The Queensland Journal of Labour History

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The Brisbane Labour History Association

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Front Cover Photo:
WWII *"Support the War Effort"* poster.

The Queensland Journal Of Labour History

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Labour History (ISSN: 0023 6942) is an internationally recognised journal published twice a year, in November and May, by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History of which the Brisbane Labour History Association is the Brisbane branch. Contents, abstracts and prices of back issues are available at the web site **www.asslh.org.au**. The journal is available in both printed form and via the non-profit publisher JSTOR. The association with JSTOR offers individual subscribers a range of advantages, including online access to the full run of *Labour History* from 1962 on.

Members of the **BLHA** who are not already receiving *Labour History* are encouraged to subscribe. The full rate for individuals is $70.00; the concession rate for students/unwaged is $40.00. Rates are kept relatively low as ASSLH is a non-profit organisation. New subscribers to *Labour History* receive the current year's journals and a free back issue of their choice.

Special Issue of **Labour History**, No. 106, May 2014
Labour and the Great War: The Australian Working Class and the Making of Anzac
Frank Bongiorno, Raelene Frances and Bruce Scates (eds.),
ISBN: 9780975767016
ISSN: 0023-6942

The working class was present at the birth of Anzac and the labour movement was present at the birth of Anzac Day. The Anzac Legend has been the subject of vigorous debate among historians in the last fifty years, but there has been insufficient attention given to the labour movement's engagement with it. This new volume of essays - published as a special issue of labour history and an edited book by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History to coincide with the centenary of the First World War - explores how workers, unionists and Labor politicians have engaged with the meaning and legacy of the Great War both during the conflict and in the decades that followed. The topics include responses to the crisis of July and August 1914, labour and conscription in a comparative context, working relationships within the Australian army at war, the 1917 strike, the Red Cross, Archbishop Daniel Mannix, and the working and reworking of the Anzac Legend by the labour movement. The collection also deals with post-war legacies, including chapters on soldier settlement and controversies over the teaching about war in schools. Contributors include Robin Archer, Frank Bongiorno, Mark Cryle, Phillip Deery, Nick Dyrenfurth, Charles Fahey, Raelene Frances, John Lack, Douglas Newton, Val Noone, Melanie Oppenheimer, Bruce Scates and Nathan Wise, with a Preface by Jay Winter. It is hoped that this collection will draw attention to the need to consider labour history in any larger account of the experience and historical meanings of the First World War.

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Editorial

Howard Guille, Ross Gwyther and Bob Russell

This issue of the Queensland Journal of Labour History comes just after various commemorations of the start of the First World War and before what could well be an overweening ANZAC Day in 1915. Australia entered the First World War as part of the British Empire. The declaration of war by the British Government on 5 August 1914 covered the Empire and committed Australia.

In a curiosity of history, the declaration of war occurred during the campaign for the first-ever double dissolution election in Australia held on 5 September 1914. The two main parties gave unquestioned support to Britain. The leader of what was then termed the Liberal Party, Prime Minister Joseph Cook said, *Whatever happens, Australia is part of the Empire right to the full. When the Empire is at war, so is Australia at war.* Labor Party leader, and soon to be Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher said *'Australians will stand beside our own to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling'.*

Australia opened its war on 5 August 1914 firing an artillery piece from Port Nepean at a German merchant ship trying to leave Port Phillip Bay. The first Australian expeditionary force invaded and captured Rabaul on 11 September 1914 and then took over German New Guinea. In a way, this reprised the formal annexation of New Guinea to Queensland made in 1883 that was then 'disallowed' by the British government.

Of about 416,000 Australians who served, about 60,000 were killed and another 152,000 were wounded. The casualty rate was one of the highest of the empire countries who committed troops; the death rate was around 1.4 per cent of the total population.

These were lower than for the European countries. Eight million of the sixty million European military personnel, were killed, seven million were permanently disabled and fifteen million were seriously injured. Germany lost 15.1 per cent of its active male population, Austria-Hungary lost 17.1% per cent and France lost 10.5 per cent.

One estimate is that the direct cost of the war to Australia was £377 million. The Australian War Memorial estimates the costs of repatriation and demobilisation were £238 million to 1935. Another

estimate puts the total long run costs including debt interest and sinking fund charges at £831 million. The annual gross domestic product for Australia over the war years averaged £585.5 million so the direct cost of the war was about two-thirds the annual product and the long-term costs 1.4 times. At Versailles, Australia received £5.6 million in reparations: the war was a poor economic investment!

These stark memories of foreign wars obscure the wars that happened in nineteenth century Queensland. For example, at a very local level, Thorpe in his colonial history of Queensland reports on a "*systematic but less well-known military campaign*" on Moreton Island with orders to sweep the island from end to end and kill all the males. The effect, some years later, was that there were no men over 35 years old.

In a very important paper presented in July this year, Raymond Evans & Robert Ørsted–Jensen have estimated that 66,680 Aboriginal people were killed in 40 years of dispersals and frontier wars in Queensland in the nineteenth century. On this basis, more Aboriginal people were killed in the Queensland wars than the total deaths of Australians in World War I.

In the authors' laconic words, *'Students of World War One will also notice that the figure of 66,680 is remarkably close to the Australian combat death rate of 62,300 in that war'*.[1] This is truly shocking; the writers deserve the strongest thanks and support and their findings the widest possible circulation.

At the time of writing, the Australian Government is committing air crews to Iraq-Syria and there is talk of meeting a 'general request' for assistance from the United States.. Perhaps little has changed, Australia still follows the 'leader' except we wait for call from Washington not Westminster.

We should remember. In the words of US socialist of the Eugene Debs from his 1915 appeal "*Never Be A Soldier*", *'The working man who turns soldier today becomes the hired assassin of his capitalist master'*. Or in the words of German Expressionist, Otto Dix

> *What is this war? It is mud, trenches, blood, rats, lice, bombs, pain, barbed wire, decaying flesh, gas, death, rain, cats, tears, bullets, fear and a loss of faith in all that we once believed in.*

Much of this issue tells us something about reactions to previous wars. Andrew Bonnell documents the serious opposition mounted by German workers and the rank and file of the Social Democratic Party to German involvement in the First World War. Rowan Cahill takes apart the right-wing accounts, particularly by Hal Colebatch, that demonises the union leaderships and the CPA for industrial

disputation during World War II. This is the written version of Rowan's 2104 Alex McDonald lecture.

Valerie Cooms is an Indigenous scholar who tells us how international pressure, especially from the United Nations, shamed the Menzies Government to take some action against the racist and discriminatory legislation of the Queensland Government. She points out that in World War II, 'Aboriginal men who enlisted as servicemen in the 1940s were only paid 1/3 of the wages of non-Aboriginal men'. At the same time, and well into the 1960s and even 70s, the Queensland government confiscated the wages of Aboriginal workers.

The themes covered by Cahill and Cooms echo in Greg Mallory's review of Doug Jordon's book about the CPA and unions especially about 'the role communist party union officials played in trying to develop the political dimension in the areas of peace, migrants and aboriginal rights'. The same themes underpin Ynes Sanz's review of Eddie Clarke's *History of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties.* Both the history and the review are meticulous.

In 2014, we need to be vigilant about another Australian Government taking us to another war. We also need to be vigilant about a Queensland Government taking away the rights of freedom of association through its VLAD Act and, it seems, overriding the native title rights of the Quandamooka people by legislation in favour of a sand-mining company.

Note

1 Evans, Raymond and Ørsted–Jensen, Robert, 'I Cannot Say the Numbers that Were Killed': Assessing Violent Mortality on the Queensland Frontier (2014). Available at SSRN: http://ssrn.com/abstract=2467836 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2467836

Max Pechstein, The National Assembly is the cornerstone of the German Socialist Republic*, 1918*

BLHA President's Column

Greg Mallory

President's Column, September 2014

The Annual Alex Macdonald was held in May and was addressed by Dr Rowan Cahill, labour historian, on the topic of *Home Front WW2; Myths and Realities*. Rowan spoke passionately on the topic which fits in with the BLHA's theme for our annual symposium namely the labour movement and war. Rowan refuted the suggestions made popular by Hal Colebatch in his book *Australia's Secret War* that the Waterside Workers Federation and the Seamen's Union of Australia worked against the war effort during World War 2. The lecture is reproduced in this edition of the journal

The October symposium has been postponed until November as the BLHA executive has decided to conduct a labour history walking tour of the Toowong cemetery. This has been organised by Bob Russell who has made contact with Friends of Toowong Cemetery who hold monthly Sunday morning tours on specific themes. We have been given a list of graves that relate to labour history figures which include the grave of TJ Ryan, Labor Premier, and other Labor Party figures. There is a Peace Shrine which stands opposite the Anzac shrine, which should be of great interest as there is little known of its origins. Details of the tour are included in the journal with contact details.

Members have been notified of the screening of *Radical Wollongong* which was put together by the Socialist Alliance, Green Left Weekly and Green Left TV. I viewed it and think it is a very good presentation of labour history. I think it deals with a number of areas quite well, notably the role the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) played in the Illawarra region as well the handling of the 1938 Dalfram dispute in which wharfies refused to load pig-iron to the tramp ship the Dalfram which was heading for Japan. The Association has decided to show it at the AGM in December.

I have been aware for some time of a number of labour history papers that have been produced at the Centre for Queensland Government at the University of Queensland. We published one in an earlier journal on Alex Macdonald and the student movement. Other papers include a biography of Jack Egerton, another on green bans in Brisbane by the Building Workers Industrial Union and the Builders Labourers Federation, and another on the political activities of the Queensland Nurses Union in relation to Aboriginal issues. I have contacted the director of the Centre in order that we meet and examine ways of jointly promoting this scholarly work.

On a sad note I can report on the death of one of our members. Wally Stubbings, a Life Member of the Association, passed away on the 6th July at the age of 101. Wally lived a very productive life in the political, industrial and sporting areas. His obituary is published in this journal and was published in *The Courier Mail* on the 7th August.

The Association continues to be in a healthy state in relation to membership and finances. We currently have 70 members which includes 12 institutional members and 6 Life Members.

Home Front WW2: Myths and Realities*

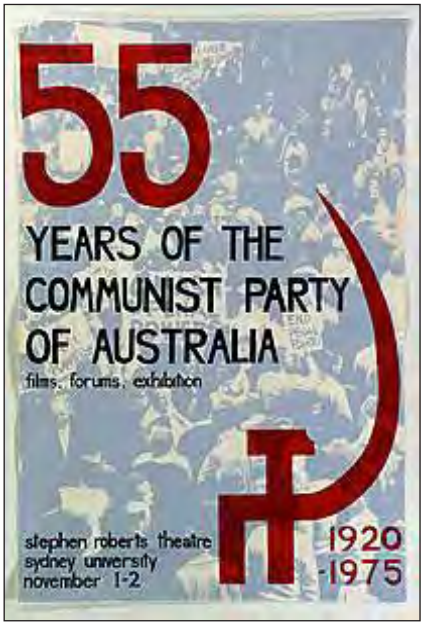
Rowan Cahill

In October 2013, the right-wing journal *Quadrant* published the book *Australia's Secret War*, an account by conservative intellectual Hal Colebatch of home front industrial disruptions by Australian trade unions during World War 2. Described as a secret history rescued from "folk memory", one previously suppressed by leftists, it detailed 'treacherous' industrial actions by unionists that variously denied or delayed vital war materials to the frontlines between 1939 and 1945, resulting in the deaths of service personnel.

These actions, the argument went, pointed to a deliberate and coordinated attempt at sabotaging the war effort by the communist leaderships of the unions involved. Maritime unions, in particular the Waterside Workers' Federation (WWF), were the focus of the book.

Some context here … during the mid-1930s and onwards, members of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) came to power within many national and local trade union organisations, particularly in the leaderships of unions in strategic industries such as mining, shipping and stevedoring. Party membership peaked in 1944 with some 23,000 members. According to historian Robin Gollan, by 1945 'communists held controlling positions in unions with a membership of 275,000 and influence in unions with a membership of 480,000 or 40 per cent of all unionists'.

In the Colebatch account, and especially amongst his supporters, what we are dealing with is a contemporary version of Cold War ideological 'analysis', with sinister hidden agendas imputed wherever they can be, and the language blurred so that 'communist' becomes 'Left' and 'Left' becomes so inclusive it embraces anything to the left of whatever the right-wing position is that is being argued from. Even small 'l'



liberals become caught up in the net, along with much of the ALP.

Aided by the vituperations of shock jock Alan Jones on the airwaves and Miranda Devine in the Murdoch press, the Colebatch book quickly transformed from a niche publication to a reprint with mainstream national release and distribution for the 2013 Christmas market. *Quadrant* editor and publisher Keith Windschuttle effusively praised the book in the December (2013) issue of *Quadrant*. Arch conservative and devout monarchist David Flint followed in the January 2014 issue with a lengthy review in which the words "evil", "treachery", "crimes", "traitors", "insidious" were used to describe wartime waterfront industrial disputes.

Flint even expressed his wish that martial law had been instituted on Australian wartime waterfronts to combat wharfie industrial actions, and regarded the alleged American use of submachine-gunfire and stun grenades on the Adelaide waterfront in 1942, during an incident allegedly involving the mishandling of an American military cargo by Australian wharfies, as reasonable.

Subsequent reviews and online comment, much of the latter couched in the language of violence and hatred, used the Colebatch account to argue that the actions of the wartime unionists were 'treasonous' and the culprits were never brought to account. The attitude of the unionists, it was argued, were such that they considered themselves above and beyond the common good, a sense of moral superiority that still characterises their modern union counterparts, the latter either the trade union movement generally, or specifically maritime workers now organised in the Maritime Union of Australia. According to this argument, present day unionists and their unions should be held accountable for the sins of the past. The strident anti-unionism of the Colebatch account, and the anti-union hatred manifest in much of the subsequent comment, neatly dovetailed with the Abbott government's anti-union agenda.

The book came with a 'back story'. It had been in the process of research and writing at least before 2007 when it got mentioned in conservative attacks on the ABC for screening the mini-series account of the 1998 MUA-Patrick's waterfront dispute, *Bastard Boys*. Colebatch's then unfinished account of wartime 'sabotage' and trade union 'perfidy' was touted as the story 'the leftist infiltrated/oriented ABC would never tell'. And much earlier, *Daily Telegraph* columnist Michael Duffy (6 January 1999) accused Australian wharfies of "corrupt" and "sometimes traitorous" conduct during WW2.

For conservative commentator Peter Coleman (*Spectator*, 14 December 2013), *Australia's Secret War* was

Colebatch's 'tribute to his father', Sir Harry (Hal) Gibson Pateshall Colebatch (1872–1953), the short-term (one-month) 12th Premier of West Australia who accompanied strike breakers on to the waterfront during the bitter Fremantle wharf crisis of 1919, an inflammatory action which contributed to the death of trade union loyalist Tom Edwards following a police batoning.

For conservatives of the Rightist kind, not only was, and is, the Colebatch account the story the Left was and is afraid to, and dared not, tell, but in a grim and nasty sense also a case of 'unfinished business'.

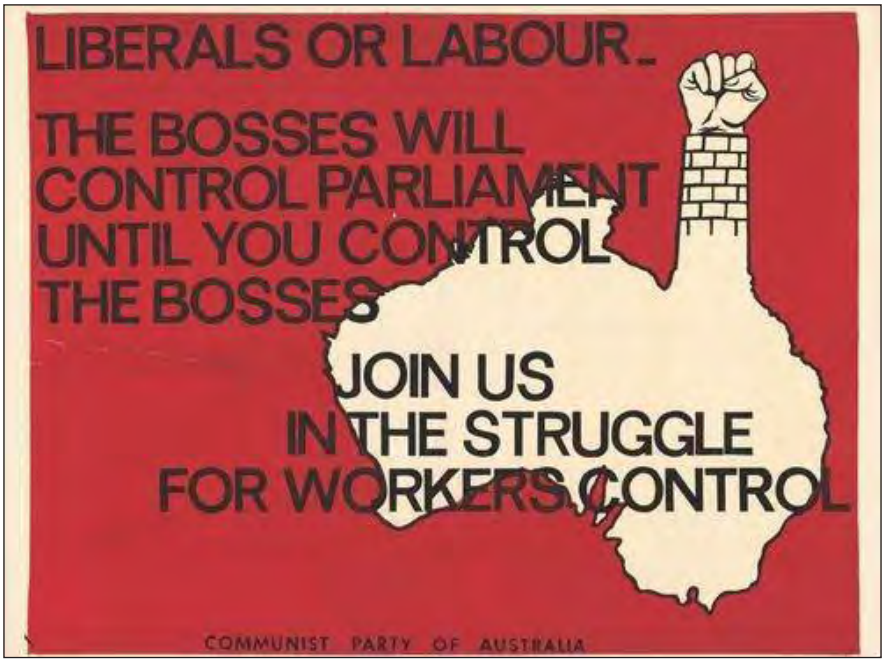
Politically, you can see where this could, and can, go…

Colebatch makes significant use of interviews and correspondence with participants or those at a remove from the action being examined. It is the sort of material, which Windschuttle has persistently claimed in relation to Australian indigenous histories, is notoriously suspect regarding authenticity and problems associated with misremembering and the anecdotal. Specialist scrutiny by 'war history' enthusiasts has raised serious questions about some of Colebatch's sources, evidence, and facts.

Despite Colebatch's claim to the contrary, industrial disputes and unrest in Australian wartime industries and work sites have been researched and analysed by scholars of industrial relations and labour history, as has the existence of the many strikes and industrial actions on Australian waterfronts during the war.

In particular, what Colebatch and his supporters seem unable to accept, is what the scholarly literature clearly establishes. This is that wartime industrial actions by waterfront workers were primarily local in origin, variously based on local factors and understandings, and occurred despite attempts by the communist national leadership of the WWF to curtail them.

Colebatch fails to grasp the realities of what was a complex context and industry. A national trade union leadership, relatively new (the communist Jim Healy had become General Secretary in 1937), in wartime, based in Sydney, overseeing a large national membership organised in some 50 or so port-based branches dotted around a huge coastline, each with their own leaderships, distinct histories, cultures, politics, practices, port characteristics, infrastructures, and work demands. Furthermore, the WWF rank and file, far from being communists during the war and the following Cold War, tended to be ALP members or sympathisers. The interesting point was that they supported communist leaderships through to the 1960s because these



were seen to deliver the goods so far as industrial relations were concerned.

The Colebatch account has maritime workers in its sites as a collective, and while making mention of the Seamen's Union of Australia (SUA), possibly the most communist of Australia's wartime unions in terms of leadership and rank and file membership, he focuses on the wharfies. This enables the wartime contribution of SUA members to be ignored. Between 1939 and 1945, Australian merchant mariners suffered losses of at least 386 dead as the result of wartime service, a significant proportion of this toll in Australian waters due to enemy mines, submarine and air attacks. During 1942 and 1943 in particular, Australian merchant shipping was specifically hunted and targeted in Australian waters by Japanese aircraft and submarines. Overall, hardly a treacherous or inconsequential civilian contribution to the war effort.

Indeed, as the McGirr Inquiry into the repatriation needs of the wartime Australian merchant marine pointed out in 1989, during WW2, Australian merchant mariners faced the possibilities of death and injury from air attacks, submarine attacks and mines, whenever they ventured out of port, without respite, and were in many

Nikolai Radlov, Rush British arms to Russian hands. TASS, 1941

ways more vulnerable and at risk than were members of the armed forces. Australian merchant vessels were mainly coal-fired, had small crews, did not carry professional medical teams, and left smoke and spark trails easily detected by hostiles, unlike the mainly oil-fired naval vessels. Further, merchant ships were not specifically designed for battle, were not protected by the weaponry carried by naval vessels, did not have armoured plating, nor the speed of naval shipping, nor the special watertight bulkheads designed for combat, nor was the merchant marine a workforce specifically trained for combat.

German raiders mined the eastern and southern waters of Australia in 1940, and Japan the northern waters in 1942. The existence of the German mines was only discovered when merchant shipping unknowingly sailed into them and became casualties. Mines were a constant danger, even post-war in places, due to the inadequate minesweeping capability of the Australian navy, the paucity of intelligence data, and the vastness of the Australian coastline.

The first merchant marine casualty due to mines in Australian waters was the British cargo ship *Cambridge* off Wilson's Promontory in November 1940, sinking with the loss of one life. The first Australian merchant marine casualty was the coastal trader *Nimbin*, en route for Sydney carrying a cargo of plywood and pigs, sinking off Norah Head, on the Central coast of NSW, in December 1940, with the loss of seven lives. According to the Royal Australian Navy's official historian, when the *Nimbin* went down, naval authorities explained it as the result of an internal explosion, the activities of the German raiders unknown to them at the time. It was only when a naval vessel went to the scene of the fatality, and found itself in a minefield, that the premise for such reasoning was proven false.

In terms of being recognised and included as significant wartime contributors and participants, it was not until the mid-1970s that the Australian merchant marine was included in Anzac Day marches, and not until 1990 that a Merchant Navy Memorial was set up at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The 22 volume Official History of Australia during WW2 has one page on the Australian merchant marine.

Colebatch and his supporters work on the premise of a patriotic, all-pull-together, seamless Australian home front war effort between 1939 and 1945, in which industrial unrest was a perverse and isolated presence. Indeed, according to David Flint in a lengthy *Quadrant* review of the Colebatch book (January 2014), Australia was unique in this regard, the industrial troubles and conflict that were part of the Australian home front in WW2, not

paralleled in either wartime Britain or the wartime United States. On this he is manifestly wrong.

So what did go on regarding industrial conflict? In wartime Britain, industrial relations was characterised by the ongoing class conflict of peacetime. According to social historian Harold L Smith, this was so intense that in

> *some war factories…. management and workers appeared to view each other as a greater enemy than the Germans.*

Despite strikes being ruled illegal after July 1940 in Britain, the number of industrial disputes and working days lost increased on a yearly basis from 1940 through to 1944. According to Smith, the idea that wartime Britain was characterised by 'social unity and consensus' is an exaggeration, developed over time by propagandists, mythmakers, and historians.

In the wartime United States, unions, generally, supported the war effort but wildcat strikes proliferated. There were 3,000 labour strikes in 1942. The following year, the number of man-days lost trebled to 13.5 million. The number of strikes rose in 1944, but less workers actually went out. By mid-August 1945, the total number of man-days lost that year to date was 9.6 million. Due to the nature of the statistical criteria adopted by US authorities, these figures are probably understated.

So what was the situation in Australia? Before continuing, let me emphasise that none of the following is secret, or hidden; it is all in the public domain, thoroughly discussed, and thoroughly documented in historical and industrial relations' literature.

During World War 2, industrial disturbances increased in Australia to the point of reaching an extent greater that at any time since 1929. Some 2,210, 000 man-days were lost during the period 1942–1945, disturbances increasing as the military situation improved. The most worrying losses were in the coal mining industry, a huge problem for a nation and society reliant on coal for power, locomotion, and merchant shipping.

So what was the cause? Treason? Sabotage by militants? Working class bastardry?

Well, no, and for an explanation we only have to go as far as that well known 'radical' historian Sir Paul Hasluck, and his official account of the wartime Australian home front, written and completed just before he became Governor-General of Australia in 1969.

So far as strikes on the wartime home front are concerned, Hasluck explained:

> *The strikes occurred in all parts of Australia and among many groups of workers. Most of them were local disputes over local grievances and were quickly settled. A number of them were by workers in disregard and in some cases in defiance of their union executives. The only industry in which striking was continuous and extensive was coal mining in New South Wales.*

As Hasluck made clear

> *in spite of the exceptional efforts made by the (Curtin Labor) Government and the…..full support of the moderate union leaders and the exhortations to greater production from the Left Wing, industrial stoppages still occurred.*

One of the initiatives of the Curtin Labor government when it came to power in October 1941 was to work and consult closely with the trade union movement, not only via the ACTU, but also via the leaderships of the militant, communist-led unions, particularly those in strategic industries. Government and the unions attempted to work collaboratively with regard to wages and conditions. Trade union leaderships actively sought to hold down wage demands, industrial conflict, and encourage increased wartime productivity. The reward for this was the promise of better conditions, if not a better world, post-war. Indeed, increased post-war industrial turbulence is in part attributable to unions seeking to redress postponed and/or lost conditions.

A personal aside here. When I was working as an historian with the Seamen's Union of Australia in 1970–1972, I met and talked a great deal with the then leader E. V. Elliott, who had also been the wartime leader of the union from January 1941 onwards, a dyed-in-the-wool and leading member of the Communist Party of Australia, a tough and hard man in many ways. However, when he recalled WW2, and his role as union leader and his membership of the wartime Maritime Industry Commission, a Curtin government initiative designed to facilitate the smooth wartime running of the maritime industry, and his often personal role in ensuring the manning of ships, he came close to tears, saying:

> *I sent men to their deaths; they were in the war zone as soon as they left an Australian port; "Cahill, [the way he always addressed me, said with a bit of a stutter, which was a long standing speech problem he tried, mainly successfully, to keep under control], the battlefront was just outside the Sydney Heads.*

Victory, *TASS, May 12 1945*

According to Hasluck, increased industrial disturbances and lost working days cannot be simply explained. Causation is found in a complexity of 'real life' factors, including the increased numbers of workers in the wartime workforce, amongst these the extensive employment of women,

particularly in industries where men were not available to meet the production demands of war.

In terms of days lost, generally, absenteeism was a particular problem, and this, according to Hasluck, was not necessarily motivated by mischief or spite but by real exigencies such as illness, injury, considerable transport difficulties to and from work, and families simply and genuinely trying to survive, juggling the day-to-day demands of work, shifts, the difficulties of shopping in the context of time constraints and rationing, and child care needs.

So far as industrial disturbance in the coal industry was concerned, that too reflected real problems, with coalfields' trade union memberships on the NSW fields in particular, consistently rejecting or resisting both Communist and ALP leadership directives and pleas to co-operate with the war effort.

On the NSW coalfields, what journalist/historian Edgar Ross termed the pre-war 'fight it out' approach to industrial relations by both managements and workers tended to prevail. Amongst miners there was a deep and abiding bitterness towards both employers and the state for police violence and bloodshed during the Rothbury struggle in 1929 in the Hunter region of NSW. In that struggle police opened fire with their revolvers on protesting locked-out miners, wounding some 45 or so and killing 29 year old miner Norman Brown.

Working in a traditionally dirty, dangerous, deadly industry, miners struggled to meet increased wartime production demands, their efforts hampered by the technological backwardness of the mines and their industry. Accidents increased; there were cases of employer violations of Award conditions; examples too of mine managements harassing miners, taking advantage of the miner's own union's constant urging of members to produce. From 1942 onwards, coal output declined, with stoppages a contributing factor.

Post-war, pent up hostilities burst free as a tired and strained mining workforce determined to win back and/or secure conditions that had either been lost or postponed.

By focusing on the waterfront, the Colebatch study encourages a gendered image of industrial unrest during WW2. The unpatriotic, 'treasonous' worker is the threatening male 'thug' on the waterfront. However, Commonwealth Government statistics regarding wartime industrial unrest did not differentiate between males and females in the auditing process, and arguably females added significantly to the mix. During the war, women were encouraged to enter the workforce, many in jobs traditionally the preserve of men, this being the only way the

male dominated armed forces could be formed up, and the only way wartime production demands could be met. A detailed study by Gail Reekie (1985) of females employed in wartime West Australia (WA) in the clothing and textile industries, in the munitions and engineering industries, and in nursing, demonstrates the ways their employments fostered industrial militancy. The presence of women in the WA civilian workforce increased by 18 per cent between 1939–1943; female trade union membership increased from 37 per cent in 1940 to 48 per cent in 1945. The number of industrial disputes in WA increased tenfold between 1941 and 1944, the peak years of industrial discontent coinciding with the peak period of female employment generally, and especially in the industries of greatest female employment.

According to Reekie, the need for women in war work, and their employment in jobs traditionally regarded as 'men's work', and the setting of the wage rate at between 60–90 per cent of the male rate, variously empowered women. Organisationally, they found themselves together numerically and in a collective way while the shortage of labour meant that their employment was secure for the duration of the war, hence boosting their confidence and bargaining power. All of this flowed-on to their senses of dignity, worth and agency, and was manifested in a robust approach to industrial relations, especially in situations where employer attitudes, despite the war, did not cease to regard them as inferiors and 'less' than men. Their militancy, argued Reekie, represented

> *resistance to both capitalist hegemony and to the dominant ideology of submissive womanhood.*

The right-wing attack on unionism of the type that informs the Colebatch study, seeks to depict the home front Australian trade union movement, especially its militant sector, as one thing, essentially 'un-Australian', and the Australian armed forces as another, there being little or no commonalities.

However, consider this: 43 per cent of Australian employees were trade union members in 1934, this rising to 52 per cent in 1942, the year in which mass unemployment of the inter-war period ended via wartime manpower planning. Factor in with these statistics the essentially masculinist nature of trade union membership and of the workforce during the period, the wartime need for males in the Armed Forces, which required large numbers of women to replace them, and it stands to reason that a significant part of the Australian armed forces comprised former trade unionists. Add to this an estimated 6000 members of the Australian Communist Party, who enlisted as the result of the encouragement of the party, especially

Waterside Workers Strike, Mackay, SLQ

after 1941, and huge links become apparent.

It becomes reasonable, therefore, to argue that in 'defending and protecting the Australian way of life' so treasured by war propagandists, part of what many in the Australian armed forces were fighting for were factors like the right to work, decent wages and conditions, the right to organise, and for some, the right to be militant and radical.

Equally, on the home front, it was the obligation of trade unionists, both in leadership roles and in the rank-and-file, to protect conditions and build their unions, however this was understood (and it is apparent this was often interpreted differently at leadership and rank-and-file levels respectively), and for union leaderships to ensure that when peace came, their unions would be strategically and politically positioned to work for improved conditions, even for a new world order.

In conclusion then, simply this: to assign the tumult of Australian wartime industrial relations to the leadership of the trade union movement, to a communist plot of some kind, to portray the turmoil as some sort of sinister plot, to use words like 'treason', 'sabotage', to even claim that the scale of industrial turmoil in Australia was somehow unique amongst the Allied home fronts, flies in the face of fact and reason, and a significant body of published research and analysis.

It is on a par with the denial of climate change science, and is at once both stupid and malicious.

* This is a revised version of the 2014 Brisbane Labour History Association Alex McDonald lecture.

NOTE ON SOURCES: The following sources have been substantially drawn on. On the Australian WWII home front, James Hagan, *The History of the A.C.T.U.*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1981; Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1942–1945*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1970, and Michael McKernan, *All In! Australia During the Second World War*, Nelson, Melbourne, 1983; on the British home front, Harold L. Smith, *Britain in the Second World War: A Social History*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996; on the US home front, Alan L. Gropman, *Mobilising US Industry in WWII*, McNair Paper 50, Institute for National Strategic Studies, Washington DC, 1996. For the maritime industry, Margot Beasley, *Wharfies: The History of the Waterside Workers' Federation*, Halstead Press in association with the National Maritime Museum, Sydney, 1996; Brian Fitzpatrick and Rowan J. Cahill, *The Seamen's Union of Australia 1872–1972: A History*, Seamen's Union of Australia, Sydney, 1981. For the mining industry, Robin Gollan, *The Coalminers of New South Wales: A History of the Union, 1860–1960*, Melbourne University Press in association with the Australian National University, Melbourne, 1963; Edgar Ross, *A History of the Miners' Federation of Australia,* The Australasian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation, Sydney, 1970. On the CPA, Alastair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia: A Short History*, Hoover Institution Press, Stanford, 1969; Robin Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement, 1920–1955*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1975; Beverley Symons, "All-out for the People's War: Communist Soldiers in the Australian Army in the Second World War", *Australian Historical Studies*, Volume 26, Issue 105, 1995, pp. 596–614. The Gail Reekie article is "Industrial action by women workers in Western Australia during World War II", *Labour History*, Number 49, November 1985, pp. 75–82.

The Great Catastrophe: 1914 and the End of the Second International

Andrew G. Bonnell

The series of rolling World War I centenaries has begun, marked by solemn national ceremonies in cathedrals and at war memorials, conferences, waves of scholarly and not-so-scholarly book publications, museum exhibitions, school excursions, TV mini-series, commemorative postage stamps and coins, battlefield pilgrimages, art installations, poppy-making events and much else. Britain and France are spending a combined total of over £50 million/€65 million on World War I commemorations, while Australia, allegedly in the grip of a budget crisis, is set to spend around A$150 million. Historians have complained of a wave of jingoistic "Anzackery", that will allow little room for more critical questions of the past. Even relatively conservative figures such as a former army officer and Afghanistan war veteran have queried the priorities implied in the dedication of such large resources to a past conflict, compared with the expenditure on the health and welfare of still living veterans of more recent wars.[1]

Of course, the history of the World War I should be remembered, and studied. As an often cited remark by George F. Kennan put it, the war was 'the primal catastrophe of the twentieth century'.[2] First and foremost, the war resulted in the deaths of around 9.5 million combatants, and several million non-combatants. (Just how many millions is hard to estimate, depending on the extent to which one counts excess mortality by hunger and disease in the war's aftermath.[3] Does one also include the casualties of the Armenian genocide, or those of the worldwide influenza epidemic at the end of the war, as part of the war's toll?) Then there were the medium-term economic and political consequences of the war: the economic and political dislocation that led to Nazism and, more widely, fascism, and the path to Stalinism in the Soviet Union. Far from being the "war to end wars", the World War I proved to be a precursor to an even bloodier and more destructive conflict. The American Marxist historian Arno Mayer refers to a 'Thirty Years War' from 1914 to 1945.[4]

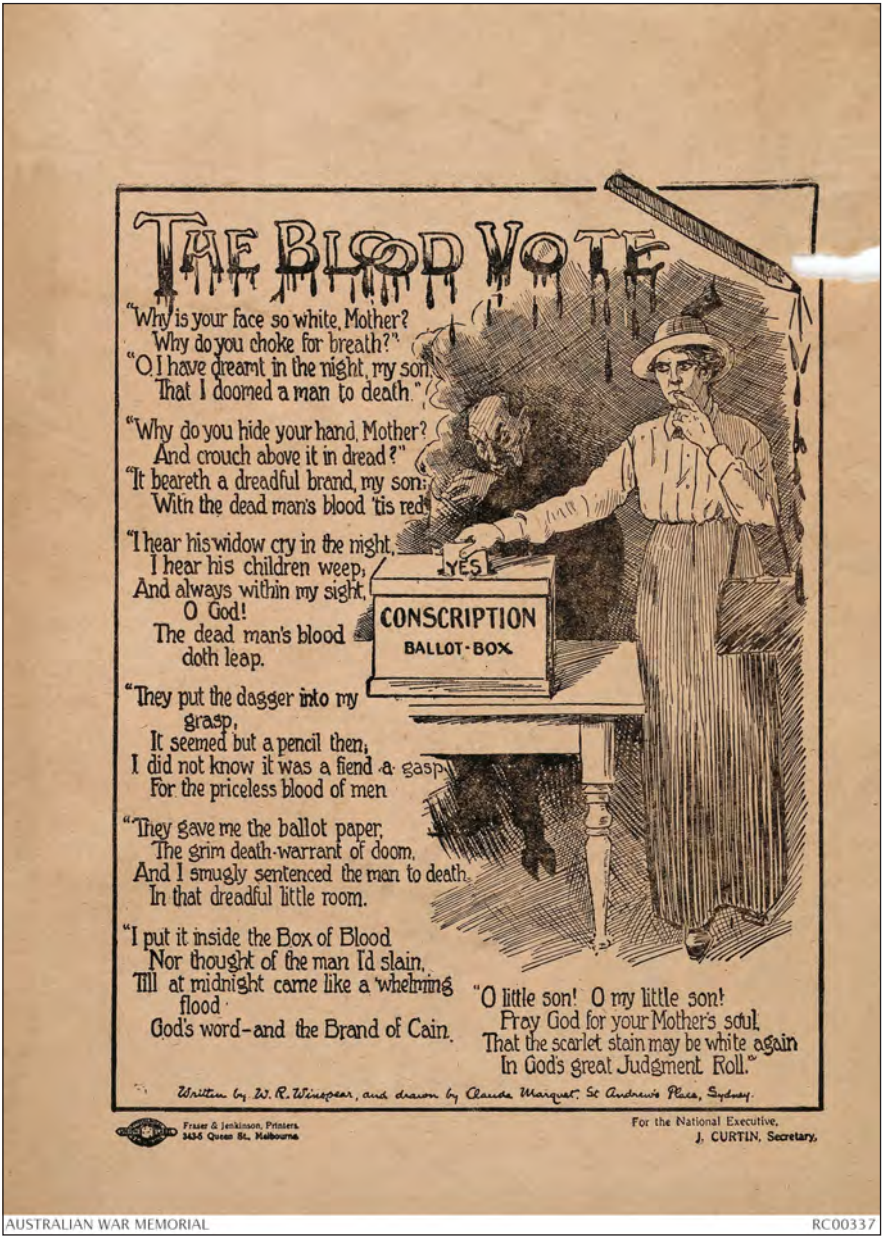
One aspect of the war and its effects that threatens to be overshadowed in the current fervour of patriotic commemoration is the opposition to war that emanated from the international socialist movement in 1914. The anti-war agitation of socialists in 1914 failed, and the Second Workers' International foundered as a result. Even so, the efforts of hundreds of thousands of members of the socialist labour movement to avert

the catastrophe should be remembered if we are to get a fuller understanding of the conflicts that took Europe to war in 1914. The end of the Second International and the subsequent split in the labour movement were key factors in the catastrophes that followed the end of the war in 1918.

Many general histories still focus on the role of around, say, sixty politicians, crowned heads, and diplomats whose decisions are presented as having determined the course of Europe's states toward the brink of war and beyond it in 1914. The social structures and conflicts, and the reactions of the millions of the non-elite populations of Europe to the events of the July of that year, still get short shrift in some accounts. It is still not as well-known as it deserves to be that in the last week of July 1914, over half a million Germans participated in Social Democratic protests against the threat of war all over Germany, including an estimated 100,000 in Greater Berlin on one day, 28 July.

On 23 July 1914, the Austro-Hungarian government delivered its ultimatum to Serbia, demanding that Serbia agree to far-reaching abrogation of its sovereign rights in the Austrian pursuit of anyone linked to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo on 28 June. After news became public in Germany the next day, the executive of the German Social Democratic Party, then a million members strong, issued a proclamation condemning both 'the machinations of the Greater Serbian nationalists' and '*the irresponsible war provocation of the Austro-Hungarian government*'**.** The proclamation called on the German government to 'exercise its influence on the Austrian government to preserve peace', stating: *'There must be no drop of any German soldier's blood sacrificed for the lust for power of the Austrian ruling powers and imperialist profiteering*'**.** The executive called for immediate mass meetings of the party members to express ***'the unshakeable will of the class-conscious proletariat for peace'***. The proclamation concluded:

> Danger is approaching! *The world war threatens!* The ruling classes, who gag, despise and exploit you in peacetime, want to misuse you as cannon fodder. Everywhere the ruling powers must hear the words:
>
> **We want no war! Down with war!**



Anti-Conscription Campaign, World War I, Australia, 1917 (Museum Victoria)

Otto Dix Shock Troops Advance under Gas, 1924 *(MoMA)*

Long live the international brotherhood of peoples![5]

Protest meetings commenced the following day, and gathered momentum over the next few days.[6] In Leipzig, a trade-union festival had already been convened for the next day, a Sunday, so thousands of workers were already present. The gathering, counted as 37,000 strong, turned into an anti-war protest rally, and gave 'enthusiastic support' to a declaration that the proletariat had 'no interest in a war between Austria and Serbia' and condemned the agitation for war and demanded peace.[7] The Chemnitz anti-war protest meeting numbered 8 to 9,000 strong.[8] Smaller meetings took place in Cologne, Esslingen, and Worringen-Dormagen.

On the Monday 27 July, 5,000 gathered in Munich, another 5,000 in Braunschweig, unspecified 'thousands' in Göppingen, in Germany's South-West,[9] with smaller meetings in Frankenthal (1,000) and Neckargartach.

The next day, 28 July, saw the climax of the anti-war protest movement, with over 250,000 protesters in at least 31 towns or cities. These included Dresden, where 35,000 turned out for the ten meetings convened around the city, Hamburg (ca. 30,000 in 19 meetings), Bremen (10,000), and Cologne (10,000). The largest concentration of protesting workers was in the capital, Berlin. The Berlin police estimated 27,400 in 13 meetings in the city,[10] but Wolfgang Kruse counted 32 meetings in Greater Berlin listed in *Vorwärts*, with an estimated total of 100,000 participants.[11]

There were exchanges of views between nationalist onlookers and Social Democrats, and even a singing contest on Unter den Linden — the German patriotic anthem *Wacht am Rhein* and other nationalistic songs versus the *Internationale*, until the police intervened.[12] Confrontations between socialists and nationalistic students were not confined to Berlin. In the university town of Freiburg im Breisgau, university students tried to crash the Social Democratic anti-war gathering, singing patriotic songs and trying to provoke the socialists.[13]

The police responded to the protest marches through the streets of Berlin

with a substantial number of men being deployed, and using drawn weapons to push back the crowds. There were also arrests — 28 in the central districts of Berlin, mostly for misdemeanours such as 'disorderly conduct'.[14] The charges were dropped after general mobilization — a sign of the civic truce, and recognition of the good behaviour of the Party leadership in abstaining from a general strike and voting for war credits. Besides, some of the offenders were undoubtedly already on their way to the front — by the end of the year, some would probably be dead.

On 29 July, protest meetings continued around the country. After the improvised protest rally at the trade union festival in Leipzig on the first day of the protests, 50,000 turned out for the nine organized protest meetings, while 20,000 turned out in Düsseldorf, 15,000 in Hannover, and 11,000 in Mannheim. Protests occurred in 57 German towns and cities that day, with over 144,000 participants (on a very conservative estimate). Protests continued on a slightly smaller scale on 30 July, with 5,000 attending the meeting in Gotha, and 3,000 or more each in Forst and Erfurt. Meetings were held in 34 places, with over 27,500 attending.

Does the reduction in the number of protest meetings after 28–29 July signal a loss of momentum of the protest movement? Kruse is correct in arguing that this is not necessarily the case.[15] In major centres of the labour movement, Social Democrats were gearing up for a second wave of protests when the 'threat of state of war', effectively a state of siege, and mobilization intervened. The Dresden party organisation, for example, had announced a second wave of protests for 31 July,[16] cancelled at short notice when the announcement of the 'threat of state of war' intervened. In Berlin, protests planned for Treptower Park on 2 August, the venue of the massive protest marches in favour of suffrage reform in Prussia in 1910 (among the first major instances of mass street

marches as a form of organized protest), were called off after being banned by the police.[17] In Frankfurt am Main, a protest meeting of Social Democratic women and girls was cancelled after being planned for 2 August.[18]

With the state of threat of war, repression began: some newspapers were confiscated, others appeared with columns excised by the censorship and appeared on 1 August with blank spaces which they didn't have time to fill with more innocuous copy (like the *Volkszeitung*, Düsseldorf, or the *Schwäbische Tagwacht*).

The decisions of the party leadership have been well documented in the older historiography of the German labour movement. However, the dynamics within the party between the leadership and the rank-and-file that turned out in thousands to protest against war might bear closer analysis. Reports of the Berlin protests indicate a degree of spontaneity and dissatisfaction with the perceived caution of the party leadership[19] — consistent with the expressions of rank-and-file militance and opposition to the course pursued by leaders of the revisionist wing that is manifest in many documents recording the internal workings of the Berlin *Wahlkreis* [electoral district] organisations.

Why did the protests against the threat of war collapse so swiftly with the declaration of a state of siege and martial law on 31 July? Firstly, there was the 'deliberate deception' of the Social Democratic leadership and the public at large by the German government, which manipulated the news of Russian mobilization to make it appear that the Reich was waging a defensive war against a Tsarist Russian attack after Germany had supposedly attempted to avert war.[20] Even the leading revolutionary thinker among the German socialist party, Rosa Luxemburg, doubted that the Kaiser's government wanted war in the last days of July.[21] While the Social Democratic Party had traditionally been opposed to imperialist and annexationist wars, it had always allowed for 'defensive' war. The government was also able to exploit the socialist antagonism to the Tsarist regime as the most reactionary and repressive in Europe (a hostility that could be traced back to Marx and Engels at the time of the 1848 revolutions). The theme of hostility to Tsarism was even echoed in many anti-war meetings in July 1914, when speeches sometimes included condemnations of Tsarist Russia, as

Otto Dix, Transporting the Wounded in Houthulst Forest, 1924

well as of the actions of the German and Austrian governments.

Secondly, and not to be underestimated, there was the threat of massive state repression. Once a state of siege/ martial law was declared, regional army commands had sweeping emergency powers to stamp out dissent. Thirdly, the protests appeared to have failed once mobilization took place, and civilian protest seemed powerless to arrest the momentum of armed force.

The protests also reflected ideological divisions within Social Democracy — the message of the protest meetings was somewhat different when speakers from the party's right spoke. The message shifted from condemnation of Austro-Hungarian policy to warnings against Tsarist Russian policy. The protests sometimes gave off mixed messages — the demand for equal political rights for workers could be read as an offer of political terms for co-operation, and the anti-Russianism often expressed could be seamlessly adapted for a message of support for national defence of the Eastern borders.

Protests were not confined to Germany: around France, there were numerous anti-war protest rallies involving

Peter Smith Templeton, Queensland Public Service Patriotic Carnival, 1918*, QPS*

thousands of workers on 30–31 July, organized both by the Socialist Party and syndicalist trade unions.[22] At Brussels, the crisis meeting of the Socialist International on 29 July was backed up by a mass meeting of 5,000 workers, with 10,000 gathered outside the venue for lack of room inside.[23] The French Socialist leader Jean Jaurès shared a platform with the left-wing German Social Democrat Hugo Haase and other leaders of the International; two days later, back in Paris, Jaurès was assassinated by an obscure young ultra-nationalist.[24]

Although leading representatives of the European parties in the Socialist International had convened in Brussels to try to avert war, they were overtaken by events and the forces that the political and military elites of the great powers had set in motion.[25] The socialist parties in Germany, Austria, and France all voted for war credits, effectively putting an end to the Second International.

The Second International may have had several weaknesses: the limited authority of the International over

parties with distinct national identities and interests; the divisions between radicals and reformists that were at least latent in most of the larger parties; and the Eurocentrism of the International (Americans and Japanese socialists were regularly represented, but otherwise the International reflected in its composition the division of the world into large European empires). However, in much of Europe where pre- and anti-democratic old regime elites still held great sway, the parties of the Second International were the greatest political forces at work for democratisation, social justice, and international understanding and solidarity. The outbreak of the World War I resulted in the profound and irrevocable division of the labour movement across Europe, which fatally weakened organised labour during the subsequent rise of fascism.

Where Social Democrats took over from discredited old regimes in 1918/19, they were burdened with the legacy of defeat and economic ruin after four years of total war. In the wreckage of the discredited and failed Tsarist Empire, ravaged by war and predatory impositions by German occupiers, in a country that was prey to civil war and vulnerable to outside military intervention, the first attempt at a socialist workers' and peasants' state was undertaken in the most unfavourable conditions imaginable. If the defeat and collapse of European old regimes in the war created opportunities for Social Democratic and Bolshevik parties to assume power, it left them a toxic legacy, and the fatal schism of the labour movement was to persist throughout the era of fascism and then throughout the Cold War.

While little remarked upon in the current public commemorations of the outbreak of the World War I, the collapse of the Second International in 1914 was the first of many tragedies in the larger catastrophe of the "Great War", and one of the most consequential.

Rudi Feld The danger of bolshevism
c1920, Australian War Memorial

Paul Nash, The Menin Road*, 1918, Imperial War Museums*

Notes

1 Paul Daley, "Australia spares no expense as the Anzac legend nears its century", *The Guardian*, 15 October 2013, online at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/14/australia-anzac-legend-centenary-war; James Brown, *Anzac's Long Shadow: The Cost of Our National Obsession*, Melbourne: Black Inc, 2014.

2 See George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order*, Princeton NJ: Princeton UP, 1979, pp.3–4 (where he actually uses the words "*the* great seminal catastrophe of this century"

3 David Stevenson, *1914–1918: The History of the First World War*, London: Penguin, 2005, p.544.

4 Arno J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime*, New York: Pantheon, 1981, p.3.

5 *Vorwärts. Berliner Volksblatt*, Extra-Ausgabe, No.200a, 25 July 1914. Bold in original.

6 The following summary of the protest meetings is based primarily on the work of Wolfgang Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration. Eine Neuinterpretation des sozialdemokratischen Burgfriedenn-sschlusses 1914/15*, Essen: Klartext, 1993, pp.30–42, with some corrections and additions from my own research in the Social Democratic Party press. Figures in the following account of the mass meetings are from Kruse's tabulation unless otherwise indicated. (Note that Kruse as a rule takes the lower estimates of numbers given in the party press, where there is a range of figures.) Jeffrey Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914. Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp.52–57, offers a brief English-language account that also draws on Kruse's findings.

7 *Vorwärts*, no.202, 27 July 1914.

8 *Volksstimme* (Chemnitz), no.170, 27 July 1914.

9 Dieter Wuerth, *Radikalismus und Reformismus in der sozialdemokratischen Arbeiterbewegung Göppingens 1910 bis 1919*, Göppingen: Stadtarchiv Göppingen, 1978, p.88

10 Landesarchiv Berlin (LAB), Rep 30 C Kgl. Polizei-Präsidium zu Berlin, Nr.15805, Bl.164.

11 Wolfgang Kruse, "'Welche Wendung durch des Weltkrieges Schickung'. Die SPD und der Beginn des Ersten Weltkrieges", in Berliner Geschichtswerkstatt, ed., *August 1914. Ein Volk zieht in den Krieg*, Berlin: Nishen, 1989, pp.115–116. The Berlin Police Presidium only counted the protests in the municipality of Berlin proper, not the suburbs that were only counted as part of Berlin from 1920 on. Kruse suggests that the official figures also understate the numbers as they excluded the people outside the meeting halls who were unable to gain admission, or who spontaneously joined marching demonstrators on the streets after the meetings.

12 Philip Scheidemann, *Memoirs of a Social Democrat* (trans. J.E. Mitchell), London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1929, vol.1, pp.185–186; "Jagows Demonstration", *Vorwärts*, 29 July 1914; Kruse, "'Welche Wendung'", p.116.

13 Roger Chickering, *The Great War and Urban Life in Germany: Freiburg, 1914–1918*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp.62–63.

14 LAB, Rep 30 C, Nr.15805, Bl.265.

15 Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration*, pp.36–38.

16 *Dresdner Volkszeitung*, no.173, 30 July 1914.

17 *Vorwärts*, no.207, 1 August 1914, 1. Beilage. A total of 39 meetings were planned for Berlin, more than were held on 28 July.

18 *Volksstimme*, Frankfurt, no.176, 31 July 1914, Beilage.

19 Kruse, *Krieg und nationale Integration*, pp.41–42.

20 The term "deliberate deception" is accurately applied in the new study by T.G. Otte, *July Crisis. The World's Descent into War, Summer 1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p.304.

21 Georges Haupt, *Socialism and the Great War. The Collapse of the Second International*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973, pp.206–207.

22 Annie Kriegel and Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: La Guerre et le movement ouvrier français*, Paris: Armand Colin, 1964, pp.92–93.

23 *Ibid*., p.88.

24 Harvey Goldberg, *The Life of Jean Jaurès*, Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1968, pp.464–474.

25 Haupt, *Socialism and the Great War*. The standard histories of the Second International are Julius Braunthal, *History of the International, 1864–1914* (trans. H. Collins and K. Mitchell), London: Nelson, 1966 and James Joll, *The Second International, 1889–1914*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1955.

United Nations and International pressures on legalised discrimination in Queensland

Valerie Cooms

In the 1960s and 1970s, while Aboriginal people in Queensland were suffering from disease and malnutrition, having their under-award wages confiscated, or being jailed for being lazy, idle, careless or leaving gates open, their bins unwashed or committing adultery, newly decolonised African and Asian nations were watching.

This essay examines the way in which restrictions denying equal citizenship rights for Aboriginal people in Queensland had started to be lifted by the 1960s. By emphasising the role played by the post-World War II global anti-racism movement together with the newly formed United Nations' expectation and surveillance, I will demonstrate the ways in which both the Australian Federal and Queensland Governments could no longer justify the deliberate denial of citizenship rights for Aboriginal people. The Queensland Government's *Aboriginal Protection and Preservation Act 1939, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander Affairs Act 1965* and the *Aborigines Act 1971*, reveal the gradual removal of restrictions imposed on Aboriginal people that upheld tactics not used on Australian citizens.[1] Similarly, the removal of discriminatory provisions from the Queensland *Electoral Act* in 1965 as well as those from the *Station Hands Award-State* in 1968 highlight the ways in which the newly formed United Nations' expectation, surveillance and criticism led to the Commonwealth applying pressure on Queensland authorities to remove racist legislation. The Queensland Government argued with the Commonwealth that its legislation was not discriminatory. However, the Federal Government's need to avert the growing UN surveillance and criticism saw unprecedented pressure applied to the Queensland Government during the 1960s and 1970s.[2]

As resistance to the Queensland Government's *Aboriginal Protection and Preservation Act 1939* continued to grow, the Commonwealth government blamed the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) as being behind the 'human rights push' and dismissed concerns as a 'politically motivated campaign'.[3] During World War II, the Australian Workers' Union (AWU) fought with the then Department of Native Affairs in Queensland to pay Aboriginal workers the same wages as non-Aboriginal men. The AWU also argued for voting rights for Aboriginal people.[4] Notably, Aboriginal men who enlisted as servicemen in the 1940s

ABORIGINES ADVANCEMENT LEAGUE

Field Officer: PASTOR DOUG NICHOLLS, M.B.E. JA 2043
Funds Organiser: Mrs. M. RICHES, 46 Russell Street, Melbourne. MF 5798
Secretary: Mr. S. DAVEY. JA 2043
President: Mr. G. M. BRYANT, M.H.R.
Vice-President: Mrs. D. BLACKBURN.
Treasurer: Mrs. P. BRYANT.

The Aborigines' Advancement League (Victoria) is a member of the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement which acts as a means of interstate co-operation for all member organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

The Five Basic Principles are the common policy of all member organizations.

FIVE BASIC PRINCIPLES

Principle 1—Equal citizenship rights with other Australians for aborigines.

Principle 2—All aborigines to have a standard of living adequate for health and well-being, including food, clothing and medical care not less than for other Australians.

Aborigines Advancement League , 1960

were only paid 1/3 of the wages of non-Aboriginal men.

Despite the Commonwealth being embarrassed into paying Aboriginal men the same wages as non-Aboriginal men, the State Government's Department of Native Affairs, under its 1939 Act, confiscated their earnings. The Department of Native Affairs also rejected the Commonwealth Government's ration book scheme and refused to implement the Federal clothing ration scheme stating that the clothing needs of Aboriginal people was 'much less than for whites'.[5] In an attempt at addressing the civil rights of Aboriginal Australians, in the 1950s, Prime Minister Menzies allocated a further 1,000,000 pounds towards the payment of aged, invalid and widows pensions for Aboriginal people in Queensland. The State Department of Native Affairs subsequently pocketed 66 per cent of this allocation with Aboriginal reserve residents receiving only 10–15 shillings a week.[6]

With the labour shortages created by World War II, Aboriginal men and women were 'rounded up' by police in Queensland towns and cities and sent to settlements or reserves or contracted for rural work for under-award wages. In 1959, after criticism about these tactics and calls for citizenship rights of Aboriginal people by resistance organisations, trade unions, the Communist Party and church groups, the Department of Native Affairs Director, Mr O'Leary argued that the Queensland Aboriginal population were 'incapable of accepting the responsibilities of citizenship and did not "desire" those rights'.[7]

The Commonwealth remained mindful of the criticism the Queensland Government's tactics in relation to Aboriginal people was attracting. As early as the 1950s, the Australian Government tried to keep the Aboriginal question off the UN agenda and wrote to all Australian overseas embassies notifying them that criticism about the condition and treatment of Aboriginal people in Queensland was an exaggeration.[8]

In 1965 the Queensland Government introduced the *Aboriginal Affairs Act* and described it as 'progressive'. While it was an improvement on the *Aboriginal Preservation and Protection Act 1939*, the segregation and incarceration of Aboriginal families on reserves continued indefinitely. Along with this went the confiscation of earnings and property and other tactics it would not resort to for non-Aboriginal people such as being jailed for being lazy, careless or leaving gates open, their bins unwashed or committing adultery.[9] The Act also controlled movement of the inmates of reserves, restricted Aboriginal people from setting up businesses or growing fruit and vegetables or keeping livestock or any other use of reserve lands as a means of supplementing

their income.[10] Ironically, at the same time, and as a result of pressure from the Commonwealth, the Queensland Government had adopted a policy of assimilation which it defined as follows:

> *The policy of assimilation seeks that all persons of Aboriginal descent who choose to attain a similar manner and standard of living to that of other Australians and live as members of a single Australian community, enjoy the same rights and privileges, accepting the same responsibilities and influenced by the same hopes and loyalties as other Australians.*[11]

While the adoption of the assimilation policy indicated a movement towards the recognition of the rights of Aboriginal people similar to those enjoyed by non-Aboriginal people, the Queensland Government had difficulty upholding and implementing it. In 1965, after removing the discriminatory provisions which disallowed Aboriginal people's right to vote contained in the *Queensland Electoral Act* in 1965, the State Government disqualified eligible voters from the State and Local Government elections.[12] This action was taken by the State Government to address concerns expressed by non-Aboriginal people about Aboriginal domination in the electorates of Burke, Cook and Carpentaria Shires. These electorates

contained Doomadgee, Mornington Island, Hopevale, Mitchell and Edward River Aboriginal reserves.[13]

The amendments to the *Station Hands Award* in 1968 saw pastoralists lose the ability to easily and openly exploit Aboriginal workers. Many Aboriginal workers were subsequently paid off and forced to leave pastoral properties (generally established on workers' traditional lands) and move into Queensland towns and cities.[14] Similarly, the provisions of the 1965 Act saw authorities lose the ability to apprehend any Aboriginal person and incarcerate them indefinitely on Government reserves set aside for that purpose. Furthermore, after the 1971 Act was introduced, State Government bureaucrats lost the ability to keep Aboriginal people on reserves against their will. Both the amendment to the Station Hands Award together with the 1965 and 1971 Acts led to a rapid influx of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities, many for the first time in the State's colonial history.

There was much resistance throughout Queensland to the influx of Aboriginal people into Queensland towns and cities with pressure applied to the State about colonisers having to share public spaces with Aboriginal people. While the Commonwealth strongly encouraged the Queensland Government to eliminate racist provisions from its legislation and to assimilate Aboriginal populations into Queensland settler society, many Queensland colonisers and settlers were simply not ready to embrace Aboriginal people as Australian citizens and did not support the policy of assimilation. This was witnessed by the numerous complaints about Aboriginal people being housed in towns and cities, receiving Department of Social Security benefits and sharing public spaces with Australian citizens, such as schools, hospitals and alcohol outlets. Racist poems were written in local newspapers also.[15] The following poem was published in the *Goondiwindi Argus* in 1973.

> *Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light,*
> *How he sits be de creek for dem fishes to bite,*
> *We is non-working Abos wid nary a care,*
> *Cause de Government send date lovely welfare…*
> *Day pays us to vote, an' rewards us for sin,*
> *While dem sweet Laborites keep de cheques rollin' in,*
> *We wait every month for de slips wid de figgers,*
> *An' dats' all we do … we damn lucky we niggers*
> *Signed Apartheid, Goondiwindi* [16]

The newly formed UN, international organisations including Amnesty International, the London Anti-Slavery Society, US Black Panther Party, Australian resistance organisations

like the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders (FCAATSI) and the Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (QCAATSI), trade unions and churches supported the rights of Aboriginal people and continued to highlight the unacceptable draconian tactics and appalling conditions and treatment of Aboriginal people on Queensland Government reserves both in Australia and overseas. FCAATSI and QCAATSI and other resistance organisations lobbied the Commonwealth as well as the UN to hold a referendum to enable the constitution to be altered removing discriminatory provisions and to allow the Federal Government the power to legislate on behalf of Aboriginal people.[17] After the Commonwealth agreed to hold a referendum in 1967, nearly 90 per cent of the Australian

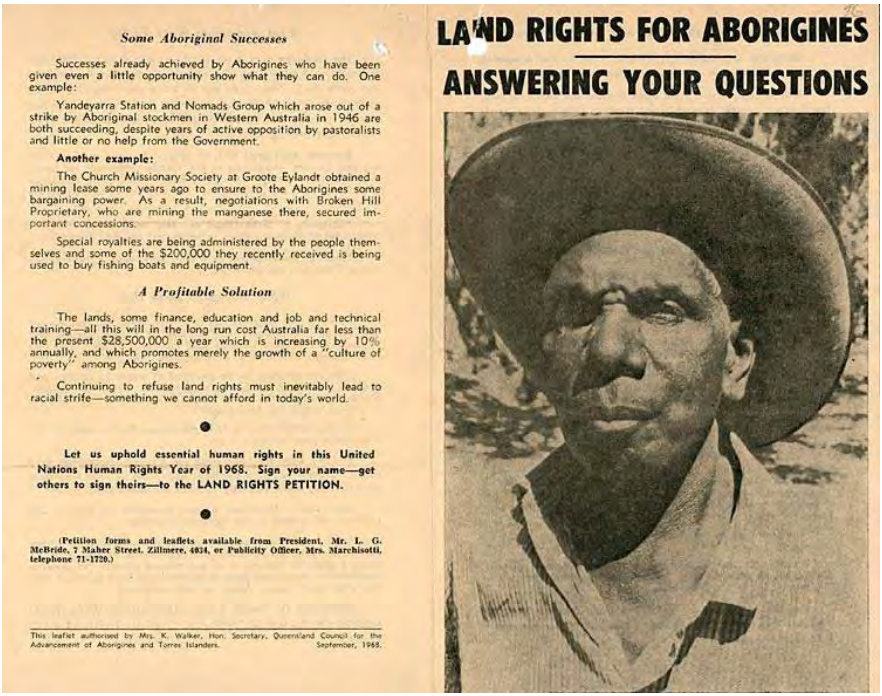
population voted overwhelmingly to have the constitution amended leaving the Commonwealth with no more excuses for not intervening on behalf of Aboriginal people in Queensland.[18]

After the 1967 referendum, the Commonwealth was initially reluctant to 'intrude unnecessarily' and committed to maintaining the 'status quo' in relation to States' responsibilities to Aboriginal people.[19] However, the Commonwealth's need to have UN conventions ratified dictated its policy commitments in relation to the treatment and condition of Aboriginal people.

In 1968 the Commonwealth announced its plans to establish the Council for, and Office of, Aboriginal Affairs. Herbert (Nugget) Coombs the former Reserve Bank Chairman chaired this.[20] Coombs understood the need to provide services for Aboriginal people particularly since the enhanced collection and collation of census data in relation to Aboriginal people after the referendum highlighted not only the extent of suffering but also the rapid growth rate of Aboriginal populations.[21] Coombs was keen to provide health and housing services for Aboriginal populations as well as enhance economic development with land allocations.[22] The Queensland Government opposed the provision of services to Aboriginal people outside of State reserves. The Queensland Government also remained opposed to any form of land rights for Aboriginal people.[23]

With the enhanced involvement of the UN and the continued relationship between resistance organisations, the Commonwealth had to address the suffering and treatment of Aboriginal populations and remove racist legislation from all Australian statutes (including its own). It also had to commit to a program of land rights for Aboriginal peoples to address the disadvantage associated with the dispossession of lands by the colonisation process.[24] The UN also demanded Australia put anti-discrimination legislation in place. By 1975, the Commonwealth had removed its own discriminatory legislation, undertaken an investigation into a national land rights program by engaging Justice Woodward, and introduced the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975* as well as the *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (Queensland Discriminatory Laws) Bill, 1975*.[25] The 1975 Aboriginal act was introduced specifically to over-ride the 1971 Act which the State Government had refused to acknowledge contained discriminatory provisions involving the confiscation of earnings and property of Aboriginal workers.

While the *Racial Discrimination Act* was watered down to a conciliatory process, its introduction, along with its engagement of Justice Woodward, meant racist legislation



Some Aboriginal Successes

Successes already achieved by Aborigines who have been given even a little opportunity show what they can do. One example:

Yandeyarra Station and Nomads Group which arose out of a strike by Aboriginal stockmen in Western Australia in 1946 are both succeeding, despite years of active opposition by pastoralists and little or no help from the Government.

Another example:

The Church Missionary Society at Groote Eylandt obtained a mining lease some years ago to ensure to the Aborigines some bargaining power. As a result, negotiations with Broken Hill Proprietary, who are mining the manganese there, secured important concessions.

Special royalties are being administered by the people themselves and some of the $200,000 they recently received is being used to buy fishing boats and equipment.

A Profitable Solution

The lands, some finance, education and job and technical training—all this will in the long run cost Australia far less than the present $28,500,000 a year which is increasing by 10% annually, and which promotes merely the growth of a "culture of poverty" among Aborigines.

Continuing to refuse land rights must inevitably lead to racial strife—something we cannot afford in today's world.

●

Let us uphold essential human rights in this United Nations Human Rights Year of 1968. Sign your name—get others to sign theirs—to the LAND RIGHTS PETITION.

●

(Petition forms and leaflets available from President, Mr. L. G. McBride, 7 Maher Street, Zillmere, 4034, or Publicity Officer, Mrs. Marchisotti, telephone 71-1720.)

This leaflet authorised by Mrs. K. Walker, Hon. Secretary, Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Islanders. September, 1968.

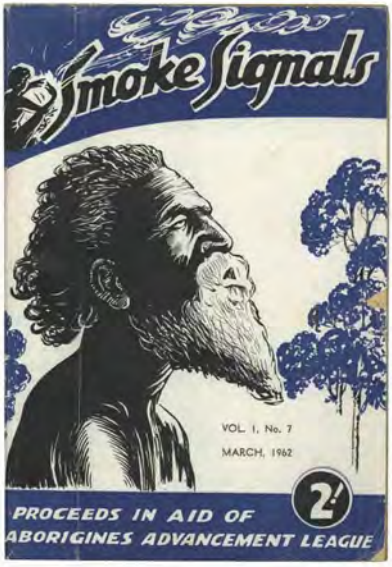
LAND RIGHTS FOR ABORIGINES

ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS

Queensland Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Islands, 1968

was either removed or over-ridden. This would have cleared the way for the Commonwealth to have UN conventions ratified. The Commonwealth also established the National Aboriginal Consultative Congress (NACC) in 1973 and informed the public it would take its advice from the elected representatives from across Australia.[26] However, the Commonwealth Government failed to fund NACC's secretariat and did not accept its advice that the government either did not agree with or could not address.[27] Arguably, the NACC was put into place to quieten the growing Aboriginal activism which was in constant contact with not only the UN but other international resistance organisations.[28]

Indisputably it was the need to avert UN and international criticism to have conventions ratified that saw the Commonwealth remove or over-ride racist legislation and address the appalling treatment and condition of Aboriginal people in Queensland. Furthermore, this essay clearly demonstrates how all Governments' Aboriginal policies were merely modified and made into more



Smoke Signals *Vol 1, 7, 1962, Aborigines Advancement League*

acceptable methods of colonisation aimed at averting criticism.

Arguably for a settler colony like Australia to be effective, Aboriginal peoples' rights had to be compromised, lands stolen and labour exploited. Aboriginal resistance resulted in annihilation, incarceration and segregation which were generally acceptable methods of colonisation in the 18th and 19th centuries. Furthermore, given the nature of Governments, where the needs of the majority of the population must prevail, Aboriginal people are dramatically over-represented in the criminal justice system, with unacceptable health, education and employment levels. This continues to attract attention in the international political arena. Aboriginal people remain at a distinct disadvantage as new Australian citizens while Governments grapple with how to appease the majority non-Aboriginal populations and deal with the impact that colonisation continues to have upon those colonised.

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6 Kidd, 1997, p. 236.

7 Kidd, 1997, p. 237.

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"Australia's most evil and repugnant nightspot"

Memories from those involved: The FOCO Club, Brisbane, 1968–69

Peter Gray with recollections by Frank Neilsen

It cannot be overstated how repressively conservative the status quo was in Brisbane during the 1960s. For many of the younger generation, Brisbane was a mind-numbing, cultural desert. Yet, despite everything, oases began to appear.

In 1964, I was privileged to start working as photographic assistant to Geoff Dauth at his Petrie Bight studio.[1] I fell into the habit of frequenting Brisbane's hippest place, the Primitif Café, which was owned by Geoff's friend, a glamorous woman named Peter Cox. At a time when the drinking age was twenty-one, there were very few places in Brisbane where young people could 'hang out'. This is where I first met Larry Zetlin who had recently become the Brisbane correspondent for *Go-Set*, Australia's first pop-music newspaper, which was published weekly from February 1966 to August 1974. Larry invited me to become their Brisbane-based 'rock photographer'. That sounded interesting, so I agreed as an extra-curricular activity; mainly for the fun of it as the pay was a pittance.

Larry and I attended just about every gig in town, from way out in suburbia (including the reputedly dangerous Inala) to the inner city. We interviewed and photographed nearly every musician around the scene at the time, including overseas arrivals, such as *The Yardbirds*.

Larry Zetlin with *The Yardbirds*

Left-to-right: Chris Dreja (bass), Keith Relf (vocals), Jimmy Page (guitar), Jim McCarty (drums), and Larry Zetlin (Go-Set). (photograph © Frank Neilsen)

We covered the very popular, though entirely conservative *Battle of the Bands* events at Festival Hall, and were regularly ejected by its eccentric manager, Bert Potts, for daring to photograph off-duty, uniformed police in action; paid by Potts to hurl fans off the stage. The kids would scream their

lungs out for performers like Normie Rowe and Johnny Young.

Brisbane also had a thriving folk music scene, based mainly at *The Folk Centre* in Anne Street which provided a trouble-free, friendly environment where people could go for a sing-along with resident band, *The Wayfarers*, or listen to influential musicians such as Margaret Kitamura and Don Henderson. Shayna Bracegirdle and Margaret Roadknight were favourites of the "folkies".

Then out of the blue, the opening of a new club was to have a huge impact on the cultural landscape of 'sleepy old Brisbane'. On Sunday, 3 March 1968, the FOCO Club opened on the third floor of the Trades Hall building. FOCO was a multifaceted extravaganza incorporating music, poetry, political discussion, film, literature and theatrical performance.

Many presumed that the name, 'Foco', had something to do with folk music. FOCO is a Spanish word meaning focus, or centre, and is connected to Che Guevara's Foco theory of revolutionary warfare. At the time, Che Guevara was emerging as an iconic revolutionary figure shortly after his death at the hands of the Bolivian army and the C.I.A. in October 1967. Guevara had postulated that armed resistance spearheaded by small rebel groups in developing countries ('focoist uprisings') might spark a

FOCO opening night poster
(scan courtesy Ted Riethmuller)

chain reaction leading to popular rebellion. Throughout its existence, the FOCO Club was decidedly, and very openly, political. It was also a place where you could let your hair down and have a bit of fun.

FOCO was the brainchild of Brian Laver, who was a prominent leadership figure in the Society For Democratic Action (SDA) which, six months earlier, had been behind one of the most influential demonstrations in a generation, the pivotal 1967 civil liberties march. Laver was a noted

'ideas' person who had risen to prominence as an influential speaker at anti-Vietnam war rallies. In late 1967, Laver was employed as a research assistant by the Brisbane Trades and Labour Council (TLC), under the leadership of Communist Party of Australia (CPA) member, Alex MacDonald, who helped Laver make the venture a reality.

The FOCO club began as a joint venture between SDA and the Young Socialist League (YSL), a youth organisation largely affiliated with the then Soviet- aligned Communist Party of Australia. The YSL had evolved out the Eureka Youth League (EYL) which originally formed in Brisbane in 1942. The EYL had been dissolved nationally the year before FOCO's launch and the earlier youth organisation evolved into the new YSL. FOCO, in turn, absorbed much of the YSL membership as partners in the enterprise.

Another important founding member was the influential and energetic Alan Anderson, a YSL and CPA member, and a Plumber's Union delegate to the Brisbane TLC. While others came and went, Alan Anderson was a key coordinator spanning FOCO's entire history. Anderson became President of FOCO, Brian Laver (SDA) became the Secretary, and Roland Hovey (EYL and YSL) the Treasurer. Thus both the trade union and the 'student' (SDA) perspectives were represented. Even though many people directly and indirectly associated with SDA were involved in running FOCO, they did so as individual members of the FOCO collective, and were not directly representing SDA interests or policy.

Alan Anderson reflects:

> *On a personal note and as a Trade Unionist and a CPA member I was acutely aware about how remote the labour movement was to young workers and thought how important it would be if we could be part of their joys as well as their troubles. FOCO achieved this connection. The combination of the disparate groups involved was important in ensuring its phenomenal success. (Personal correspondence, 13/9/2012)*

The student and SDA contingent provided many of the ideas and key personnel, while the young Socialists were disciplined and hard-working supporters of the project. The SDA had many talented members, including Mitch Thompson, who was noted for his exceptional organisational and financial skills. Thompson recalls:

> *The real creativity and energy came from a whole lot of people such as Larry and Di Zetlin, David Guthrie, Bob Daly, Doug Anders and others who came and went. They were the ones who provided the ideas,*

energy and organised the shows and people (bands etc). The YSL comrades provided the 'muscle', the arduous setting up of the nuts and bolts. (Personal correspondence, 17/12/2012)

Likewise, Alan Anderson remembers:

Lee Walkington, Rod Pemberthy, Lynda Boland, and lots of Lynda's friends were the core. It was always a vibrant passing parade. There were scores of people, too many to mention, who came and went or performed; but a solid core was necessary week after week to keep the show going. The role played by Alec Macdonald, TLC secretary, was also crucial. (Personal correspondence, 26/9/2012)

FOCO was run as a collective and all major decisions were made by this group. Among organizers and audiences alike, there was a relaxed atmosphere of camaraderie where everyone's point of view would be listened to and respected.

FOCO operated weekly on the third floor of the old Trades Hall building (now demolished) at the intersection of Turbot Street and Edward Street in Brisbane

(photo: Fryer Library / University of Queensland)

FOCO opened every Sunday night at 7pm. It operated as a membership-based club to avoid restrictive legislation which kept all venues in Brisbane closed on a Sunday (except those associated with the churches). Being a registered club, FOCO was exempt from this antiquated, draconian law. It cost one dollar to become a member of

the FOCO Club and 70 cents to attend the regular Sunday events. This money was used to offset the operating costs which included some remodeling at Trades Hall, hiring of bands, renting films, and importing radical literature. Right from the outset the club did very well financially.

Examples of FOCO membership cards

At the opening night, my initial impression was the bare wooden floors and lack of decor within the building made the whole thing seem quite spartan, almost forbidding. Members were encouraged to explore simultaneous events which were separated by movable partitions. There was a 'disco' area for the big draw-card, LIVE MUSIC, where people could dance and just have fun. We were privileged to have our senses assailed by (ex-Brisbane) Melbourne guitarist Lobby Loyde and his band *The Wild Cherries*. The place was jumping as the music pumped out, with atmospheric effects provided by the *ACME Light Show Inc*. Larry Zetlin recounts:

> *A FOCO member, a physicist named Doug Rickards, who had worked on the Mariner project with NASA, loaned FOCO a small strobe that he had used in his research. That initial puny light was soon replaced by a large scientific commercial strobe supplied to us by a member of a visiting US research ship that used the strobe to identify floating buoys at sea. I believe the strength of that strobe compares with strobes used on commercial planes today. I am not sure if the captain of the ship ever knew that he had inadvertently contributed to Brisbane's cultural life! (Personal correspondence, 12/8/2012)*

In the film-viewing area, people could drop in to watch feature-length movies including Fellini's *8 ½*, or Vittorio De Sica's wonderful *Umberto D*, or short experimental films, many of which were Australian-made. One memorable six- minute experimental film, directed by Albie Thoms (1941–2012) and Bruce Beresford, was *It Droppeth as the Gentle Rain*, produced in 1963,

which starred Lyn Collingwood, Germaine Greer, Terence McMullen and Cam Perry. The film was banned from cinema release and is considered by Metro Magazine to have marked "the birth of Australian experimental film". The story centred around human faeces falling from the sky; a little at first, though by the end it was coming thick and fast, a real shit-storm. It was quite surreal, and totally hilarious. Albie Thoms introduced the film on the night it was screened at FOCO.

Larry Zetlin, with his experience in band promotion and underground film, took on the role of venue manager and was responsible for the day-to-day running of the club. Zetlin had built an extensive network of music and media contacts through his work with *Go-Set*. Larry explained:

> *We modeled FOCO on what we thought was happening internationally. My knowledge of the underground music, art, cinema and performance scene(s) was gained by reading imported so-called Underground magazines, such as Rolling Stone, Village Voice, the San Francisco Free Press, etc. (Personal correspondence, 11/9/2012)*

Zetlin promoted FOCO during weekly radio broadcasts with Brisbane's most 'switched on' DJ, 4BC's Tony Macarthur, a great promoter of interesting new music. Macarthur eventually left Australia to work with pirate station, Radio Luxembourg.

Word about the FOCO experiment spread quickly, and large crowds started to arrive. Typical attendances were between 500 and 800 people per night. Local musicians got to show off their talents, and the popularity of FOCO grew with the regular appearances of resident band, *The Coloured Balls*.

The popular band, *Max Merritt and the Meteors,* made special trips from Sydney to play at FOCO, which further boosted its reputation as a great venue. Larry Zetlin recalls that the crowds at FOCO swelled to close to 2000 people when Max Merritt played:

> *We fitted the greater numbers in at Trades Hall by opening all the areas into one large space and canceling movies and folk areas. The numbers were even greater when FOCO held free concerts in the city botanical gardens. (Personal correspondence, 12/11/2012)*

Alan Anderson notes that as the club grew in popularity:

> FOCO became a real threat to commercial discothèques, nightclubs, hotels, church groups and the Young Liberals. Sometimes, whole disenchanted Young Liberal branches arrived. FOCO was having a tremendous effect on the Establishment.[2]

The poetry-reading area was not a huge crowd-puller; though it was attended by contributors of varying degrees of seriousness and talent. Actor Jack Thompson, Tom Shapcott and Graham Rowlands all read there, along with many others. Readings of works by international writers was also presented, including Dylan Thomas, Günter Grass, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Bob Dylan, and Allen Ginsberg. Larry Zetlin recalls:

> *Another unusual speaker was the Australian newspaper's then resident cartoonist, Bruce Petty, who drew and gave away large cartoons drawn on white butcher paper. He drew a large crowd (no pun intended)! (Personal correspondence, 13/9/2012)*

Sharing this space were acclaimed folk performers including Margaret Kitamura, Declan Affley, Don Henderson, Sylvia Burns, Shayea Karlin, Harry Robertson, Chris Nicholson and Barbara Bacon. Blues performers were also featured including Matt Taylor, Paul Johnson, Terry Hannagan and gifted bluegrass player Chris Duffy on banjo, mandolin and guitar. *The Red Belly Stompers Jazz Band*, *The Ram Jam Big Band* and the *Rammita 'P' Jug Band* were also popular, as was the flamenco guitarist, Brian Crawford.

One of the folk bands performing at FOCO (photo: Tribune, September 1970)

Elsewhere, there was a coffee-making area, and a forum for political discussion. Speakers included Ted Baldwin, the leader of the Queensland Teachers' Union, and Brian Laver, who spoke about his first-hand experiences of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. Public forums were held on such diverse subjects as the U.S. Civil Rights movement, rock music, the global press, Brisbane architecture and the environment, Australian folklore, Catholicism, Transcendental Meditation, the Vietnam War, and the European Student/Worker Movement. Audience participation was encouraged during such events, leading to much spirited discussion.

The theatrical performance troupe, *The Tribe* (originally *The Dire Tribe*), led by Doug Anders, consisted of players from the University of Queensland who would enact *avant* garde 'happenings' for the delight and/or mystification

of the audience. This experimental group gave performances of Samuel Beckett's 'dramaticule' *Come and Go*, as well as Harold Pinter's *The Black and White*, the controversial *Motel* by Jean-Claude van Itallie, and Wymark's *Coda*. Audience participation was encouraged.

The theatre troupe had originally formed for the production of Jack Thompson's *Alice Is*, which was staged at the Avalon Theatre in St. Lucia in 1966. *Alice Is* was conceived as a theatrical musical extravaganza featuring the music of The Wild Cherries, the band featured at FOCO's opening night launch, together with an another band called The Rabbit Farm. Tragically, a court injunction was issued in response to a neighbour's complaint about the "noise" the Cherries produced during their first afternoon's rehearsal. The show opened minus The Wild Cherries who were an integral part of the musical extravaganza.

The books, posters, and other paraphernalia for sale at FOCO were a comprehensive collection of revolutionary material dealing with the situations in countries such as Cuba, Nicaragua, China and Czechoslovakia, which was then experiencing the 'Prague Spring'. On sale for the first time in Brisbane were global 'underground' newspapers like *The Village Voice*, as well as London's *Peace News* and the *International Times*. Larry Zetlin

Jack Thompson (left) with the members of a purpose-made band called The Rabbit Farm*, which played (at much reduced volume) without* The Wild Cherries *for the production of* ALICE IS. *Lead guitarist Dennis Urrey (with hat) and seated on floor is Peter Miles, drums, from* The Coloured Balls. *(photograph © Frank Neilsen)*

recounts this story about FOCO's opening night:

> *Brian Laver, without consultation with the group, set up a table selling various leftist books from 'his' Red & Black bookshop. I was appalled, as I thought this would drive away the opening-nighters who were there predominantly for the music. I was wrong! The books on sale added a frisson of 'danger' and excitement and intrigued most of the new membership. (Personal correspondence, 8/8/2012)*

The Sydney-based theatrical group, The Human Body, made a visit to Brisbane in October 1968 to participate in an event called *Vietnam Environment,* coordinated by John (Johnny) Allen. Over the course of a week, The Human Body worked with The Tribe and other participants using all the available spaces in the building. John Allen recalls:

> *At its centre was an American young-anarchist anti-Vietnam script called 'American Atrocities in Vietnam'. Tribe performed a series of Vietnam sketches. A boy in a clear plastic cylinder of ox blood wiped the blood across the plastic view which people had of his prison before breaking out to spread ox blood among the crowd. Then, audience members were extracted, put through an interrogation box, and either offered a lucky dip or pushed onto the fire escape. The pop band played an abstract sound poem based on the siren of an ambulance, and 'The Tribe' improvised an interpretive dance under strobe lights. Chants of "stop the war", "leave Vietnam", were passed around and picked up.*[4]

As to the significance of FOCO in a wider context, Larry Zetlin comments:

The FOCO 'Vietnam Environment', a special night held on Sunday 6 October of 1968 (publication: FOCO Collective)

> *We modeled FOCO on what we thought was happening internationally. In early 1969, when Di and I traveled to live in London, via the west coast USA, we realized that we were far in advance of what we saw overseas. Our cultural cringe had caused us to overreach and exceed what was actually happening overseas. (Personal correspondence, 11/9/2012)*

Overwhelmed by its large memberships, FOCO suspended taking new members on more than one occasion. The club first closed its membership rolls in mid-July 1968, having reached some 2,500 members. This decision was based on overcrowding and difficulties in effectively administering such a large number of members. Membership was again closed in August 1968 when the numbers reached around 3,200.

FOCO published a weekly newsletter which was mailed to each of over 3,000 members, advising them of the upcoming Sunday's events or 'happenings'. Each newsletter featured interesting, often humorous, cover designs and graphics, many created by the talented artist, Bob Daly. It cost over 2 cents each to print and mail a newsletter to every member. It took about 100 work- hours each week to fold and sort them into post-code order (a requirement for bulk mailing). This work was done by a large working bee every Wednesday night at *The Cellar*, with the bulk of the labour provided by the disciplined CPA youth from the YSL.

Cover page of a FOCO newsletter (publication: FOCO Collective)

SDA's headquarters, *The Cellar*, had already been established in the former Roma Street Markets prior to the launch of FOCO. *The Cellar* became the organisational and promotional centre for FOCO. It was also used as a more intimate venue hosting events such as drama groups, film nights and folk sessions. It was promoted as an extension of FOCO's activities in an environment "*unhampered by noise and great crushes*" to distinguish it from the main venue.

Next door to *The Cellar* was the SDA financed *The Red and The Black Bookshop,* which was periodically damaged in police raids and Neo-Nazi attacks. On one occasion, police broke into the bookshop while pursuing demonstrators who had taken refuge inside. The break-in caused $6,000 worth of damages. In April 1969, a suspicious fire also caused significant damage, mainly from the resulting water damage. An issue of SDA's own newsletter (*Student Guerrilla*) described state police "*paying almost daily visits*" to the bookshop "*usually without giving any reason for their appearance, and always without a warrant*".

On 27 May 1969, after the bookshop had moved to new premises in the Elizabeth Arcade, police seized fifteen posters from the shop. Thirteen of these were reproductions of a drawing by the 19th-century artist, Aubrey Beardsley (1872–1898) called '*Lysistrata*

Haranguing the Athenian Women'. The proprietors of the bookshop, Brian Laver, Mitch Thompson, and David Guthrie, faced obscenity charges for displaying this print in public. In a Brisbane Magistrate's Court hearing on 7 July 1969, the prints were declared obscene. Despite an appeal to the High Court, the bookshop was forced to pay a substantial fine.

Five months after the launch of FOCO, Johannes Bjelke-Petersen became premier of Queensland on 8 August 1968. From the outset, FOCO was regarded with suspicion by the reactionary forces that ran Queensland. During a late night sitting of Federal Parliament on September 12, 1968, M.H.R. Don Cameron, Liberal backbencher for Griffith, delivered a speech attacking the FOCO Club. The following day's *Courier-Mail* gave in-depth coverage to the speech, under the headline "*Drugs, women claim on Foco*". The article reported Cameron as saying that "*Marihuana and Methedrine are procurable for the asking*" at FOCO. He added that its "*communist or almost-communist*" leadership could "*arrange a young woman for a whole night in a matter of seconds*" for a standard asking price of $10. He further proclaimed that FOCO was "*Australia's most evil and repugnant nightspot*".[5]

According to Alan Anderson:

> *The Cameron allegations did have an effect on FOCO, and numbers did drop off. His allegations were like the attacks on the Moratorium, hysterical, crude and untrue; but like the Goebbels lie technique, some of it sticks.*[2]

The FOCO collective responded to the attack in their next newsletter, assuring parents that their teenagers were perfectly safe attending FOCO events. Attendances, however, dropped to as low as 200 per night, when a minimum of 300 patrons was required to break even.

*In response to Cameron's ridiculous allegations, posters and stickers were displayed all over Brisbane reassuring patrons that "*Foco Lives*" (publication: FOCO Collective)*

FOCO Newsletter promoting the second appearance of Lobby Loyde and The Wild Cherries. The band played to reduced crowds at the regular FOCO Sunday night event at the height of the Cameron controversy (publication: FOCO Collective)

'Politicos' in SDA were expressing concerns that the political intention of FOCO was being lost. For them, FOCO was no longer "*aiding the revolutionary movement*" and instead they saw FOCO as "*channeling potential revolutionary people into non-revolutionary activity... of a cultural,* unorganised *nature*". This theoretical dilemma saw SDA largely pull out of FOCO activities by the end of 1968. The newsletter of 26 February 1969 (Vol. 2, No. 9) announced "*FOCO Is Dead*". While this did not mark the end of FOCO, it was part of the final decline.

The dissolution of SDA as an organization came about in April, 1969. The old SDA quickly reformed as the new Revolutionary Socialist Student Alliance (RSSA), wishing to "*pass from a protest* organisation *to a radical or revolutionary movement*" in order to build a libertarian-Marxist political group rather than a social club. SDA's departure proved to be a turning point in FOCO's history, marking the start of its eventual decline.

"But we cried FOCO Lives" (publication: FOCO Collective)

Alan Anderson laments:

> *The trade union movement had remained indifferent practically all the way through. How could they fail to comprehend that something was happening, something more than words or insignificant acts, but something that many young people were absorbed in and identified with?*[2]

The FOCO club's alliance with the trade unions was becoming increasingly strained. The reformist nature of the old-guard institutions did not sit well with the aims and activities of the energetic, more radical youth. The union movement was concerned that the controversial publicity FOCO was attracting would harm what they saw as their own respectable position in the community.

The 1969 Labour Day procession, traditionally headed by ALP leaders in the political and industrial arena, was joined by young radicals, many of them FOCO members. Alan Anderson explains:

The aim was to present... a genuine desire of young radicals to transform into something effective a Labour Day which had in the past relied upon Punch and Judy shows and ice-cream for its revolutionary content. In short, put politics back into Labour Day.[2]

The red-and-black flag waving "student" contingent in the 1969 Brisbane May Day procession

(photo: Grahame Garner / Fryer Library, Brisbane)

The young radicals marched with red and black flags and chanted slogans. For dramatic effect, they sat down and then jumped up and ran arms linked at full speed with flags flowing. They also harangued the then Federal Opposition leader, Gough Whitlam.

As a result, the leaders of the labour movement seized this opportunity to dissociate themselves from the radical youth movement. TLC president, Jack Egerton, decried:

...misguided way-out individuals... subjecting Labor leaders to rude and unwarranted personal attack... responsible trade union officials have no intention of allowing a group of scrubby, confused individuals who are unable to differentiate between civil liberties and anarchy to cause dissent in the trade union movement.[6]

Alan Anderson remembers:

FOCO was an ideal platform from which union leadership could express their point of view. In the 15 months that FOCO lived only 10 officials attended and three spoke, and even then it was on our initiative. I believe that FOCO was murdered by a trade union movement steeped in conservatism.[2]

Youthful exuberance in the 1969 May Day procession

(photo: Grahame Garner / Fryer Library, Brisbane)

Soon afterward, FOCO was informed that they could no longer use the Trades Hall venue, ostensibly because of planned renovations. The club's final event at the Trades Hall venue took place during the Queen's Birthday long weekend on Sunday June 8, 1969.

Despite the blow, FOCO struggled on. While searching for a new venue, regular weekly FOCO events were suspended for about six weeks. Through Peg Penberthy, the AHEPA hall in Boundary Street, West End was secured. AHEPA HALL was far from an ideal venue, but was the best option available. Alan Anderson recounts:

> *In the days leading up to what became a one night stand, we received a number of serious threats that were passed on to us by Alec Macdonald, who was always a tower of support to FOCO from beginning to end. Nevertheless we opened with the slogan FOCO LIVES. The night at AHEPA Hall was well attended, but before the night began I told those present that a police raid was expected and if people wished to leave they should. Few people left and our resident group, The Coloured Balls, began playing. I observed a large contingent of police drilling about 100 metres further down Boundary Street. Back inside, I repeated my warning but everyone stayed. Then in the police came and began dragging people out. The band stopped, then began playing 'We'll sing you a song and it won't take long, all coppers are bastards'. Perhaps this surreal experience convinced me that our time had come. (Personal correspondence, 29/9/2012)*

FOCO's key supporter in the TLC, Alex Macdonald, died suddenly from a heart attack on 18 August 1969. This unexpected tragedy was another setback for FOCO.

The search for a venue continued with an attempt to rent part of the Queensland Waterside Workers' Club. While the union leadership was open to the idea, the initiative was not supported at the rank and file level; so FOCO remained venue-less. Alan Anderson remembers:

> *In September 1969 I organised Trade Union Youth Week, as we had done the previous year, with an open air concert held in the Brisbane Botanical Gardens. This was the last time an event was held under the banner of FOCO. (Personal correspondence, 7/9/2012)*

Facing ongoing financial difficulties, their base of support eroding, and with their organizers exhausted, the decision was made to close FOCO permanently. In September of 1969, the grand experiment finally drew to a close. Yet

Poster for Trade Union Youth Week, 1968 (photo: Bob Daly, poster designer with Norma Chalmers)

Street theatre performance during Trade Union Youth Week (photograph courtesy Lynda Boland)

the memory and the ideal lived on — Alan Anderson reflects:

> *FOCO remains the most significant event I (ever) participated in. FOCO may have been slightly ahead of its time for the Australian political and cultural climate, but it was a creative jump in the right direction with lessons that should have value for the future. (Personal correspondence, 29/9/2012)*

Mitch Thompson:

> *Because this was a real collective effort of a loose grouping, it probably was always going to have a limited life. But what a quality life, an impact in Brisbane well beyond its short existence. (Personal correspondence, 17/12/2012)*

John Stanwell, an organiser who kept many aspects of the FOCO tradition alive in later endeavours, reflects:

> *FOCO was an amazing confluence of art and politics, which made it both attractive to young people and a threat to their parents (which is largely why it was closed down). Most importantly, FOCO showed us we could successfully run large and complex ventures that were successful in both cultural and financial terms; which exposed*

> *a new audience to radical ideas; and which made a profit that we could use on more political activities. (Personal correspondence, 8/8/2012)*

Stanwell acknowledges FOCO as the source of inspiration for the renowned 'Joint Effort' events during the 1970s and early 1980s which raised substantial amounts of money for political activities.

The endemic corruption presided over by Bjelke-Petersen was eventually exposed by the Fitzgerald Inquiry (1987–1989). This ended the National Party's 32-year run as the government of Queensland. Three former ministers and a police commissioner (who also lost his knighthood) were jailed for their involvement in dirty dealings which had thrived throughout the long reign of the National Party.

Lee Walkington, a regular worker's at the club every week, reflects:

> *We were aware at the time that it was something unique and I for one worked hard to make it a success each Sunday night. It was true though that by the end of the period that the 'hands and feet' activists, of which I was one, were left worn out by it all. It took a lot of work to set it up and an even greater amount of work to clean up after it was over. (Personal correspondence, 11/11/2012)*

Lee Walkington concludes:

> *Even today some 40+ years on I know of quite a few people who credit their interest in politics and art and radical culture to FOCO. (Personal correspondence, 26/11/2012)*

FOCO LIVES!

Peter Gray *is an independent filmmaker, and award-winning director of photography, with a career spanning forty years and four continents. Peter was a student at the University of Queensland in the early 1970s, and is a Graduate of the Australian Film and Television School. Peter is a founding member and manager of the Brisbane Discussion Circle.* <peter@radicaltimes.info>

Frank Neilsen*, Brisbane-born, was employed as a commercial/industrial photographer during the 1960s. He studied art and photography at Brisbane Technical College, and was a member of Poets, Essayists and Novelists (P.E.N.) in the 1960s, as well as being a member of the Miscellaneous Workers Union. He moved to Melbourne in 1973, where he operated his own photographic studio. He holds the degree of Bachelor of Information Technology, and is a member of the Brisbane Discussion Circle.* <fneilsen@outlook.com>

The Brisbane Discussion Circle *(BDC) is an online group that exchanges*

information and resources about the events and activities spanning the period 1960 to 1985. It was formed by political and cultural activists in an effort to develop and preserve the historical legacy of this era. The circle is comprised of a diverse group of individuals who achieved amazing things in Brisbane during this time. The aim is to preserve our history for posterity with sophistication and accuracy. This presentation is an example of a document arising from such joint effort by BDC members. Requests for membership can made via the BDC website. <http://bdc.radicaltimes.info> or by e-mail <manager@radicaltimes.info>

References:

1 The use of the first person singular refers to the experiences and recollection of Frank Neilson. The historical research and interviews for the article were conducted by Peter Gray in participation with the Brisbane Discussion Circle.

2 Anderson, Alan. "The Foco Story" Tribune (newspaper), 2 September 1970.

3 Brian Laver interviewed by Andrew Stafford (6/11/2002), Andrew Stafford Collection (Fryer Library UQFL440).

4 Guthrie, Adrian John. "When the way out was in: avant-garde theatre in Australia, 1965–1985" Doctor of Philosophy thesis, Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, 1996.

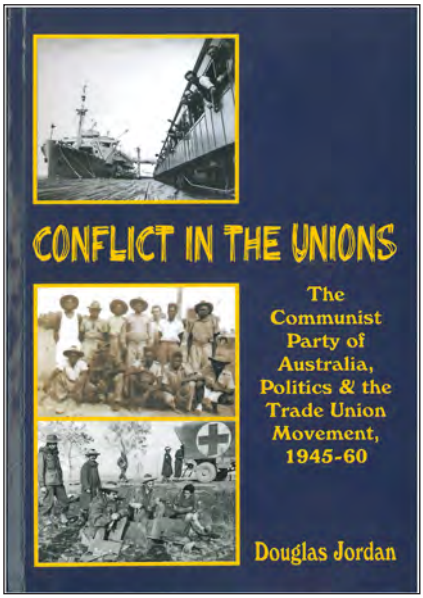
5 Courier-Mail "Drugs, Women claim on Foco", 13 September 1968

6 Courier-Mail "Student Radicals Never Again at Labor Day", 16 May 1969.

Book Reviews

Douglas Jordan, *Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia, Politics & the Trade Union Movement, 1945–60,* ***Resistance Books, Sydney, 2013, $30, paperback, 312p, ISBN 978-1-876646-62-2***

Review by Greg Mallory



When writing on trade unions Vladimir Lenin argued that trade unions must develop a political consciousness and not just concern themselves with mere economic matters such as wages and conditions. It was the duty of communists in the trade union movement to raise political issues and steer away from mere 'economism'. In 1942 the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) Lance Sharkey reinforced this position in his book *The Trade Unions*. The book was a practical guide on how to apply Lenin's views to Australian conditions. Communist union officials were directed by the Party to raise political issues wherever they could. Doug Jordan's excellent work *Conflict in the Unions* traces the role the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) played in developing this position from 1945 to 1960. The discussion, however, takes place a little outside this time frame. Jordan argues that communist union officials did not necessarily follow party dictates as a lot of them saw their role in the CPA as being militant trade unionists first and political apparatchiks second. This brought a lot of union officials into conflict with the party hierarchy. However in their defence Jordan argues that these officials were not totally in control of their unions as they formed loose alliances with members of the Australian Labour Party (ALP) in the union's day to day activities and were also too busy fighting for basic industrial issues. Also one of the basic problems communist union officials had was the perception that all their political actions came from orders from the Soviet Union.

The book traces the role communist party union officials played in trying to develop this political dimension in the areas of peace, migrants and aboriginal rights. The CPA was active in and had policy in these three areas and instructions were given to officials to promote Party policy in their unions. However there were pitfalls with taking too much of a political stand as this position may have been unpopular with the membership. Jordan uses the example of the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF), the Seamen's Union and the Miners' Federation promoting opposition to the Korean War and hence support for Communist North Korea. This position was soundly rejected by the rank and file membership, however in the next union election these communist union officials were returned to office. This result makes the point that members of unions voted for these officials not because they were communists but because they were militant trade unionists.

As mentioned before three unions in which the leadership was mainly communist were the Miners Federation, the WWF and the Seaman's Union. These unions were able to promote these political issues by way of their various publications, the Miners' Federation through their publication *Common Cause,* the WWF through *Maritime Worker* and the Seamen's Union through the *Seamen's Journal*.

The first issue that Jordan's discusses is that of peace. The CPA's attitude to the peace movement came from a direction from the Cominform (formerly the Comintern) in 1947 which stated that what was needed was to build a peace movement in every country in support of the Soviet Union. Peace committees were formed in various left unions all around Australia and communists took the issue of peace to their workplaces. Communist union activists were responsible for organising workplace meetings, sending union delegates to peace congresses and passing resolutions in support of the peace movement. These activists promoted the slogan that 'peace is union business'. Two of the big issues that involved unions were the building of the Woomera Rocket Range and the opposition to the Korean War. The outbreak of the Korean War coincided with the attempt by the Menzies government to ban the CPA. This made the work of promoting opposition to the Korean War very hard business. The Australian Peace Council (APC) was formed in 1949 and trade unions activists were welcomed. The CPA had an influence over the direction of the APC by way of its trade union delegates. Towards the end of the 1950s the CPA started to moderate its views and work towards building alliances with the ALP. This is described by Jordan as "in fact returning to its 'Popular Front' days of the mid-1930s where the party functioned almost as a left appendage of the ALP".

The next action communists were involved in was the mass immigration before and after the World War 2. The CPA had from its inception an anti-racist attitude towards immigration in opposition to the White Australia Policy. Before World War 2 it welcomed left wing migrants but however after an influx of European migrants were coming to Australia after World War 2, the CPA adopted an anti-immigration stand. The CPA argued that these migrants were coming from right-wing backgrounds. Some of the unions, including the Building Workers Industrial Union (BWIU) opposed the building of migrant hostels. A lot of communists later disapproved of this stand. However, later on the BWIU took a public stance in support of migrants during the 1952 and 1961 recessions. With the next influx of migrants, some from Italy and Greece, the CPA supported their entry and helped many of them obtain housing and jobs. A number of these migrants went on to join the CPA.

The third action was that of support of the aboriginal rights movement. From the start the CPA had a policy that aboriginals should control their own destiny. In 1946, a communist Don McLeod was involved in a strike by aboriginal stockmen in the Pilbara and was supported by the Seamen's Union. As aboriginal workers went to the cities to garner support for their struggles and many joining the labour market in the cities they came into contact with city workers, unionists and members of the CPA. Two prominent aborigines who joined the CPA were Chicka Dixon, who worked on the Sydney waterfront, and Kath Walker, poet and activist. A lot of those who joined the CPA took their learned activism back with them when they returned to their home. After World War 2 a communist-led ticket won control of the Northern Australian Workers Union (NAWU) in Darwin. The NAWU supported aborigines when they went on strike but when the communist leadership was ousted the union reverted to disinterest and open hostility to aboriginal issues. In 1958 the Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement (FCAA) was formed as an organisation to support aboriginal rights and had significant support from the labour movement, including the Builders Labourers' Federation (BLF), the Australian Railways Union (ARU), the WWF, BWIU and later the Seamen's Union.

The strength of Jordon's work is the detailing the relationship that the CPA had with a variety of unions and how the tactics of politicisation were successful and unsuccessful in particular unions. I think it is important that the role the CPA played in developing these policies and attempting to implement them is an important issue so often ignored in other histories of the CPA. We are also accustomed to trade union histories that ignore the role of the CPA. Unions do have political dimensions but now day they are so tied the ALP

that a union is more concerned with its political dimension as to which faction of the ALP will they be aligned to. If Jordan had taken his book up to the 1960s and 1970s he would have discussed how the NSW BLF was able to, under communist leadership of Jack Mundey, bring that dimension with the union's green bans as well as its call for workers' control. Although the issues that Jordan brings to our attention i.e. peace, migrants, and aboriginal rights, met with mixed results, the unions great successes in this area of political dimension lies with three famous disputes, the Dalfram (pig-iron) dispute of 1938 against Japanese militarism, the Dutch shipping ban of the late 1940s supporting Indonesian independence and the green bans of the 1970s in support of 'socially useful labour'. All these unions were led by communist activists and brought the political dimension to the forefront.

The book, originally a 2011 Victoria University Ph.D. thesis, is extremely well researched and well written. However I have one complaint, it has no index. For such an important book this is inexcusable. It makes the job of a reviewer much harder as well as the researcher who wants to cross reference. However it does have an excellent bibliography as well as extensive end notes. This is indeed a good book and it breaks new ground on this important relationship between the CPA and the union movement in the political dimension.

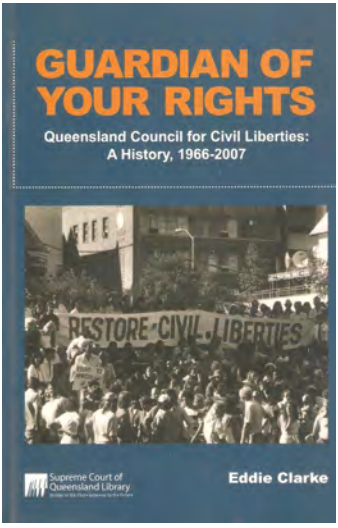
I would recommend this to anyone interested in the history of the trade union movement in Australia, the CPA, the Peace movement, migration and aboriginal issues.

A note of sadness, Doug Jordan passed away not long after the book was launched, I hope this book and thesis will preserve his memory.

Book Reviews

Guardian of Your Rights *Queensland Council for Civil Liberties: A History, 1966–2007* by Eddie Clarke, Supreme Court of Queensland Library, Brisbane, 2008 ISBN 9780980322033 ($20 from QCL at http://qccl.org.au/)

Review by Ynes Sanz



A Handbook for Our Times

With the advent of the Queensland Liberal/National Party government in March 2012 and the events that followed, *Journal* readers were probably never more aware of the truth of the BLHA motto: 'The Past is always with us'.

'Daddy, what did you do in the great war?' That old propaganda poster is among a groundswell of memories as the Anzac centenary draws near. But this book tells the story of a different kind of war, and the gains made by men and women of principle who have fought in the kind of battle that never ends. The struggle to defend our civil liberties is particularly close to the hearts of Queenslanders. Clarke quotes *The Australian*'s editorial in April 2005, which said

> *The great lesson of Sir Joh's career is that the price of liberty is truly eternal vigilance. His dominance of public life for close to two decades demonstrates how quickly democracy can be perverted by a cunning politician.* (page 56)

As the Newman government gleefully took up the reins and savagely shortened the girth on Queenslanders, after 14 years under Labor, a sense of dystopian *déjà vu* found me attending my first meeting of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, a voluntary, member-based organisation founded in 1966 to protect and promote human rights and freedoms. After a hearing about the achievements of its past presidents and members, I bought a copy of *Guardians of Your Rights* by Eddie Clarke, and found it was a page-

turner about the struggles and triumphs of the men and women of the QCCL.

Here are timely reminders about the old Right that warn us not to be surprised by any of the tricks produced from their successors' toolboxes. But there are also significant victories that shine like candles in the gloom, in case, faced with today's false-flagging of bikers as the rallying point for the Newman/Bleijie government's fervid attack on free association and freedom of assembly, we might ask 'but what can one person do?'

Clarke, a social historian, recounts how he was approached to write this history but '... initially baulked at the task because I thought it would be too boring. How wrong this opinion proved to be! I soon found that the task opened up a new exciting world.' [1]

He gathered material from QCCL archives in the Fryer and Oxley libraries and from interviews with presidents past and present. He credits these first-hand accounts and the guidance of editor Ellie O'Gorman as major contributors to the book's readability. By the end of his commission the chronicler, 'impressed with the integrity and intellect of the presidents and the importance of the aims of the Council ... became a convert and joined the ranks of the organisation he had set out to document'.[2]

He begins with a chronological development of the Council, then deals in turn with significant personal and organisational rights topics such as Protest and Peaceful Assembly, Indigenous Rights, Police Powers, Accountability and Unionists' Civil Rights. Each is a live issue again in 2014.

This is a meticulous history, enlivened by cartoons from Queensland's bad old days and stories full of humour and grim satisfaction that bear re-telling like all good yarns. Readers might remember the one from 1978 when a Bundaberg dentist challenged the ban on street marches and 'applied for a police permit to march down an unnamed 'no through road' at 2.45 am with his dog Jaffa.' Transcripts of O'Gorman's subsequent cross-examination of Bjelke-Petersen during the 1987 Fitzgerald Inquiry also make entertaining reading.

This is not the place for a full analysis of similarities between battles fought over the last forty years and today, but a few examples are indicative. Council Vice-president Terry O'Gorman, speaking at a mass rally in February this year opposing the 'bikie legislation', recalled another time, in the 70s and 80s, when a coalition government with a similar majority in parliament had a 'law and order' (a.k.a. anti human rights) agenda. On that occasion, outcomes included the Springbok tour demonstrations, to which the

government responded by imposing a month's state of emergency, and bans on street marches which led to the arrest of some 400 people. The role of the QCCL in these and other events is documented, and there are extensive appendices.

Conservatives are unlikely to relish the fact that a number of the activists who were 'blooded' in those clashes, some even needing hospital treatment as a result of government-condoned police brutality, went on to become well-respected civil libertarians, parliamentarians and community leaders. Many QCCL luminaries have been awarded Honours over the years, like Dr Janet Irwin's Order of Australia and Centenary medals for her service to women's affairs, medicine and the community, including in abortion law reform.

Many other Council committee members and presidents have proud records like that of Australian Council for Civil Liberties president Terry O'Gorman, former Attorney-general Matt Foley and Stephen Keim, the barrister who more recently successfully acted for the falsely-imprisoned alleged terrorism suspect Dr Mohamed Haneef. A summary account of this case in a postscript makes stirring reading. Keim was recently in the news when a Queensland government brief was taken from him, apparently because he had criticised the Newman government over new Sex Offender laws designed to keep offenders behind bars even if judges ordered their release. That the issue of separation of powers has again arisen has led some to suggest that this concept seems poorly understood by Newman and his under-qualified Attorney General, Bleijie.

Apart from acting as legal observers at rallies and appearing in the courts, the QCCL's practice has been to expose matters of public concern via press statements and media appearances, submissions in response to the introduction of new legislation, or via complaints to bodies such as the Criminal Justice Commission. For a while, the community was in the fortunate position of having a QCCL member, Matt Foley, in parliament, enshrining civil liberties in legislation across women's rights, indigenous rights and prison reform. He implemented reforms in the wake of the Fitzgerald Inquiry in the heady days when no-one thought we would ever have to fight to regain that territory.

The QCCL has sometimes been limited by circumstances to simply exposing inequitable or corrupt practices to public view. The Lucas Inquiry reported in 1977 on a wide range of police misbehaviour including perjury, but wrongdoers were not brought to justice despite clear evidence of corrupt practices. This was due to an intransigent Attorney General and Police commissioner determined to take no action against any officer,

proven guilty or not, combined with insufficient funds to pursue the matter. The same factors are still major obstacles today.

As a result, it has sometimes had to be satisfied with small but telling victories. Practices revealed during those proceedings included misdirecting suspects' solicitors to the wrong police stations to hinder them from being present while police interviewed their clients:

> *When O'Gorman conducted a lengthy questioning of a witness about this matter, Justice Lucas finally interrupted, 'Mr. O'Gorman, the committee accepts that solicitors get the run-around', and O'Gorman had to be content that those words would now appear in the transcript.* (page 137)

Undeterred, the QCCL continued its push for an appropriate review and watchdog agency. In a chapter on police powers we read how arguments in favour of a transparently independent review body began at this time, after strenuous representations in the face of endemic police misconduct that was in some cases rewarded by promotion. There followed a succession of replacement agencies, their power expanding incrementally, each body flawed in a different way.

Fast-forward to 2001 and the inception of the Crime and Misconduct Commission, with powers broadened to include major crime and the oversight of the integrity of the public service and witness protection, but inherent weaknesses and contradictions in its powers and oversight.

Clarke gives us a framework to understand the events unfolding today as Queensland's NLP government manipulates and dismantles the mechanisms purportedly set in place to keep its legislation and implementation transparent and even-handed.

In his recent no-holds-barred submission to the Queensland parliament on the Crime and Misconduct and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014, Tony Fitzgerald QC had this to say:

> *However, a government can limit a committee's ability to "enhance the democratic process" or even use a committee to help mislead the electorate. Using its parliamentary majority, the Liberal National Party has appointed five of its members to this seven person committee and, as all members of the committee are doubtless aware, it recently sacked and re-stacked another committee which attempted to "enhance the democratic process" and then fabricated a reason for doing so. The circumstances*

> *aren't encouraging but, given the public turmoil in Queensland, particularly in relation to criminal justice, I can't leave open the possibility that it might be incorrectly suggested that I don't object to the Bill.*[3]

Events in the late 70s drew the Council into unionists' civil rights. Previously, it had been thought that unions were best placed to deal with these issues themselves, but the Council went into action to oppose the Essential Services Act of 1979, which not only banned strikes but contained additional dictatorial ministerial powers including penalties over industry, unions and individual unionists.The Council opposed the provisions of this act which 'ignored the civil rights of the individual, reversed the onus of proof, abridged the right of free speech, reduced parliamentary control, and assumed guilt by association.' (*page 220*)

Chapter 15 contains detailed accounts of the ETU strike in 1985 and the subsequent SEQEB dispute in which the government distinguished itself by, among other things, holding a cabinet briefing of senior police officers to make sure police treatment of strikers was sufficiently heavy-handed. Matt Foley, newly elected QCCL president, and Stephen Keim, both personally involved, provided Clarke with first hand accounts. A Full Court decision that proved scores of arrests to be unlawful led police to drop charges against 'Many innocent citizens (who) had been wrongfully arrested, fingerprinted, photographed and detained in the watch-house ... In a press article, Foley said the Full Court decision vindicated the Council's criticism that the use of police to break up pickets represented a ghastly abuse of police powers.' (*page 225*)

In mid-2013 trespass charges were laid against four CFMEU organisers for entering the Legacy Way worksite. Despite their bail conditions being varied to permit them to enter the site pending the case going to court, the Queensland government, no doubt buoyed-up by the Federal Government's 'union slush fund' Royal Commission, is still pursuing moves to keep union representatives out of worksites, ironically via new provisions under the *Work Health and Safety Act Feb 2014.*

> *Instead of being able to enter a worksite immediately on suspicion of a breach of the Work Health and Safety Act, unions will have to give 24 hours notice under the changes.*

"For too long, we have seen construction unions using safety as an industrial weapon in this state," Mr Bleijie told State Parliament today.[4]

On his own website, Bleijie 'said the new laws would complement the Building Construction and Compliance

Branch (BCCB) that the Government established *to crackdown on militant union activity* and ensure safety compliance on construction sites.'[5] (*emphasis added*)

In a society where parties can come to power as a result of voter indifference, the daily news can be so disheartening that it is tempting to turn away and block our ears. This makes us as powerless as if we were simply ignorant or uninterested in these events:

> *'In a way, the world-view of the Party imposed itself most successfully on people incapable of understanding it. They could be made to accept the most flagrant violations of reality, because they never fully grasped the enormity of what was demanded of them, and were not sufficiently interested in public events to notice what was happening.'*[6]

In Eddie Clarke's book, in case we might forget, we can read the proof that people of good intent can achieve significant outcomes even in times when closed-door committees and late-night legislation changes are driven by power rather than policy and control not compassion.

As Matt Foley said in relation to the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties' 'passionate media and community campaign to close the infamous 'black hole' at Boggo Road jail', a fight won, he recalls, 'against the odds':

> *'There is nothing wrong with the judgement of the Queensland people when they are properly informed of the true facts. Indeed their wisdom is regularly underestimated, to the detriment of the puffed-up and mighty who act on the banal pseudo-evidence of political party focus groups. Truth will out.'*[7]

With the help of the true facts in this book, we can get the measure of our adversary, draw strength from past victories, maintain the necessary vigilance and stay stout of heart for the struggles ahead.

Notes

1 Eddie Clarke, A Long Journey: Writing the history of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties (QCCL) QCCLv Newsletter, March, 2008 pp 8–9

2 ibid

3 Independent Australia http://www.independentaustralia.net/politics/politics-display/tony-fitzgerald-slams-lnp-newman-and-bleijie,6332

4 The Courier-Mail February 13, 2014 http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/new-laws-to-deny-unions-immediate-access-to-queensland-worksites/story-fnihsrf2-1226826124697

5 http://jarrodbleijie.com.au/news/labor-supports-militant-unions-over-safety-and-productivity

6 George Orwell *1984*

7 Matt Foley, speech for QCCL Award of Life Membership, Auchenflower, October 2013

In Memorium

Kathrine Nelson
(5/4/70–14/3/14]

A tribute to Kath Nelson, Secretary of the Queensland Services Union, from her close friend and work colleague for over 20 years Lisa Heap — Executive Director of the Australian Institute of Employment Rights Inc.

Kath was a unionist and her work was important to her. Kath's first job in the movement was as a 19-year-old administrative assistant with the Association of Draughting, Supervisory & Technical Employees (AESDA) working with John Forester and Ian Buckley. Immediately before taking the job with AESDA Kath was employed at the Embassy Hotel as a bar attendant. John Forester, a regular attendee, recognised something in Kath, something special, and he encouraged her to apply for a role in the union. Ian (Buckley), less than enthusiastic about getting a "*barmaid with no experience*" to support him, remembers her interview, what she wore (a little black dress) and the absolute vibrancy with which she entered the room. According to Ian "*she couldn't spell ACTU let alone know what it stood for or meant*" but before long she had demonstrated the sharpness of mind, drive to learn and commitment to hard work, that was present throughout her career.

She became an invaluable member of the team, often at age 20, running the office single handedly whilst John and Ian were "on the road" organising and dealing with disputes. . Kath was always very proud of her starting point. She would say proudly she had done every job in the union.

When AESDA joined the then Municipal Officers Association Kath and Ian transferred across. Ian, reflects that it was Kath's capacity and hard work that convinced the then Secretary of the MOA, Ray Selby, that he "*hadn't taken on a couple of duds*."

Kath moved through various administrative roles eventually becoming an Industrial Officer. She moved to Melbourne where she commenced work at the Victorian Branch of the ASU. This is when I met Kath. There was a perception, by some, that "*we had done Queensland a favour*" in taking her on. However, within about 5 minutes of meeting her "*the sisters (and the occasional well thought of brothers)*" thought it was one of the best decisions the union had made. Some of our less than enlightened brothers looked scared; sometimes with good reason. Kath's in your face honesty, disarming frankness and no nonsense "tell it like it is" approach was like a breath of fresh air for some, and their worst nightmare for others. She introduced us to a number of interesting expletives to describe those employers, fellow union officers, politicians or members who were not, in her view, up to the task.

These were the difficult days of the Kennett government in Victoria. Days of loss of pay roll deductions of union dues, compulsory local council amalgamation, compulsory competitive tendering of local government services and privatisation of public assets.

Kath was at the forefront of negotiating deals to secure member's employment security within local councils. Wendy McManus notes that Kath's particular strength here was her ability to see the solution to the problem and negotiate the deal. It's not something that every one could do. She did it and she did it well and members loved her for it. When circumstances required it Kath returned to work in Queensland.

One of Kath's biggest achievements as an Industrial Officer was negotiating the Local Government Workforce Transition Code and the South — East Queensland Retail Water Reform Framework. Together these instruments provided employment security for many thousands of local government and water industry workers. Her unique ability to see the big picture, whilst at the same time focus on the micro detail meant that Kath was a formidable "opponent" but it also earned her enormous respect from those on the other side of the bargaining table.

Kath reluctantly took on the most senior paid role of the union (Secretary) in early 2011 and National Vice President of the union at that time too. She was the first woman to hold the office of Secretary in the Branch. Part of Kath's reluctance came from knowing the impact this would have on her home life with her partner Brett and son Spencer

and her precious time with family and friends. She knew she would immerse herself in the job if she did it. She was always mindful that she couldn't do the job without the continuous love and support of Brett.

David Smith, the outgoing ASU Branch Secretary, and Kath had what could be described as an "intense" working relationship. Even though they often argued, David says he never had any doubts that Kath was a vital and necessary part of a future leadership team. He also recently reluctantly admitted, to me, that on at least 75% of the issues over which they had argued over, Kath had been right!

Kath never sought out leadership or power. She never actively sought promotion and she certainly didn't expect or even desire that she would become the Secretary of one of Queensland's biggest unions. Her reluctance as a leader was in my view one of Kath's strengths. She never sought power for powers sake and therefore she was not seduced by it.

Sometimes this made her unpopular. Kath withstood a lot of personal and political pressure when in 2012 she insisted that the national deal for community sector equal pay rates had to match what had been achieved in Queensland. She would settle for nothing less than what the workers deserved. Her tenacity was rewarded and community sector workers across Australia received higher rates of pay because of her action.

She was a member of the ALP National Executive and active within the Queensland ALP Administrative Committee, not because she sought power or influence but because she could see a job that needed doing. In her view, it was important for Australia that we had a modern, connected and relevant Labor Party. She committed to doing what she could to achieve this. She had strong, very strong, views on this right up until the end. She was not necessarily a Julia Gillard supporter; however, she hated the misogyny that surrounded her treatment in office. It's something that deeply concerned her.

Kath took on the leadership role in the union because she could see a job that needed to be done. Her vision was of a contemporary union deeply connected to its members and the community. She was enormously proud of the union's *27 Ways Campaign* — seeing it as an opportunity to promote what workers had achieved, through the movement that has created Australia's decent standard of living. It was also an opportunity for spiffy t-shirts, billboards and award wining videos!

Kath enjoyed sharing the leadership with Jennifer Thomas and those in the broader leadership group, such as Neil Henderson who has since been appointed Secretary of The Services Union. Together they were the epitome

of a modern, attractive contemporary leadership team. She was very much committed to distributive leadership and she wanted to develop others to take on leadership roles, including those on the Executive and workplace delegates. She wanted members to love their union and she wanted the union to be more relevant to them and the broader community.

I once asked Kath to tell me what "her" ASU would feel like. She said

> *Powerful, proud, empowered, purposeful, making a difference, focused.*

Kath could see the immediacy of the threat that conservative governments posed to the livelihood of members and so she drove the change process hard. Some struggled with the pace of change. However, it has ensured that the foundations are in place so that the union is now well placed to withstand the dual threat of the Newman and Abbott governments.

The importance of what Kath was trying to achieve was recognised when she was awarded a place in the prestigious Vincent Fairfax Fellowship program at the Melbourne Business School, in 2012. Not bad for a barmaid from the Embassy Hotel! Kath loved being part of this program and in particular the emphasis it placed on building more effective and more ethical cultures, systems and processes within organisations such as the ASU. She loved ideas and she voraciously sought out new ideas and innovations that she could apply within the union.

Kath remained committed to organising even when receiving treatment for leukemia. She spoke to the doctors' and nurses who cared for her about their need to be in the union and the importance of electing a state government that would support public services such as the public health system; Organising, recruiting and advocating right to the end.

No one can doubt Kath's commitment to workers and the legacy that she has left is significant.

The above tribute is an edited extract from the eulogy given at Kath Nelson's funeral, St Johns' Cathedral, Brisbane, 21 March 2014.

In Memorium

Wally Stubbings — obituary

Wally Stubbings; wharfie, communist, veteran athlete

Born: 10th March, 1913, Strahan, Tasmania

Died: 6th July, 2014, Redlands, Queensland

Wally Stubbings, Life Member of the Brisbane Labour History Association, passed away on 6th July, 2014 aged 101. Wally was one of the last remaining labour activists who had links to the 1940s. Wally received his Life Membership because of his life-long involvement with the labour movement, both industrially and politically.

Wally was born on the 10th March 1913 in Strahan Tasmania and worked as a timber worker in his home town in the 1930s. He married his wife Ada, a fellow school friend, in1933 and had a son Col in 1934. During this time he became active in the Timber Workers Union which began his long involvement with the union movement. As well as working as a timber worker he also worked as a waterside worker (wharfie) and this saw him transferring to Hobart in 1940 to work on the Hobart waterfront. In 1944 Wally came to Brisbane to work as part of the war effort. After the war Wally decided to come back to Brisbane to live but he had to go back to Hobart to establish his credentials in order to be able to transfer back to Brisbane. He came back to Brisbane in 1946 and immediately joined the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) and the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). He threw himself into activism in both these organisations.

The WWF was a progressive organisation having got rid of the 'bull' system in the 1940s, and the union was heavily involved in the Dutch shipping ban of the late 1940s. In the 1950s and 60s the union had broadened its

involvement with its members with sporting clubs, art classes, dancing studios for the children of wharfies, and had established a film unit. They were very active in the community and Wally was responsible in 1956 for organising wharfies to go to Inglewood to help the community in flood relief. The volunteers who went out there included that qualified plumbers mechanics, former shearer's cooks and bakers. These helped immensely with the town's recovery.

Wally's first industrial involvement was the 1948 Railway Strike in which he, along with Fred Patterson, was 'bashed' by Queensland police at a demonstration on St Patrick's Day. After coming home and lying down for a number of hours to get over his injuries, he set out to put posters up in bus shelters and walls from Moorooka to Bulimba declaring the then premier Hanlon a nazi. All through his active years Wally was monitored by Queensland's 'infamous' Special Branch. They spent a lot of time sitting outside Wally's home and followed him to work and followed his son Col to school.

He was elected to the executive of the Brisbane branch of the WWF and worked as a Vigilance Officer (VO) for four years. In the CPA he was secretary of the waterfront branch and served on the State Committee and was campaign manager for various communist candidates. In 1949 he was organiser for the Party in Rockhampton during the federal elections. When famous American left-wing activists Harry Bridges, President of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, and Paul Robeson, world famous American singer and actor, visited Brisbane they were shown around by Wally.

During the 1950s the WWF was involved in two national strikes in 1954 and 1956.

Throughout these strikes wharfies were involved in numerous demonstrations as well as promoting their cause in various ways. Wally was sent out to the country to talk to the farmers. As in the containerisation issue that followed in the next decade, Wally took the attitude that wharfies needed to show the farmers that they too were interested in the economy and hence it was important that wharfies were actively talking to the population.

Wally visited the Soviet Union in 1963 as part of a Communist Party delegation and was a guest of Communist Party of the Soviet Union. On May Day he was taken to the Bolshoi Ballet which included in the audience Nikita Khrushchev, Yuri Gagarin, Soviet cosmonaut, and Fidel Castro. He was embarrassed when the Party guides took him to the front of the queue when visiting Lenin's tomb as he thought the people who were lining up should have been given preference to him. On his way back from the Soviet Union Wally

visited Indonesia and they were met at the airport by the General Secretary of the Indonesian Communist Party and were guests of the Indonesian Party.

In the 1960s great changes were happening in the stevedoring industry with the introduction of containerisation on to the waterfront. The WWF was heavily involved in this debate, which also brought the issue of permanency for the workforce. Wally was involved heavily in this debate and argued that it was inevitable that containerisation would be introduced and once again argued that it was important to 'look outwards' in order to promote the best outcomes for wharfies.

In the late 60s and early 70s great changes were happening in western democracies with protests over the Vietnam War. The WWF and the CPA was some of the main organisations opposed to the war and along with the student movement organised the Moratoriums which stood as mass opposition to the War. Wally was heavily involved with this movement and worked alongside leading student activists of the day. Wally was also involved in the civil liberties struggle, anti-conscription and the movement against apartheid. He was arrested in the right-to-march campaign of the 1970s and spent time in the same cell as Senator George Georges and Federal MP Tom Uren.

In 1968, Wally supported the CPA's condemnation of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia to end Alexander Dubcek's Prague Spring. However, most CPA maritime workers nationally supported a minority opposition that in 1971 split away to form the pro-Soviet Socialist Party of Australia (SPA). Wally and other Brisbane wharfies remained CPA members, along with some other maritime unionists nationally.

As well as being involved in the CPA and the WWF Wally and his wife Ada were involved in numerous other organisations. Wally was also one of the founding members of the Council for Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and had a long involvement in fighting for Aboriginal rights. He worked with Sugar Ray Walker and his wife Kath Walker who became famous for her poetry as well as being an aboriginal activist.

Wally's wife Ada was treasurer of the WWF Women's Committee which was responsible for visiting sick wharfies in hospital. They were particularly concerned about the plight of a young wharfie who had fractured his spine. After raising money for helping this wharfie Wally was approached by a Dr Murphy from the PA Hospital to set up an organisation to highlight the problem to the general public as well as giving help to the patients. Wally and Ada were thus foundation members of the Paraplegic Welfare Association.

Their home in Gratwick St., Moorooka became a hive of activity. There were meetings of the Progress Association, Communist Party branch, Paraplegic Association and the Council Council for Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, Fretlin, as well as other organisations.

When Wally retired he took a trip in a kombi van around Australia. He started by going up the Queensland coast and stayed with wharfies at various ports all around Australia.

At the age of 60 Wally took up Veteran Athletics and attended a number of world championships in various parts of the world. He competed in Sweden, West Germany, New Zealand, USA, Puerto Rico. At the age of 70 on the day Australia won the America's Cup, Wally won the world championship 800 metres for his age group. He won many 400 and 800 metres events for his age. He was a Life Member of Queensland Veteran Athletics (now known as Queensland Masters Athletics). In his later years Wally was a member of a gym and kept his exercise routine until his overall health prevented him from continuing.

Wally was a prolific reader which could be traced back to his childhood. A few months before he died he was reading Chomsky, Pilger, Dawkins and had asked his son to get out of the library Darwin's *Origin of the Species* for him to read again.

Wally's wife Ada pre-deceased him and he is survived by his son Col and Col's wife Joan, his grandsons Carl and Jeff, seven great grandchildren and five great, great grandchildren

Greg Mallory,
President, Brisbane Labour History Association

Notes on Contributors

Lisa Heap

Lisa is a labour and human rights activist. She has substantial experience advising workers, unions, community and private sector organisations on labour rights issues. She is currently the Executive Director of the Australian Institute of Employment Rights (AIER) an independent tripartite organisation that promotes fair and decent workplace rights for all. She has been regularly engaged by the International Labour Organisation as a technical expert regarding the application of international labour standards in practice. She is also a practising solicitor working in the area of workplace relations law.

Lisa was the lead advocate for the Queensland Services Union's landmark pay equity case for community sector workers (2008–2009).She advises a number of union leaders on matters related to union culture, governance, promoting strategic change within unions and the development of union activists. She holds tertiary qualifications in Arts, Law and Applied Human Rights.

Frank Neilsen,

Brisbane-born Frank was employed as a commercial/industrial photographer during the 1960s. He studied art and photography at Brisbane Technical College, and was a member of Poets, Essayists and Novelists (P.E.N.), as well as being a member of the Miscellaneous Workers Union. He moved to Melbourne in 1973, where he operated his own photographic studio. He holds the degree of Bachelor of Information Technology, and is a member of the Brisbane Discussion Circle.

Peter Gray

Peter is an independent filmmaker, and award-winning director of photography, with a career spanning forty years and four continents. Peter was a student at the University of Queensland in the early 1970s, and is a Graduate of the Australian Film and Television School. Peter is a founding member and manager of the Brisbane Discussion Circle.

Dr Rowan Cahill

Rowan has worked as a teacher, freelance writer, agricultural labourer, and for the trade union movement as a journalist, historian, and rank and file activist. An Honorary Fellow with the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, University of Wollongong (NSW), he has published extensively in labour movement, radical, and academic publications. His books include The Seamen's Union of Australia,

1872–1972: A History (with Brian Fitzpatrick, 1981), Twentieth Century Australia: Conflict and Consensus (with David Stewart, 1987), A Turbulent Decade: Social Protest Movements and the Labour Movement, 1965–1975 (edited with Beverley Symons, 2005), Radical Sydney (with Terry Irving, 2010).

Associate Professor Andrew Bonnell

Andrew G. Bonnell is an Associate Professor in History at the University of Queensland, Australia. He studied at the University of Sydney (PhD), University of Marburg, and the Technical University, Berlin. Publications include the books The People's Stage in Imperial Germany (2005), Shylock in Germany: Antisemitism and the German Theatre from the Enlightenment to the Nazis (2008), and (edited) An American Witness in Nazi Frankfurt: The Diaries of Robert W. Heingartner, 1928–1937(2011) and numerous articles on modern German history, particularly on German Social Democracy**.**

Valerie Cooms

Valerie Cooms is an Aboriginal woman belonging to the Nunukul people of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) in Quandamooka (Moreton Bay). Valerie has spent many years working in Aboriginal affairs, including briefly on the National Trachoma and Eye Health Program in Cunnamulla and Western Queensland in the 1970s. Valerie worked for the Australian Government across many agencies including the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Valerie was employed as the CEO of Queensland South Native Title Services and worked towards the native title consent determination for Quandamooka people in July 2011. Valerie is currently the Chairperson of the Quandamooka Yoolooburabee Prescribed Body Corporate which holds native title. Valerie has also served on the Community and Public Sector Union governing council and as a board member for Indigenous Business Australia. Valerie has three children and many grandchildren. Valerie's PhD was awarded by ANU in 2013 for her thesis *Free the Blacks and Smash the Act — Aboriginal Policy and Resistance in Queensland from 1965 to 1975.* All views in her paper are the private views of the author and in no way reflect the view of the National Native Title Tribunal of which she is currently works as a Member.

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 and the preservation of labour archives. There are no limits on the study of labour history and the diverse membership reflects many different areas of concern.

The BLHA is the Brisbane branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. The Association organises seminars, lectures, meetings, conferences and publications on themes of labour history. Membership is open to all individuals and organisations who subscribe to the Association's objectives.

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'. Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the views of the Association or the Editors. The Journal's Editorial Board is the Committee of the BLHA, chaired by the President.

Notes for Contributors

The *Journal* is published in March and September. Articles of up to 4000 words may be accepted; 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. Obtain a copy of the Editorial Guidelines before submission.

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. Two (2) copies of each manuscript are required. Please ensure all contact details are given, including phone numbers and an email address.

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

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