moved to a room in the WWF Building in Adelaide Street and the branch limped on for several years, although the closure of Peters Slip, again for the construction of yuppie hideaways, further depleted the available work. Active membership by the late 1980s was down to about 30 or 40. Similar problems were occurring in other branches. Cockatoo Island closed and the FIA led an assault, partially successful, on the painters and dockers membership at Garden Island, with the assistance of the Federal Government.

The death knell came courtesy of the 'small organizations' legislation of the federal Labor governments of Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Paul Keating from 1983 to 1996, embodied in s.193 of the *Industrial Relations Act* 1988, whereby unions with less than 1,000 members were to be deregistered unless the relevant Union could show that its continued existence was in the public interest. While that section of the Act was later repealed, the dockies could

**... the dockies could well and truly see the writing on the wall.**

well and truly see the writing on the wall. In accordance with trade union principles, the federal executive made a decision, rather than be wiped out, to participate in an orderly transfer of its work and membership to kindred unions. The ship repair work, and the relevant award, were to be transferred to the

Metals and Engineering Workers Union (now the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union) and work associated with stevedoring to the WWF (now the Maritime Union of Australia). Deputy President Williams of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission allowed time for this rationalisation to occur and, upon being satisfied of its occurrence, cancelled the registration of FSPDU on 1 December 1993. Ray Winning died in September 1992 as the end of the era approached.

A sad postscript to the demise of the Union concerned the activities of one Martin Timothy who in late 1992 and 1993 declared to the AIRC that he was the secretary of the Union, despite John Burke occupying the office by way of a casual vacancy following Ray Winning's death. Timothy made various applications to the AIRC and the Federal Court, all of which were dismissed. Unfortunately, during the course of these proceedings, he made a number of baseless allegations concerning present and former union officials.

Timothy claimed that various deaths could be attributed to union officials. I must say that the allegation that concerned me most was one that I had conspired with Peter Beattie (now the Premier of Queensland) to bring about some dreadful event, the details of which I do not remember.



Ironically s.193 of the Industrial Relations Act was later repealed as being repugnant to international conventions on freedom of association to which Australia was a party. Equally ironically, Cairncross Dock reopened in the 1990s after having been sold to private interests. Painter and docker work is now done by members of the AMWU. The roster system is no longer in existence. Another victory for the bosses.

## Conclusion

During my time as a member of the FSPDU, I served as a member of the management committee in New South Wales (two years), a member of the management committee in Queensland (three years) and Vice-President of the Queensland branch (three years). During my time in the Queensland branch, we at one stage had four members who had undertaken tertiary education, but the real joy was to meet the number of working class intellectuals whose paths it was my privilege to cross during my years in the Union. Their influence, and the experience gathered in the extraordinary world of the ship repair industry, has stood me in more than good stead in my current career.

## Endnotes

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\* \* \* \*



**Bullock teams crossing the bridge at Charleville with drays  
loaded with wool, circa 1890**

Photo courtesy National Archives of Australia  
(Series Accession Number J2879/1, Image QTH490/28)

# **Workers and Entrepreneurs: Queensland's Bullockies**

**Claire Wagner<sup>1</sup>**

While the term 'bullocky' has passed into the Australian vernacular, and the bullocky has acquired status in folklore, myth has prevailed over fact so that the unique subculture of the bullocky clans of southwest Queensland, which spanned some eighty years, has been barely recorded.

Beginning as employees who sought to become their 'own boss', bullockies readily changed status. However, their sons might unselfconsciously remain bush workers wanting a fair go, while bemused by theories of class warfare.

The writer's bullocky antecedents, traceable to the 1830s, span four generations and present a saga of toil in pursuit of land ownership, achieved by a few. Research began with the recollections of relatives born between 1900 and 1924, and subsequently expanded into the printed record. This article focuses on the 1890s, when bullockies and horse teamsters, known as 'carriers', were among the groups who gave moral and material support to striking bush workers, whose culture they shared and with whom they intermarried.

An inherent conflict between cultural loyalties and proprietorial status came to the surface during the 1891 shearers' strike; the loyalties ultimately prevailed, although this support presented dilemmas and challenged bullockies' working-class credentials, and proposals to strike in sympathy were much disputed.

**An inherent conflict between cultural loyalties and proprietorial status came to the surface during the 1891 strike ....**

The bullocky mythology was compounded in the family ties between carriers and bush workers. Carriers identified with the early union movement. They formed their own unions, involved themselves in the 1891 strike, and affiliated with the Australian Workers' Union until 1915.

They were ready to describe themselves as 'working class', as did the occasional maverick gentleman on remittance. The semantics of this phrase are complicated by differences between English categories applied in the nineteenth century and a mere distinction between workers and bosses.

In traditional terms, most were of 'the lower classes', but not the low-

est (an ascription coming more often from self-made colonials). In industrialising Britain, they were likely recruits to the lower middle class, a rural/urban transition described in material detail in Flora Thompson's memoir of the 1860s.<sup>2</sup> Their aspirations to upward mobility translated to the colonies, and characterised the 'new shearers' seeking a sufficient living and unpretentious houses. Their very respectability made them inimical to their 'class enemies'.

The carriers regarded class as a matter of style and not substance. A quasi-proletarian populism was sustained by their sense of belonging to a vocational caste, which became compounded with union solidarity. At the same time they could be as self-righteous as any storekeeper in pursuing the values of British suburbia.

The earliest available reference to a carriers' association concerns a 'strike' in 1871, when carriers at Maryborough demanded higher rates and refused to deliver stores or collect produce. Editorial opinion in the *Queensland Times* held that their demand was reasonable.<sup>3</sup>

The carriers' unions that were subsequently established in New South Wales and Queensland organised themselves around local territories comprising a railhead and the

routes originating from it. Territorial competition was not unknown and became interwoven with the issues of the 1891 strike.

In 1886, Charleville people were displeased when 'their' teams took wool to another railhead to avoid a waterless stage.<sup>4</sup> In 1890 local patriotism determined entrepreneurial priorities, when the Warrego Carriers' Union lowered its rates to favour the inefficient Queensland Railways and to 'loosen the sentimental bonds of federation'<sup>5</sup> which tied them to the Bourke route.

In 1894, two local governments were embroiled in a dispute after the opening of a new road that had encouraged Barcaldine carriers to break into Blackall's territory. The next year, the Jericho carriers reduced their rates for a wool contract, to undercut those of Barcaldine, 'a free enterprise bid that somehow failed to please the usual defender of free enterprise, the editor of the Barcaldine *Western Champion*'.<sup>6</sup>

By 1867, the first union to be established was the Central Australian Carriers' Union, based at Bourke, New South Wales. It adopted the rhetoric and political stance of the bush workers. A meeting resolved not to serve station agents and storekeepers who employed non-union

**By 1867, the first union to be established was the Central Australian Carriers' Union, based at Bourke, New South Wales.**

members.<sup>7</sup> For them, a trade boycott was a strike, and their semantics occasioned dispute and confusion until an arbitration court judgment in 1915 defined them out of existence as an industrial union, ruling that employers could not be unionists.<sup>8</sup>

By 1890, there were carriers' unions at four Queensland railheads: Barcaldine, Charleville, Hughenden and Peak Downs.<sup>9</sup> They paralleled the development of urban transport unions in Brisbane and Rockhampton.<sup>10</sup> As in New South Wales, there was little if any contact between the two groups, notwithstanding the example set to bush workers by the waterside strikes of 1890.<sup>11</sup>

There was a significant difference between them. An urban worker, who went home at the end of a shift to a meal prepared by someone else, could identify himself as working class; the rural carrier, with or without a wife, camped by his team for weeks at a time, cut their mulga, and followed a distinctive lifestyle. His socially conservative values, if not his politics, owed more to the eighteenth century than the nineteenth.

Members were both owners and employees, often related to one another, typically Dad and the boys. The general picture is of an informal and fluid network, very loosely organised, in which the members knew one another well, as relatives or old pioneering colleagues. One group timed a meeting at St George to coincide with race week.<sup>12</sup> Such a

mobile organisation, with manoeuvrable networks, and schooled in commercial opportunism, was not necessarily weak.

The main function of carriers' unions was to negotiate rates and to share out work, especially wool loading. They received lists of down loadings from the squatters and allocated them its members in order of their arrival at the union's office, in a system known as 'rotation loading'.

Rotation loading was a continuing cause of contention. When family firms were involved, it perplexed relations with organised labour. The one-time Secretary of the Warrego Carriers' Union, Thomas Lonsdale, generally supported it, but would make exceptions, for example for a man with a large family employed in operating five teams. In such a case, Dad would be unwilling to break up the teams by rotation loading, preferring them to move as a group so that he could supervise his less experienced sons, who, under rotation loading, might go off in different directions.<sup>13</sup>

The squatters objected to it, claiming that their outgoing clip or their incoming supplies might be at the mercy of men who could not pass a pub, and as with the shearers, demanded freedom of contract. Nor was it unknown for a union office to divide an up-load between several carriers, adding considerably to the cost.<sup>14</sup> This seems to have been ex-

ceptional, and the squatters' main concern was their wool.

## The 1891 strike

In events before, during and after the 1891 strike, the contradiction between class loyalty and entrepreneurial status recurred. For 'class loyalty' it may be possible to read intimate local loyalty, to kin and community, contrasted with the vastly exploitive operations of the squatters' principals, transmitting telegrams and anger from Melbourne or London.

Earlier, in what might seem like a corporate effort, the Barcaldine-based employers', labourers' and carriers' unions all held their annual meetings at the same time. All were 'of recent birth but numerically strong'. The Labor element comprised 600 men. The main issues concerning carriers were rates and rotation loading.<sup>15</sup>

In 1889, the Central Queensland Employers' Association had clearly distinguished carriers from bush workers when it sought to lower the shed hands' wages, and at the same time made a closed shop agreement with the Carriers' Union, undertaking to use their teams in return for reduced rates.<sup>16</sup>

Following this agreement, some bul-

locks belonging to a non-union carrier at Hughenden were shot. He attributed the shooting to a commercial rival. Another non-member was travelling with his family in a 'hopeless' condition; eight of his twelve horses had been driven away or destroyed for similar motives.<sup>17</sup>

When the shearers went on strike early in 1891, their union urged the carriers' unions to show solidarity with the bush workers, but while most carriers supported the strikers, many were diffident about a boycott.

**... while most carriers supported the strikers, many were diffident about a boycott.**

Indeed, the brief newspaper reports give the impression that every time the carriers met they formed another union, being divided over whether to strike or not. In the longer term, cultural

loyalty prevailed in the widespread outrage at the official excesses perpetrated against labour unionists.

The bullockies and horse teamsters of the Warrego district, where the labour movement was strong, did not strike. Instead, the Warrego Carriers' Union raised money to maintain the strike camps and to defend those arrested as agitators.<sup>18</sup> Other unions, carriers and labour, in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria adopted this stance. The money was forwarded through the Australian Labour Federation in Brisbane.

As town suppliers, they had good reason for not striking. The storekeepers, whose up-loads they carried via Bourke, generally supported the shearers—their customers—a fact that was censored from newspaper accounts; one of Charleville's rich storekeepers, G.J. Fitzwalter, was an agent for the Shearers' Union. With the exception of Barcaldine, the only place where storekeepers' deliveries were ever threatened, support from local businessmen seems to have been general, if discreet. As the unionists' 'only friend' they gave credit at Clermont.<sup>19</sup>

The clash of loyalties was most marked in the Barcaldine Carriers' Union (BCU). A proposal was made not to serve storekeepers in outlying townships, which the strike committee, comprising carriers' and labour unions, refused to sanction; the Union split.<sup>20</sup> A seceding group, which became the Western Queensland Carriers' Union (WQCU), affirmed its commercial priorities and sought to guarantee preference in all loads for years to come, from storekeepers, selectors and pastoralists alike.<sup>21</sup>

The BCU had resolved that it should not be affiliated with any other organisation (unionist or pastoralist). Another resolution favoured the pastoralists: while up loading was to be deployed through the Union's agents, there was to be no rotation loading. Further, members declined to join the strike camp, insisting that the strike penalised them, in that

they would not receive any of the funds raised to support the shearers.<sup>22</sup> They were described in *The Worker*<sup>23</sup> as the only group who had not been 'solid',<sup>24</sup> and had been hooted at a local meeting, where one speaker said that team animals could be mistaken for kangaroos and shot.<sup>25</sup> Even so, before the secession a majority had voted the large sum of 100 pounds for the defence of union 'agitators' sent to trial.<sup>26</sup>

At the height of the strike there were 128 bullock and horse teams idle at Barcaldine, with nothing to carry, and apprehensive of damage to wagons and animals if they did. Those wishing to start work again were mainly 'married men with large families, whose grown-up sons are also engaged in carrying.' Some of them had their teams mortgaged and relied on money received for loading to work off the debt. The WQCU's reasoned position was not helped by some of its members, including one Samuel McKeon, who was fined 10 pounds for intimidating non-members; two others were arrested on the same charge.<sup>27</sup>

The WQCU's stand came too late for the pastoralists, who reneged on the 'closed shop agreement' of 1889, and began to engage distant teams from Rockhampton, invading their commercial territory under escort of police and troops, causing the Union to lose trade to Charleville and Hughenden.<sup>28</sup> This affront to local loyalty reawakened popular sentiment in the form of fund-

raising to defend those arrested.

In March 1893, the WQCU was broken up and its funds distributed.<sup>29</sup> After two years of existence it had nothing more to do than make populist gestures, lapsing into the earlier informality. During the election campaign in 1892, it voted 25 pounds to support the Labor candidate. 'An unusual amount of drinking among the labourers is apparent in town' on whom the newspaper blamed an outbreak of political graffiti.<sup>30</sup>

The Warrego Carriers' Union proved more durable, and became a power at Charleville, with muscle, money and political patronage. In the city, such an organisation would have become the preserve of gangsters. In the outback, under small-town scrutiny, where delivery remained of paramount importance, it kept a kind of innocence. It was tightly run, with a well-paid secretary who was kept in check and never allowed to dictate policy. One incumbent was given leave to stand as a Labor candidate.<sup>31</sup>

In 1891 the Warrego carriers had resolved not to 'strike',<sup>32</sup> but were represented on the Strike Committee at the Charleville camp. They disrupted non-union carrying for squatters.<sup>33</sup> There were two incidents involving wagonloads of wool set on fire, in which the carriers refused to help police. In one the carrier and his boy were taken to the camp and the horses let loose.<sup>34</sup> After the

strike, there was another attempt to burn a wagon at Charleville<sup>35</sup> and in February 1892, four bullocks belonging to a non-unionist were shot.<sup>36</sup>

A year later, T. Regan was charged with destroying harness belonging to F. Calcino, who had left the Warrego Carriers' Union. Another carrier's wagons had been capsized.<sup>37</sup> The motives are unclear, but perhaps had to do with local solidarity. The courtroom was crowded with carriers when Regan appeared. He was granted bail and his supporters rallied with two large sureties of 80 pounds each, with another 80 pounds from himself.<sup>38</sup> Their morale had been boosted two weeks before, when Thomas Glassey MLA, the leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, visited Charleville on an election campaign, first addressing the carriers, then a public meeting.<sup>39</sup>

The Warrego Carriers' Union included 220 members with a large credit balance in the bank.<sup>40</sup> With their reputation for reliability and a secure place in the local economy, they were to be reckoned with. This assured solidarity was partly due to well-knit family networks. Unlike the northern centres, Charleville had become a stable home base for carriers, with strong local loyalties: a fact argued by the participation of children in demonstrations against police and troops in 1891, reciting the Riot Act as it was read for the umpteenth time.

Cultural affiliations were weaker at





**Large bullock team with bales of wool ready to unload,  
Charleville district, circa 1890**

Photo courtesy National Archives of Australia  
(Series Accession Number J2879/1, Image QTH490/27)

the less domesticated northern centres. At the time of Regan's trial, the Hughenden pastoralists were able to offer carriers reduced rates as a result of competition from the non-union teams, which had established themselves there by courtesy of police and troops.<sup>41</sup>

Late in 1894, ten horses owned by a non-unionist were shot near Hughenden,<sup>42</sup> but like the earlier incidents, it seems to have been done for individual gain. Similar rivalries surfaced at Tambo in 1897, when the carriers briefly went on strike. Not long after, they disbanded the union; public opinion was against them, and all the wool had been let to their fraternal Char-

leville counterparts.<sup>43</sup> The Warrego Carriers' Union was affiliated with the AWU and held its annual meetings in the AWU's hall at least until 1915, if not longer. But like the defunct WQCU, it had an embarrassment of riches, and flirted with the idea of using its copious funds to start a Labor newspaper, before deciding that it would be outside its jurisdiction.<sup>44</sup> The Australian Labor Party's coffers benefited.

For a time it was able to withstand competition. In 1892, the Warrego Pastoralists' Association invited the local carriers to tender independently. On receiving no response, they introduced forty 'alien' teams from Maryborough through their

secretary N.J. Neilsen (who ran a carrying business and a stock and station agency in Charleville).<sup>45</sup> This tactic had worked in the north, but the union teams and the private teams apparently rationalised their operations and coexisted. There was a variety of work and plenty of it, with the multifarious border traffic, a preferred alternative to the exorbitant Queensland Railways. Not long after they found a new cause, and the Union was to leave an enduring mark on two local economies in an event which survives in Charleville's folklore—the shooting of an Afghan's camel in 1894. The son of the unionist James Richardson, Hugh, recalled its importance to the writer 90 years later.<sup>46</sup>

Pastoralists, aloof from the life of the bush towns, and wont to employ indentured labour from the islands of the Pacific, were inclined to envisage a 'coolie class' with equanimity. The attitude of the squatter-dominated government was apparent in a photograph published by *The Queenslander*, showing some of a visiting ministerial party astride the exotic beasts.

In 1893, there was alarm when a station manager used Afghan camels to haul a consignment from Charleville, this being necessitated by the delay of a carrier. In jingoist com-

mercial mode, the Warrego Carriers' Union offered to indemnify him.<sup>47</sup>

The next year, an acrimonious controversy flared when squatters began to contract Afghan teams to haul wool in competition with the Union. A camel team arrived at the railway station from Euroongoola, and one of Cobb's horses, terrified by the strange creatures, bolted, hurt itself, and had to be put down.<sup>48</sup> The carriers held a public meeting at which an influential businessman, John Armstrong, spoke against the camels. He was a self-made man, originally a butcher, with a vested interest in livestock and town commerce.<sup>49</sup>

**Carriers, bush workers and many town employers were united in one respect, their shared racial prejudice ...**

The Carriers' Union felt that the squatters were victimising them. Accordingly, one of the camels was shot, in a demonstration against squatters and 'Asiatics'.<sup>50</sup> Carriers, bush workers and many town employers were united in one respect, their shared racial prejudice, targeting the Afghans and, for good measure, the Chinese. *The Western Star*, a storekeepers' mouthpiece, observed:

By all means let alien labour be restricted whether it be in driving camels, in hawking inferior wares, in cultivating vegetables or in the manufacture of furniture.<sup>51</sup>

Thirty years later, Thomas Lonsdale

attributed the shooting to Frank Lemon and 'Burley' Bryan; Lemon had been a well known bullocky on the route from Mitchell when the railhead ended there.<sup>52</sup> Subsequently, anti-camel leagues were formed in Cunnamulla, Eulo and Thargomindah, and the Cunnamulla carriers sought legalistic redress from the Carriers Act, protesting at the issue of licences to camel drivers.<sup>53</sup>

The Afghans retreated and continued to prosper at Bourke. The campaign had the effect of excluding camel teams from Queensland and confirming Bourke as their centre. Most Queensland wool continued to be carried by bullocks until World War I, when bullocks were needed for meat, and were replaced by horse teams, which operated beside trucks.

## **Carriers and the AWU**

Being formally affiliated with the Queensland AWU until 1915, carriers' unions became involved with the political labour movement.

The Queensland AWU was more interested in returning members of Parliament than its counterparts elsewhere, who were primarily concerned with industrial issues and working conditions. AWU branches were based in Charleville, Longreach and Hughenden, and operated autonomously, raising and spending funds unfettered by any

central organisation until 1913.

In 1895, the Queensland branch declined to amalgamate with those in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia,<sup>54</sup> but in 1906, rejoined them and once more sent delegates to the national convention, which was gaining in centralised power and influence. The first Labor Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, addressed the 1909 convention. The following year, the delegates voted themselves first-class railway fares, with sleepers.<sup>55</sup>

At a broad, if not national level, the AWU's concern with prescribing minimal working conditions predisposed it to see all issues in discrete, literal and depersonalised terms. As more and more urban unions sought to amalgamate, the AWU had to constantly redefine its priorities. In the event, the power base remained rural, with some delegates pressing for 'one solid bush workers' union'.

Though more concerned with legalistic definition than ideological purity, it had to consider internal contradictions within the labour movement, to which the carriers' situation was critical. A carrier's constant preoccupation was where his next load was coming from, especially up-loads and bribing of agents to give priority—'dooking' and 'scabbing'—were not unknown ... so much for mateship.<sup>56</sup>

In 1912, the AWU acknowledged

that shearing was to be regarded as temporary employment, which might be incidental to various proprietary enterprises, the AWU president W.G. Spence averred that a small-time contractor did not forsake socialist principles when he acquired a bit of property. Discussing 'one big union', the Longreach delegate, Laracy, felt that

the carriers would be better served if allied with the urban transport workers, though their concerns were different. In Queensland there were carriers who were employers as well as employees. To bring them in would be what his Socialist friends would call an 'unscientific' method of organization.<sup>57</sup>

In 1914, the Queensland AWU held its first 'Annual Delegates' Meeting' (a term which emphasised branch autonomy) and the branches continued much as before, buying and improving office properties. The first two meetings were family affairs, including outings with the wives and children.<sup>58</sup>

The next year, the Convention 'jettisoned the carriers' after an arbitration judge had ruled that employers could not be union members.<sup>59</sup> This relieved the AWU of its own problems of definition; there had

been exhaustive consideration after the 1914 Convention, which had been unable to bring carriers' enterprises within the purview of unionised conditions.

The Convention had agreed to differ on the issue of rotation loading, seen to be appropriate in some circumstances, and inappropriate in others. Traditional family arrangements could not be encompassed in a log of claims, standardised and centrally promulgated.<sup>60</sup>

The AWU's ambiguous relationship with the carriers had been manifested not long before. In 1913, rotation loading had occasioned a dispute between the Central Queensland Carriers' Union at Longreach, and the Pastoral Employers' Association of Central and North Queensland. The pastoralists broke the ensuing strike using motor vehicles.

By this time, as the AWU's pragmatists knew, the days of the carrier were numbered, threatened by technology and awareness of the internal contradiction between owners and employees. Well aware of the contradiction, the pastoralists had approached the AWU's national office in Sydney, bypassing the local branch.

**... the days of the carrier were numbered, threatened by technology and awareness of the internal contradiction between owners and employees.**

Grayndler, the national secretary, replied cautiously that the AWU was drawing up by-laws for its carriers' section but did not yet speak for them. This was confirmed by H.E. Budd, secretary of the Central Queensland Carriers' Union, on letterhead reading 'AWU Western District, late Australian Carriers Union, Longreach Branch'. A conference was arranged, but the carriers did not arrive. The pastoralists then received a telegram from R. Bow, 'District Secretary AWU', asking for another conference—which gave them righteous cause to oppose 'the AWU', so called, and motor lorries and tractors were pressed into service forthwith. The AWU itself was not broadcasting any grievances under its mutable letterheads. At the workface, no one other than carriers seemed to be aware of the dispute. In the whole district there were only two adherents of 'scientific socialism', a shearer who left before the contracted time, and a carrier at Portland Downs, where 'Tom Finch threw off his load'.<sup>61</sup>

Thereafter, the pastoralists negotiated with the State AWU on industrial matters, and negotiated rates for the diminishing numbers of carriers, now unequivocally seen as businessmen, though never as social equals.<sup>62</sup>

During World War I, when most Queensland carriers changed to horses, those centred on Bourke continued with camels. (The interstate route was then euphemised as 'less suited to camels'). By 1923,

there was still 'guerrilla warfare' between the Carriers' Union, the Motor Lorry Owners and the Graziers' Association over rotation loading, but there were then only 1000 carriers left in Queensland.<sup>63</sup>

The trade continued until the 1940s, notably for hauling timber. One of the last industrial confrontations involving carriers was a measure of their respectability, a far cry from the 1860s when consignments of rum were broached en route. There was a demarcation dispute at Yuleba where local log haulers claimed to be carriers. The union negotiated with the graziers to favour the bullockies and exclude the locals, known to be drunks. There was a rather ignominious affair at St George, harking back some seventy years when hawkers were distinguished from carriers: the drivers of four-horse vans and three-horse drays claimed to be carriers.<sup>64</sup>

## Endnotes

### Abbreviations

Q *The Queenslander*

WS *Western Star* (Roma)

QT *Queensland Times* (Ipswich)

### Newspaper Indexes

*Western Star* (hereinafter WS), Roma, 1875-1901.

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## BOOK LAUNCH(ES)

### On the Road with Jack (Mundey, not Kerouac)

Greg Mallory

My book *Uncharted Waters* was launched seven times around Australia in July, six by Jack Mundey. The following is an account of the adventure. This is a story about book launches, medical mishaps, the use of technology by older people, getting lost down South – and sundry other misadventures. Along the way we sold books, met many old mates, and thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Jack took some keeping up with!

The first launch took place on 2 July — at Sydney University at the National Labour History conference. What made it particularly pleasing for me is that my original Ph.D. supervisor, John Moses, attended unexpectedly. John originally came from Atherton. Jack Mundey originally came from Malanda, a few kilometers away, and they are roughly the same age. They had not seen each other for fifty years. I was born in Atherton and grew up on stories of the Atherton Tableland so the three Atherton Tablelanders were reunited. Another pleasing aspect was the attendance of Suzie

Roach, Ted Roach's daughter. Ted led the Pig-iron dispute and was Federal Assistant Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation for 25 years. In my speech I mentioned that it took two Five-Year Plans to complete the book, recalling a joke Jack had made many years before.

The next day's launch, at Port Kembla, took place 20 metres from where the *Dalfram* was berthed in 1938. It was attended by over 60 people including members of the local labour history branch, wharfies, and retired and current unionists. Jack Mundey picked up on the Five-Year Plan joke and this time he said it was three. Getting out of Wollongong was easier than getting in. At one stage we even headed back into Wollongong, with much acrimonious discussion between navigators! Needless to say, we arrived back in Sydney two and half hours late.

The next week there was a book launch in Katoomba, without Jack. The Mayor of the Blue Mountains, Jim Angel, launched the book. The launch was part of the Blue Mountains Union Council's 'Politics in the Pub' event.

The next launch was in Melbourne a week later. It took place in the Victorian Trades Hall bar, known as Paddy's Bar. The launch went well on the Friday night, attended by over 60 people. At this stage it had become four Five-Year plans to



### **Jack Munday and Greg Mallory at the Wollongong launch**

complete the work. The Victorian Trades Hall is a magnificent historic building and the bar has union posters and banners everywhere. I had been in Melbourne attending a national sports history conference for a number of days prior to the launch. I had a near-death experience in a Melbourne yellow cab with Tony Collins, a Rugby League historian. In the taxi driver's attempt to get to Lygon Street, he accelerated over a

roundabout. Once at the restaurant, I clashed in discussion with a number of Oxford University academics over the value of sports history, and indeed labour history. I immediately tried to sell them a copy of my book, to show them the error of their ways, but to no avail, and we retreated to the pub next door. The night of the launch, again eating in Lygon Street, I tripped over my editor's coat, and by the next day, my knee was twice



the size and I had a limp for a week. The next launch was Brisbane at the Paddington Workers and Community Club. Over 120 people attended. After the launch a celebration took place in West End with well-known author, Tony Reeves. On my home territory now; there were no major incidents this time!

The next day I picked Jack up in a taxi and we flew to Sydney. Technology, not freeways or taxi drivers or obstacles for the unwary, got the better of us this time, as it took 15 minutes for us to open the boot of the hire car. I suggested we put my large case on the back seat but Jack said 'I am not getting into a f...car

with someone who does not know how to open the boot'. I finally gave in and sought help. The attendant said to press a button on the key and it would open – and it did! I dropped Jack home but got into further trouble in trying to get from Croydon Park to the Blue Mountains where I was staying with my partner Shelley. Five minutes into the journey I immediately knew I was lost. Finally I found a sign that said Penrith. I arrived in the Blue Mountains three hours later than my estimated time.

The next day I picked up Jack and drove to Canberra. The launch, at the Noel Butlin Archives, went well.



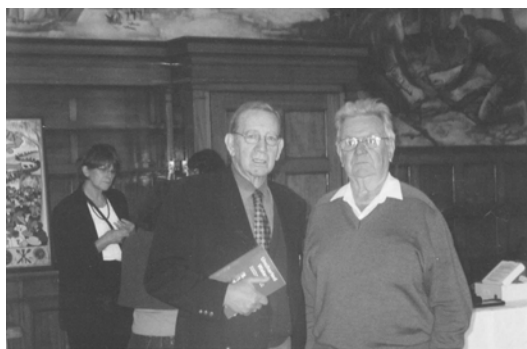
**Greg, Meredith Burgmann and Jack Munday at the East Sydney launch**

I think Jack had revised his estimate back to two Five-Year Plans this time. We met a wide range of people. Two of my Canberra friends, Jack and two ALP blokes decided to eat in the restaurant of University House. We had a good meal and lengthy political discussions. One of the ALP blokes was an organiser for the Liquor, Hospitality Miscellaneous Workers Union and one of the waiters was a union delegate. Everything went fine until we were reprimanded for our loud and lengthy political discussions. However, everything seemed to be OK at the end of the night as the Misso's organizer was signing up a few members to the union as we were leaving.

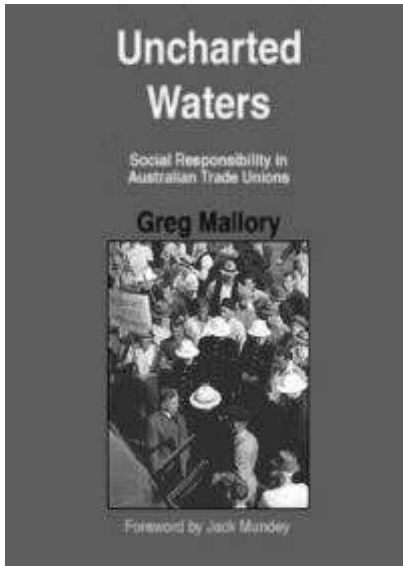
The next launch, at the East Sydney Hotel, was hosted by Meredith Burgmann. Jack had it back up to three Five-Year Plans. Meredith Burgmann commented that she and her sister Verity had taken much more than four Five-Year Plans to

write their book on the NSW Builders Labourers' Federation. Meredith in her opening remarks described me as 'an organic intellectual'. This got a fairly good laugh. After the launch, a group of us decided to have a meal at a pasta place across William Street. On the way our builders' labourer's mate Darcy asked Vince Ashton, who attended the launch, to join us. I knew Vince had been on Gallagher's side at one stage and I was worried what I had written about him. I quickly examined the book and found that what I had written put him on side with the Munday group, so I began to stop worrying. Vince blended in with our group, who were staunch NSW Teachers' Federation activists. Vince climbed halfway up a wall to take a group photo and thoroughly enjoyed himself. A few of us went back to my partner Shelley's friend's place at Kings Cross and played union songs until 4 am.

\* \* \* \*



**John Moses and Jack Munday at the Sydney Labour History Conference launch of the book**



## **Uncharted Waters**

Excerpts from reviews of

### **Uncharted Waters: Social Responsibility in Australian Trade Unions**

**By Greg Mallory**

Boolarong Press, Brisbane, 2005, available at selected bookshops or contact Greg at [gmallory@vtown.com.au](mailto:gmallory@vtown.com.au)

\$35, paperback, 243 pp.

### **Review from *Green Left Weekly***

#### **The tradition of class-struggle unionism**

‘Mallory has done us all a big favor in publishing his book on social responsibility in Australian unionism. *Uncharted Waters* is a must read for those seeking to grapple with the history and future of a militant union movement in this country’.

Jim McIlroy, *Green Left Weekly*, 14 September, 2005.

Full Review at: <http://www.greenleft.org.au/back/2005/642/642p21.htm>

### **Review from *Workers Online***

#### **Taking a stand**

‘Mallory starts out to tell us the stories of the WWF and the BLF, and they are great stories, but his aim is more than that. John Moses, a historian and theorist of trade union action, is quoted by Mallory and sums up where he is headed:

The object of trade union behaviour...is not the building up of a massive trade union bureaucracy but the encouragement of the growth of socially aware, responsible and creative workers. It is a process which sees a reciprocal

relationship between the union and the individual members, between the union as a force opposed to capital on the one hand, and an instrument for the emancipation of individuals on the other." (Moses, *J. Trade Union Theory from Marx to Walesa*. Berg Publishers, London, 1990).

Read these books and then, as John Robertson said to Australia's largest union meeting on 1st July 2005, "get out there and get on with it".

Neale Towart, *Workers Online*, August 2005.

Full Review at: [http://workers.labor.net.au/features/200508/c\\_historicalfeature\\_neale.html](http://workers.labor.net.au/features/200508/c_historicalfeature_neale.html)

### **Review from *Labor e-Herald* *The ALP's National Magazine Online***

'The NSW BLF has been seen as a forerunner to the many green movements and parties that have sprung up around the world. Meredith and Verity Burgmann state that Petra Kelly took the green message to West Germany after seeing the Green Bans in action in the 1970s. They claim that the Green Party's role in Germany was influenced by Green Bans.

However, what made the NSW BLF unique was the fact that it was the first (and probably still the only)

organisation to mix trade union politics with green politics and further open the possibility of a "red and green" alliance. It also brought to the attention of society that trade unions can be socially responsible and that it was necessary to have some control over the end product of labour.'

Full article at: <http://eherald.alp.org.au/articles/0805/magbook15-01.php>

### **Review from *Canberra Times***

'A newly published book by Brisbane labour historian Greg Mallory provides interesting historical context to these developments [that is, the ACTU's current campaign to influence public opinion on the Federal Government's changes to industrial relations law]. [The book] sets out to explain the origin and nature of broad-based campaigns by trade unions that extend union concerns to areas that Mallory calls the "social responsibility function"... Mallory could have made more of the community contexts for these campaigns. ...[T]here are elements of the two campaigns that resonate powerfully with the current political climate, and the ACTU's approach. Those interested or involved in the labour movement will find much of value in Mallory's book.'

Erik Eklund, *Canberra Times*, Monday 22 August, 2005, p.13.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### **Union phoenix arises in the Pilbara**

Review of

#### **Hard Ground: Unions in the Pilbara**

**By Bradon Ellem**

Pilbara Mineworkers Union,  
Port Hedland, 2004.

Available from the CFMEU,  
Mining and Energy Division,  
Sydney

\$20, paperback, 70 pp.

As the Howard government prepares to launch the biggest frontal assault on the Australian trade unions in decades, this book about the struggle to revive the union movement in one of its traditionally crucial regions is timely and extremely illuminating. The story of the rise of the Pilbara Mineworkers Union, as a locally-based, industrial union representing all trades, should provide inspiration and many lessons for all those workers grappling with the looming assault on their right to organise by one of the most anti-union govern-

ments in the country's history.

Bradon Ellem has written a well-researched and vivid account of the tempestuous industrial development of the Pilbara mining region of Western Australia. The book focuses on the battle for the survival and renewal of unions in the iron ore mining industry of the Pilbara in the north west of WA — dominated by the two largest mining corporations in the world, Rio Tinto and BHP-Billiton.

The mines owned by Rio Tinto at Hamersley and Robe River had largely driven the unions out since the defeats of the 1980s, but the BHP-owned mines had remained under union awards. In late 1999, BHP-Billiton launched a drive to de-unionise its mines. This story tells about the see-sawing struggle to maintain and build union strength in the BHP mines, and to re-build union influence in the Rio Tinto sites.

The background to this struggle is the international mining boom which sees record profits being made by both companies, and the global offensive by big corporations to destroy the power of the union movement to ensure these massive super-profits are largely kept to themselves. For these reasons, the Pilbara conflict has major implications for the whole Australian workers' movement.

Behind a number of the longstand-

ing problems of the union movement in the Pilbara was a bitter history of demarcation disputes and infighting which had weakened the unions at Hamersley in particular. When BHP-Billiton commenced its push in 1999 for Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs)—individual contracts—in mines at Newman and Port Hedland – the unions successfully banded together to resist.

At Hamersley, Rio Tinto suffered a blow when workers voted to reject a non-union agreement. This led to the establishment—with direct ACTU assistance—of the PMU, as ‘a grassroots organisation of Hamersley Iron workers that want to have a voice in their workplace and their community... independent of, but [working] closely with industrial unions’.

This new type of union organisation, based not only on the workplace but within the local community, and involving family members as well, sets an important precedent for future industrial organising around the country. A parallel development within the BHP mines led to the formation of a community-based group, Action in Support of Partners (ASP), at Port Hedland in 2000, followed by the BHP Pilbara Mineworkers Union in 2003.

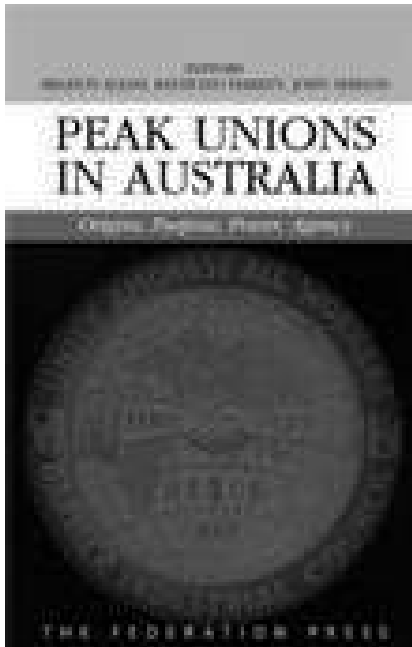
Progress for the PMU at Hamersley was seriously set back in 2004 by the under-the-counter negotiating of

a sweetheart deal between the Australian Workers Union and Rio Tinto, bringing Hamersley workers under a federal award. This move by the AWU national officialdom has led to further divisions among the Rio Tinto workforce—but the struggle continues at these mine-sites.

As Ellem concludes: ‘The irony is that through failing to win a state award in Hamersley Iron, the site where it was established, the PMU has now become the official form of unionism at BHP. It may now be that this kind of unionism, melding unions together in new ways with new tactics and methods, is a sign of things to come here and elsewhere. For all its physical isolation, the Pilbara is often at the centre of Australian industrial life. It was like this with the de-unionisation from 1986 to 1993. Today, it might be so once again, this time heralding a new kind of unionism.’

**Jim McIlroy**





Review of

**Peak Unions in Australia:  
Origins, Purpose, Power,  
Agency**

**By Bradon Ellem, Raymond  
Markey, John Shields (eds)**

Federation Press, Sydney,  
2004.

\$49.95, paperback, 274 + x  
pp.

This is an edited collection of articles on peak union bodies in Australia—state labour councils, plus the ACTU. It's an important book with a historical focus that brings together the work of a number of scholars.

Not all metropolitan-based councils are covered (South Australia, Tasmania, and the ACT and NT are omitted), but Queensland is well served by two chapters, one on the formation of the first trades and labour council in Brisbane, and one which covers the 20th century history of what is now known as the Queensland Council of Unions.

The book also covers some non-metropolitan councils, with Broken Hill, the Illawarra, Wagga Wagga and Rockhampton included.

John Kellett charts the short (1885-1888) role of the first Brisbane Trades and Labour Council. His chapter shows how the Council arose, focussed as it was by moderate craft unions on the issue of the eight-hour day, and then the efforts of various groups to reform the Council and radicalise its objectives. The first Council President was notable Scottish-born unionist William Galloway, a social and labour activist of a more conservative bent, who was a city councillor from 1884, and became Mayor in 1888-89. The reformist moves were led by radical, immigrant-led elements, often unskilled workers. These Anglo-Celtic migrants made Brisbane 'a restless

place, a young city in flux' (p.88). The Council was riven by several disputes, including its incapacity, due to the way its objects were framed, to assist in the industrial disputes of individual affiliates. Nor could the Council levy affiliates, so its material resources were weak. It fielded labour candidates in the 1888 elections, but all were defeated. William Lane and others challenged the status quo, leading to proposals to revise the rules to produce the Australian Labour Federation, which responded more vigorously to the expectations of the new settlers who were pouring into the colony.

The chapter by Simon Fry, John Shields and Bradon Ellem, which overviews the broad sweep of the history of what is now the Queensland Council of Unions (QCU), shows the continuing difficulty of maintaining labour unity in the State over much of the twentieth century, due to differing political structures and significant tensions between segments of the labour movement.

Barbara Webster shows how politics and ideology led to rival peak union bodies in Rockhampton in the 1950s. It is interesting to contrast the history and operation of peak unionism in Rockhampton with the South Coast Labour Council in New South Wales where, despite the difficulties, class-based unionism and a strong consciousness of place meant that the Illawarra body developed some unity around socially progres-

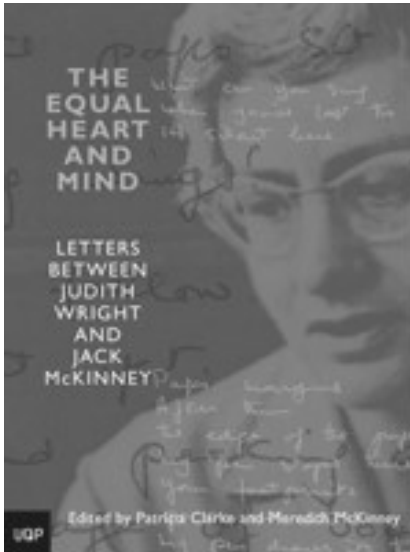
sive ideas as well as bread-and-butter industrial issues.

Peak councils, national and state, currently face the same set of challenges that confront the union movement as a whole: 'developing new roles amidst institutional and economic fragmentation', as Chris Briggs writes of the ACTU (p.253). So this book raises important issues about the role of labour councils in the future. Potentially, their state-based and often decentralised nature (there are 10 regional branches of the QCU, for instance) gives state and regional bodies much better roots in the community than the ACTU, more of a purchase on public opinion, and some capacity to mobilise the movement in tough times.

The book remedies a sore neglect. While peak union councils have been an important part of the IR landscape for more than a hundred years, the coverage of councils in terms of histories is patchy. Further, the book is much more than a recitation of facts, but rather a deep analysis of the reasons for the successes, and failures, of peak councils. What holds them together? How do agendas change? Why, at times, do peak councils fragment? Issues of power and labour politics come into play in all of this. However, with most chapters covering a broad sweep of history, the focus on the last 10 or 20 years is necessarily brief. A gap to be filled in the future!

**Janis Bailey**





Review of

**The Equal Heart and Mind:  
Letters Between Judith  
Wright and Jack McKinney**

**By Meredith McKinney and  
Patricia Clarke (eds)**

University of Queensland  
Press, Brisbane, 2004.

\$24.95, paperback, 202 + xiii  
pp.

Lost in a desolate country  
I travelled far to find  
What only you could give me —  
The equal heart and mind  
That answer love in kind.

(From *The Forest*, Judith Wright)

Astonishingly, the works of arguably Australia's finest poet, Judith Wright, are out of print, save for a recent volume of bird poems published by the National Library of Australia. The copy that I read in the mornings of *Five Senses*, first published in 1963, is on loan from a friend and I fear she will re-call it soon! The place where Wright and McKinney lived for 20 years, Mt Tamborine, memorialises Wright by a walkway named in her honour, but there is little else to remind the resident or visitor of this exquisite poet and social activist, whose contribution in particular towards environmental debate at both local and national levels was enormous.

This book is a book of letters between lovers, soul-mates, a couple passionately devoted to each other, and to their respective callings of poet and philosopher. It covers two periods: April 1945 to April 1946, before they began to live together at Mt Tamborine, and February-May 1950. When the letters begin, Judith is at her family's home in Armidale, trying to break the news of her relationship with a man more than 20 years her senior, whom she could not marry—divorce laws requiring the consent of both parties at the time. She did not manage, however, to break the news to her father until later. Life with a man who was poor, whom she could not marry in those conservative times, a returned ex-soldier not in good health, a self-taught philosopher, with several children ... not a good prospect, in-

deed! When Judith returned to Brisbane, to her Universities Commission job, Jack had just moved to live-in with a couple as a 'pensioner-gardener, hangeron-handyman'. By late 1945 Jack and Judith were together, having bought their first house at Tamborine Mountain. It was a two-room timber worker's cottage that they dubbed 'Quantum' as Jack was studying quantum physics as part of his broad self-education. The letters break off, resuming in 1950 with the impending birth of the couple's daughter, Meredith. Judith is stranded in a Brisbane hospital for several months with pre-eclampsia, and in April gives birth to Meredith, seeing Jack only occasionally.

Judith Wright gave the letters to Meredith late in life, and they have now been edited in a most sensitive and engaging way. Interspersed with poems, photographs from the family album and short essays by McKinney and Clarke that explain the context of the letters, this is a beautiful collection that illuminates the McKinney-Wright relationship and also says much about the intellectual and creative work that each did, and how their ideas contributed to the other's development.

The letters are a mix of the ordinary and everyday, literary gossip, philosophical ideas, and humour. Judith worries, awaiting Meredith's birth in Brisbane, that 'all the babies' things will start to get blue mouldy. Would you mind airing

them in front of the fire or the radiator?' (p.164). She is annoyed that Longmans, the British publisher, have kept a manuscript for six months and are still undecided about how precisely they should send it back to her. She dubs Meredith 'the Dormouse' soon after she is born, and writes 'she is a beautiful girl and I am crazy about her' (p.178). She speculates whether she should let someone know she is in the Mothercraft Home, but decides against it as 'he only knows me as Miss Wright so that would be a bit sudden' (p.181). Jack writes about his struggles with his 'Philosophy of Science' article, and reports that 'we have peas & carrots & 3 pumpkins (probably) in the garden but not much else' (p.174).

One is convinced by the end of the book that Jack had been right: 'we are going to be very happy & defy the world'. Judith's short memoir of Jack's death, and the poems that conclude the volume, sum up the complexity of the relationship.

With rough-cut pages and a lovely cover, this gem of a book illuminates the lives of a self-taught intellectual and a great poet who was also a significant social activist. Teasing glimpses are given of post-war Brisbane's intellectual and artistic life. Judith Wright was not at this point the major public figure that she would later become. But this book illuminates her journey to that destination.

**Janis Bailey**

## CONTRIBUTORS

**Janis Bailey** is a lecturer in the Department of Industrial Relations at Griffith University. Her research interests include union strategy and culture. Before moving to Queensland in 2002, she taught at the University of WA and Edith Cowan University, and was variously Secretary, Editor and committee member of the Perth Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History.

**Helen Ester** is a journalist and teaches at Central Queensland University. She is currently completing a PhD in the Department of Politics and Public Policy at Griffith University.

**Rae Frances** has published several books and numerous articles on the history of work, women's history, Aboriginal/European contact history, religious and community history and has also co-edited several collections of essays on Australian and New Zealand history. She is co-editor of the journal, *Labour History*. She has taught Australian history, women's studies, New Zealand history and Australian studies in Melbourne, Perth and Auckland. She is President of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History.

**Jim McIlroy** is a member of the Socialist Alliance, a long-time contributor to *Green Left Weekly*, and author of several pamphlets on labour history: *The Red North*; *Australia's Early Socialists*; and *The Origins of the ALP: A Marxist Analysis*. He is also a longstanding workplace delegate for the Community and Public Sector Union in the Centrelink Call Centre in Brisbane.

**Greg Mallory** is an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Industrial Relations, Griffith University. His book *Uncharted Waters: Social Responsibility in Australian Trade Unions* has just been launched. He is currently working on a history of the Queensland Coal Miners' Union for the CFMEU. Greg is also a sports historian and is currently working on a history of the Brisbane Rugby League. Greg is President of the Brisbane Labour History Association.

**Bob Reed** currently practises as a barrister in Brisbane, principally in the areas of industrial and employment law and criminal law. From 1977 to 1988 he worked as a painter and docker in the ports of Brisbane and Sydney and from 1995 – 1999 as a research officer for the Liquor Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers' Union.

**Claire Wagner** is a writer and editor. As a journalist in Sydney she specialised in environmental matters and wrote for *Nation* and *Australian Financial Review*. At Sydney University she took Arts and Town Planning and on retiring to Brisbane took a Classics degree at the University of Queensland.

# Noticeboard

## CONFERENCES

### FROM SUFFRAGISTS TO LEGISLATORS

**4 November 2005**

**Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane**

A one day conference that features a number of current and former political figures as well as academics. The Hon Dr Carmen Lawrence is a confirmed keynote speaker. The full program will be released shortly. This is a free event not to be missed!

Contact details: Hon Mary Crawford  
m.crawford@qut.edu.au  
Phone: 07 3864 5251.

### MATESHIP, TRUST AND EXCLUSION IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY

**16-17 February 2006**

**Victorian Trades Hall, Carlton South**

A cross-disciplinary conference organised by the School of Historical Studies, Monash University, in conjunction with History Australia, Eras and the Melbourne Branch of the Society for the Study of Labour History. Papers from all disciplines of the humanities are sought. 200 word abstracts are required by 31 October 2005. Proposals for film, video, performance or other contributions are also sought.

Keynote speakers are Professor John Rickard (author of *Class and Politics; Australia: A Cultural History*; and *H.B. Higgins, the Rebel as Judge*). Other guest speakers include Eva Cox (University of Technology, Sydney), Richard Waterhouse (University of Sydney) and Rae Frances (University of NSW).

Contact details: Nick Dyrenfurth  
nick.dyrenfurth@arts.monash.edu.au  
Phone 03 9905 8749; Mobile 0411 262 934

## **WORKING TO LIVE: HISTORIES OF THE 8 HOUR DAY AND WORKING LIFE**

**20-21 June 2006**

**University of Melbourne**

Part of a series of events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Melbourne Stonemasons' establishment of the '8 Hour System', this is a joint initiative of the Melbourne Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History and the Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne.

Abstracts of proposed papers are due by 31 January 2006 and full papers (5,000 word maximum) by 20 May 2006.

Proposals and papers to Peter Love at [pjlove@infoxchange.net.au](mailto:pjlove@infoxchange.net.au). Further information available on the ASSLH website.

This conference will be followed by the 'New Standards for the New Times' conference on 22-23 June at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. This conference explores contemporary work-life issues; contact Iain Campbell ([iain.campbell@rmit.edu.au](mailto:iain.campbell@rmit.edu.au)) or Cathy Brigden ([cathy.brigden@rmit.edu.au](mailto:cathy.brigden@rmit.edu.au)) for further details.

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ASSLH**



*Labour History* (ISSN: 0023 6942) is an internationally recognised journal and part of the prestigious History Co-operative of the University of Illinois. It is published twice a year, in November and May, by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History – a non-profit organisation.

Members of the Brisbane Labour History Association who are not already receiving *Labour History* are encouraged to subscribe – the full rate for individuals is \$50.00 covering the November 2005 and May 2006 issues (concession rate for students/unwaged is \$35.00) - your bonus will be a **free copy of the May 2005 issue (#88)**.

Your support of the journal as a subscriber makes it possible for *Labour History* to continue to promote and publish labour history research in Australia and beyond. Please send for our *Guidelines* if you are interested in contributing to the journal.

The November 2005 issue is in preparation and contains a powerful thematic section edited by Andrew Moore on the Extreme Right in Australia. Additional articles are wide ranging: Cathy Brigden and Marcel van der Linden draw upon geography and ethnography to provide fresh insights into labour historiography; Linda Colley uses historical analysis to show that redundancy for Queensland public servants is not a new or novel trend; Marian Quartly examines Australian labour cartoonists and their image of the ideal Australian worker; and Peter Burke highlights the links between labour history and sporting history. Book reviews, research reports, conference reports, obituaries add to the mix.

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## **Editorial Policy**

*The Queensland Journal of Labour History* is a journal of labour and social history with a particular emphasis on Queensland history. The history of labour, the classic social movement, is central to our concerns, as are the histories of newer social movements. This journal is committed to the view that history has a social purpose. It publishes articles which, in Ian Turner's words, engage our sympathies, affect present circumstances and suggest answers to present problems. In the words of the Association's slogan, "The Past is Always with Us".

The articles published herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Association or the Editors.

## **Contributing to The Queensland Journal of Labour History**

The *Journal* is published in March and September.

Articles of up to 4000 words may be accepted, and shorter contributions are encouraged. First person accounts of labour history are particularly welcome. Reports on exhibitions, seminars and research projects are sought, as are book reviews and photo essays.

Contributions should be made in hard copy to the Society's post office box and (if possible) digital format via email, to the Secretary's email address (see inside front cover). Hard copies should be typed, double-spaced on single-sided A4 bond paper, with a margin of at least 3 cm. Please number the pages (central bottom of page for preference). Two (2) copies of each manuscript are required. Please ensure all contact details are given, including phone numbers and an email address.

Intending authors should refer to the style guide for *Labour History*, journal of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, at <http://www.asslh.com/>.

Please advise if you have ideas for graphics (photographs, maps, drawings, cartoons, etc) that might accompany your article if accepted for publication.

# The Queensland Journal of Labour History

No. 1, September 2005  
ISSN 1832-9926

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