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See inside back cover for *Editorial Policy* and *Notes for Contributors*.

Front Cover Photo:
The strikecamp at Hughenden in 1891. See John McCollow's review of the Errol O'Neill play about the shearers strike in this issue..

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SUBSCRIBE TO *LABOUR HISTORY* — THE NATIONAL JOURNAL OF ASSLH

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***Labour History*, 111, November 2016**

With this issue, we begin the next stage of Labour History's life. A new editor and the support of Monash University means that from now on Melbourne will gradually become the site of editorial work. We have chosen to start with a special thematic connecting social movements, labour internationalism and the Cold War. This contains papers drawn from those presented at a symposium held at La Trobe University last year. Other articles in this issue deal with occupations in little-known areas of the history of work. We have also continued our tradition of engaging in scholarly debate by publishing an article that analyses Connell and Irving's classic study of class structure in Australian history. For more information, please visit http://www.labourhistory.org.au/

Editorial

Howard Guille

The Penalty Rates Decision

The Fair Work Australia decision on weekend penalty rates is a disaster for low paid workers. It is another victory for narrow market-based economics and a serious disruption of the principle that 'minimum standards' should be inviolate except for extreme social or natural circumstances.

In the words of the decision, issued in late February

> *existing Sunday penalty rates in 4 of the modern awards before us (the Hospitality, Fast Food, Retail and Pharmacy Awards) do not achieve the modern awards objective, as they do not provide a fair and relevant minimum safety net (s53).*

The cuts are shown in the table. The Sunday rate for permanent staff (full and part-time) goes down from double time in retail and pharmacy to time and a half. In the Fast Food award, the penalty rate goes down to time and quarter (for permanents) and time and half for casuals. This is the same as the Saturday rate. The reason given is that the workers in Fast Food are predominately young and many are

Award	Sunday Penalty Rate
Hospitality Award	
full-time and part-time employees: (no change for casuals)	175 per cent ➔ 150 per cent
Fast Food Award	
(Level 1 employees only) Full-time and part-time employees: Casual employees:	 150 per cent ➔ 125 per cent 175 per cent ➔ 150 per cent
Retail Award	
Full-time and part-time employees: Casual employees:	200 per cent ➔ 150 per cent 200 per cent ➔ 175 per cent
Pharmacy Award	
(7.00 am – 9.00 pm only) Full-time and part-time employees: Casual employees:	 200 per cent ➔ 150 per cent 200 per cent ➔ 175 per cent

students; they are presumed to be less affected by working on Sundays.

Depending on how the decision is implemented (and, as of February 2017, FWA has called for submissions about this), some 680,000 workers face a pay cut; for permanent workers regularly working weekends this could be up to $6000 a year. The cuts will hit more women than men, more young workers than older ones and more low income people than the better-off. As the ACTU said '*The average worker in accommodation and food services earns $524 a week and those in the retail trade earn just $687—compared with a $1,163 average for all Australian workers.*' The FWC itself says it will provide "hardship" to workers.

The decision is a victory to the constant 'drip by drip' attack not just on specific award conditions but on comprehensive labour market regulation. The cuts to penalty rate have a lineage back to Work Choices. The areas where penalty rates have been cut have the highest proportion of workers whose conditions are set by Modern Awards, not collective agreements. *Work Choices* removed the award safety nets pushing workers take it or leave it on to individual contracts via Australian Workplace Agreements. The Rudd/Gillard Government introduced modern awards to provide a safety net for workers not under collective agreements and as a minimum condition for enterprise bargaining.

Work Choices was comprehensively rejected in the 2007 Election. In 2010, Tony Abbott said '*It's dead, it's buried, it's cremated now and forever*'. But in December 2014, Coalition Treasurer Joe Hockey asked the Productivity Commission to do a review of the industrial (workplace) relations framework including penalty rates. The Productivity Commission said the system needed '*repair not replacement*'; it endorsed the principle of awards, enterprise bargaining and the procedures for unfair dismissals though proposing some process changes and more 'flexibility'.

The Productivity Commission said that '*There are compelling grounds for premium rates of pay for overtime, night and shift work*'. But it also recommended that '*Sunday rates in the hospitality, entertainment, retailing, restaurants and cafes industries should be brought into line with Saturday rates*'. The grounds were '*Australian society expects to be able to shop, go to a pharmacy, and eat at cafes and restaurants on weekends*'. And, '*the overall social costs of daytime work on Sundays are similar to Saturdays, and consistently lower than evening work*'.[2]

The Government now stood back, claiming clean hands, and let the employers and their friends take the case to reduce weekend penalty rates to the first 'four yearly' review of awards that had been mandated into the Fair Work Act.

There are some very major social, political and historical questions involved. One is the sheer number of people affected; according to the Productivity Commission around 4 million people work at least a Saturday or Sunday each week. That is around one in three in the workforce. The largest groups are nurses, medical and hospital staff, retail and hospitality workers, protective and emergency services and public transport. This one third of the workforce is providing services—often essential—to the two-thirds who have 'normal' working hours. The fundamental question ought to be how to organise the provision of such services so that the burdens are shared. It is submerged in almost the same way as domestic work; these are not matters that either the Productivity Commission or Fair Work considered.

Instead of taking a broad social approach, the matter has been reduced to an individual microeconomic matter. How much extra has to be paid to compensate a person for the 'disutility' (the word is used by the PC and the FWA!) of working weekends. The transcripts and submissions for the FWA case are crammed with claims and counter-claims, backed by surveys and economic models of various levels of sophistication and credibility, putting dollar numbers to the marginal costs in social dislocation from working on Sunday as against Saturday.

The ACTU made the case that awards are minimum standards and only to be reduced where there is *proof that economic and social development had regressed to a point where it is no longer economically sustainable to continue to provide such minimums, notwithstanding their desirability (231).* In other words, minimums are precisely 'minimums'. Forcing people below them is to harm them either absolutely or relative to people who have 'above minimum' conditions.

The FWA rejected the ACTU argument on the grounds that it was not in the legislation and hence would reduce the 'discretion' of the Tribunal. A resort to legal niceties is a retreat from politics and policies that are doing harm to actual people. Indeed, there is a tenor through the conduct of the entire case that winning the immediate legal point, and frequently a process point, is the most important result.

The FWA and the Productivity Commission who laid the ground work at the behest of the Federal Coalition Government seem to have a touching faith in an Alice in Wonderland world where cutting the wages of those at the bottom can be portrayed as the best way to create jobs. With stagnant real wages and widening inequality, action on negative gearing, capital gains and tax avoidance and evasion with the proceeds spent on social and physical infrastructure would be a much more effective way to promote employment

and social inclusion. At best, on my reading of the FWA decision, the cuts to penalty rates will allow a small business shop or cafe operator to spend Sunday in bed and not at work, by employing a cheaper casual worker. It is not much of a gain. Not one of the business operators said that prices would reduce because of lower penalty rates. One conclusion is that the lower wage costs will go straight into profits. While many small businesses are doing it tough it is more than likely that a very substantial part of any increased profit will pass into the hands of the shopping centre and retail strip owners via increased rents.

This issue shows how far current workplace relations arrangements built around the theory of individual economic actors have moved from the collectivism of the labour movement. John McCollow provides part two of his account of the Labour History Plays of Errol O'Neill. He makes the strong point that 'All art is political' and that dogmatism, not didacticism, is the problem. We are privileged to publish a preview of the forthcoming book *Wharfie* by Wally Stubbings and Lesley Synge. This links strongly with the obituaries—a better word is celebrations—of Connie Healy and Digger Murphy.

John Dargavel provides a fascinating account of how the minute book of the Rockhampton Branch Lodge of the Stonemasons Union eventually finished up being recognised by UNESCO's Australian Memory of the World Committee. It emphases the importance of artefacts and original records to remembering and interpreting the past. And the centrality of archivists and archives; to which we honour and remember Sigrid McCausland.

Ian Mackie and Gary MacLennan combine history, analysis and argument in their account of high Indigenous employment and low quality education. They make the strong point that there is no solution to Indigenous disadvantage within neoliberal ideology. The issues concludes with reviews of two books; one by Bob Russell, one of the current editors of this journal and one by Jeff Rickertt, a former editor.

Notes

1 Fair Work Australia, *Decision 4 yearly review of modern awards – Penalty Rates*, [2017] FWCFB 1001, Melbourne 23 February 2017.

2 PC News - October 2015, http://www.pc.gov.au/news-media/pc-news/pc-news-october-2015/workplace-relations

BLHA President's Column

Greg Mallory

It is with great sadness that I begin this report by announcing the death of one of our Executive members Sigrid McCausland. Sigrid passed away in early December from cancer and had a long association with labour history. She was a member of the BLHA Executive for a number of years and just recently served on the National Conference Committee. She was also a member of the ASSLH Federal Executive and also served on the Executive of the Sydney and Canberra branches. In November Sigrid was awarded the Labour History Medal for her services to labour history.

Sigrid was also a distinguished archivist working as a lecturer at Charles Sturt University. Prior to that she worked for the ANU, the University of NSW, the National Archives and the Noel Butlin Archives of Business and Labour at the ANU. She was a joint secretary of the Council of Archives International and Education Officer for the Australian Society of Archivists. For her services to the archives community Sigrid was made a Fellow of the Australian Society of Archivists. The BLHA passes on its condolences to her family and friends and in particular her partner Phil Griffiths.

I would also like to report on the death of Connie Healy also in December. Connie was a former Treasurer and Life Member of the BLHA. Connie had a life long involvement in politics being a former member of the Communist Party. Connie wrote a thesis and book on political theatre in Brisbane. The BLHA offers its condolences to Connie's family. See the tributes to both Ingrid and Connie later in this journal.

The National Conference Committee has been making steady progress in its preparation for the September National Conference. So far we have received contributions from a variety of unions and in particular a sizeable grant from the MUA which will provide fares and accommodation for one of our keynote speakers Ruth Milkman. Ruth is Distinguished Professor at the City University of New York Graduate Center at the Joseph S Murphy

Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies. The other keynote speaker is John Maynard, Professor at the University of Newcastle and an expert on indigenous labour. The Call for Papers and registration has gone out and can be accessed on the ASSLH / BLHA website.

Our federal body ASSLH has been conducting a review of its operations and has come up with some recommendations. On the Friday before the National Conference in September a Special General Meeting of the Association will be held to decide a number of proposals. All members of the BLHA are able to attend as they are also members of ASSLH. Two of the proposals to consider are changing the name of the Association to Labour History Society of Australia. The second proposal is to hold the AGM every second year during the National Conference.

In June one of our members Geoff Rickertt launched his book *The Conscientious Communist*, a biography of the socialist Ernie Lane. In October Geoff followed this up by hosting an anti-conscription walking tour of the Brisbane CBD on behalf of the Association. This was an excellent event and well attended.

The biography of Wally Stubbings, former communist and wharfie and Life Member of the BLHA is near completion and will be launched in the coming months. We will inform members of the launch date as details come to hand.

I have just obtained just obtained a very rough draft of a biography of Ted Roach, former Assistant Secretary of the Waterside Workers Federation and leader of the 1938 Dalfram/pig iron dispute. There are numerous complications in bringing this work to completion including obtaining suitable permission and of course editor's costs but if anyone has any suggestions I would be most eager to hear.

In conclusion I would like to thank members of the Executive and the editors of the journal for their work during the year. One of the Executive members Emma Thornton has stepped down and we wish her well in her new pursuit. I would also like to welcome Georgina Murray to our Executive committee.

The Labour History Plays of Errol O'Neill,[1] Part 2

John McCollow

Introduction

Errol O'Neill (1945–2016) was a Brisbane actor, director, short-story writer, playwright and social activist. Over the period of 1983 to 2011, O'Neill wrote five plays dealing with various episodes of labour history in Queensland. These were:

- *Faces in the Street* (first performed 1983)—concerning the Brisbane general strike of 1912;
- *Popular Front* (first performed 1986)—concerning the labour movement (and in particular the Communist Party and Queensland MP Fred Paterson) during the tumultuous period of 1930 to 1950;
- *On the Whipping Side* (first performed 1991)—concerning the 1891 shearers' strike;
- *The Hope of the World* (first performed 1996)—concerning the 1985 SEQEB strike;
- *Red Soil, White Sugar* (first performed 2011)—concerning the Isis district sugar strike of 1911.

This article is the second of two that describe and analyse these works, which make a valuable contribution to our understanding of labour history in Queensland in particular and of the nature of the labour movement generally. As can be seen, the plays are listed and will be considered in the order that they were written, not in chronological order of the events they depict. The first article (McCollow, 2016) dealt with *Faces in the Street* and *Popular Front*. This article will consider *On the Whipping Side*, *The Hope of the World*, and *Red Soil, White Sugar*.

On the Whipping Side[2]

The 1891 Queensland shearers' strike is arguably the most important strike in Australian history. It is credited with paving the way for the formation of the Australian Labor Party and for the arbitration system that characterised Australia's approach to industrial relations for most of the Twentieth Century.

Striking shearers on the move through the Hughenden district 1891

The strike was fought over "freedom of contract", with squatters seeking to undermine the power of the shearers' union and reduce wages, while the union sought to enforce "closed shops". At the height of the dispute, thousands of shearers were living in strike camps across central Queensland. With the strong support of the Tory press[3], the conservative state government intervened on behalf of the pastoralists and mobilised police and military personnel as well as "special constables". As noted by Evans (2004, p. 99), 'attempts by unionists to intercede with strike-breakers were construed by the authorities as acts of riot and conspiracy'. As tension escalated, there were 'incidents of violence … committed by both sides (Ibid.) and a number of 'strikers gave vent to thinly veiled revolutionary sentiments' (Ibid.).

The judge appointed to try arrested strikers, Justice Harding, was 'chosen for his reactionary views' (Ibid.), browbeat the jury into delivering a guilty verdict, and dealt harshly with those who came before him (Evans, 2004, p. 100). Thirteen of the strike leaders were convicted of "conspiracy", subsequently serving three years hard labour.

As O'Neill (1991, p. 9) observes in his Introduction to the play:

> The jailing of the … union leaders for conspiracy was

> the event which spelled the beginning of the end of the strike. But what is now clear is that the real conspiracy was not among the unionists but between the Government and the squatters and financiers who, during 1890, a year before the strike, developed a plan to cut wages and force "freedom of contract" upon the workers. It seems that the "freedom of contract" issue arose not because of the onset of tough economic times, as has been widely believed, but because of a long term plan of the conservative forces to crush unionism.

Ultimately, the strike failed due to the gaoling of strikers, 'hunger and sickness in the camps, and the failure of the wider working class movement to support it' (Evans, 2004, p. 101). As a result, many in the labour movement put their faith in political rather than industrial organising through the Labor Party, and in arbitration as a means of settling industrial disputes. The prominent socialist William Lane took another path, embarking with followers to Paraguay to found the ill-fated "New Australia" colony.

According to Svenson (quoted in Cooper and Maloney, 1991, p. 28):

> The most important consequence of the (Shearers') War—but one which is frequently overlooked [though not by O'Neill]—is the dropping of the ALF's (Australian Labor Federation) socialist objective. In the last days of 1891—at a time when unionists were at their most vocal and belligerent—the ALF executive suddenly and without explanation drew up a new political program which omitted all reference to the total nationalisation of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

As Svenson (Ibid.) notes, the Labor Party did, in fact, gain significant electoral support and seats in parliament following the strike. In 1899, a minority government led by Anderson Dawson became the first Labor government in the world (though it lasted all of six days).

Historical characters in *On the Whipping Side* include Colonial Secretary Horace Tozer, who is accurately depicted as the wily chief strategist of the government intervention in the strike[4]; T.J. Byrnes, MLA (and later Premier), who is described as 'ambitious and diligent in the service of the Government's objectives' (O'Neill, 1991a, p. 13); and Senior Sergeant Dillon, a police officer in Clermont who rather enjoys throwing his weight around.

The two most developed characters based on historical personages are Frederick Fairbairn and William Lane. Fairbairn was the manager of Logan

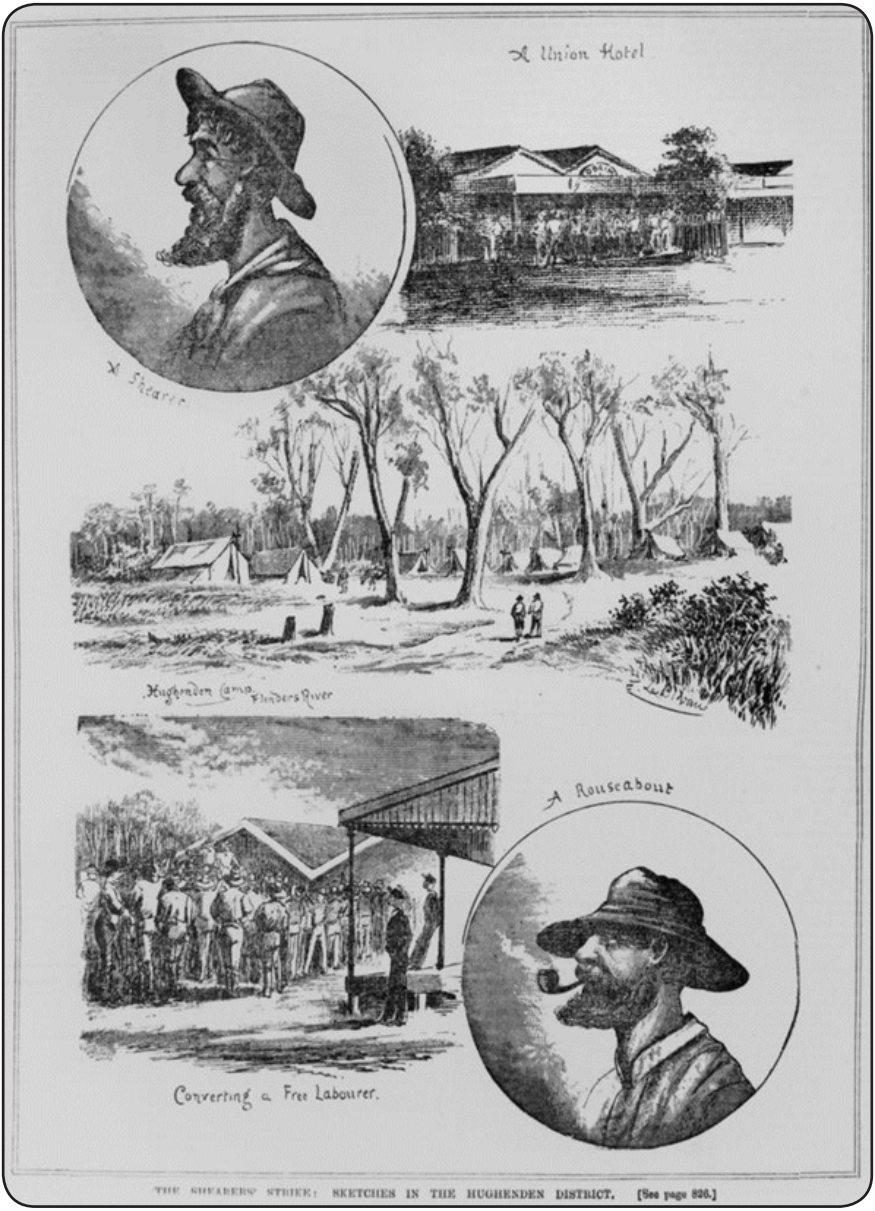
Downs station and the youngest son of the pastoralist family with extensive property holdings. It was he who, on 5 January 1891, read out to the shearers the new shearing agreement developed by the United Pastoralists' Association and stated that it would be the basis for employment on the property—arguably the opening salvo in the dispute (Huf, 2010). As drawn by O'Neill, Fairbairn presents as likable, confident, educated, well-mannered and considerate; but also as a man who is strongly supportive of the existing social order in which he is ensconced and convinced of the correctness of the pastoralists' cause and tactics. In the play, Fairbairn vies for the affection of the school teacher, Moira Maguire, against the rough-around-the-edges young shearer Frank Connolly.

Lane is portrayed as an eloquent and passionate advocate for workers' rights and acts as a quasi-commentator on the actions in the play. But his flaws are also exposed. When Frank convinces Lane to visit the shearers' camps to boost morale, it is clear that Lane's main motivation is to recruit subscribers to his South American scheme. In one scene Moira disabuses Frank of his illusions regarding Lane:

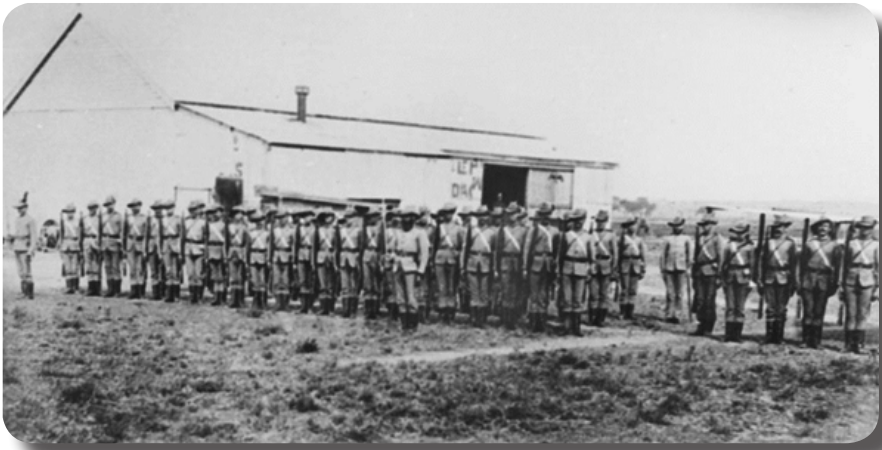
> Moira: You're in love with Will Lane and his rhetoric. It's a romantic dream with no hope of fulfillment …
>
> Frank: How can you be so sure it won't work?
>
> Moira: Well, for one thing, I've seen your attitude to Chinese and coloureds. And Lane's attitude.[5] All these western Queensland bushmen that he's so proud of … do you think he's going to let them look for wives among the native women? Do you think there won't be divisions of opinion like there are here? One month without drink[6] and you'll be at each other's throats. (O'Neill, 1991a, p. 108)

On the Whipping Side continues O'Neill's exploration of the conflicts within the labour movement, but this time the conflicts are portrayed as occurring as much *within* the characters as between them. Lane is shown as a person who is 'fighting for political representation and at the same time becoming disillusioned with it' (O'Neill, 1991a, p. 8). In the course of the play, Frank moves from infatuation with Lane's utopian plans, to support for direct action against the troopers, to deciding to run for parliament. This last decision is questioned by his shearer mate Mick:

> … You'll find the seats too soft, and the whiskey too good, and the bush too far away to be real … And you'll hate yourself. Because you'll be thinkin' like a manager … You'll have stopped



THE SHEARERS' STRIKE: SKETCHES IN THE HUGHENDEN DISTRICT. [See page 826.]



Townsville foot infantry in Hughenden during the Shearers Strike 1891

thinkin' like a worker. (O'Neill, 1991a, p. 140)

By the end of the play, Frank and Moira have reversed their relative positions on Lane's Paraguayan venture:

Moira: … As Will says we can 'rewrite the history of humanity'. (pause) Come with me to South America.

Frank: No, Moira. I don't believe in it anymore. I never really did. (O'Neill, 1991a, p. 135)

On the Whipping Side also continues O'Neill's commitment to writing women into labour history. Moira plays an important role in the play, wrestling with her conflicting affections for Fairbairn and Frank and arguing politics with them both. Her sacking by the Education Board for 'consorting with undesirable elements' is consistent with the way in which female teachers were treated well into the next century. O'Neill reveals that patriarchy is not confined to the conservative side of politics in a brief scene between the shearer Ned Barry and his wife Evelyn:

Evelyn: But what about the kids! We should be able to plan out our lives better than this. We've got five children, Ned. We have to be able to feed them, to live with dignity.

Ned: Until we get justice for the working man, there'll be no dignity for anybody.

Evelyn: What about justice for working women, Ned? Why are these decisions always taken by men, when they just as surely involve us women and kids as well?

> Ned: I don't know love. That's the way it is. A man's gotta do what he thinks is right at the time. (O'Neill, 1991a, p. 41)

The fictional character of Helen, owner of the Clermont hotel, is another example of O'Neill's capacity to create complex and strong female roles. Helen is middle-aged, long ago deserted by her first love, an itinerant shearer, now widowed after a love-less marriage, and facing bankruptcy due in part to her support for the strikers. Her would-be suitor (and financial saviour), the ever optimistic and opportunistic local merchant Vincent Porter, who contrives to profit from both sides of the conflict, seems straight out of a Dickens' novel.

On the Whipping Side was produced by the Royal Queensland Theatre Company (RQTC) as a touring production in 1991, the centenary year of the shearers' strike. The production opened in Rockhampton (with Gough Whitlam in attendance) and toured central and northern Queensland before playing in Brisbane. The RQTC reported that the play was enthusiastically received by 'the capacity audiences that packed into theatres' in regional centres (RQTC, 1991). This assessment is borne out by the "performance reports" provided by the local secretaries of the Queensland Arts Council, which were unanimous in their praise for the performances (QAC, 1991).

A number of critics were extremely positive in their reviews of the Brisbane production. Shearer (1991) hailed the play as 'an accomplished piece' which 'delivered a nicely balanced and rather meaty delight'. Widdowson (1991) found the play 'lively and entertaining … an enjoyable and effortless way to come to grips with historical happenings'. Nemeth (1991) called it 'excellent theatre'. Hebden (1991) praised the 'astute direction' and 'powerful text'. Pollock (1991) described the play as 'heart-warming … funny, sad—even tragic … entertaining and thought-provoking'.

However, reviewers from three major media outlets, *The Australian*, the ABC, and *The Bulletin* were decidedly unenthusiastic.

Kiernander (1991) described O'Neill as a 'fact-fetishist … [who] assumes that the events are inherently interesting'. For Kiernander, 'the shearers' strike is not a living part of our shared cultural heritage … the story is just another strike narrative'. He concluded that the play is 'serious, likeable, enthusiastic, admirable, but also limited because it doesn't examine its own Utopian assumptions'.

Cotes (1991) described the play as "worthy" (in inverted commas) and acknowledged that it 'deals honestly with the dissensions in the ranks of the workers'. However, she found that 'there's a curious old-fashioned tone

to the play. Perhaps … the time for this kind of straight doco-drama has passed'. She felt that the production 'never comes to life' and that it was 'not a dramatically gripping play'.

Gough (1991) stated that while *On the Whipping Side* is 'a meticulous and passionate retelling of the story of the 1891 Queensland shearers' strike', it is 'didactic and uncompromisingly black and white'. She pondered whether 'the reason that O'Neill's plays leave me unmoved and even irritated' is because 'he works so hard to be ideologically correct' or 'because most of his multiple male characters … are divided so arbitrarily into goodies and baddies'.

As O'Neill points out, the play is capable of being appreciated on a number of levels:

> I intended the play to serve a pluralist purpose … Some see it as an entertaining history lesson, some see it as a historical analysis of the left, some see it as a critical celebration of the labour movement. Others see it as an interesting story about interesting characters. (O'Neill, 1991b)

However, O'Neill admits that in his plays he tries 'to make the political background as intrusive as possible' (quoted in Riley, 1996a). The less than stellar reviews perhaps reflect that many theatre-goers do not expect or look forward to critically evaluating social and political issues when they go to a show. As O'Neill observed, 'a lot of well-meaning people … actually never analyse the [capitalist] system' (quoted in Yallamas, 1996); a good proportion of these may not thank a playwright whose plays challenge them to do just that.

Second, a significant number of theatre-goers are not particularly knowledgeable about or sympathetic to left politics. While they may be attracted to 'an interesting story about interesting characters', their interest in the ideological conflicts of left is probably negligible. One suspects that they tend to see all on the left as of a kind (and allegedly portrayed as 'goodies' by O'Neill). That might explain why despite the fact that *On the Whipping Side* explicitly deals with the various and conflicting assumptions of labour movement activists, Kiernander thought these assumptions had been left unexplored.

On the Whipping Side was published in 1991 by Playlab Press. The publication includes a foreword by Aubrey Mellor (who directed the RQTC production) and an introduction by the playwright, who also provides a bibliography of relevant historical sources. The publication includes photos and sketches related to the shearers' strike. The Queensland Arts Council produced very useful "teacher's notes" to accompany the play (Cooper and Maloney, 1991). The play is currently

in print and available from Playlab Press.

The Hope of the World[7]

In 1985 the South East Queensland Electricity Board (SEQEB) announced that it intended to make use of contract and casual labour. The Electrical Trades Union (ETU) saw this as reduction in working conditions and a precursor to de-unionising and privatising the industry and called a strike of linesmen. In response, the Queensland government sacked over 1000 SEQEB staff who were members of the ETU. In support of the sacked workers, power station operators, who were members of the Municipal Officers Association (MOA), reduced power supplies causing blackouts across southern Queensland. The government declared a "state of emergency" (which was in effect for a month) and took measures to significantly increase penalties for individuals and organisations engaging in industrial action or protest. It sought and obtained the deregistration as a state union of the ETU. It passed legislation to facilitate greater use of contract and casual staff. Hundreds of people were arrested for protesting at rallies. Eventually, the strike was called off with the unions weakened and without the workers being re-instated (though the workers did receive some compensation in the early 1990s

Arrest of protester in SEQEB dispute

with the election of the Goss Labor Government).

The Hope of the World was first produced in Brisbane by the Queensland Theatre Company[8] in 1996 (interestingly, the year that the National/Liberal Coalition returned to government).

The Hope of the World is unique among O'Neill's labour history plays in at least two ways. First, it is about a labour dispute which most of the audience would have lived through, even if they hadn't participated in it, and in which he had some involvement. As reported on the *Workers Bush Telegraph* website (2016) O'Neill stood 'in protest, with many other believers, on a pubic footpath outside an electricity depot in Taringa'.

Second, although historical figures are alluded to, in *The Hope of the World* all of the characters are fictional. Further, the play does not go into specific details about the strike; that it is about the SEQEB dispute is never specifically acknowledged in the script, and the events in it could be said to parallel the historical events more than to depict them.

The Hope of the World is also the labour history play that comes the closest to a mainstream dramatic work. There is a relatively small cast and while political issues remain important, there is a greater emphasis than in the other plays on personalities and personal relationships. Jim and his wife Clare are at a crisis point in their marriage when Clare's former lover Red appears after a prolonged absence interstate and attempts to restart his romance with Clare. The strained relationship between the striker's wife Maureen and her mother Shirley is also explored at some length. In a media interview, O'Neill stated, '*The Hope of the World* is as much about relationships and a struggling marriage as a union dispute' (Gold Coast Bulletin, 1996).

There are also continuities, echoes and parallels between *The Hope of the World* and O'Neill's earlier plays. The most important is that the characters reflect a cross section of labour, occupying different places in its struggles, trying to make sense of the world, carving out different ideologies and strategies, arguing with each other and with themselves. O'Neill stated that the play:

> … deals with some issues which I think are universal to humanity to do with personal and political life … The personal and political conflicts in the play are about locating the enemy. Is the enemy out there or internal? How much is the enemy our own inability to come to terms with the real struggle we are involved in? (quoted in Yallamas, 1996)

Union secretary Jim, a former firebrand who now seeks an achievable, "realistic" outcome from the dispute and harbours parliamentary ambitions within the Labor Party, can be seen as a 1980's counterpart of Harry Coyne in *Faces in the Street*. Red Morrison, the journalist who holds on to his socialist principles, albeit from the relative safe position of interested onlooker and with a view to maximising his own advantage, is in some ways a more modern (and less sober) version of the William Lane of *On the Whipping Side*. The brash and committed but politically naïve rank and file activist Len O'Donnell[9] has parallels with Joe Regan of *Faces in the Street* and Frank Connolly of *On the Whipping Side*. Social worker Clare Dixon recalls teacher Moira Maguire in *On the Whipping Side* and house-wife Maureen O'Donnell recalls house-wife Evelyn Barry of *On the Whipping Side*.

As in his earlier plays, O'Neill employs humour strategically in *The Hope of the World*, both as a means of relieving the emotional and political tensions inherent in the drama and as illustrative of the Australian character.

Another interesting continuity is the use of a quasi-narrator/commentator—a feature of all of O'Neill's labour history plays. In *The Hope of the World*, commentary is provided by conservative radio talk-back host Shirley Condon (who is Len O'Donnell's mother-in-law). Shirley parallels the character of Mary Hall in *Faces in the Street*. Unlike Mary Hall, however, Shirley's situation has a poignancy of its own:

> Even though she has fought a personal life-long struggle—an alcoholic husband and bringing up a daughter who resents her, Shirley is still blinded by a sense of loyalty to the status quo. At the close of the play, she is still isolated and alone. (Dunne, 1996)

Most of O'Neill's labour history plays depict the heavy-handed brutality with which Queensland police have enforced "public order", violated civil rights and suppressed dissent. The portrayal of the operations of Queensland Special Branch in *The Hope of the World* is particularly stark.

Critical reaction to *The Hope of the World* followed the pattern described above in relation to *On the Whipping Side*—the views of those who found it compelling jostling with the views of those who found it too political and didactic. Kelly (1996) called it 'a courageous, important play'. Riley (1996b) stated that it was 'stimulating, challenging and thoughtful … a political and theatrical experience not to be missed'. Galloway (1996) stated that the play 'contains some of the most passionate political writing to be heard on the stage for some time … the passion of it sweeps you along'. Hope (1996) considered it 'a faultlessly

written production' that should receive 'nothing but praise'. Baldwin (1996) described the play as 'meaty material … which is Queensland in its heart, universal in its soul'. Cotes (1996) found it to be 'a powerful story of victimisation and betrayal'.

Brown (1996), on the other hand, felt that 'there is just way too much "debate" about "issues"', while Haxton (1996) faulted the play's 'over-reliance on political rhetoric'. Gough (1996) thought that O'Neill had matured as a playwright since writing *On the Whipping Side* and was not so tied down 'to the facile polarities of Left and Right'. She thought that *The Hope of the World* was 'more complex and therefore more honest' than O'Neill's earlier plays. However, she felt that 'every now and then, the agitprop creeps back in'.

A number of critics commented on the potential audience response to the play's politics. Galloway (1996) felt that 'there is no doubt that *The Hope of the World* will alienate a fair section of its audience'. Cotes (1996) concurred, opining that 'its unashamed partisanship [will] polarise the audiences'. Kelly (1996) described the play as 'uncompromising—to some, perhaps, alienating'. Hebden (1996) appeared to include herself in this category, asking: 'Do we really need to go back and relive the indignities of those years? The past is the past and resurrecting it doesn't mend bridges'. Almost as if in response, Cotes (1996) wrote:

> *The Hope of the World* is a brave attempt to remind us of a part of Queensland history that needs to be remembered, and if it does nothing else, it will generate heated post-performance discussion on both sides of the political fence.

That would be an outcome, it can be surmised, that would well-please O'Neill.

The Hope of the World has not been published.

Red Soil, White Sugar

Red Soil, White Sugar, the least known and most recent of O'Neill's labour history plays (and the only one about a union "victory"), was originally produced as a local production for the centenary of the sugar strike in 2011 in Childers (as part of the Crush Festival).[10] *Red Soil, White Sugar* has not to date been produced in a major centre.

Red Soil, White Sugar marked a return by O'Neill from the more intimate setting of *The Hope of the World* to the more historically detailed and sweeping style of *Faces in the Street* and *On the Whipping Side*. There is a large cast of historical and fictional characters and a chorus that (along with a newsboy who calls out headlines as he peddles his

RUSSIAN UNION FAMILIES IN BUNDABERG CAMP.

papers) interjects commentary, poetry and song throughout the action of the play. The play opens with a rousing scene in which unionists, growers and a chorus of various townsfolk sing about their individual concerns (growers about rain and beetles, unionists about pay and overwork), then join together to sing "It's all about the sugar".

The Queensland sugar industry strike of 1911 occurred in the wake of the laws brought in after federation prohibiting the use of South Sea Islander labour in cane fields or sugar mills (as part of the "White Australia Policy"). Previously, extensive use had been made of this cheap source of labour (under conditions amounting to little more than slavery—see Saunders, 1982). The new workforce sought improved wages (30s per week) and an eight-hour day, and by 1911 they were ready to strike to achieve these goals. The Colonial Sugar Refinery (CSR) resisted and brought in non-union labourers. The sugar workers were supported by other unions, most significantly waterside workers who refused to load non-union sugar. The CSR was supported (with some exceptions) by sugar growers. In the end, the strike achieved recognition of the union, a few improvements in conditions[11] and the establishment of a Royal Commission which established a standard wage structure for the industry.

As Saunders (1982, p. 172) observes:

> During the strike, the dynamics of conflict between small growers and wealthy millers; between millworkers and the millers; between field labourer, cane-cutter and the farmer—

SUGAR STRIKE OF 1911

Sir,—In The Courier-Mail of September 21 appeared a statement by Mr. Lamont regarding the part played by the Tasmanians as strike breakers in the sugar strike of 1911. I participated in the strike at Childers, where our camp was situated at the Lilly Lagoons. I came in contact with men from most parts of the world, including Tasmania, who were loyal to the principles of unionism and remained so throughout the strike. The police entered our camp and arrested 21 members, including Tasmanians. It is unfair to condemn a State or a large number of people because of a few misguided individuals. —I am, sir, &c.,

Moorooka. S. ARCHER.

Letter in Courier Mail 1935

> emphasized the basic problems of the economic and class structure within the industry …
>
> Conflict was inevitable when white employees would no longer assume the persona of servants, while many employers were still comfortable in the role of "master".

Childers, the setting for *Red Soil, White Sugar*, was a significant centre in the strike. When sixty-five workers at the Childers mill struck in June, they were issued with notices for breach of contract. The court cases related to these matters raised fundamental questions about the master/servant relationship. Initially, the local magistrate dismissed the charges on the basis that the Masters and Servants Acts of 1861 did not apply. The CSR appealed to the High Court. 'The High Court judges failed to agree on whether the Acts applied and referred it back to the Childers' Magistrates Court for redetermination' (Armstrong, 1983, p. 108). The 'grave legal doubts [that] were expressed as to the validity of the legislation in this area' seriously undermined the position of employers (Saunders, 1982, p. 180).

In July, a group of strikers met a train arriving in Childers carrying two Labor MLAs who had come to address them, but passengers also included a number of strike-breakers. In the last scene of Act One, O'Neill (2011, pp. 35–40) depicts how the situation descended into chaos when police attempted to arrest one of the unionists. Act Two opens with the newsboy and chorus chanting and singing sensationalist news reports of the incident: 'Railway station riot', 'Police battle mob', 'Childers a police garrison town', 'Disorder, anarchy' (Ibid., pp. 41–43).

Historical characters depicted in the play include conservative Queensland MLA Edward Swayne, Queensland Labor MLA Myles Ferricks, CSR general manager Edward Knox and Federal Labor Attorney General and acting Prime Minister, Billy Hughes. Hughes acted on behalf of the strikers in two significant ways: as a Labor Government Minister, he threatened to remove protection for the sugar industry if the wage demands were not met; and as president of the Waterside Workers' Federation, he imposed a ban on handling of non-union sugar

(Armstrong, 1983, p. 107). T.J. Ryan makes a brief appearance as a barrister in the breach of contract case. [12]

The main fictional characters in the play are Red, a young cane cutter, new to the industry and to trade unionism, who is none-the-less thoroughly committed to the strike; Max a sugar grower and Alice, Max's independently-minded daughter. There are a number of minor characters, such as various workers and coppers, the union organiser Felix McNabb, and the local shopkeeper, Florence Gilbert. One memorable character is the anti-union ganger, Bob McPherson, whose verbal exchanges with the strikers deliver humour and vitriol from both sides.

O'Neill picks up on some interesting tensions on both sides of the dispute. Amongst the sugar growers there was some sympathy for the unionists, whose claim was seen to be fairly reasonable. As Saunders (1982, p. 174) points out, the labour movement was aware of the precarious position of smaller growers, who were being gouged by CSR and faced being blacklisted at their local mills if they were seen to be supporting the unionists. This situation is exemplified in the play by the character of Max, a sugar grower who toes the CSR line and whose daughter Alice becomes romantically involved with Red.

On the workers' side, the union had to manage tensions between "gun" cane cutters who were happy to work on results-based contracts (with no specification of hours) and the ordinary cutters and mill hands who wanted standard hours and standard rates of pay. It also had to deal with the question of "alien labour". Saunders (1982, p. 172) emphasises the 'violently expressed racial antagonisms' of the unionists, which acted 'to obscure the wider issues of class consciousness and solidarity'. The brunt of this was directed at Melanesians and at Italian, Chinese and Japanese labourers who had been brought in as strike-breakers. In the play, the workers discuss race issues at a union meeting. O'Neill accurately portrays the position of the unionists (and that the views expressed by the character Red were very much a minority view), but he does not capture the viciousness of their racism:

Red: There's a lot of Islanders still here, workin' in the industry. Asiatics, coloureds. I've met some of 'em. Hard workers, just like us.

Felix: We went through all this ten years ago.

Red: Still doesn't make it right. Socialism means the brotherhood of humanity doesn't it? Asiatics and other aliens do the same work, they should get the same pay ...

Dickson: We're fighting for our own brotherhood.

Let them organise for themselves ...

Felix: Let's have the brotherhood of man by all means, but we have to keep demarcation between different races ... It took us years to get rid of the Kanakas. And we've still got a big struggle ahead of us if we don't want to work for Kanaka wages.

Thommo: When the first black gets a union ticket, my resignation 'll be the next item of business. (O'Neill, 2011, pp. 14–15)

In one of the play's closing scenes, the workers debate the announcement by the union that the strike has been settled. Many are angry that they were not consulted about the decision and disappointed with the less than optimal outcome. Felix, the union organiser, runs with the official union line—this is a victory and 'the best we can hope for' (O'Neill, 2011, p. 76). But others want to defy the union and stay out on strike. Red, who shares their anger, reluctantly comes to the view that, 'a strike is only a strike, not a revolution; that'll have to wait' (Ibid.).

The play ends, in a scene reminiscent of the ending of *Faces in the Street*, with the chorus singing a musical adaptation of Henry Lawson's "Something Better", ending with the line: ''Tis the hope of something better that will save us in the end'.

Musical Play based on Red Soil White Sugure, in Childers in 2016

Red Soil, White Sugar has not been published.

Conclusion

The labour plays of Errol O'Neill are important contributions to and valuable documents of Queensland theatre and labour history. It is extremely regrettable that of the five plays, only one is in print as of late 2016. That two of the plays have never been published and are therefore inaccessible even in library collections is even more disturbing. It is to be hoped that the plays will be published and performed in the future.

It is perhaps most appropriate to close by giving the last say about his work to the playwright himself:

> I don't think I am any less of an artist, writer or actor because I have a dominant political motive … I would not like to be seen as a neutral artist. There is no such thing as neutral art. All art is political. Even if you deny its political nature you get used by the system in certain ways. The more control you have over how your product gets used, the more effective you can be …
>
> Didacticism is not a bad word. Dogmatism is. Didacticism means teaching. All you are doing as a left-wing or critical or Marxist person … is to put on the agenda questions which in the dominant culture don't get raised …
>
> I value the intellectual critical side of … [theatre]. I have always tried to get inside the plays, writing and developing them, researching the material and presenting it as an offering: here is my view expressed in a dramatic form about this bit of history or this political reality or issue. I offer it to the audience for their enjoyment and edification. (quoted in Riley, 1996a)

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Notes

1 The author would like to thank Mary Kelly who kindly provided access to Errol O'Neill's papers.

2 '"On the Whipping Side" is a shearing term meaning the last stage of the shearing of the fleece. The shearer first takes off the belly wool (which is usually dirty and full of grass seeds) the shears down one side (the "long blow"), then turns the sheep over for the final stage (the "whipping side") so that the fleece will come off in one piece' (Cooper and Maloney, 1991, p. 17). It is also the title of the shearers' song sung at the commencement of the play.

3 'The *Brisbane Courier* maintained a constant stream of distorted reports alleging widespread violence and drunkenness at the strike camps' (Fitzgerald, quoted in Cooper and Maloney, 1991, p. 32).

4 Premier Samuel Griffith 'ordered in the military; but it was … Tozer who actually ran the campaign' (Evans, 2004, p. 99).

5 Lane was thoroughly racist. His first novel, *White or Yellow? A Story of the Race-War of A.D. 1908*, is described as 'a racist polemic' (Souter, 1983) and the journal he co-founded, *The Boomerang*, was strongly supportive of a "white Australia" and disparaging of non-whites.

6 Lane was a teetotaller.

7 The title refers to the longstanding slogan in the Australian labour movement, 'The unity of labour is the hope of the world'.

8 By this time, the company had ceased to the use the term "Royal" in its title.

9 At one point in the play Len is accused of being a "Trotskyite". He responds 'I don't even know what a Trotskyite is' (O'Neill, 1996, p. 38).

10 The play was developed as a part of the Regional Stages project, a joint initiative of the Community Partnerships Section of the Australia Council and the Bundaberg Regional Council. In 2016, Tony Carey, who had written the music for the 2011 production, adapted the play as a musical entitled *RaW*, which was also produced in Childers with a local cast.

11 Millworkers in the main achieved an outcome of 30s for a 48 hour week, but field workers in the main did not.

12 Ryan, later Labor Premier, represented the defendants in the case. The Ryan Government rescinded the Masters and Servants Acts in 1916 (Saunders, 1982, p. 182).

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Disadvantage and Suffering: A Failure of Education

Ian Mackie
Gary MacLennan

The 2015 *Dropping of the Edge* report, by the Catholic Social Services, documents clearly that the remote Indigenous communities are sites of devastating poverty and disadvantage.[1] Sutton, Smallwood and Macdonald have all in their different ways drawn attention to the reality of Indigenous suffering.[2] Why is this suffering so? The Indigenous intellectual Noel Pearson is very confident that he has the answer. In a series of lectures, articles, interviews and books, which are hosted and promoted by the Centre for Independent Studies, the Institute for Public Affairs and the Murdoch Press, Pearson has ceaselessly preached that the problem is that 'passive welfare' has the communities in a stranglehold. He also says that the dominance of left-wing thought is preventing the solution of making welfare payments conditional rather than a basic right as at present.[3]

The antidote to the thought of Pearson, and of those who support and fund him with public money, is a careful examination of history. A study of the historical record reveals, we would maintain, that the problems faced by Indigenous communities today begin with the exclusion of Indigenous Australians from the national economy through intergenerational unemployment and the absence of a serious endeavour to provide a quality education. This process began with the Equal Wage case in 1968, when the pastoralists responded to a court directive to pay equal wages to their Indigenous workers through a callous policy of mass sackings.[4]

We note here Macdonald's argument that the violence and corruption in today's Indigenous communities is a direct result of the attacks on Indigenous personhood and ways of being in the world that has been unleashed by the neo-liberal state from the 1980s onwards.[5] We are in sympathy with much of the case that Macdonald makes against the ontological violence that is currently being inflicted on Aboriginal Australia by the neo-liberal state with its assaults on the egalitarian culture of demand sharing and caring for kin. Indeed, it is his championing of neo-liberalism and the so-called 'road of Adam Smith' that is the source of our opposition to the policies and politics of Noel Pearson. Nonetheless, the primary thrust of what follows is that protracted exclusion from the workforce and the absence of a quality education are the primary sources of contemporary Indigenous suffering.

The impact of long term unemployment is well known. Mark in his review of Cottle's study on the trauma of protracted unemployment writes

> In all cases, the loss of work is a catastrophic blow to both the individual and his family. Severe health problems routinely occur, including heart attacks, strokes, cancer and suicide. The toll on the psychological health of the family is equally great. Stress, anger, and depression are routinely felt by all involved. There is a downward spiral of deterioration as the length of unemployment increases. [6]

We think work, along with land and culture, was also an essential element in the identity of the Aboriginal worker and as such its loss was traumatic. We discuss how the absence of work is at the root of Indigenous suffering through a study of the role of Indigenous workers during WW2 and a study of the political economy of one particular Aboriginal reserve, Doomadgee.

We have a dual focus—the economy and education. We deal with education, not only to refute the myth of the Golden Age of Missionary education, but also to draw attention to the cost that Indigenous Australians have had to pay, because they were not given an education adequate to link school and work.[7] When market forces turned viciously against Indigenous Australians, the lack of an education left them highly vulnerable. The link between education and work forms a complex dialectic. During the height of pastoral employment, work acted as a pull-out factor. When work in the pastoral industry ceased, the education provided was not of a sufficient standard to equip the students for alternative work. Moreover, the absence of jobs continues to impact back on the educational system, in that Indigenous communities cannot see the point of sending their children to school when there are no jobs.

Indigenous Labour in the war years

The impact of Connie Field's great documentary, *The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter*, has been such that few, especially on the Left, are unaware of the role that women workers played during WW2.[8] Feminists have pointed out that, because of the war, women moved into skilled professions that had been denied to them previously, only to be thrown out of these jobs when the men returned from the battlefields.[9] After the war the iron ceiling of patriarchy once more descended.

What is much less well known is the contribution to the war effort in Australia of the Indigenous work force. The ingratitude displayed towards women workers would seem to have its Indigenous parallel in Australia as the brutal treatment of the striking workers in Palm Island in 1957 and Yarrabah in 1958 shows.[10] May in her account

of the post-war period points out that a new generation of white managers took over at the stations and that as a whole they were unsympathetic to the Indigenous stockmen.[11] Moreover, despite the contribution of the Indigenous workforce, Indigenous Queenslanders' lives continued to be governed by repressive and paternalistic legislation.[12]

The reports for the war years 1939–45 show a uniform picture. In 1939, for example, demand for labour exceeded supply, especially in the Far North. As the war began to have an effect on the availability of "white labour" demand for Indigenous Labour increased. Again, demand was in excess of supply. It should be noted, however, that the strength of demand did not mean equal pay for the Indigenous worker. White workers continued to receive greater remuneration.[13]

The report for the year ending June 1942 indicates a major deployment of Indigenous labour. Mobile gangs of up to 400 men were organised and sent throughout the state where the need for labour was greatest. The peanut, cotton, sugar and maize industries all depended on these mobile gangs. In addition the pastoral industry continued to be a major dependency. As a result of this activity, the Indigenous workforce increased from 1,982 to 2,497 in 1942. This was out of a total Indigenous population of 19,103. The report comments

> It can hardly be expected that these men, entering callings in which they have had no previous experience, could attain efficiency comparable with competent whites but it can be claimed that they are rendering a good service under conditions in many cases new to them.[14]

The men were supervised by department officials. The Director reports that they were carefully watched to see if they could perform tasks they were not used to. The report for 1944 evinces pleasure at being able to report that in the main results were satisfactory.[15] The mobile gangs were to continue, although greatly reduced in numbers, after the war so essential they were to the cane harvest.[16]

Important as the mobile gangs were, the backbone of Indigenous employment was in the pastoral industry. The war provided opportunities for advancement in the industry, and the 1945 report notes that there were 'numerous cases of aboriginals and half-bloods being employed as Head Stockmen and in other responsible positions'.[17] After the war the reconstruction of the pearling industry led to the replacement of the Japanese divers who had dominated the industry in the pre-war period. Their place was taken by Indigenous divers and the comment is 'The established impression that Islanders are incompetent, incapable, or unwilling

to undertake dress diving work cannot now be accepted'.[18]

It is difficult to judge the impact of the war work on the Indigenous workers. May speculates that the Aboriginal workers may have become more difficult to discipline in the old way.[19] 'Crime among Aboriginals' was a regular feature in the annual reports. The Chief Protector, J. W. Bleakley noted in 1938 that crime was generally low and this was satisfactory.[20] In 1935, 34 offences occurred. In 1936, the number of offences was 54. This rose to 61 offences in 1937. [21]

The report for 1939 recorded 68 offences, most of which were for 'drunkenness' as generally was the case (Director of Native Affairs, 1940). The report for 1940, however, specifies 105 offences; a figure which may bear out May's observation that the impact of changes in their work patterns may have made the Indigenous workers more difficult to discipline.

Officially however the reports stressed the success of the mobilisation of the Aboriginal workforce. They were essential to the harvesting of maize at Atherton, peanuts at Kingaroy, arrowroot at Coomera, the cotton crop in the Callide Valley and cane cutting at Ingham and Bundaberg. The report for 1942 notes

> In addition to the foregoing every man suitable for employment in the pastoral industry has been recruited for such work from church missions and Government settlements. Including men employed in the essential primary industries, there are approximately 2,800 aboriginals, male and female, employed in Queensland, the majority being in occupations essential to the war effort.[22]

The Doomadgee Story

Doomadgee was created as an Aboriginal reserve in 1931. The population was 138 in 1938. In the 2011 census that had grown to 1,257.[23] Doomadgee community's background is intimately connected with its status as a mission run by the Open or Christian Brethren Assembly. Sympathetic accounts of the activities of the missionaries are provided by Akehurst and McNaught.[24]

Forming a judgement about the role of the missionaries in the colonial context is a controversial matter. Vine Deloria Jr, a Native American activist theologian and historian, recounts how 'An old Indian once told me that when the missionaries arrived they fell on their knees and prayed. Then they got up and preyed on the Indian'.[25] The hostility revealed in this anecdote does have its Australian counterpart. Thus, a Queensland-wide survey conducted in 1978 by the Aboriginal Legal Service and the Foundation for Aboriginal Research and Action uncovered a good

deal of negative feeling about State and church control of Aboriginal reserves.[26]

The Aboriginal Legal Service's visit to Doomadgee in 1978 evinces a certain hostility towards the missionaries in that it notes that those who supported the missionaries had better housing, while those who lived in the tents and shacks were more militant.[27] It is important, though, that any judgement we make is put into context. What precisely is that context? The official version has been given and defended by Windschuttle and Johns and others.[28] Theirs is a narrative of the bringing of civilisation to a barbarian land and a benighted people. A more succinct and credible statement of the context is given by Ashenden. He writes 'the wants and desires of the Frontier were: for land and water; for cheap labour; for sex; and, often enough, for blood'.[29]

Consider now the fate of two young Aboriginal girls in that context. Akehurst narrates how the first missionaries in Doomadgee were approached by an Aboriginal man, Major Walden, to take his daughter into their care. They did so and Nina became 'a loved *first daughter* in the family and a loving, voluntary nursemaid to her two little white brothers, Frank and Victor. She adored them and they likewise loved her'.[30]

Photograph 1.[31] The use of photographs, as in Photograph 1, has of course to be viewed with some

Nina Walden when joining the Akehursts and the change after several months of loving care

caution. Their use in the Indigenous context seems to have been pioneered by the notorious American Educator and founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Captain Pratt. His practice was explicitly genocidal in that he infamously declared that it is necessary to kill the Indian to save the man.[32] He photographed his students in native gear and then cut their hair and dressed them in uniforms to show how he had "civilized" them.[33] Nonetheless, the fate that could have befallen Nina is revealed in the next case.

The second girl was part of a group that was removed from North Queensland to the penal colony of Palm Island at the same time as Nina was joining the Akehurst family. Among the group was a fourteen year old girl. By the time she arrived the police officer escorting the group had got her pregnant.[34] No one has recorded the girl's name. There are no photographs of her. She has vanished from history and become

part of the 'wreckage upon wreckage' hurled in front of the feet of the Angel of History.[35]

Apart from their role in providing succour to the Indigenous people they encountered, the missionaries led and created an Indigenous economy which was of very impressive dimensions. Doomadgee had a pastoral and an agricultural basis. Everyone was employed and some 70 men left the community every year to work in the pastoral industry. For the purposes of this article, though, it is also important to come to a judgement on the educational legacy left by the missionaries.

Here, the record is less impressive. From 1931 to 1956 schooling figured very low in the order of priorities. For instance when Mrs Read was absent in 1947 very little education took place.[36] Mrs Read worked part time in 1948.[37] There was a short school year also in 1949.[38] This was followed by short years in 1950, 1951, 1952, 1953 and 1954.[39] Again, it is important to place these figures in context. May cites an Amnesty International survey which found that 53 per cent of Aboriginal workers had received no education. Only 27 per cent had progressed to Grade 3 or 4. Even allowing for the low educational standards of the time, these figures still shock.[40] May notes that the lack of education severely restricted the jobs that Aborigines could undertake.[41]

Added to this was the problem of the pull-out exercised by the pastoral Industry. The report states

> Boys are encouraged to learn mechanical and various other forms of work, but almost without exception, their one ambition is to become stockmen, despite the risks and thrills. A mission boy somehow seems to be able to ride the very first time he is in the saddle.[42]

The following data for 1949 is typical account of the balance between agriculture, the pastoral industries and schooling.

> School Staff—Mrs G. Read (normally in the past), assisted by six native teachers. Progress was quite good until Mrs. Read had to leave the work to receive medical treatment. *The school has been closed since that date*.
>
> Mrs P. Roberts is a new staff member expected at Doomadgee early in June, when the school will be reopened. Miss Roberts will conduct the classes until further expected (qualified) assistance arrives later in the year.
>
> Years' school returns. 31/3–30/11/48,—number of days open, 172; Total attendances, 12, 908; average attendance—girls, 47; boys 28; total, 75.

Classification (as at 30th November, 1948)

Class	Boys	Girls	Total
Prep 1	12	10	22
Prep II	6	11	17
III	4	6	10
IV	4	6	10
Grade I	5	6	11
II	–	4	4
III		6	6
Total			80

Manual Instruction

Boys—general stock and station work. A few boot and saddle repairs. Some receiving instruction in engineering and general maintenance work, steel frame building, &c.

Girls—Sewing, domestic and agricultural work.

Industrial Development

Labour demand very brisk. All available labour is out on employment. Wages have been raised, bringing the average earnings of station hands to 45s and drovers to 60s, plus 5s if wife not otherwise supported by employer. As higher rates are being paid for white labour, a further rise is contemplated on July 1st.

Agricultural

Area available 34 acres fenced and prepared for use…Area under cultivation 8½ acres vegetable under spray irrigation. Two acres grown on seasonal rains. Two and a-half acres fruit and bananas.

Harvest for year to 31/3/49

Vegetables—sweet potatoes, 2 tons 13 cwt; melons, 1 ton; pumpkins, 10 cwt; total 4 tons 3 cwt

Fruit bananas, 95 doz; lemons, 15 cases; also a few oranges, mandarins, and papaws.[43]

It was not until the arrival of Lionel Fawsett and Miss Rossow in 1957 that qualified teachers were available.[44] This meant that there two teachers coping with a pupil intake of 121.[45] The evidence then from the protectorate reports is clear. There was no golden age of missionary education for Indigenous Australians in Doomadgee or indeed elsewhere in Australia.[46] As a consequence of this neglect of education, there is an absence of a viable reservoir of educated older citizens in Doomadgee who have the lived experience of the value of an education, and who can guide, inspire and motivate the youth of today. Such a situation is not, of course, confined to Doomadgee.

Conclusion

The suffering of Aboriginal Australia has grown to such an extent that it can no longer be ignored. That, for us, explains the Rudd apology of 2007.[47] In this article we have sought to oppose strongly neo-liberal prescriptions[48] and so-called solutions for Indigenous disadvantage. We have examined the historical record and showed that once there was genuine full employment in Aboriginal communities. It is true that this employment was exploitative.[49] The Protectors were systematic and ruthless in their determination to provide an Indigenous labour force, whose wages could be stolen. This is an injustice which has yet to be remedied.[50] Nevertheless, as Kojeve's reading of Hegel's master-slave dialectic showed, out of the exploitative capital-labour relationship emerged slaves (workers) whose confidence was based on their ability to work on the world.[51] Moreover, the performance of the Aboriginal workforce, especially during WW2, was such that it gives the lie to the old canard, recycled by Gary Johns, that Indigenous Australians lack a work ethic.[52]

We would also repeat our argument that, contra Pearson, the current unsatisfactory situation is not due to the existence of the welfare state. Rather, we identify protracted unemployment and the absence of a quality education as the main sources of Indigenous disadvantage. To say this, does not mean that we disregard Macdonald's impassioned defence of Indigenous being in the face of neo-liberal onslaughts.[53] Still, we wish to draw attention to the inadequacies of Indigenous education and the truth of the trauma of long term unemployment, and how it corrodes one's health and one's humanity.[54]

Notes

1 Mogg, M., Prideaux, J., & Beavis, A. (2015). *Dropping off the Edge 2015*.
2 Sutton (2009); Smallwood (2015); Macdonald (2010)
3 Karvelas, 2013; Pearson, 2000, 2004, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b
4 Langton, 2002; May, 1994
5 Macdonald, 2010
6 Rank (2002, p.700
7 We use the phrase 'quality education' to describe the kind of education outlined by Marx in the Geneva Resolution of the International Workingmen's Association in 1866. Marx, who was heavily influenced by Robert Owen's experiments in education in Lanarkshire, envisaged a close relationship between work and education (Castles & Wüstenberg, 1979, pp.10–42).
8 Field (1980)
9 Colman, 1995; Kolmar, Killian, Liebowitz, Derbyshire, & Pierman, (2002)
10 Watson (2010)
11 May (1994)
12 (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service, 1979
13 May, 1994
14 Director of Native Affairs, 1942, p.1
15 Director of Native Affairs, 1944, p.1
16 Queensland Department Health and Home Affairs, 1947, p.1
17 Chief Protector, 1945, p.1
18 Queensland Department Health and Home Affairs, 1947, p.2

19 May, 1994
20 Queensland Home Secretary's Department, 1938, p.7
21 Queensland Home Secretary's Department, 1938, p.7
22 Diector of Native Affairs, 1943, p.1
23 Centre for the Government of Queensland, 2015
24 Akehurst (1993); McNaught (1994)
25 1972, p.105
26 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service, 1979, pp.81–107
27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Legal Service, 1979, p.148
28 Bolt, 2014; Johns, 2010, 2013; Windschuttle, 2002, 2009
29 as cited in Smallwood, 2011, p.73
30 Akehurst, 1993, p.25; original emphasis
31 Source Akehurst 1993, p.25
32 Pratt, 1892
33 Adams, 1995; Churchill, 2004
34 Watson, 2010, p.78
35 Benjamin, 1977, p.259
36 Queensland Department Health and Home Affairs, 1947, pp.29–30
37 Queensland Department Health and Home Affairs, 1948, p.35
38 Queensland Department of Health and Home Affairs, 1949, p.37
39 Director of Native Affairs, 1953; Queensland Department of Health and Home Affairs, 1950; Queensland Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 1954; Queensland Department of Health and Home Affairs, 1951, 1952
40 Logan, 1992; Logan & Watson, 1992; Meadmore, 2003
41 May, 1994, p.15
42 Director of Native Affairs, 1953, p.40
43 Queensland Department of Health and Home Affairs, 1949, pp.37–38; emphasis added
44 Queensland Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 1957
45 Queensland Chief Protector of Aboriginals, 1957
46 Cadzow, 2010; Fletcher, 1989; Tatz, 2008
47 Rudd, 2008
48 Harvey, 2007
49 It would be no exaggeration to say the relationship resembled the 'primitive accumulation' described so eloquently in Marx (1867/1974, pp.702–716).
50 Kidd, 1997, 2006
51 Hegel, 1807/1977; Kojève, 1969
52 Johns, 2006
53 Macdonald, 2010
54 Cottle, 2003; Janlert, H., & Hammarström, 2014; Rank, 2002

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The Travels of a Slim Book: Rockhampton Stonemasons, 1890–1899 and Beyond[1]

John Dargavel

If you travel to the streets of Rockhampton you can tell of the Customs House, the Town Hall, the Post Office and other nineteenth and early twentieth century stone buildings that you saw there, and if you delve into their history you can tell of their architects and the dates they were opened, but rarely anything of the people who actually built them. But somehow a slim book has survived that provides a tiny glimpse into their stonemasons. And that slim book has its own traveller's tale to be told here.

It starts in June 1890, when it was bought in Rockhampton, probably by William Robertson. We know nothing of where it was made or its first long journey to the shop. It is a very proper 'Minute Book', so labelled in gold on its spine, of foolscap size, a centimetre thick, with board covers and 184 pages of lined paper. On the evening of Tuesday, 17th Robertson went to a meeting with nine of his brother masons. They were to form the Rockhampton Branch Lodge of the United Operatives Stonemasons Union of Queensland. Brother Moffatt

was to be President, Wm Sills, Vice President, J. Innes, Treasurer, Wm Robertson, Secretary, and J. McNeill was to be the Tyler–the traditional title of the membership officer. They signed up John Sanderson, John Foley, Geo. Philp and Wm Easdale as members, agreed to meet on alternate Tuesdays, and to share the cost of the room rent. Four more members were signed up in July, W. Sills was to be Shop Steward, John Foley was to be the delegate to the Federal District Council, and trade information was to be sought from other states. Robertson took the book home to write up the minutes on the kitchen table, neatly with nary a blot.

Page by page, brief minutes of the meetings were recorded. The masons had to follow union procedures by having quarterly meetings with elections; this was difficult when there were so few of them, but they appointed an auditor and sent their dues to Brisbane. Attendance must have fallen, as an entry in August notes that members were to be fined if they missed a quarterly meeting. They didn't elect a Secretary in September election and the book records fewer meetings until the 'no attendance' or 'no minutes' entries in December and January 1891. They struggled to keep the Lodge going, but a move to the convivial Stanley Hotel was at first successful, but there were other forces at work: the economic depression of the 1890s and the political rise of labour. The minutes, carefully recorded in the small book give little explanation, beyond noting that in May, the Lodge resolved to withdraw from the Australian Labour Federation. In June, Bro Laird wanted to give up his office as shop steward, and a special meeting on 19 June, when it was just one-year old, the Lodge resolved 'that the books be taken to Brisbane to the Parent Lodge'. The slim book was off on the next of its many journeys.

The book lay unused in Brisbane for almost eight years. How easily it might have been lost! But it was safely returned for the re-opening of the Rockhampton Branch on Friday, 14 April 1899. Joe Innes who had been in the original branch was there with thirteen of his brother masons. Work must have been picking up in Rockhampton because the minutes record that Wm Easdale came back the next month, and clearances were received for William Dargaville and Bro Dumbrell who had come from other states. They also record that William Turner would not be admitted until he paid his dues to the Sydney Lodge; but he was later allowed to pay them off at five shillings a fortnight. Working hours were an ongoing issue that needed a special meeting in October. Its minutes record that if overtime was called for the masons would work from 6 to 8, 9 to 1, and 2 to 6. From June, the book records the monthly meetings until 8th December and then it stops. Its pages give no indication about what happened. Was the branch too small

to function effectively? Was it caught up in the struggles to form the Labor party? Did work dry up? The slim book can shed no light, but we do know that it went on another journey, back to the union in Brisbane. There it lay forgotten, perhaps at the back of some dark cupboard, for forty years. Again, how easily might it have been lost!

War. By 1941 it had been going for two years, the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbour, Singapore fell, and at home paper like many things was becoming harder to find. The union's State Secretary hunted for a book in which he could jot down rough minutes each month, sometimes fortnightly, until he could get them typed up and approved; and there it was waiting for him, a slim book with 160 blank pages. It was never going to be the fair copy, so pencil would do, and it didn't need to be specially cared for; taken to and fro it got battered in its travels. But it served its purpose well. On Tuesday on 10 December, 1946 the stonemasons were preparing for their annual dinner; twenty gallons of beer had been contributed by the Bulimba brewery, but Bro Thorpe was charged to get ten more. The year was coming to an end, and the slim book was full. It was no longer needed, but somehow it survived for another forty years, until it entered the most risky period of its life; the era of amalgamating small unions into larger stronger ones. In 1991 the stonemasons union was de-registered. Who would bother to keep such an old book? William Julius Henry (Joe) Harris (1922–2002) would.

Joe Harris was a carpenter, union and labour activist, journalist, writer and labour historian. He saved the slim book among all the boxes and boxes of records of stonemasons, carpenters, industrial and labour organisations that he salvaged when officials retired or when offices were being closed or moved. At first he took them to his home in Norman Park, and later took most of them on the short journey to Queensland's John Oxley Library. After he died in 2002, his widow sent the remainder there. The slim book was in safe hands, but it still had a long journey to make. Harris had been corresponding with the Archives of Business and Labour at the Australian National University since the 1960s when it was already building up its large collection of labour records. The Australian National University was the right place for it, and in 2003 it made the journey with all the rest of Harris' collections to the re-named Noel Butlin Archives Centre.[2] But that was not the end of its story. Its record of the ten masons that had started their short-lived branch in Rockhampton was to gain world recognition.

The slim book was one of the 317 minute books of nineteenth century, pre-Federation Australian trade unions that collectively were deemed worthy of formal recognition by

1

Branch Lodge of the United, Operative Stonemasons' Union of Queensland, Opened at Rockhampton June 17th 1890

Officers, Brother Moffat President. Brother Wm Sills, Vice President, Brother J. Innes Treasurer, Brother J. McNeill Tyler, Brother Wm Robertson Secretary,

proposed and seconded that John Sanderson, become a member of this Society Carried, proposed and Seconded that John Folly, become a member of this Society Carried proposed and seconded that George Philp, become a member of this Society Carried, Proposed and Seconded that William Eastdale, become a member of this Society Carried, proposed and seconded that this Lodge meet every alternate Sunday evening at eight Oclock Carried, proposed and seconded that the Rent of Room be paid at close of meeting Carried, proposed and seconded that Brother John Folly, be Vice President Carried

Lodge meeting held Tuesday night, July 1st 1890
proposed and seconded that Alexander Galloway, become a member of this Society Carried,
proposed and seconded that Jessie Folkes become a member of this Society Carried; proposed by Brother J McNeill, and seconded by Brother J Innes, that George Reid, is a fit and proper person to become a member of this Society, Carried,
proposed by Brother Moffat, and seconded by Brother Wm Sills, that Brother John Folly, be appointed to represent this Lodge, at the Federal District Council, now forming at Rockhampton Carried

UNESCO's Australian Memory of the World Committee in April 2011.[3] They were a precious record of the past for the future. But recognition is not conservation; and the battered slim book would need repair if it was to last. A small voluntary group, the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre, had been raising money for just such needs and was able to pay for it to be professionally conserved. Its broken back was carefully repaired to prevent it falling apart, its original 'Minute Book' title was retained and an archival quality box was made to store it in.

But its longest travels were yet to come. Each of its pages has been digitised and made available on the internet.[4] The record that William Robertson started so carefully on his Rockhampton kitchen table in 1890 will perhaps be read on the other side of the world in other times.

Notes

1 An earlier version of this paper was published in the Friends of the Noel Butlin Centre Newsletter, 38, June 2016, pp.6–8.

2 Australian National University Archives, Joe Harris Collection deposit 2, Rockhampton Branch of the United Operative Stonemasons Union, NBAC Z625/35.

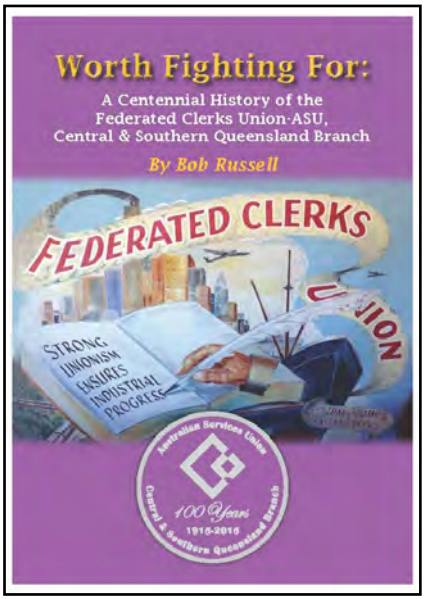
3 Inscription 37. The Minute Books of Pre-Federation Australian Trade Unions. They are held in the collections of twelve institutions, see http://www.amw.org.au/.

4 An access agreement is required, see http://archives.anu.edu.au/using-archives/copying-records.

Review of

Bob Russell (2016) *Worth Fighting For: A Centennial History of the Federated Clerks Union—ASU Central and Southern Queensland Branch*, Cornerstone Press 2016

by John Martin



Worth Fighting For: A Centennial History of the Federated Clerks Union—ASU Central and Southern Queensland Branch was commissioned to commemorate the centenary of the Central and Southern Branch (C&SB) of what was known for most of its existence as the Federated Clerks Union (FCU). Bob Russell demonstrates his skills, as both an author and a

researcher, in this fascinating history of the C&SB.

Whether familiar with the C&SB or not, *Worth Fighting For* provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of white collar unionism that makes it a very useful read for anyone interested in labour history, particularly in Queensland. *Worth Fighting For* chronicles the various advances and challenges faced by all Australian unions, as well as the dramatic changes to the Australian industrial relations landscape.

More than merely an industrial relations discussion, *Worth Fighting For* also provides a graphic account of the political upheavals within the branch of this union that reflected broader societal changes. The transformation of the C&SB provides a microcosm of geopolitical and societal changes that were playing out at a national and even global level.

Chapter 1 is an introduction and explains that, by necessity, the primary focus of *Worth Fighting For* is in relation to the period from the 1970s onwards. Chapter 2 sets out the evolution of clerical employment in Australia and the formation of the Branch and its development. The favourable environment for unions that had existed in Queensland until the Hanger Decision meant that the C&SB was the largest branch of the FCU Australia-wide. Chapter 2 develops the scene for some of the industries in which the Branch operated as well as the curious attitude towards gender equity issues adopted by the National Civic Council (NCC) aligned leadership of a union that had such a high proportion of woman as members.

Chapter 3 details the impact that massive social change had on the C&SB and its leadership. The late John Forrester (Branch Secretary 1971—1976) moving from Sydney to Brisbane may have appeared to be merely a rearrangement of like-minded union officials within the FCU. Mr Forrester however proved not to be the NCC loyalist that some might have expected. Fractures within the Right-dominated leadership of the union and the appointment of officials whose nominal religion may have belied their underlying beliefs, would set the scene for much of the future.

The battle for the control of the C&SB when the existing leadership apparently lost touch with its membership is contained in Chapter 4. In the current political and industrial climate, it is now difficult to believe that decisions were made on behalf of union members, by the NCC-backed leadership, that would have such a detrimental impact. Interviews with Branch Secretary (1982—1994) Bernadette Callaghan and her supporters provide an insight into the "straw that broke the camel's back" and triggered the successful

challenge of the NCC-backed leadership.

The election of Callaghan's 'Better Deal Team' was not the end of the matter and Chapter 5 discusses the poisoned relationship between the new leadership of the C&SB and the Right-dominated national FCU leadership. The national organisation must have seen the leadership change as an aberration and assumed that the conservative membership of the C&SB would return to their senses after their flirtation with socialists and feminists amongst the Better Deal Team. The extent to which neither side was willing to budge demonstrates their commitment but the waste of finances and effort funnelled towards an internal battle illustrates the lost opportunities to the C&SB following the leadership change.

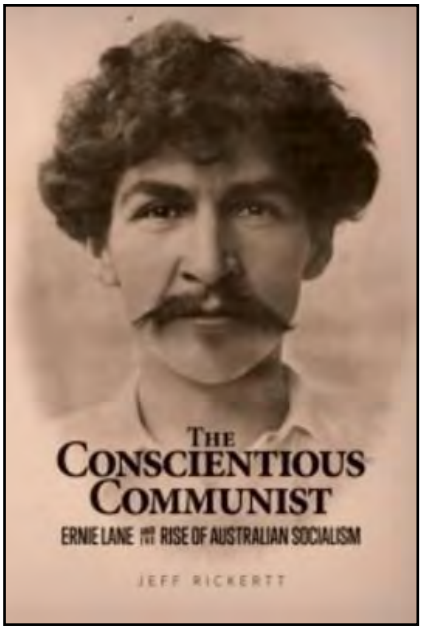
With protagonists of the battles moving on, and the FCU amalgamated with other unions and became the Australian Services Union. Chapter 6 demonstrates how the end to the internal battle between the C&SB and the national organisation was timely, in that the broader union movement was now facing some fairly serious challenges. Declining union membership and the shift from centralised wage fixation to enterprise bargaining was difficult enough for most unions but was acutely felt by this white collar union. The leadership pursued an organising strategy to manage the new challenges it faced but this new strategy was not endorsed by everybody. Another challenge faced the leadership of the C&SB but this one in the 1990s did not result in a change to the elected full-time officials.

The final chapter, Chapter 7, outlines the most recent incarnation of the CS&B with its amalgamation with the QPSU. An amalgamation that did not fit the original blueprint, the creation of the Together Union is, as Bob Russell puts it, a fitting book end to the history of this extraordinary union.

Review of

The Conscientious Communist by Jeff Rickertt

Howard Guille



Jeff Rickertt, The Conscientious Communist: Ernie Lane and the Rise of Australian Socialism, North Melbourne, Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2016, $39.95

There was a time when Queensland led Australia and Australia led the English-speaking societies in left politics. There was a time when the debate in the ALP was about the best way to achieve socialism. There was a time when the Australian Workers Union (AWU) was a fighting union and some of its delegates were in the left of the ALP.

This was the time of Ernest Henry (Ernie) Lane (1868–1954) one of the most active and prominent people in the left in Queensland. He is described as a '*propagandist for socialism*'.[1] In the 1890s he helped organise the Socialist League and then the Social Democratic Vanguard. He was the Chair of the Brisbane Branch of the Amalgamated Workers' Association and, after its amalgamation into the AWU, elected to its executive. From 1916–23, he was an AWU delegate on the Queensland Central Executive of the ALP. He resigned from the ALP in 1926 rather than sign the anti-communist pledge.

Ernie Lane is the subject of Jeff Rickertt's superb biography, '*The Conscientious Communist*'. According to Rickertt, Lane was a '*died-in-the-wood revolutionary industrialist, a One Big Union (OBU) man through and through*' (p209). But he was a communist, not a Communist; that is, he did not become a member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). In '*Dawn To Dusk — Reminiscences of a Rebel'* published in 1936, *Ernie Lane* described his political growth as the '*emergence from darkness to light, from the soul destroying philosophy of capitalist individualism to the inspiring humanitarianism of communism*'.[2] His thinking, writing, and most importantly actions, were about getting the labour movement—industrial and political—

to be a mass movement for socialist progress. He was a '*cipher for all the major currents of radical dissent of his times*' (p206).

The book is a story of a life and a story of Queensland (and to a lesser extent Australian) socialism. The life is described chronologically from his arrival in 1884 as a 15 years old assisted immigrant from the United Kingdom. His first job was at a dairy farm in Nundah; within a year he was employed as a clerk in a city grocery store (pp7–8). Elder brother William Lane arrived in Brisbane in 1885; he got work as a journalist and in 1890 became the first editor of *The Worker* launched by the Australian Labour Federation.[3] Rickertt shows how Ernie was radicalised by William; more importantly, perhaps, he also shows how Francis Adams and others supported Ernie becoming a socialist and countered the millenarian, utopian and racist ideas of William. (p19ff)

Ernie joined the Australian Socialist League in 1888 and took a collectivist rather than a libertarian anarchist line. A year in the United States followed where Rickertt says '*the bones of class theory gained flesh*'. (p34). During and in the aftermath of the shearers' dispute, Ernie Lane worked through the issues of insurrection, state socialism and radical parliamentary reformism. He became and remained a supporter of parliamentary action—but one based on politically active unions and an active mass political party. In 1899 he was part of the opposition to the despatch of 294 Queensland troops to the Boer War (p71).

In 1903, Ernie, with partner Mabel and three children, went to *Cosme*, the remaining part of the New Australia settlement in Paraguay. Rickertt's account, including the very ambiguous situation of women at the communistic settlement, is, on its own, almost worth the price of the book. Ernie Lane put the money together to get back from Paraguay by working as a clerk in the modern La Plata meat works in Argentina. Here he witnessed '*class war incessantly raged, naked and unashamed*' (p110). The relief from this period was staying, near London, two doors away from Peter Kropotkin whose anarchism '*seemed hopelessly impractical*' compared with that of Argentinian workers. (p111)

Returning to Brisbane, Ernie Lane joined the AWA and represented it and then the AWU in the Labor Party and union forums. In 1915 he became the paid industrial writer for the *Daily Standard* and wrote under the name Jack Cade (p139). He backed this with leadership in the anti-conscription campaigns of 1916–17 and by propagandising—especially making collections of socialist literature available through unions and workers' organisations notably the Queensland Socialist League. He supported industrial unionism and, according to

Rickertt, was superficially close to the De Leon and Debs approach of socialist unionism through the OBU and separate political organising through a socialist party. (p185). Unfortunately for Lane, (and for socialism in Queensland) the mass union became the AWU and the party became the late 1920s ALP; with power in both tightly held and exercised from the top.

Rickertt skilfully combines the person and the politics as part of the historical fabric. Lane was an autodidact. This is perhaps a common feature of activists through to the expansion of universities in the 1980s–90s (or was it a feature of the kinds of people who became activists and not apparatchiks?). A wide range of books and ideas were influential; as Rickertt says, '*reading was, along with experience and temperament, one of the factors Lane himself nominated as a catalyst for his politicisation*' (p21). Being cultivated and cultured went with this; '*literature, art, music, an appreciation of nature, an acute sense of the common good, the value of both self and selflessness; all these facets of human experience went into the making an effective socialist movement*'(p209).

Part of this is the careful way Rickertt draws out the relationship with Mable—herself politicised and politically active. Political mate to Ernie but also a homemaker and mother. There are some nice hints at the tensions; also for Ernie who had to work to earn and was at the mercy of bosses who had little compunction in victimising him. This included the *Daily Standard* when in the 1930s it moved to the right (p247ff). Also, on the 'personal', Rickertt insightfully underlines the importance for activists to have some 'sanctuary'. A place to withdraw and regroup; to ponder and reactivate. For the Lanes it was the home '*Cosme*' in Highgate Hill (p125) (what a terrible loss that it was never heritage listed) and, from the 1930s, a beach place at Currumbin.

Left politics is both industrial political action and political industrial action. The former is the direct industry/ workplace battle over power and control. The latter is using the state institutions to advance both the organisational power of workers and their material conditions. These are now arcane ways of thinking. In Australia in the 1880s to 1920s, they were almost the daily currency of ways and means of advancing the workers' cause.

In 2017, it seems sheer effrontery to think this way. Josh Bornstein in a recent article about '*wither the left*' aptly said, '*listening to a modern progressive politician is like taking a tepid bath*'.[4] This is partly presentation; consider how unedifying most labour or green politicians sound reciting a slogan 'proved' in a focus group. The vacuous titillating of social media is no better. Even worse, the progressive

bath is has few ideas to heat it and even fewer calls for action. Jeff Rickertt's book would be instructive for today's ALP, Green and union 'professionals'. Sadly, we cannot presume they have developed the necessary love of reading.

Notes

1 Joy Guyatt, 'Lane, Ernest Henry (1868–1954)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lane-ernest-henry-7022/text12213, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 28 February 2017.

2 E.H. Lane, *Dawn To Dusk. Reminiscences of a Rebel*, Brisbane, William Brooks,1939.

3 Gavin Souter, 'Lane, William (1861–1917)', Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/lane-william-7024/text12217, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 1 March 2017

4 Josh Bornstein, Just as neoliberalism is finally on its knees, so too is the left, *The Guardian*, 25 February 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/commentisfree/2017/feb/25/just-as-neoliberalism-is-finally-on-its-knees-so-too-is-the-left?

Wally Stubbings Family Moves to Brisbane

Lesley Synge and Wally Stubbings

*This article is a short extract from the forthcoming book **Wharfie** by Wally Stubbings and Lesley Synge. The book will be published later in 2017. Wally was a life member of BLHA and we are pleased to reproduce a short story from this new book of his memoirs*

We were soon installed in a hostel in Rocklea on Brisbane's south side where the greater part of the wartime manufacturing industry was taking place. Children weren't allowed to live at the hostel so some nimble footwork, subterfuge and sweet-talking kept Col with us until we could make an alternative arrangement. The obvious solution seemed to be to enrol him in a boarding school, but many families had anticipated the need to find boarding schools for their offspring before the thought occurred to us. Women, as well as the men were contributing their labour to the war effort and Brisbane's boarding schools were already filled to overflowing. Ada had the idea of approaching Archbishop James Duhig to enlist his intervention. It worked. Nudgee Junior, a Catholic college on Brisbane's northside, accepted Col as a boarder.

After some weeks in a machine shop, I was transferred to the unit that tested Pratt and Whitney aircraft engines. The engines were tested at maximum revs in small concrete cells—no ear plugs or muffs supplied. They were then taken to a quarry in nearby Salisbury and let run for a day; if there were no problems they were deemed ready for warfare. Little wonder that in later years I would become profoundly deaf!

The first communist family with whom I became acquainted was the Myles family. Bob worked locally. He'd later become a fitter and turner in the shipyards, then worked for an elevator company. Meg Myles had been born into a strict Roman Catholic family, she told us, in 1900. When she met Bob—a rollicking communist and devoted member of the Communist Party of Australia—it turned the certainties of her faith upside down. She married him and joined the Communist Party too, but for a significant time she suffered intense turmoil and confusion before becoming the stalwart I would know. Meg was a strong woman. She was a thinker (and a *thinking* communist) and I appreciated her remarks.

The USSR at that time was our valuable ally. We now know that all the major powers were wheeling and dealing for positions of power right from the beginning of hostilities. But at that time there was a friendly attitude towards the USSR from Great Britain and Australia.

It wasn't long before Bob asked me to join the Communist Party of Australia. We always referred to it as the Party or the CPA. I gladly did. Bob would become one of my best mates and we would stand together in many political struggles in the years to come. Bob and Meg Myles were dedicated communists and the Myles family became a vital part of my life, and Ada's too, although she never joined the Party herself.

The British Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm—the flying arm of the Royal Navy—was transferred to Brisbane and given the hostel so we civilians had to move. We were allocated to a small hostel in Bulimba. It was closer to the city but conditions were cramped. Since Brisbane residents were enduring a severe housing shortage and many families were forced to live in tents we didn't complain. We lived there for some months.

I should mention Ada's qualities here. I've already mentioned that she was strong and a good athlete. She was also intelligent and efficient. It didn't surprise me that she was snapped up by the federal government department that dealt with the provision of aircraft parts. She initially glued fabric on the fuselage of planes.

In anticipation of a prolonged war, the commonwealth government built some two hundred temporary homes—timber cottages, set on low concrete stumps—for war workers. (Col tells me there were exactly 186 of them—because one of his jobs when he was older was to run around the whole lot of them doing letter box drops for the Progress Association and he counted every one of them.) The wartime industrial estate was centred on the suburbs of Salisbury, Rocklea and Moorooka, and accommodation meant that workers could walk to work from the housing estate. The latest town planning concepts were brought to bear: roads and footpaths, concrete stormwater drains, sewerage, water, gas and electricity connections. By this time, the Allied offensive was pushing the Japanese Imperial Army back, so the government scaled down its munitions complex and made its cottages available to the general public. Many desperate families were keen to move in.

Charlie Serow, a friend of mine I knew from the CPA, was second-in-charge of the Brisbane office of the Department of the Interior. 'Is there any possibility we could rent one of those homes?' I asked him.

'Not a chance,' he said. 'There are families with several children living under canvas. They are the priority. But apply anyway. Might as well get your name on the books.'

I applied and was pleased to receive a request to attend an interview in the city. I fronted the office on the due day but Charlie happened to be away on

annual leave. A middle-aged woman bade me sit and turned a stern face my way. It did not bode well.

After recording my name and marital status she asked, 'Any children?'

'Yes, one boy.'

'Where's your son living now?'

'He's boarding at the Nudgee Junior Catholic College.'

The stern face softened. In fact, her eyes lit up. 'Okay, Mr Stubbings, we will be in touch.'

Next thing was a letter *wishing to inform Mr Walter Stubbings* that the request to rent a house was granted.

'How the hell did *you* get a house?' asked Charlie after his holiday.

I had no idea. It transpired that his replacement was a devout Catholic who was putting people of her own faith into the new houses. She was acutely embarrassed when informed that she'd assigned a federal government house to a communist!

No. 1 Gratwick Street, Moorooka, was new but very basic. Like other Department of the Interior homes it was made of wood and fibro and classed as 'temporary'. In time, tenants would be allowed to purchase their houses which some did, renovating and improving them. We continued to rent but eventually we too would purchase our home. In the meantime, we bought a double bed, a second-hand table and four kitchen chairs, and an icebox to provide primitive refrigeration. We lacked wardrobes so put our personal belongings in the corner of the bedroom with a curtain rigged up to screen them from view. I rounded up apple packing cases—they'd be good enough to provide seating for our visitors.

Down the track, the government decided to increase the rents. It was the Party's idea to establish a Progress Association and to take up the issue. Many people joined the association and I was voted in as the secretary, partly because we had the telephone connected, one of the few houses that did. The meetings were generally held in our home.

We tenants were not happy about the rent increase and voted to withhold the rent payments until the government backed down. It was a straightforward strike when you think about it. Very soon a delegation from the Department of the Interior and a government minister arranged to meet with us. The crowd in attendance was so big that we had to move out into the backyard. The Progress Association had a win—the rent hike was cancelled.

Ada and I both changed jobs. She went to do the book-keeping for Airstream, a firm not far from the Salisbury quarry and within walking distance.

She joined the Federated Clerks Union and soon became the shop steward. As I've mentioned Ada never joined the Communist Party herself but accepted my commitment to going to meetings most nights of the week. I started at Star Engineering in Fortitude Valley.

At Nudgee College, Col's nickname was 'Tassie'. He was a good scholar and good at most sports, however, as one of only two non-Catholic boys there, he was on the receiving end of some bullying. We wanted him home with us and Ada decided that Junction Park State School would suit him best because, unlike the school closest to us, it had a swimming pool and she thought everyone should learn to swim. When we told the Christian Brothers that Col would be finishing up, they were dismayed. They had visions of him representing the school in future sports competitions and put us under intense pressure to allow him to stay on.

World War II had begun on 1 September 1939 with the invasion of Poland by Germany. The war in Europe concluded with the invasion of Germany by the Soviet Union and the Western Allies; Germany surrendered unconditionally on 8 May 1945. It was not until 15 August 1945 that Japan surrendered and the war in the Asian Pacific region ended. At last my brother Frank could return to his family in Melbourne.

I've mentioned that his battalion went to Darwin. From there they were shipped to the island of Timor. Timor was divided between two colonial powers—the eastern half belonged to the Dutch and was the most eastern part of the Dutch East Indies archipelago; the western half belonged to Portugal. The Japanese overwhelmed the Australians in Portuguese Timor and Frank and his fellow soldiers were taken prisoner. He had three-and-a-half gruelling years as a Japanese prisoner of war (POW), in Kranji, Singapore.

The treatment of the POWs under the Japanese is now notorious. Inadequate shelter and food and forced labour killed many a prisoner. Without medical care, cholera, dysentery, diarrhoea, and tropical diseases mowed them down. When Frank entered the Army he weighed 12 stone 8 ounces. When rescued after the Japanese surrender, he was down to 4 stone 5 ounces. After the starvation diet inflicted on him, he suffered from beriberi, a deficiency of vitamin B1, and was admitted to the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital. It wasn't far from where we lived and we visited him as he made his recovery.

My prospects at Star Engineering didn't look too bright so I began to think about going back to the waterfront. To do this I'd need a current ticket or registration as a member of the Waterside Workers Federation. The only way to get it was to return to Hobart and work on the waterfront for 3 months, after which I could transfer my ticket to the port of Brisbane.

We decided to make a family holiday of it and booked passage on the *Ormiston*, a coastal cargo vessel that plied the waters between Brisbane and Hobart and took a small number of passengers. Funnily enough, I would work on the *Ormiston* several times when it berthed at the Hamilton Wharf in Brisbane. But for now I was a passenger.

We spent a lovely, leisurely few days sailing down the east coast of mainland Australia, reached the Tasman Sea, crossed Bass Strait, entered Storm Bay and sailed up the Derwent River into Hobart Harbour. Sailing up the Derwent and catching sight of our Hill Street home in the distance was a moving experience. The green of the forest and Mount Wellington's cap of white snow were in stark contrast to the brown of Queensland and New South Wales, both states in the grip of a severe drought. It was a real pleasure to return to our beautiful house and enjoy the reunion with my mother, Ern and his family, and Ken. Much to Gladys's relief Marshall Penney returned from army service in New Guinea. While he'd been away fighting, she had worked in Cadbury's chocolate factory on Hobart's northside and wrote to him every day.

The first Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race was held that Christmas, the yachts leaving Sydney on Boxing Day 1945. Six days later the winner, *Rani*, sailed into Hobart Harbour. The sight of the yachts on the Derwent River was a special experience. But it was soon followed by devastating news—Frank had died.

In Brisbane, the hospital had considered him well enough to discharge and arranged rail passage to Melbourne for him. Towards the end of his long journey home to his wife and children, Frank lapsed into unconsciousness and died on the train. His tragic end on 2 January 1946 affected us all very much.

I noticed many improvements to working conditions on the wharves. The union policy of humanising the previously inhuman conditions had definitely produced results. The open pick, or bull system, was gone and a roster system was in place; and the hours of work were rationalised. During the war the government had wanted to minimise industrial disruption on the waterfront and had established the Australian Stevedoring Board to organise the waterside workers' work rosters. This stayed in place from 1942 until 1956 when a new agreement was negotiated.

As it had when striking against the export of pig-iron to Japan, the Waterside Workers Federation of Australia continued to take action on the international stage. Just prior to my re-registration, the WWFA, along with the Seamen's Union, conducted one of the most significant and audacious campaigns of its history in supporting the independence of Indonesia. In

the wake of the Japanese surrender, East Indies nationalists seized the opportunity to throw off the colonial yoke of the Dutch who assumed they would resume power. On 17 August 1945 the nationalists proclaimed the independent state of Indonesia (which the Japanese had promised to grant them). It would not be until November 1949 that Dutch sovereignty was officially transferred to the United States of Indonesia and independence formally celebrated on 27 December. The WWFA fully supported the new nation.

Indonesia, with a population of 78 million across the archipelago, would become a powerful nation. I would be fortunate to visit there briefly in 1963—but I'll leave that story for later.

While I worked as a wharfie, Ern and Ken did bush work. They had a contract to cut timber on the West Coast to make staves for wine casks and took Col with them. Col was amazed to see the lives his uncles led. They worked hard all day then walked miles back to their log cabin where they got out their racing saws and started training for the next wood chopping competition. Col was pleased to be appointed timekeeper. After their workout, they ate wallaby stew and turned in early.

Testing aircraft Salisbury Quarry c1944

All too soon our 3 months in Hobart were up and it was back to the sub-tropics.

That little house in Gratwick Street, Moorooka, would become a hotbed of communist agitation for many decades to come. The new suburb was populated by a new community, all strangers to each other, and this made for a very exciting time. Funnily enough, we ended up surrounded by Roman Catholics and finished up good friends with all of them. In the forty years we lived there, our home would see a huge number of visitors—activists from all over Australia and all over the world. We soon upgraded our apple case visitor seating but Ada and I kept that original bed for the duration of our married life.

In Memorium

Digger Murphy

A tribute by Paddy Gorman

The passing of 97-year old Charles (Digger) Murphy on 23 September represents the end of an era for Queensland and Australian coal mineworkers.

Digger, as he was known to his family and friends, was a former President of the Queensland District of the Miners Federation and the pioneer for women's participation in the coal industry's production workforce.

Born in Ipswich on 13 July 1919, his father Ernie Murphy was a coal miner as was his maternal grandfather Charles Kirkpatrick, who became the first full-time President of the Queensland Colliery Employees Union (QCEU). Charles, after whom Digger was named, led the Queensland miners delegation to the founding conference of the Miners Federation as a national union in 1915 and the QCEU became the Queensland branch of the Miners Federation.

As a young child living in Ipswich and seeing hundreds of WW1 returned soldiers, the first word he spoke was Digger and from that time on this became the name that everybody used.

When Digger's Dad was retrenched in the early 1920s the family made the long trek to the new coal mining town of Collinsville in North Queensland. They lived in a bag humpy and Digger started school there. Ernie came back to the Ipswich coalfield at Moggill and when that mine flooded at the height of the Great Depression in 1931, he was on the dole for about five years.

The Murphy family lived in a very modest house not far from grandfather Charles Kirkpatrick, who became a great influence on the young Digger.

Digger was particularly proud of his grandfather Charles's commitment to principles and values. As Queensland miners' union President Charles had been appointed to the State Parliament's Legislative Council. He was a member of what became known as 'the Suicide Squad'. The Legislative Council, or Upper House, was dominated by members of wealthy families who continually blocked

Labor's progressive reforms in the Parliament. Charles and other Labor Party leaders were pledged to abolish the State's Legislative Council and on the day Labor had the numbers in the Upper House for the first time, it moved the Bill to abolish it on 23 March 1923. They became the only politicians to vote themselves out of office!

On the Monday that 15-year old Digger started work at the New Ebbw Vale (Woodend) Colliery at Ipswich in 1935, he came home to the news that his grandfather Charles had died. He was still President of the Union in Queensland.

Digger recalls visiting his grandfather in hospital the day before and Charles asking the other family members who were with him to leave the room because he wanted a quiet chat with young Digger. He gave the boy who was about to go into the mines the next day some valuable advice and as he bid him farewell he said "well, it's up to you now young Charles to carry on the work".

And carry on Digger did. He was cut from the same cloth as his grandfather. As a 17-year old on the tough coalfields of Ipswich in 1937, Digger was elected Branch chairman of his Miners' Lodge.

It was to be the start of a lifetime of distinguished service to the working class. Digger cut his teeth on helping rebuild the miners Union from the ashes of the Great Depression. He was proud to have supported the first national Communist leaders in an Australian trade union with the election of Charles Nelson and Billy Orr as General President and General Secretary of the Miners Federation in 1934.

Digger himself joined the Communist Party and played a very active role in the 1949 National Coal Strike. Although he was a great supporter of the United Front he never forgave the Chifley Labor Government for jailing Union leaders and sending troops in to mine coal during the 1949 strike.

Digger rose through the Union ranks and was elected to his first full-time position in 1957 as District Check Inspector (full time safety official elected by rank and file miners). Mine safety was a passion for Digger, following in the footsteps of his pioneering grandfather Charles who had become Queensland's first full-time Check Inspector back in 1915.

Digger's election as Queensland Check Inspector was just three years after the Collinsville mine disaster of 1954 when seven miners were killed in a gas outburst. Before the disaster, the Union had been locked in dispute with management over safety concerns. The Union was ignored and the State Government backed management, a fact that contributed to the Collinsville disaster. The plight of miners in his boyhood town greatly increased

Digger's determination never to give an inch on safety and health matters.

His role as Check Inspector brought Digger into wider contact with the rank and file mineworkers throughout the State and in 1964 he was elected as Queensland District President. It was a time when the Bowen Basin in Central Queensland was opening up and Australia's coal export market was developing.

As President, Digger led the campaigns for decent housing accommodation and conditions in Central Queensland. During his Presidency from 1964 till his retirement in June 1979, Digger was at the centre of some of the most challenging industrial disputes in Australia's history as big global business moved for a stake in Australia's lucrative coal industry, particularly in the wake of OPEC Oil Crisis in the early 1970s.

But Digger never shirked from even the toughest fights, whether they were on the predominately underground coalfields of Ipswich and North Queensland or the burgeoning open cut operations of Central Queensland.

Among the many challenges Digger faced, the toughest times were

Digger Murphy at the Moura washplant in May 1979 with four of the first women coal mineworkers. From left: Raylee Airey, Pattie Ryan, Digger, Laurel Seymour-Smith and Julie Patterson.

undoubtedly the two major coal mine disasters he dealt with as President.

The first was in his home town of Ipswich on 31 July 1972 when a massive explosion at the nearby Box Flat Colliery took the lives of 17 miners in an underground gas explosion. Of those killed, 14 men were in the vicinity of the explosion underground and three miners were working on a belt adjacent to the mine entrance. A mine warden who was sent to investigate the explosion died later as a result of his injuries and some workers at the surface were also injured in the explosion.

In a moving recollection featured in the 2015 international award winning documentary Blood on the Coal, Digger recounts the damage and trauma inflicted on the entire Ipswich community. Decades after the Box Flat Disaster, the wounds are still raw and memories of grieving families still haunt.

Digger sat on the Inquiry into the Box Flat Disaster. His grandfather Charles had sat as a member of the Royal Commission into Queensland's greatest mine disaster at Mount Mulligan in 1921 when 75 miners perished in a massive underground explosion.

Just over three years from Box Flat, Central Queensland experienced its first big coal mine disaster when the Kianga underground coal mine near Moura blew up on 20 September 1975 taking the lives of 13 miners.

Digger knew every one of the Box Flat and Kianga miners personally. It was a heavy load to bear. Indeed, on whatever scale loss of miners lives occurred, Digger was always there for the families, work mates and friends.

On the industrial battlefront Digger led his members with great courage and foresight from lengthy strikes, to stay-downs and lock-outs and never faltering. Digger not only made an enormous contribution to Queensland miners. He played a key role on the Union's Central Council, the national governing body his grandfather Charles had been a founder of. Digger represented the Union at ACTU Congresses and internationally as well. Right to the end a staunch Communist, one of Digger's greatest experiences was his visit to the then Soviet Union.

Out of the many wider contributions Digger made there are two that merit particular recognition. The first was in 1975 when the Nymboida coal miners in northern NSW took over their colliery and refused to be sacked. Digger played a key role in making sure the Nymboida miners could occupy and work the mine in the critical early days of the take-over, including personally smuggling a car full of explosives and detonators over the border for the miners. Throughout the four-and-a-half years of the successful miners takeover of Nymboida, Digger was a welcome and honoured guest.

The second was Digger's pioneering role in getting women into the coal

mine workforce as production workers. Under his leadership, Queensland became the first place where women started at the Blackwater and Moura mines in Central Queensland. And true to form, Digger and the Union insisted that the first mining women were paid exactly the same as the men and received every condition and entitlement equally. To Digger all workers, regardless of gender, religion, race or colour, were all equal.

For all his great achievements, Digger was always adamant that he was only half of a team throughout his working life. His wife Joyce was not only his life partner but his rock. Joyce was a very respected leader of the Miners Women's Auxiliary, the backbone to many of the industrial disputes the miners were involved in and the great supporters of families and communities who endured the pain of lost ones in the mines. Long after the headlines had faded and public attention had moved on, women like Joyce were there at the side of those who needed a helping hand or a kind word for as long as it took.

Digger and Joyce shared more than 70-years together as a married couple. They lived their whole married lives in Ipswich and brought up three wonderful daughters in Judy, Cheryl and Beth. Joyce passed away in March 2014 and although Digger remained staunchly independent living in their home until his passing last Friday, he missed Joyce every day of his life.

Digger Murphy pictured at 2015 Centenary of Colliery Employees Union

Our Union today owes much to Digger and his Comrades past and present. To this writer and many others he was also a kind and generous mentor. We will all miss him but none more so than his loving family, those wonderful three daughters who have inherited their parents' passion for justice and commitment to a Fair Go and his four grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Vale Digger Murphy, you have left a great legacy and one that grandfather Charles would be proud of.

– Paddy Gorman

In Memorium

Vale Sigrid McCausland

Frank Bongiorno

Many of us owe a very great debt to Dr Sigrid McCausland, whose untimely death on 30 November 2016 has been widely mourned by her many friends and colleagues in the archival and historical communities. The biographical notes at the end of *Light from the Tunnel*, a history of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University published in 2004 to celebrate its survival, called Sigrid McCausland's part in defending it 'the greatest struggle of her professional life'.

I suspect these words were Sigrid's own, and they are unerringly accurate. As University Archivist Sigrid became the central figure in the campaign to save the archives, and she brought to that struggle a passion and commitment that had personal and professional costs. At one point the ANU management formally forbade Sigrid from having anything to do with the Noel Butlin Archives, so that it could roll out its latest hare-brained scheme for closing the place while maintaining the appearance that it was still functioning. 'To have your work denigrated and to be told by others without expertise that it is dispensable', she later reflected, 'was extremely unpleasant'.

Sigrid's arrival in Canberra as University Archivist in November 1998 was an especially lucky break for those who wanted to save the archives. The Director of the Research School of Social Sciences had announced their imminent closure and foreshadowed the dispersal of the collection in August 1997. The future of this monumentally important national collection was still very much in doubt when Sigrid arrived; as if to make the point, the ANU initially put her on a three-year fixed-term contract. But she brought to her role—one she would play with skill, tact and vision until 2005—an extraordinarily rich store of expertise

and wisdom built up over an already long and distinguished career in archives.

There was also something about Sigrid—a calmness, poise, humour and dignity—that instilled confidence in others, and gave her arguments that extra force they needed in difficult days. At a time when there was considerable anger over the behaviour of the ANU—and with many provocations still to come—she revealed an acumen that was sorely needed. She once told me that someone from the university took her out to a site in outer-suburban Canberra that the university management had in mind as a replacement for the Acton Underhill as storage. Sigrid didn't like the look of it and rejected the idea; wouldn't it be vulnerable to a fire? Sure enough, the Canberra bushfire of 2003 soon swept through the area. Possibly, without Sigrid's wise counsel, the records of the Australian Agricultural Company—whose place on the UNESCO Memory of the World Register she championed and secured—would today be a collection of cinders.

Sigrid also had the job of overseeing the new arrangements whereby the reading room and offices were moved into the Menzies Library, and away from the Acton Underhill. She understood that the move had its disadvantages. Researchers would need to order material in advance of a daily retrieval time, rather than

Sigrid with Peter Love, from the Victorian Branch of the ASSLH.

Photos courtesy of Noel Butlin archives

simply walking in and getting their documents in a few minutes. But Sigrid also understood that the benefits from the move—in terms of assuring the Archives' future—outweighed such minor inconveniences.

She was no stranger to the ANU. Having been raised in Bathurst—a connection with regional Australian life that remained important to her—Sigrid was an undergraduate at the ANU from 1971 until 1974, living first at Burton Hall and later, in a lively shared house while she completed an Honours degree in History with a thesis on modern painting in Sydney from 1935 until the end of the war. She was part of a talented Honours cohort, who were finishing their degrees at the time when student radicalism peaked at the ANU, in 1974. Canberra was then the home of *Labour History*, and the ANU the country's major centre for study in the field; her teachers included Bob and Daphne Gollan, Humphrey McQueen, Bruce McFarlane and Bruce Kent, as

well as Manning Clark, John Ritchie, John Molony and in Politics, Fin Crisp. Sigrid was a conscientious and successful student—although, by her own account, a perfectionist—whom Clark enlisted as his research assistant after she had finished her studies. She clearly didn't allow herself to be overawed by the great man. Although he invited her to undertake a Master's thesis, a year working for Clark was enough and she was soon heading overseas in a familiar rite-of-passage for young Australians of her generation.

Sigrid returned to a country in 1977 that was a much less inviting place for a young graduate beginning a career than it had been when she completed her degree. But she quickly found a job in the public service, working for a year in the housing branch of the Department of the Capital Territory. A year later she was at the Australian Archives, now the National Archives of Australia, but this was not her first encounter with what would become her life's work; she had previously been employed during university holidays in the nissen huts next to the lake that were then the Archives' home, working on Billy McMahon's papers.

Sigrid later worked at the State Library of New South Wales, for a time in the Mitchell manuscripts collection, and she completed the archives course at the University of New South Wales in 1982. She would also later tutor in that course for a couple of years, the beginning of a lifelong commitment to archival education. After an appointment as the City of Sydney Archivist, she became University Archivist at University Technology Sydney, where she also completed a doctoral thesis on the anti-uranium movement. It was submitted for examination just a few weeks after her appointment as University Archivist in Canberra.

Sigrid was recently made a Fellow of the Australian Society of Archivists, an honour that, among other things, recognised her long-term contribution to archives education. She contributed to editing the first edition of *Keeping Archives*, the Australian archives profession's bible; served on the editorial board of the profession's journal, *Archives and Manuscripts*; and, in recent years, returned to teaching, this time at Charles Sturt University, where she played a major role in the success of its undergraduate and postgraduate programs in archives and records management. She presented and published many papers, was active in her profession's national and international organisations and, alongside her multiple achievements in a busy professional life, was an inspiring mentor and colleague to many younger archivists. Her international standing in the field of archives education received recognition when she was appointed to the prestigious post of Secretary General of the

Section for Education and Training for the International Council on Archives.

The Australian Society for the Study of Labour History recently honoured Sigrid with its Gold Medal. Alongside her outstanding contributions to labour history as an archivist, she served as President of the Canberra Region Branch of the Society during her busy period as the ANU's University Archivist, and she was more recently a valued member of the Brisbane Labour History Association executive.

Sigrid will be long remembered for her warmth, sense of fun, generosity and intelligence, as well as her remarkable energy and versatility as a professional in the worlds of history and archives. The labour history community feels her loss keenly. We offer condolences to Phil Griffiths, Sigrid's partner, and to all of her family, friends and colleagues.

In Memorium

Connie Healy's Life

By John Healy

This is a time to celebrate the life and achievements of Constance De Mestre Healy, known as Connie. She was born 93 years ago in Sydney on May 30, 1923 to Eric and Kate Lovegrove, and was the third of three sisters. Her older sisters were Florence and Patricia, known as Pat. The three sisters were to support the cause of organised labour and socialism all of their lives. I should add that this commitment was not without its costs, but they remained steadfast and passed on their socialist ideals to their children

Both of the Lovegrove girls' parents came from middle class backgrounds. Eric went to World War One when his oldest brother was killed, and the remaining brothers drew straws to see who would next serve country and empire. Eric drew the short straw, and returned shattered, damaged by the trauma of war as well as spirit rations given before soldiers went "over the top". Eric became an alcoholic, but it was the strongly anti-war views with which he returned that estranged him from his conservative family.

Kate was a rebel from a young age, none too impressed with an education provided by governesses rather than a school with the hoi-polloi. She was not very enamoured with the idea that her role was to work for charities doing good works while waiting for a suitable husband to appear.

For this reason, she took a typing course and announced her intention to go to work. Her father's response was to utter the memorable words, "If you go out to work my girl, you need never darken my doorstep again and will be cut off without a penny." He was true to his word, but some of the family gave the Lovegrove girls small gifts, including 78rpm records, so that the children could at least become acquainted with "higher culture." Some relatives occasionally visited in cars in the 1920s and 1930s. They were so rare that people peered out of their windows and children chased them up the street. However, Kate was largely cut off from her family too.

A woman of strength and determination, Kate was to support the women's

movement all her life and was one of the founders of the organisation that was the precursor of the Union of Australian Women, the feminists of their day. A feisty woman, Kate always supported her daughters, encouraged them to make decisions for themselves and to stand up for what they believed in.

Eric had difficulty finding and staying in work after World War One, and often did casual work like selling encyclopaedias. Connie read all the volumes of one of the medical encyclopaedias he was selling and consequently had a life-long medical fascination. During the Great Depression, it was literally impossible for him to find work so he approached the local doctor with a proposition. He would cultivate a part of the doctor's landholding and the silent partner, the doctor, would receive half the proceeds.

The family were all involved, and the three Lovegrove sisters all worked in the business. They grew vegetables and raised chickens to eat too. They bartered some vegetables for milk with the friendly local milkman. They sold the flowers to cafes, theatres and cinemas to which they would often be given free tickets, which is why Connie and her sisters saw so many 1930s films.

On the same plot of land where they had their market garden, the family built and maintained a grass tennis court where the children played. Their mother, previously Australasian Women's singles and doubles champion (with her sister Easter as a partner), encouraged them to play. Just as Kate and her sisters had been in the Linton Cup Team, Connie and her two sisters Florence and Pat were in the Linton Cup Team of their generation, and Connie went on to win the Queensland Junior Women's Championship at the age of 15 in 1938, playing with a warped racket.

Interestingly enough, official recognition did not overwhelm Connie. For many years, the large metal bowl she was given for winning was to be found in our laundry in Enoggera, where it was used to store potatoes. From there, it was unceremoniously thrown out when it rusted, and thus posed a threat to the family's health. She was also impressed more by being castigated at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School for taking books by Darwin and Marx to school than by the many academic prizes she won there. She finished grade 12 at age 15, having been promoted over several grades at primary school as the work was deemed too undemanding for her.

Thus it was that Connie grew up in the 1920s and the Great Depression of the 1930s and was a young woman during the Second World War. The events of those years were to have a decisive influence on her outlook and activities. She grew up extremely quickly. As she

put it, "I was an atheist at 15, a socialist at 16, a communist at 17 and a widow at 19."

So how did events move so quickly to shape her moral and political perspectives so definitively? Certainly the Great Depression was an important catalyst in her early life. She quickly became alert to the appalling inequality of that time as she saw with her own eyes the terrible effects of mass unemployment on people's lives. Her father was unemployed, and for some years was a relief worker working for subsistence wages. His life had already been blighted by the First World War in which he was a soldier before he had to endure the poverty and indignity that capitalism served up in those difficult depression years. Connie had to endure the jibes of insensitive schoolmates when her father worked on community projects near the Graceville State School she attended.

As they all won full scholarships to study at Brisbane Girls' Grammar School, the three Lovegrove sisters had the opportunity to have a decent high school education. This was at a time when very few people had a high school education at all. Their political education continued with Workers' Education Society classes and their involvement in Unity and New Theatre,

Connie (right) with her long-time friend and comrade Eva Bacon, and an unidentified soldier, probably during the early 1940s.

which opposed capitalist injustice and fascism.

After one performance, Connie was summoned to one of her Commonwealth Bank bosses' offices, where she was told in no uncertain terms about the bank's disapproval of her political theatre activities. Shortly afterwards, Connie went to work in the office of the Waterside Workers' Federation, an organisation that was certainly not going to dismiss her for her activities in political theatre. The union movement sought politically reliable staff who would not betray it to the security services, and Connie fitted the bill.

Connie was to learn about the crucial role of workers first-hand, attending lively stop-work meetings and recording the decisions made democratically by the workers. In the same period, her anti-war feelings were heightened by the death of her first husband Reg, a navigator on bombing raids in the European theatre of the Second World War. Her knowledge of the trade union movement was enhanced when she married Mick Healy, the General Secretary of the Queensland Trades and Labour Council a few years later.

Connie always believed women should work as it was a way of maintaining their independence, and when working for the Waterside Workers' Federation she was payed equal pay, something available to most Australian women only in 1972, some 30 years later. While her children, Jim and John, were young, she worked first for trade unions and later in legal offices as a conveyancing clerk. She was later to study law, politics, language and history subjects at university while working full-time.

When Mick retired from the waterfront in 1970, and wanted to visit his family in Northern Ireland in 1971, Connie worked in the prestigious London Chancery Lane legal service in which Dickens had worked. In the same year, the family visited Europe, including the Soviet Union, where Mick was a guest of the seafarers' union in several port cities.

Upon returning, Connie worked first in legal offices, and then went on to work for the French and Education Departments of the University of Queensland for 16 years until her retirement in 1988. In 1988, first her eldest son Jim, and then her husband of 43 years, Mick, died. It was then, in her retirement, that Connie decided to return to university studies.

Returning to the social sciences, and history in particular, Connie turned her attention to the Australian history that she had lived. After some initial studies, she was a joint winner of the Dennis Murphy Labour History Scholarship in 1992, which assisted her to undertake research into the Labour Movement in Australia. She wrote

her master's thesis on the history of political theatre in Brisbane and then won two local history grants to assist in the publication of her book on the same subject and to continue her research.

She then published her book *Defiance* (2000), as well as many articles for the *Brisbane Labour History Journal*, *Vintage Reds* and *Recollections of the Black Armada in Brisbane*. She also published five articles in the book *Radical Brisbane* (2004) and wrote two entries in the *Dictionary of Australian Biography* on playwright Jim Crawford, and teacher, actor and producer George Eaton.

To enable future researchers, writers and scholars of the future to have access to information about Australian Labour history, she donated a large collection of books, brochures and photographs to the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland, a collection known as the Connie Healy collection. It was her belief that the fine role that the labour movement had played could be airbrushed out of history, and she did not wish to see that occur. Since then Connie has won a Centenary Medal

Connie awarded a life membership of BLHA in 2009 by BLHA President Greg Mallory

and an Order of Australia medal for her contribution to Australian industrial relations.

Looking back on her life, Connie still held dear the values she had acquired in her youth. She was still very much against war, which badly affected her father and took away her first husband Reg. She never forgot the fear of unemployment and the poverty of her youth and believed that a just and peaceful society was needed more than ever. She also retained her interest in political theatre. The 1930s was a period that left indelible impressions on many, not just Connie, and as she pointed out, it is perhaps no accident that half of the Australian novels written between 1928 and 1939 were written by women.

Connie always said that the key to being interested in politics and staying politically active for an extended period is to always believe that a peaceful and better world is possible. That was often difficult during Connie's lifetime. The Great Depression, the Spanish Civil War, World War 2 and the long period of the Cold War were not easy times to be a socialist, but belief in a better future kept her going. The restoration of capitalism in Eastern Europe was a bitter blow for Connie, but the pink tide in Latin America was inspiring. Right now, it is a political ice age for socialism, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, Connie was unimpressed by Donald Trump's election.

Connie was awarded life membership of the BLHA in 2015. She always believed that socialism, peace and justice were possible. She believed not only that democracy and a world that offered real equality for everyone without regard to their class, race, ethnicity, beliefs, gender or sexual orientation was possible, but that it remains an urgent necessity.

Contributors

Frank Bongiorno teaches history at the Australian National University and is President of the Canberra Region Branch of the Society for Labour History and of Honest History.

John Dargavel is an honorary Emeritus Fellow in the Fenner School for Environment and Society at the Australian National University where he is actively engaged in forest and environmental history research. He has degrees in forestry from the Universities of Edinburgh and Melbourne. His doctorate from the Australian National University presented a radical analysis of the development of the Tasmanian wood industries. He worked as a forester in government and industry for over twenty years, before moving to the Australian National University in 1978. He has researched and taught in the areas of forest economics, politics and history. He is a past President of the Australian Forest History Society, and is Vice-President of the Friends of the Noel Butlin Archives Centre. He is the author of books and papers on forest management, industrial and labour history, trade, forest and environmental politics, cultural aspects of landscape and remembrance, and a play, *Hard Work to Starve*, on the 1920s Tasmanian timber dispute.

Paddy Gorman is the National Media Director of the CFMEU Mining Division, as well as the editor of its journal, Common Cause.

John Healy has worked as a high school teacher, statistician, translator and English teacher. He is now teaching English at QUT International College.

Ian Mackie has had a long and distinguished career in Queensland schools. He has worked across the state in teaching and principal roles. In the 1990's he was President of the Teachers' Union and went on to a long career as a very senior public servant. He served as the first Training Ombudsman returning to schools in 2005 to achieve national acclaim for the "job guarantee" methodology now used in many high schools around the country. He left the Public Service as an Assistant Director General in 2011 to pursue his interest in improving outcomes for Indigenous students. This has led to his intense study and research into the use of Nudge Theory in all schools. He has an exceptional knowledge of all aspects of the Education industry.

John Martin has been employed as the Research and Policy Officer at the Queensland Council of Unions for over four years. John has previously worked within the trade union movement including a decade at the LHMU (now United

Voice). John has held management positions in industrial relations in both public and private sectors. Advocacy before various tribunals has formed a major part of John's duties. John has also worked as a ministerial advisor being the industrial relations advisor to the Martin Government in the Northern Territory. Having worked in a range of jurisdictions and industries John has substantial experience with the major challenges facing employees and employers throughout Australia. Having recently been awarded a PhD, John has an undergraduate business degree and first class honours in commerce, both majoring in industrial relations. John is a sessional academic and has lectured and tutored in the disciplines of management and industrial relations. In addition to these academic qualifications, he is a past-President of the Industrial Relations Society of Queensland and has been invited to speak at a number of domestic and international conferences.

Dr John McCollow, now retired, was a teacher and then a teacher union officer. In his younger years he studied theatre (he was a classmate of Hollywood director Jerry Zucker). His acting career highlight was a two-line part in the 1986 Bruce Beresford film, *The Fringe Dwellers*, where his name was misspelt in the closing credits.

Gary McLennan has been an educator for over 50 years. He has taught at all levels from primary to tertiary in the UK, Nigeria, China and Australia. He has had extensive experience of working with key Indigenous educators, such as Dr Gracelyn Smallwood, Dr Grace Sarra and Dr Chris Sarra. He has also worked within the Indigenous educational bureaucracy as a researcher. He has also worked to help Indigenous People in the process of self-emancipation and has also advocated and struggled for the rights of gay people, trade unionists and the unemployed, Palestinians, women and the Irish.

Wal Stubbings was 40 years a wharfie. As a child growing up on the West Coast of Tasmania he developed an early love for writing. This love resurfaced when he became an active unionist of the Brisbane branch of the Waterside Workers Federation – he wrote for the newsletters of the Brisbane branch as well as for the national journal, the *Maritime Worker*. After joining the Communist Party of Australia he wrote short pieces for the CPA branch newsletter as well as for its national newspaper. An avid reader of the Queensland daily, the *Courier-Mail*, he penned many a Letter to the Editor to correct what he saw as biased reporting. In retirement he became a Masters Athletics champion. After retiring from competitive sports he was a contributor to the Stubbings family history, *Great Grandma Stole a Cow* (2000). Over the last years of his long life he worked on more of his life story, with a particular burst of energy as he turned 100.

Lesley Synge enjoys collaborating with others. Her writing career started with editing anthologies for a number of community groups. She collaborated with artist Kathryn Brimblecombe-Fox whose paintings illustrate *Cry Ma Ma to the Moon,* an e-novel about poets in a love triangle. Her poetry collection *Organic Sister* includes drawings by black and white artist Donald Greenfield. She contributed lyrics to Stephen Leek's choral work, *Jiri San Sunrise.* She produced a film 'Slow Days on Old Pathways' for the launch of *Mountains Belong to the People Who Love Them* (2nd ed) at the Queensland Poetry Festival. This book is her first collaboration with a wharfie.

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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