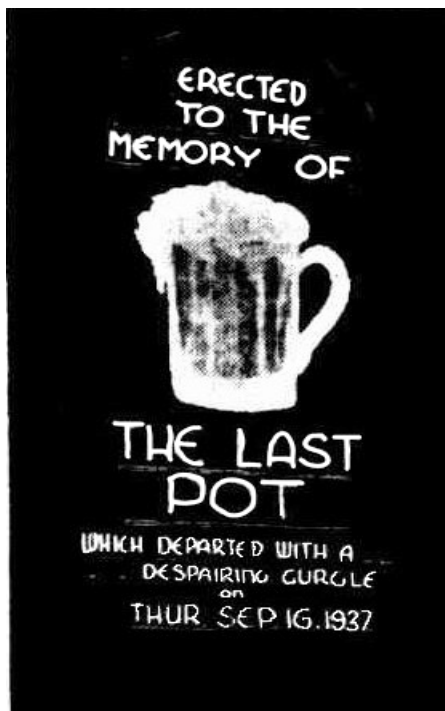


# *The Queensland Journal of Labour History*

No. 28  
Autumn 2019



*The Brisbane Labour History Association*

\$5.00



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### **Front Cover Photo:**

Seen during the 1937 Castlemaine Brewery Strike:

“An expressive sign on an empty beer keg in a city hotel yesterday”

The Courier Mail — Brisbane, Queensland Friday 17 September 1937 p.13.

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# The Queensland Journal Of Labour History

No. 28, May 2019

ISSN 1832-9926

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# LABOUR HISTORY

## A Journal of Labour and Social History

*Labour History* is an internationally recognised journal published twice a year, November and May, by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. For more information, visit <[www.labourhistory.org.au](http://www.labourhistory.org.au)>



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*Vashti Kenway*

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# 2019 ALEX MACDONALD LECTURE

## Raymond Evans

(Adjunct Professor, Griffith University)

**‘Hostile whirlwinds swirl  
above us...’**

## **The Red Flag riots and the tumult of 1919**

Wed 12 June, 5.30 for 6.00

Level 2, QCU Building  
16 Peel St, South Brisbane

The years after the First World War were years of tumult. Tens of millions of young men and women had died in the slaughter; hundreds of millions were determined that such a horror would never happen again. Many wanted society to be entirely reorganised, on socialist lines.

Determined to stop them were the hard men of the right; those who had organised the bloodbath, those determined to defend capital and its military.



Raymond Evans is one of Queensland's most distinguished historians.

He has written extensively about racism and frontier violence, as well as many other aspects of social and political history.

His book, *A History of Queensland* (2007) is the best one-volume history of this state.

---

The **Alex Macdonald Lecture** is the major event held by the BLHA each year. It is named in honour of the Left activist and former Secretary of the Queensland Trades and Labour Council (1952-69).



- We publish the *Queensland Journal of Labour History* twice a year.
- We host the annual Alex Macdonald lecture
- We hold regular presentations, seminars, film screenings, walking tours, book launches

## **BLHA Oral History Project — Preserving the history of our movement**

Australia has a well-established and well-run network of archives that preserve documents and physical evidence from our history; including the history of our unions, parties and struggles.

However, the voices and experiences of individual activists are not so well preserved.

The Brisbane Labour History Association has decided to launch an Oral History project to begin changing that.

In the coming months, we'll be designing and managing a project to record the experience of the 1985 SEQEB dispute, the most significant dispute in Queensland in the past 40 years.

We want you, our members and supporters involved in this.

Almost everyone knows someone who participated in the dispute. Some were those in the front line of Bjelke-Petersen's assault on our jobs and rights; tens of thousands of others came to picket lines, rallies and meetings, raised funds, or just talked about it with their workmates and friends.

Others had positions of responsibility: in parliament, leading trade unions or other organisations.

Our long-term aims are to publish a book on the dispute and the lessons learned, and set up a website of materials about it, including excerpts from interviews.

### **A diverse project**

At the same time, we will be encouraging our members and supporters to begin recording their own experiences, and that of their friends and colleagues, in the labour movement and the Left more broadly.

Within our membership there is a priceless heritage of building campaigns, organising and fighting for better workplaces and a more decent society.

As part of our project we will be organising training sessions with the assistance and expertise of members of Oral History Queensland.

Our oral history project will be launched at the annual Alex Macdonald Lecture, on June 12<sup>th</sup> this year.

**Phil Griffiths, Brisbane Labour History Association Executive**

# BLHA

## President's Column

Greg Mallory

I would like to welcome three new members to our BLHA committee — Jeff Rickertt, Jess Hensman and Elliot Darcy. Jeff of course has previously been an active committee member and journal editor and we are pleased to have his insights and experience again. Jess and Elliot are young union organizers and will bring some welcome new ideas and enthusiasm to our work!

BLHA members are assisting with a project to document the history of the Union Cooperative Society, which set up a Union Coop in inner city Paddington in 1969, with grocery store, petrol sales, white goods buying coop, and a meeting room which is still run as the Union Coop centre. The 50-year anniversary will be celebrated this year, and BLHA plans a talk about the history of coops in Australia as part of those anniversary celebrations in August.

In November last year, BLHA and the Search Foundation ran a joint seminar on "*Women's Work: the struggles of women in employment: wage*

*disparity, superannuation, insecure work, discrimination and harassment.* Speakers included Ros McLennan (QCU General Secretary), Prof Glenda Strachan, QTU official Penny Spalding, Young Workers Hub worker Imogen Barker, and Dr Linda Colley from ALP anti-discrimination Committee.

Following a workshop for retired unionists at the ACTU congress in June 2018, BLHA members have been involved in the establishment of a Retired Unionist Network in Brisbane, launched in August with the name "*Vintage Reds*". Members carried a newly painted banner in the QCU Change the Rules rally in Brisbane last November, and have joined union actions by the MUA when ferry drivers were on strike last year, and by the ASU in support of hospital workers at the Mater hospital earlier this year. Vintage reds meet in the QCU each first Thursday of the month at 10:00am and any retired union members are welcome to join in!

Our committee discussions this year have included planning for the Alex

Macdonald lecture on June 12th and a project to start recording the stories of older workers about their working life and experiences, to provide an archive of valuable labour history. We will keep you updated as we develop this project as it is something with which any member of BLHA can assist.

Les Crofton, a long term member of the BLHA, passed away late last year. Les was Secretary of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union. An obituary will be published in the next journal.



# Reports

## Women's Work — The Struggles of Women in Employment

Patricia Hovey

On 3 November, thirty-two people attended a joint SEARCH-Brisbane Labour History Association forum at the ETU in Brisbane to hear and discuss presentations on wage disparity, superannuation, insecure work, discrimination and harassment, by five women trade union representatives and academics.

The event was chaired by SEARCH member, Anna McCormack who introduced the speakers — Ros McLennan, General Secretary, QCU, Glenda Strachan, Emeritus Professor, Griffith University, Penny Spalding, Women's Officer, QTU, Imogen Barker, Young Workers Hub, QCU, and Dr Linda Colley, CQ University Brisbane.

Ros McLennan spoke about the Change the Rules Campaign which she said is fundamentally about women's equality and the need to win a living wage for 2.3 million workers, the majority of whom who are women. Women



*Anna McCormack chairs the Women's Work event in Brisbane  
(Photo by Paul Norton)*

are over-represented in the low-paid hospitality, retail and pharmacy sectors where penalty rates have been cut twice. In Queensland, wage theft is rampant and happens most often where there is insecure work, young people and women. Ros also provided the sobering statistic that 23% of women experiencing domestic violence are in the workforce. Unions will continue to campaign for paid DV leave, including for casual workers.

Glenda Strachan provided an historical perspective on women's work, noting that women have always worked but entered the paid workforce to find institutionalisation of unequal and lower wages, gender segregation of jobs, no access to some jobs and the marriage bar. The latter was only abolished in the QLD Public Service in 1969.

Linda Colley referred to the 15–18% gender pay gap, with discrimination and bias in hiring decisions being a contributing factor. There is also invisible discrimination in recruitment and selection, career progression, flexible work arrangements, and the value placed on work. Women requesting part-time work are frequently perceived as unreliable or not serious about the job.

Speaking on superannuation, Penny Spalding explained that to qualify for the Superannuation Guarantee, a worker must be 18 years old or over and earn \$450 per month (or more) after tax. The outlook for many women facing retirement is grim due to following factors:

- Gender retirement gap is 47%
- Women live 5 years longer than men on average
- An estimated 40% of older single women live in poverty
- Women are more dependent than men on the Age Pension

- The fastest growing cohort of homeless people is older single women.

An estimated 220 000 women miss out on \$125 million of super contributions as they do not meet the \$450 threshold from one employer (many women work part-time, in more than one job) and the current 9.5% super guarantee does not enable most women to accrue enough savings for a comfortable retirement.

A system which leaves women with only half the super of men is not sustainable.

Government support via tax concessions is poorly targeted in terms of improving adequacy and women retire on average with just over half the super balance of men.

We heard from Imogen Barker that 33% of employed women are in insecure, casual jobs and how important it is for young workers to get proper advice about pay and entitlements. Young people are mostly in casual jobs and some don't have time to go home between shifts. They are denied permanency so casual employment can last for years.

In discussion, people spoke about their experiences of low pay, insecure work and discrimination, including older workers who can also be trapped in insecure work. There were questions about the impact the of the Higgins and Harvester basic wage decisions.

Glenda Strachan explained that they had both positive and negative impacts. Establishing a legally enforceable minimum wage was an important win for workers generally. However, by defining the basic wage as one which allowed a man to support his family in frugal comfort, women's right to equal pay was delayed by decades. The gender pay gap has been immovable for 30 years.

Feedback from participants was that the presentations were excellent, providing us with important historical and current information about women's employment experience.

# Possession, Provider, Organiser: Three Eras in an Australian White-Collar Union

Bob Russell

## Abstract

This paper describes three distinct eras in the post-war history of Australia's largest white-collar union, the Federated Clerks. These eras are the period when the union was first and foremost a political asset in the cold-war fight against communism, followed by phases when the union focused on membership service and most recently on workplace organisation. The manner in which these transitions were enacted, the reasons behind them and their longer run implications are explored. The overarching narrative describes how a right-wing, non-confrontational body became a progressive social union with a feminist agenda.

This article is an investigation into the various stages, strategies and contradictions of Australia's largest white-collar union, the Federated Clerks Union, (FCU) which in 1993 became the Australian Services Union (ASU), and has now been incorporated, alongside the Queensland public service union, into Together.

I argue that in the post-World War 2 period, the Union passed through three

distinct phases, which are captured by the first part of the title to this paper.

From the early 1950s and through the next 30 odd years, the FCU was a political possession of the National Civic Council (NCC), the right-wing, Catholic Church dominated anti-communist movement. The paper outlines the implications of this for the Union as an organisation and for its membership.

Over the course of a ten-year long civil war within the Union, that, in the first instance, involved the Queensland Branch and the Federal body, the *raison d'être* of the organisation shifted. From a political asset, the Branch became a servicing organisation with a membership focus.

But with overarching changes in the nature and composition of the workforce that it represented, the technologies that those workers used, and the legal framework within which it operated, the Union was forced to shift once again and adopt an 'organising' approach that informed its day-to-day activity.

I conclude by speculating about a fourth phase, which we can call ‘survival’ and the implications of this.

This paper is part of a larger project, for which I was given unfettered access to the archives of the largest branch of the old FCU, the Central and Southern Queensland Administrative and Clerical Employees Branch. During 2015–16, I also conducted eleven in-depth interviews with past Secretaries, Presidents, factional oppositionists, delegates, organisers and activists.

### **The Union as a Political Asset**

The history of the FCU is of interest, both for what it can inform us about Australian labour relations more generally and for being an early example of white-collar unionism.

The organization dates back to 1911, when a branch was chartered in Victoria. Four years later and following a visit by a Victorian representative, the Central and Southern Queensland Branch of the union was created. The first available census of the Branch indicates that it had 1137 members as of 1917, 92 per cent of whom were male.<sup>1</sup> Occupations represented by the Union included bookkeeping, accountancy, payroll and legal clerking, stenography and shipping and dispatching. Clerking was thus synonymous with office work more generally and this included the activities of measuring, weighing and

tallying both physical artifacts and human activity.

Consequently, FCU members could be found in a vast array of employments — on the docks and in railway yards, later in aviation, in gold mines and timber mills, in meat works as well as insurance companies and in various branches of public service. This diversity meant that the FCU was, in a rather loose sense, an occupational union rather than an industrial union, organizing workers on the basis of what they did rather than who they worked for.

Throughout much of its history, the Queensland Branch was both the largest in the FCU and one of the largest unions in the state. Membership growth practically trebled during the Great Depression, from just over 3000 in 1930 to 11,517 by 1940. By 1960, this figure had again doubled, and in 1965 the Queensland Branch had just over 26,000 members.<sup>2</sup> Without doubt, much of this impressive growth was due to union preference clauses. A typical state award from the 1930s specified that:

Preference of employment shall be given to financial members of the Federated Clerks’ Union of Australia Union of Employees: Provided always that such union admits to membership any person who is at present or has been prior to that date of this award



*Annual Miss Clerk Beauty Pageant, 1967*

employed as a tally clerk in the state of Queensland.<sup>3</sup>

In other sectors, the Branch's influence was still more direct. Throughout the 1940s, for example, the FCU ran an effective hiring hall on Brisbane's docks. To obtain work, one had to be registered at the Union's Selection Centre, a facility that was only open to financial members of the Union.

Given the importance of awards for the Union, it should come as no surprise that obtaining and maintaining them was the chief order of union business. The Clerks and Switchboard

Attendants' Award, which dates from 1921, became the template for the Branch. Over time, the Union would come to have coverage in over 50 awards: nationally, in the airlines, oil companies, breweries, finance, paint, motor vehicle, shipping and aluminum industries; and under state jurisdiction in hospitals, utilities, gaming, education, credit unions, newspapers, sugar mills, health funds, motels, retailers, railways, abattoirs, real estate agencies and other manufacturing companies.<sup>4</sup>

The central place of awards was to lend the FCU a highly specific cast.

In Bramble's typology, the FCU was clearly an 'arbitrationist' union.<sup>5</sup> This arbitrationist cast was reinforced when a faction aligned to the anti-communist Catholic Social Studies Movement (CSSM), later the National Civic Council (NCC), took control of the union.

In 1948 the Victorian Branch of the FCU fell under the control of the CSSM. By 1950, this faction had gained a majority in the Queensland Branch and by 1952 was in control of the union's National Executive, National Council and the New South Wales' Branch.<sup>6</sup> From this point onwards the FCU assumed the most retrograde positions on the issues of the day. At a time when women already constituted a majority of Queensland Branch membership — 59.6 per cent in 1949 — union publications held forth that women in the workforce "strikes at the basis of our civilisation, the family life... A mother's place is with her children in her home".<sup>7</sup> Although the leadership did subscribe to the principle of equal pay for equal work, its motivation "Was not so much a belief in women's rights...as men's concern that the growing female workforce paid at a lower rate threatened their jobs."<sup>8</sup>

In addition to its pro-natalist positioning, the main union publication, *The Clerk*, featured a regular "Commo Corner" in which "Communist imperialism" was regularly denounced in barely concealed racist terms:

Australian must realise the stark fact that we are a nation of 8,000,000 people surrounded by over 120,000,000 Asiatics, who are rising to the cry of Marx: 'Workers unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains.'<sup>9</sup>

Some 30 years later and the union was still railing against both the African National Congress for being a 'terrorist' organization and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation for its allegedly left wing bias.

Union convictions in these matters spilled over into its approach to strictly domestic industrial issues. A resolution at the union's 1956 National Council held that

Generally 24-hour stoppages achieve no good purpose and thus the Union does not wish to take any part in them, except where it is expressly consented to by Branch Executive or in the case of urgency, the Branch President.<sup>10</sup>

According to the Queensland Branch President, William Thornton, conciliation and arbitration were to be favoured over industrial action for in them was to be found "the promotion of more active co-operation between labour and management as a means of solving the problems facing the workers in this country."<sup>11</sup>



In order to avoid getting dragged into sympathy strikes or other solidarity actions, the Queensland Branch withdrew from the state Trades and Labour Council, which it promptly labeled “the Kremlin”, in 1956.<sup>12</sup>

Diverse sources seem to agree on the *modus operandi* of the National Civic Council and its relationship with the FCU and the other ‘industrial unions’ that were in its camp. A reform-oriented critic of the union commented:

The NCC agenda was to prevent communists from controlling trade unions, not to improve the lives of union members. They devoted enormous resources to winning and holding union coverage of particular trades and industries, but very little to recruiting and representing the workers within them.<sup>13</sup>

For the centenarian former President of the Queensland Branch:

I joined in July 1949 in the Clerks Union. I then immediately, because I was put there, worked on organising the machine. It was drummed into me that whatever you do, you’ve got to keep control. You must retain control... Everything that the Clerks Union did was right. They didn’t want the Comms to take over.<sup>14</sup>

Beyond promoting ‘co-operative’ labour-management dealings, the relationship between the FCU and the NCC had a number of other consequences. These are best revealed by union staff in Queensland and elsewhere, who, for a variety of reasons, became increasingly disaffected with the tie to the NCC.

Such tensions were first to emerge in the Queensland Branch during the years immediately preceding the 1976 contested Branch elections and were enunciated by the then-Branch Secretary, John Forrester. His protestations were directed to Bob Santamaria, against the union’s long time and unelected Federal President, John Maynes, who also held the position of National Industrial Officer for the NCC. In these exchanges, Forrester laments the subordination of the union to the NCC.<sup>15</sup>

This relegation manifested itself in numerous ways. First, staff recruitment to the Branch was, to a considerable extent, controlled by NCC operatives. For Forrester this led to the hiring of “white-collar workers [who] are substantially non-unionists or do not have the Union mentality”.<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, Forrester saw links to the NCC as leading to a loss of staff morale in the Branch. As a matter of course, staff were expected to attend NCC meetings and to make ‘voluntary’ donations every payday to the ‘movement’.<sup>17</sup>



Young and recently hired staff members, including the first female organisers, balked at such expectations and the not so subtle forms of coercion that lay back of them.<sup>18</sup> Forrester was likewise concerned that Branch finances were being jeopardized by virtue of having to participate in NCC sponsored activities, whilst placing NCC operatives on the Branch's payroll when engaged in non-union related matters.<sup>19</sup>

Thirdly, there was resentment at the way in which workers could summarily be withdrawn from the FCU and placed in allied unions such as the Shop, Distributive and Allied Employees Union if the NCC required greater numbers in a different affiliate when jockeying for control.

Just such a situation arose in 1976 with a deal that would transfer coverage of workers in the motor vehicle retail sector from the FCU to the Shop Workers and in the process place these workers on an inferior award. According to Forrester, this particular deal was done over the heads of the members solely "to assist the National Civic Council in a factional fight in the Shop, Distributive & Allied Employees' Union in which the Federal President of this Union [FCU] is heavily involved at our members' expense."<sup>20</sup>

Overall, the unelected Federal Executive of the union, under Maynes' leadership, was viewed by moderates in

the Branch as holding the organization back on a range of issues that included re-affiliating with the Trades and Labour Council. While Forrester was unsuccessful in overturning the connection with the NCC, losing the 1976 Branch election to movement loyalists, the same contradictions continued to manifest themselves until 1982, when the NCC regime was successfully challenged in Queensland.

This time, the protagonist was a young female organizer. Bernadette Callaghan accounts for the trigger that led to her challenge in the following informative narrative:

I used to organise the clerks at the Building Society and I can always remember one day. I went to the Metropolitan Permanent Building Society in the Valley and I'd always got on really well with the clerks and the clerks down there were just about to lynch me and I thought 'So what are you talking about?' and they told me that the Union had agreed to an extension of trading hours without their say-so.

Now, I was the organiser and I hadn't even been told, so I went up and had a bit of an argument with Joan Riordan [the Branch Secretary] about that and she said 'Well, you've got to compromise'. I said, 'But you can't do these things without



*Going on strike, Clyde Industries,  
Brisbane, 1967*

running it by the members and in fact taking the members with you.’ It’s just simply wrong, fundamentally wrong. But she prevailed.<sup>21</sup>

What Callaghan was objecting to was the way in which things were being done to members without consultation, while these practices were producing outcomes that were definitely not in their interests. Essentially, this is the same grievance that John Forrester had registered when he objected to shifting members from the FCU to the SDA. Whether it concerned the transfer of members onto inferior awards, or changes to working hours, deals were being done in the total absence of membership approval.

All of this did not mean that the union never flexed its muscles when confronted with recalcitrant employers. Given the position of clerks at ports and in terminals, the union was in

a strategic position in what is today called the ‘supply chains’ of various industries. This power was mainly used to rope all eligible workers into the union. Following the Hanger decision of 1967, union preference clauses were outlawed in Queensland. To get around this barrier, the FCU was more than willing to place bans on those employers who were unwilling to countenance closed shop conditions. According to David Mapstone, who would later take on the role of Branch President under a reform ticket, the union

...had a plan and that was you look at the Council of the Queensland Confederation of Industry and you start off with the Chairman of that Council, who was the head of one of the major food packaging companies in Brisbane... We’d go in and say “Righto, you’ve got 48 hours to get all your clerks in the Union. If they’re not in the Union by that time, you’ll be black-banned by road, rail, sea and air.”<sup>22</sup>

And this was largely effective in maintaining membership of eligible workers in the FCU even after union preference clauses had been outlawed. In this respect, the FCU was a powerful entity. But it is an altogether different matter as to whether this muscle was transposed into a state of employee/membership empowerment. John Grenville, a former National Secretary

of the Clerks, who also lost that position in a power struggle with John Maynes in 1976, just a few months before John Forrester was disposed of in Queensland, provides one answer to this question.

NCC activity in the union movement is directed towards the creation and maintenance of compliant unions. Compliant to their political aims. Compliant to employers who are prepared to provide financial assistance to the NCC... [The] NCC enters into deals with individual employers whereby in return for guarantees of industrial peace from an NCC dominated union, the employers contribute large sums of money to NCC funds. In other words, the NCC is engaging in an industrial variation of the 'protection racket'.<sup>23</sup>

In short, although the FCU certainly fulfilled many of the functions that would normally be associated with Australian trade unionism at the time, it was ultimately subservient to a much broader, conservative agenda as laid down by the National Civic Council.<sup>24</sup> The union was used as a political asset in a wide-ranging political/ideological defense of the status quo. Membership was something to be controlled rather than represented. Quite simply, "It was Christ against the Devil".<sup>25</sup>

## **The campaign for a servicing union**

In the leadup to the Queensland Branch elections of 1982, until just hours before nominations closed, the existence of the 'Better Deal Team' had been a well-concealed secret. Composed of the three young organisers, Bernadette Callaghan, Dianne Linnane and Chris Woods, the 'Better Deal' slate promised change in the Branch.

Callaghan and Woods had never been in the NCC, while Linnane resigned in 1975 out of support for the then embattled Branch Secretary, John Forrester.<sup>26</sup> The fourth member of the team, who was to run for the Branch Presidency position, David Mapstone, had been a loyal NCC stalwart. He provides us with an interesting reflection on the reasons for his defection:

[T]he closer I worked with committed Left Wing Union officials, the more convinced I was that they were more interested in their members' welfare... and the more I worked with these people on negotiating industry awards, the more I began to respect them... the Left Wing people taught me that Unions should really be more about what the members want than what you as an elected official want... where clearly the members run the Union and not the officials... that's the way it's supposed to

be and that's what I saw in the Left Wing Unions...whereas in my side...it was predominantly the other way around and hiding their political agenda...<sup>27</sup>

The 'Better Deal' team ran on a 'members' first' program. To make the union more democratic they proposed to increase the size of the Branch Council to better reflect the changing occupational demographics of the Branch. Emerging sectors in the union such as higher educational support staff, as well as workers in the financial and retail sectors, were under-represented in the structures of Branch governance.

Their program, which was publicized through a self-funded broadsheet called *The New Clerk* also promised to re-open old Branch offices in regional Queensland so as to provide a better level of service. Union membership fees would be reduced for those who paid their dues early in the calendar year or through newly implemented automatic payroll deductions. Meanwhile, the Branch Presidency would be converted from a salaried position back to a honourific role. A referendum on re-affiliation with the Trades and Labour Council was promised and it was proposed that the Branch office be reorganized into a service unit for existing members and a recruitment division to bring in new members.

A basic theme of the 'Better Deal' team's campaign was that members were paying too much for a 'third rate' service. Rather than building up large financial surpluses, the challengers argued that, "The true concept of unionism is that unions are non-profit organisations using what monies they have for the benefit of members".<sup>28</sup> Following on from this premise, another pledge that was made by the reformers was to establish a new legal advisory service at the Branch. This facility would be available to all members, free of charge, to provide legal assistance in compensation claims.

In response to what was essentially a populist campaign, the incumbents doubled down with a negative message. Their literature defined the election as being all about affiliation with the Trades and Labour Council; "Affiliation with the Queensland Trade and Labor Council and political intrigue in our Union are the real issues of this 1982 Branch Triennial election."<sup>29</sup> From this it followed that the challengers were being funded and supported by Trades Hall and by "Several left wing officials of political (sic) motivated Unions", including the Waterside Workers Federation.<sup>30</sup> Members were duly warned that "Trades and Labor Council affiliation could mean involvement in irresponsible strikes".<sup>31</sup>

As the results rolled in, it was clear that the 'Better Deal' slate was winning across the various sections of the

Branch.<sup>32</sup> Various factors account for the almost 400 vote plurality that Callaghan won in her bid for the Branch Secretariat. Certainly, there was an “it’s time factor”, along with an age/demographic component that worked against the old guard.

Another advantage that Callaghan points to is that in their job as organisers, she, Linnane and Woods were continually out amongst the rank and file, listening to and trying to resolve their problems.

Our members appreciated the work that we did and we fought hard on their behalf... we’d got out and done the work and I think that they [the leadership incumbents] had organisers that weren’t doing the job. They employed organisers that were really very lazy and were not doing the job... we were good at our job... we had a good reputation amongst our members and that flowed through.<sup>33</sup>

In other words, the commitment to providing a better service featured to a significant extent in the election upset.

### **The NCC digs in**

The new Branch leadership faced an immediate impediment to delivering upon its commitment to membership service — the hostility of the Federal leadership of the union which sought

to actively undermine the Queensland reformers.

Following the dismissal of staff that had remained loyal to the old guard, the National Office established a new entity known as the Brisbane Annex. Its main function, as admitted by one of its staffers, was to keep NCC loyalists on board until the election results of 1982 could be overturned.<sup>34</sup> It was estimated that the National Office expended between \$2.5 and \$5 million to keep this operation going over the next 7 years.<sup>35</sup> This leads immediately to the next point of contention between the Branch and the National Office.

Being a federated union, the National Office existed on the basis of sustentation fees that were payable by the different Branches. In return, the Branches were supposed to receive industrial advice, representation for members who were under Federal Awards and space in the FCU’s national publication, *The Clerk*. Unwilling to see members’ money being spent on operations such as the Brisbane Annex, and cold war overseas’ programs, the Branch undertook the decision to withhold its fees. This decision, taken in early 1983 upped the stakes considerably while setting a very dangerous precedent in the eyes of the National Office.

Retaliation was not long in coming. Branch officers were not allowed to take their seats on the unelected

National Executive Council, a body which had the as yet untested power to dismiss democratically elected branch officials. Over the next 5 years, the National Executive Council under Maynes' leadership attempted to place the Branch under a hand-picked 'interim administration', while Branch leaders, were duly expelled from the union for periods ranging from 5 to 7 years for an array of misdeeds including misappropriation of union funds, (i.e. the withholding of sustentation fees).<sup>36</sup>

Each of these measures proved ineffective as a means for dispensing with the 'troublesome' Branch leadership. Branch funds were strategically placed beyond the reach of Federal officials. In 1987, a three-week, around the clock occupation of the Branch headquarters was undertaken to prevent the physical seizure of Branch property by staff at the Brisbane Annex.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, judicial decisions and Branch elections kept going in favour of the Branch. Courts turned back the National Office's attempt at an administrative coup, while the expulsions of the Branch leadership from the FCU were also voided.<sup>38</sup> Just as important, the incumbents won triennial elections in 1985, with an increased mandate, and again in 1988 elections.

Formal hostilities were brought to an end in the lead-up to the 1989 ACTU congress and that body's drive to oversee union amalgamations as a

way to arrest plummeting membership levels.<sup>39</sup> As Callaghan was to report back:

– the battle for the Clerks Union is over because, if it continues, there will be no Union left. Severe criticism was levelled by Secretary Kelty at the Federated Clerks Union, particularly the spending of \$2 million on factional disputes and the lack of opportunities for women in the union hierarchy.<sup>40</sup>

Unless the Clerks could put the internecine turmoil behind them, it would be a very poor candidate indeed for amalgamation with other white-collar unions, which is what the ACTU had mandated.

We now have a situation where the ACTU... are saying that unless the Clerks Union does something about its own position they will take it into their hand... If we do not act quickly the Clerks Union is finished... the battle for the Clerks Union is over simply because in its present form the Clerks Union will not exist beyond the next ACTU Congress.<sup>41</sup>

Nevertheless, the final agreement between the Queensland Branch and the National Office delivered what the former had been seeking. First and foremost, the union was to be



when Mr Jones made my life at the office a torment, I was ready to leave. Thank heavens Delia knew what to do about -

# sexual harassment

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO DELIA? MR JONES  
KEEPS LEANING ALL OVER ME WHEN I'M TYPING...  
I'VE ASKED HIM TO STOP, BUT NOW  
HE SAYS HE'LL SACK ME IF I  
DON'T GO OUT WITH HIM!

AND THEN WE'LL  
BREAK HIS LEGS.....

WELL DEAR,  
SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN  
THE WORKPLACE IS A  
UNION ISSUE...SO FIRSTLY  
WE'LL CALL THE -

**FEDERATED  
CLERKS  
UNION**  
(528666)

mantis

Illustration by Mantis  
Secretary, Federation of Clerks  
Anti-racism, Equality & Democracy

Sexual Harassment Awareness Poster, sponsored by the C&SQ Branch, circa 1983

democratized. Beginning in 1991, all positions in the National Office and national leadership bodies (the National Executive, the National Council) would be directly elected. Unelected officials from Queensland were forced to stand down. The Branch would henceforth have editorial control over its section in the national journal and it was permitted to opt out of the objectionable Overseas Fund in the calculation of its sustentation fees.<sup>42</sup>

### **A service union**

The legal battles alone between 1983 and 1988 cost the Branch \$375,000.<sup>43</sup> Despite this drain on resources, the union in Queensland did undertake a number of significant initiatives on behalf of its membership.

The leadership made a point of undertaking periodic regional tours to touch base with the membership. In some cases this was the first time in years that members had had any contact with union officials.<sup>44</sup>

There was also a systemic review and updating of the awards that the union was a party to. In some cases such awards had not been revised in the preceding 20 years.<sup>45</sup>

As promised during the 1982 campaign, Branch Council was expanded to enable better representation for newer occupational groups. Along the same lines, new sub-branches were

also created in a number of regional centres.<sup>46</sup>

For the first time ever, the Branch hired a permanent research officer, affiliated with the Workers' Health Centre and following a 1985 referendum re-affiliated with the Queensland TLC while dropping all connections with John Maynes' Combined Industrial Union Committee [the old NCC Industrial Group].

A number of innovative campaigns were launched during this period, including one around sexual harassment in the workplace and another around the health and safety impacts of using computer monitors. In the same vein, the Branch authored new policy guidelines for the use of computer equipment and for workplace childcare.

Progress on the adoption of a 38-hour workweek and 19-day working month was also advanced along with commitments to launch work value cases and a comparable wage case on behalf of the Branch's female majority.

Each of these steps provides a solid indication that the Branch had turned its attention towards the service of its members, whilst re-joining the state labour movement. Just as this was occurring, however, a second set of factors was to make these tasks more challenging than they previously had been.



## The challenge of the Accord

On top of the turmoil within the Clerks Union, the new leadership faced challenges as a result of the rapidly changing external environment of Australian industrial relations and the ACTU's role within those dynamics.

Initially, the 'Better Deal' team was a strong supporter of the Accord. The logic of this support lay in the estimation that the outcomes of the Accord were "a lot more to look forward to than we have had for many years and a lot more than we could realistically expect to win through direct bargaining in the current economic climate", in the context of the recession of the early 1980s.<sup>47</sup> The picture had changed, however, in later iterations of the Accord, when full CPI indexation came to depend upon productivity bargaining with employers.<sup>48</sup>

Suddenly, this change was to place whole, new, labour-intensive demands on what it meant to provide adequate membership service.<sup>49</sup> In this regard, the Branch was at a particular disadvantage. The FCU was not based in any particular industry, nor did it represent an explicit occupational base. Instead, in many establishments, the union had relatively small numbers of workers that it was entitled to represent. A future Branch Secretary describes some of the difficulties associated with the servicing model:

I remember one of the negotiations with one of the transport companies, there were six members... we've had to go back half a dozen [times]...to get an agreement for six men... from any kind of sense of cost effectiveness... some of the big companies, they had... all different divisions, so you were dealing with the branches of each division, even though they were all the one ... and it was completely inefficient.<sup>50</sup>

As if the sea change from wage fixation through the award system to direct bargaining with employers was not enough, the Branch, in common with many other unions began to experience a persistent decline in membership, beginning in the mid-1980s. Contributing to this decline in a major fashion were ongoing changes to labour legislation.

Queensland was an earlier initiator of Voluntary Employment Agreements. Increasingly, closed shops were being 'opened up', even at major employers such as Evans Deakin, Metway, SEQEB, Qantas, Castlemaine and across Queensland newspapers.<sup>51</sup> Previous remedies to this sort of situation, such as the launching of bans and boycotts were no longer legally available. So, just as servicing was becoming a more daunting task, the membership base upon which it was dependent began to shrink. Tellingly, membership erosion

was occurring during a period of heady economic growth, not during a period of recession. It would turn out to be a secular trend rather than a cyclical occurrence.

## **An Organising Union**

Following the injunctions of the 1989 ACTU congress an amalgamation between the FCU, the Municipal Officers Association and the currently existing Australian Services Union was completed by 1993, with the FCU having the status as ‘host union’. This act, along with the retirements/resignations of some of the principle antagonists of the preceding period, laid the groundwork for the third phase in the post-war life of the union.

Much as Branch officials were committed to providing service for their members, the ‘servicing model’ was becoming an increasingly difficult endeavor for the union to fulfill. Symptomatic of these problems were the decisions by the Branch to close down its regional offices in Maryborough and Toowoomba as well as the Branch’s research facility as early as 1986.<sup>52</sup> By the following decade and even after the amalgamation things were to become even more dire for the Branch. As described by new Branch Secretary, Janice Mayes, by the mid-1990s:

Our membership was utterly depleted. You need to appreciate, after Howard was elected, we

lost whole workplaces... I can’t describe how heart breaking it was. You’d come in every day for months and there you’d see five or six resignations in the fax machine.

We were at a very low point... The Branch was nearly broke... I vividly remember going to a Branch ... executive one night with \$6,000 in the bank and we had a wage bill of \$25,000 and I remember ringing up and getting staff to ring up employers to see if they could send any direct debits, whatever they owed us in direct debits.<sup>53</sup>

By 2006, the Branch had fewer than 8000 members, just over one-third of its membership from 20 years earlier. Of this remaining membership, again, just less than one-third was to be found in the private sector. But, (and it is a big ‘but’), the 2400 workers in the private sector were spread across 668 individual work sites!<sup>54</sup> Of necessity, both the Branch and the union had to change course. The servicing model was no longer viable. As explained by a long-time activist in the Branch:

The Accord was finished and we were all getting into enterprise bargaining ... that was a real challenge to the movement in terms of resourcing, because ... for a Union like ours, too, which was a very diverse membership across many, many workplaces,

many, many Agreements to be negotiated... it was a challenge... and that's why the organising model... really came to the fore then, because you had to.<sup>55</sup>

First mention of adopting an organising approach appears in ASU and Branch literature in the mid-1990s. The shift coincides with a second strategic decision to place a greater emphasis on organising in the public and para-public sectors and especially in health care and tertiary education.<sup>56</sup>

As understood within the Branch, organising entailed a shift in both emphasis and in the way the union operated. Prominence was to be given to activities in the workplace that were membership driven. In order to make this a reality, priority was to be given to education, especially for union delegates who were to assume a key role in the functioning of the union.<sup>57</sup> One indication of this reordering was a large increase in the number of delegates as well as the ratio of delegates to members.<sup>58</sup> This reorientation would bring about both material and cultural shifts. Organisationally, organising was split off from servicing, with the new positions of Lead Organiser and Lead Negotiator being clearly demarcated. Organising was to entail not only acquiring new members in those establishments where the union already had a presence, while opening up non-union worksites to recruitment,

but also empowering members in the process. Thus:

Instead of seeing the union official as a hero delivering benefits, members must re-experience the reality of working together and thereby achieving power in relation to their employer.<sup>59</sup>

To give effect to this strategy, special attention was paid to the formation of Workplace Organising Committees (WOCs), in those employments where the union had a presence. WOCs were intended to provide an alternative to the old system of arbitration. They were to provide a forum in which the issues that mattered most to rank and file workers could be identified and collectively acted upon.

Efforts were also undertaken to make the union more attractive to new potential constituencies by making it more inclusive. The union specifically created an Indigenous Reference Group to focus on the specific interests to Aboriginal and Torre Strait Islander members. A gay and lesbian ASU members caucus (Glam) was initiated in 1998 with the express purpose of challenging the workplace injustices that this segment of the workforce experiences.<sup>60</sup> Along with active participation in broader labour movement campaigns, including the Days of Action against the Federal Government's Work Choices legislation, a turn towards a

broader social unionism was clearly identifiable.

### **Conclusion: a new era of ‘survival’?**

The union that has been described in the preceding paragraphs would have been unrecognizable to its leaders from 30 years earlier. From a bastion of anti-communist conservatism in defense of the status quo, the Queensland Branch and the union as a whole had transmogrified into a progressive, left leaning organization with women in leadership positions throughout.

In this article, I have attempted to both periodise and theorize these shifts, identifying three distinct eras as ‘possession’, ‘provider’, and ‘organiser’.

The change in emphasis over the latter two stages, ‘provider’ to ‘organiser’ has been criticized by some as being a misled venture that failed to produce notably successful outcomes. I will conclude by commenting on these arguments.

Set against the empirical evidence contained in this one case study such arguments are half-right. The shift to an organising model has failed to arrest the decline in trade unionism in Australia or elsewhere. In the particular case presented here, the Queensland Branch of the ASU had become non-viable by 2010, when it was forced to seek out an amalgamation with

the Queensland Public Sector Union, against the overall wishes of the ASU nationally. This amalgamation produced a new Branch, the ASU-Together Queensland Branch in 2011. Although the ASU was the host in this amalgamation, it was dwarfed in size by the QPSU. Consequently, the new Branch primarily represents workers in the public sector.

On the other hand, it is difficult to argue that the shift from a service orientation to an organising model was a historic miscalculation let alone a causal factor in membership decline. As the evidence presented here demonstrates, the Queensland Branch of the FCU was already shedding members prior to the adoption of an organising ethos. Indeed, it was membership loss that was rendering the old servicing approach non-viable. In this case, we can say that transitioning from service to organization was making a virtue out of necessity. Quite simply it became a matter of survival, although no one was in a position to guarantee final satisfactory results.

The history presented here also has a number of theoretical implications for the study of Australian labour and trade union history.

First, typologies are static. In the post-war history of this one union branch, various types of unionism were traversed including arbitrationist and active organising. To a large extent

these trajectories were determined by external exigencies.

Secondly, even with in one paradigm, there could be significant variation in the way that it was practiced. The FCU remained wedded to the arbitration model for good reason; given the structure of the union and its wide, diverse membership, it was the most effective means by which to pursue trade union objectives. However, it was pursued in very different ways under different union regimes.

When the NCC dominated the Branch, members' interests were at best a secondary, incidental matter. Following the overthrow of this leadership, servicing the membership through award renewal was pursued with passion. At the same time, the Branch was taking its first steps towards a broader form of social unionism.

## Notes

- 1 QIRC, Box 54, Union 31.
- 2 QIRC, Industrial Unions, Box 54, Union 31; Annual Report of the President of the Industrial Court, Industrial Registrar's Office, Queensland.
- 3 Industrial Registrar to Minister of Labour and Industry, 11 June 1937, QIRC, Box 54, Union 31. For further details on the effects that such clauses had on the Branch, see B. Russell, *Worth Fighting For: A Centennial History of the Federated Clerks Union-ASU Central & Southern Queensland Branch*, Brisbane: Cornerstone Press, 2016.
- 4 *New Clerk*, June, Vol.4 No 2, 1985.
- 5 T. Bramble, 'Australian union strategies'.
- 6 B. Ellem, 'Ideology and union purpose: The Federated Clerks' Union in New South Wales, 1946-58', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, September, 1997, pp.344-60.
- 7 *The Clerk*, October, 1953.
- 8 *The Clerk*, October 1953; B. Ellem, 'Ideology and union purpose..
- 9 *The Clerk*, July 1954; also see B. Ellem, 'Ideology and union purpose'.
- 10 *The Clerk*, April, 1956.
- 11 *Ibid*; B. Ellem, 'Ideology and union purpose'.
- 12 *The Clerk*, September, 1956.
- 13 L. Tanner, *The Last Battle*. Carlton Vic: Kokkino Press, 1996, p.11. Tanner would later lead the reform faction of the FCU's Victorian Branch, before entering Federal Parliament.
- 14 Interview, William Thornton, 7 April, 2015. Thornton was President of the Queensland Branch by 1950, a position that he was to hold over the next 32 years. He was also a member of the Brisbane mens' Committee, a subsidiary of the NCC in Brisbane (Officers and Members of the Brisbane Mens' Committee, nd. Dossier on the NCC in C & SQ Branch files). Thornton was in his 101<sup>st</sup> year when interviewed. He died a few months after the interview was conducted.
- 15 Forrester had resigned from the NCC in 1975, Interview, Dianne Linnane, 18 June, 2015; interview Chris Forrester, 2 June, 2016.
- 16 Forrester to Santamaria, 21 May, 1975.
- 17 *ibid*. Transcript of an interview with Bernadette Callaghan on Radio 3CR Public Affairs, Melbourne, 2 June, 1984.
- 18 *ibid*;
- 19 *ibid*.
- 20 Forrester to Sullivan, 30 July, 1976.
- 21 Interview, Bernadette Callaghan, 20 June, 2015.
- 22 Interview, David Mapstone, 31 March, 2015.
- 23 Committee to Defend the Victorian ALP, *A Pattern of Deceit*. Mimeo, 1979

- 24 The same relationship appears to have held in NSWs where Ellem argues that “the Union was arguably becoming a vehicle for the policies of the Movement”, B. Ellem, ‘Ideology and union purpose’, pp.352.
- 25 Interview, David Mapstone, 31 March, 2015.
- 26 Interview, Dianne Linnane, 18 June, 2015.
- 27 Interview, David Mapstone, 31 March, 2015.
- 28 *The New Clerk*, October, 1982.
- 29 *The Clerks Bulletin*, n.d.
- 30 *ibid.*
- 31 *ibid.*
- 32 Interview, William Thornton, 7 April, 2015.
- 33 Interview, Bernadette Callaghan, 20 June, 2015.
- 34 Interview, Patrick Brophy, 9 June, 2015. According to Brophy, “we weren’t able to do much, actually, in the State sphere. ... it was mainly to keep us there, so staff didn’t disappear, because they were expecting to win ...”
- 35 C & SQ Branch Minutes, 16 April, 1988.
- 36 Full details of the civil war that was taking place between the Queensland Branch and the union’s national office are contained in B. Russell, *Worth Fighting For*, 2016.
- 37 This measure was widely supported by union rank and file members from the waterside division of the Branch, *Times on Sunday*, 11 November, 1987; C & SQ Branch Press Release, 12 November, 1987; *The New Clerk*, vol.7, no.1, February, 1988; Interview, Bernadette Callaghan, 25 July, 2015.
- 38 *The New Clerk*, vol.7, no.1, February, 1988.
- 39 A. Barnes and R. Markey, ‘Evaluating the organising model of trade unionism: An Australian perspective’ *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, vol.26, no.4, 2015, pp.513–25.
- 40 C & SQ Branch Council Minutes, 21 October, 1989.
- 41 Chris Woods, *ibid.*
- 42 C & SQ Branch Executive Minutes, 13, 27 November, 1989.
- 43 C & SQ Branch Council Minutes, 16 April, 1988.
- 44 C & SQ Branch Council Minutes, 17 March, 1984; C & SQ Branch Executive Minutes, 9 September, 1985.
- 45 Transcript of an interview with Bernadette Callaghan on Radio 3CR Public Affairs, Melbourne, 2 June, 1984.
- 46 C & SQ Branch Council Minutes, 28–29 July, 1984.
- 47 *The New clerk*, vol.1, no.5, November, 1983.
- 48 C & SQ Branch Council Minutes, 29 November, 1986.
- 49 *The New Clerk*, vol.7, no.3, 1988.
- 50 Interview, Janice Mayes, 7 January, 2016.
- 51 C & SQ Branch Council Minutes, 20 April, 1985; C & SQ Branch Executive Minutes, 14 July, 1986, 26 September, 1988.
- 52 C & SQ Executive Minutes, 3 February, 1986, and 14 April, 1993, C & SQ Branch Council Minutes, 30 August, 1986.
- 53 Interview, Janice Mayes, 7 January, 2016.
- 54 C & SQ Federal/State Executive Minutes, 20 February, 2006.
- 55 Interview, Mark Starkey, 14 January, 2016.
- 56 C & SQ Branch Executive Minutes, 18 January, 1995.
- 57 This coincided with the ACTU’s Organising Works program, A. Barnes and R. Markey, ‘Evaluating the organising model’. Interview, Janice Mayes, 7 January, 2016.
- 58 *ASU News*, vol.2, no.7, 2000. The Branch attained the impressive mark of 1 delegate for every 14 members.
- 59 *ASU News*, vol.2, no.6, 2000.
- 60 *ASU News*, vol.2, no.5, 1999.

# 1937 Castlemaine Brewery Dispute: “Valour Among the Vats”

Carol Corless

This paper is an account of the strike by brewery workers at Castlemaine brewery in Brisbane in 1937, drawing upon previously unpublished works to outline what was the first stay-in strike undertaken in Queensland. The strike was to gain a 40-hour week and a pay rise. The strike did not have the outcome that the workers hoped for and left at least 80 workers without jobs, which included workers from the second Brisbane based brewery, due to the actions of the employers. The strike was held during a time when the preferred method to gain the 40-hour week was arbitration: The Australian Council of Trade Unions; other individual unions; the Queensland Government and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) were vocal advocates for arbitration.

The 1937 Castlemaine Brewery Strike was the first stay-in strike in Queensland and was one of many that were enacted around the country to achieve changes to working conditions. The stay-in or sit-down strike had been an IWW tactic in industrial disputes in the early 20th Century<sup>1</sup> but a worldwide wave of stay-in strikes had originated in France in May 1936. This method of striking spread to Belgium and was used in the

United States at the end of 1936 and early 1937.<sup>2</sup> Australian workers began using the tactic in February 1937 with the first stay-in strike conducted at the North Wallarah mine situated just north of Swansea, New South Wales. This strike lasted 38 hours and the wives of the miners were credited with settling the strike. Their wives and women friends had prepared provisions for the men and they drove to the mine with the provisions. They were prevented from handing them over by a police cordon. Approximately 250 people, mostly women and children, marched to the home of the mine business manager. After a conference, the business manager accepted a compromise on behalf of the mine owners.<sup>3</sup>

September 15, 1937 was the beginning of the stay-in strike at the Castlemaine Brewery, Milton in Brisbane. The workers’ representatives approached management about a pay increase and a reduction in hours to a 40-hour week on September 10. The representatives were two of the workers at the factory, one of whom was the President of the Queensland Branch of the Federated Liquor Trades Union (FLTUQ). They requested an immediate weekly wage of £5 for union members, with an



extra 5 shillings for cold cellar hands and a 40-hour week, with a limit on overtime to 4 extra hours per week. The Castlemaine-Perkins Brewery employer representatives said that as this issue affected the other brewery in Brisbane (The Queensland Brewery Ltd, based in Fortitude Valley) the demands would need to be referred to the Brisbane Brewers Association (BBA). The response, given on September 15, was that if the employee representatives applied to the Industrial Court for the pay increase then the BBA would not oppose the pay claim but they would oppose the reduction in hours.<sup>4</sup> The response from the workers' representatives was that they were happy to take the pay increase but would be ceasing work "...until the 40-hour week was granted".<sup>5</sup>

*On September 15<sup>th</sup> 1937 at Castlemaine Brewery at 10.30 a.m. a 'Stay in' Strike was declared, on the grounds of altering the working hours from 44 to 40 hours a week with 8/- rise in wages, bringing it up to £5.0.0, with £5.5.0 for cold cellar work, and a limit of 4 hours a week overtime. All the men from each department, gathered together in the Bottle Department, where we stayed, much to the annoyance of the management of the Brewery.*<sup>6</sup>

The men settled in to the stay-in strike by setting up improvised beds out of bales of straw and bags of bottles.<sup>7</sup>

The BBA decided immediately to apply for the deregistration of the FLTUQ, and the Association's spokesman, Colonel F. A. Hughes, stated that they believed that the strike was illegal.<sup>8</sup> The secretary of the FLTUQ, Mr D. Skehan, defended the strike. Skehan stated that the strike was legal under the Arbitration Act as a vote had been taken by brewery employees on the 40-hour week and that the Castlemaine Brewery members by a large majority had agreed to cease work for the cause. Mr Skehan was questioned on the situation at the Queensland Brewery Ltd, and stated that they were not involved.<sup>9</sup> The members at that brewery were not on strike and as far as he knew "...they were working as usual."<sup>10</sup> The BBA had escalated the conflict by deciding not to make deliveries to hotels from either brewery during the dispute.<sup>11</sup> At the time hotels were tied to particular brands of beer and were mostly owned by the individual brewing companies.<sup>12</sup>

The press reported daily on the dispute with the reports filtering through to the regional newspapers. An article in the *Courier Mail* went into the ins and outs of the strike, suggested that it was farcical and that the men were playing a "...childish game of 'valour among the vats'..."<sup>13</sup>

*Right from the start we were invaded by Press reporters, and pictures were taken, and published in the front pages of the daily papers. The Japan*





As the result of the Trades and Labor Council dispute, committee taking over the strike negotiations Mr. J. Hayes (left), president of the Federated Liquor Trades Union, is not far from the moment official spokesman, nor is Mr. D. Skehan (right), the secretary. Nevertheless both officials express themselves as well content with the position.

*J Hayes and D Skehan, Truth, Brisbane  
26 Sept 1937 p1*

*Chinese war, was forgotten for the time being, as the people of Brisbane were concerned only in the Beer Strike, and how long the beer would last in the Hotels.<sup>14</sup>*

The newspapers also interviewed the wives and girlfriends of the strikers. The focus of the interviews of the wives was on how they were coping with the men not at home.<sup>15</sup> The stories ranged from the women happy about the men not being at home as they didn't have to prepare meals to wondering "...how much money do we get tomorrow."<sup>16</sup> Jim Hayes, lead striker, sent a reporter out to his home at West End to speak to his wife about what she thought of the dispute.<sup>17</sup>

*Mrs. Hayes, busy washing her husband's shirts, ready to be taken out to the scene of action — or is it "in action" — gazed in astonishment as a Press reporter and photographer*

*walked up her front stairs, and drying her hands on her apron said, "Heavens above; what a job Jimmie's given you. I don't know anything about it. Haven't time to worry much. Yes, come in, of course. Haven't had time to do much to the house this morning; it's washing day." "No 40 hours a week for you, Mrs. Hayes?" Mrs. Hayes indicated her scorn and derision. "But the men — they work hard out there. They deserve their 40 hours." Strikers wives are loyal.<sup>18</sup>*

Some of the wives, children and girlfriends were reported as missing their men. The reporter going as far as the say that the headline should be "...Sit down strikes ensure domestic bliss."<sup>19</sup>

When the men went on strike, it was reported, there was £35,000 of beer left in vats that needed to be processed or it would have to be dumped.<sup>20</sup> The head brewer, Mr. A. K. Hall, believed that it was a more important story that 6 men had managed to save this product "...than that the strikers had spent a comfortable night."<sup>21</sup> It was reported that four brewers and two foreman worked to move beer in various stages of fermentation around the plant to storage. All equipment had to be left clean and the 6 men worked 16 to 18 hour days to ensure that this happened. The head brewer also stated that there were hogsheads in storage that needed

to be seen to. He pointed out that this work was normally done by 40 men.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile the men involved in the dispute had spent a comfortable night in their surroundings. Foodstuffs, tobacco and cigarettes were amongst the items donated to assist the men in their stay-in strike.<sup>23</sup> It was reported that Mr J. Hayes had stated amongst the group of strikers on the September 16, "*We are quite comfortable and will stay for six months if necessary. If the breweries can last seven days then we can go for 70 days.*"<sup>24</sup>

On the second day of the strike it was reported that there had been a donation of a special food item along with an entertainment source. A hessian bag of oysters was to be shucked for dinner and had been donated by a sympathiser. A radio was donated with the licence transferred into the name of Jimmy Hayes with the address being the Milton brewery so that it complied with the regulations of the Postmaster-General's Department.<sup>25</sup>

*In the room where we were staying was 3,000 dozen bottles of beer, which were not touched by anyone, it was declared "taboo" by all. There was also two Customs officers in the room day & Night, as the beer was under Government Bond, and was being watched by the officers.*<sup>26</sup>

Beer bottles that were housed in the same room were off limits.<sup>27</sup> There were

customs officers posted in the room with the strikers to ensure no beer left the premises without payment of the customs duty.<sup>28</sup> Meals for the men was a hot topic in the newspapers as it was reported nearly every day what they were eating, and photographs appeared of the preparation of the meals.

*We soon had two copper boilers at work, in a Galley which was erected nearby; and two of the men who had been cooks before they had worked at the Brewery, soon had hot meals ready for us, and the old call of 'Come and get it' was heard at meal times, and the men who were always orderly waited in a long 'queue' with plates & cups in their hands, waiting for their hot meal.*<sup>29</sup>

The *Telegraph* reporter wrote that he was greeted with the sight of a new galley, erected overnight, when he visited on the Saturday. He reported that the chefs were garbed in white aprons and chef's hats. He stated that nearby men were shelling peas. Close by to them were donations from the city barrowmen of a bag of potatoes, case of apples, case of pears, carrots and turnips. The previous afternoon the men had been visited by their wives and girlfriends. They had been treated to a reverse of normal roles where the men waited on them with afternoon tea and dainties.<sup>30</sup>



*Brewery Strikers Kitchen, The Telegraph, Brisbane 18 Sept 1937 p1*

By Friday September 17 reports of the hotels in the city having run out of draught beer were the news of the day in conjunction with stories of the strike.<sup>31</sup> It was reported that bottled beer was being used, not being sold as full bottles but rather rationed out in short sixpenny glasses. The secretary of the Licenced Victuallers' Association, C. M. Jenkinson was quoted as saying that most supplies would run out by Monday morning.<sup>32</sup> One hotel enterprisingly decided to bring in draught beer from a Toowoomba hotel via a car. The licensee of the Grosvenor Hotel in George Street was told swiftly by the FLTUQ secretary that if the beer was sold then the hotel would be declared black and all bar attendants would be withdrawn. The beer was withdrawn from sale.<sup>33</sup>

The press ran multiple stories about the men being tired of the strike.<sup>34</sup> Mr J Hayes interviewed every striker and stated that to a man they were willing

to stay out until the 40 hour week was won. A letter to the editor that said that the wives of the strikers had met and were urging the men to go back to work for the pay rise and to achieve the 40-hour week via political means, was denied by Mr Skehan.<sup>35</sup>

*Rumors kept coming in about us being tired of the strike, and we were ready to go back to work, these tales used to make us very hostile, and they were denied in the next days Press. On one occasion one of the daily papers, published a false statement about us on the front page, and we therefore declared that paper 'Black', and advised other unions to do so.<sup>36</sup>*

The paper that was declared black was the Courier Mail as detailed in a report on the strike written by Michael Patrick Ryan.<sup>37</sup>

The employers' application to the Queensland Arbitration Commission to deregister the FLTUQ and cancel the Brewery Employees Award — Brisbane and Toowoomba — was heard on September 20.<sup>38</sup>

The Court comprised of Messrs T. A. Ferry and W. J. Riordan.<sup>39</sup> Riordan believed that the best way to advance workers' interests was through arbitration rather than direct action.<sup>40</sup> The employers were represented by Colonel F. A. Hughes, secretary of both the BBA<sup>41</sup> and Castlemaine Perkins

Ltd.<sup>42</sup> As a part of the employers' case he cited an earlier meeting in November 1936 where the response of the BBA to the union demand for a 40-hour week had been that the union should make an approach to the Industrial Court to apply for a variation of the Award.<sup>43</sup> It was alleged by the BBA that at the time of this discussion the secretary of the union said: "*We are not going near the Court: when we are ready we will take 40 hours*".<sup>44</sup> The employers also argued that no ballot had been undertaken for the strike.<sup>45</sup>

The FLTUQ was represented by Mr D. J Skehan who outlined various issues that had led to the men deciding to strike. Mr Skehan outlined that the dispute was only with Castlemaine Perkins but the affidavit mentioned the Queensland Brewery. He said that the other brewery could continue to supply their product as the brewery had never been part of the negotiations for the 40-hour week. Mr Skehan also vehemently denied ever saying the statement about taking the 40-hour week and that the earlier meeting had been complicated by a separate, long term dispute with the employers about illegal hotel trading hours.

The Industrial Court questioned why the union had not notified the Industrial Registrar of the strike, (as required under the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1932), until September 17, two days after the strike began.<sup>46</sup> Also, why the ballot paper had asked

for a simple yes or no to a long list of demands including "*...observance of legal trading hours, a 40-hour week, a minimum wage of £5, overtime limited to four hours per week.*"<sup>47</sup> One of the arguments that Skehan used was that as the employers had broken the law with regards to opening times of hotels then it should not be a problem that the strikers had done so.<sup>48</sup> He was quoted as saying "*...what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander.*"<sup>49</sup>

The Industrial Court ruled that the award be cancelled and that the preference clause be removed from all awards that the FLTUQ was party to. This ruling was to take effect on September 22 at 9 am. if the men had not returned to work.<sup>50</sup>

At the time of the dispute the FLTUQ was awaiting approval for affiliation to the Brisbane Trades and Labour Council (TLC). This was already jeopardised by FLTUQ members support for the Industrial Labour political party, with most TLC unions, and the TLC, backing the ALP. The Amalgamated Road Transport Workers Union (ARTWU) made representations to the TLC due to 18 of its members, employed in delivering by the breweries, being left without work, five of whom were directly employed and laid off.<sup>51</sup> Many TLC affiliated unions were unhappy as they supported arbitration in practice and principle and the first they heard about this strike was when it was already underway. The TLC was asked

by its affiliates to appeal the decision of the Industrial Court; if the strikers were evicted the employers could use non-union labour, plus widespread strike action in support for the evicted strikers might not be controlled by the unions.<sup>52</sup>

The men did not return to work on September 22. Although the Industrial Court ruling shopped short of deregistering the union, it removed the clause that gave preference of employment to members of the union.<sup>53</sup>

<b>Table 1 — Awards affected by the removal of the preference clause<sup>54</sup></b>
<i>Brewery Employees' Award — Brisbane and Toowoomba</i>
<i>Malthouse Employees' Award — South Eastern Division</i>
<i>Bar Attendants Award — Brisbane</i>
<i>Wine and Spirit Stores Award — Brisbane</i>
<i>Aerated Water Factories Award — Brisbane</i>
<i>Marine Stores and Bottle Washing Establishments Award — Brisbane</i>
<i>Aerated Water Factories Award — South Eastern Division</i>

That morning, at 9:06 am. the head brewer Mr A. K. Hall had entered the bottling room where the men were and asked if they were going to return to work. He was answered by Mr Hayes with a 'no' on behalf of the men and a 'that is right' by Mr Martin Anderson.<sup>55</sup>

Mr Hall returned in the afternoon and asked again if anyone was going to return to work. This time he urged them to return under police protection. The men heckled him but one striker requested to be escorted out under police protection.<sup>56</sup> As he left he said "*Cut out the heroics, men. Who is game to follow me?*"<sup>57</sup> Most of the strikers turned their backs on him as he left. Mr Hall proceeded to interview each man but only the one man decided to leave. Mr Hayes said that the employee who left was only a recent employee.<sup>58</sup>

The same day a vote was taken at the TLC in support of the striking workers. Affiliated unions decided to support the striking workers financially and actively.<sup>59</sup> A further motion resolved that the "...Government be asked not to allow the police to be used against the stay-in strikers at the brewery."<sup>60</sup>

On September 23, the employees at the Queensland Brewery, many of whom were Coopers Union members, were paid off. The carters, coopers and tradesmen of Castlemaine Brewery were paid off on the 24th. It was reported that rumours were rife that the men were to be evicted.<sup>61</sup> Colonel Hughes approached the Commissioner of Police on September 23 for assistance in removing the strikers from the Brewery premises at Milton. Hughes originally had verbally approached the Commissioner but then followed up in writing the request for police presence at the eviction. Hughes

cited Section 277 of the Criminal Code saying that the strikers were trespassers. Hughes wanted a police presence as he believed that the men would resist their removal.<sup>62</sup>

*Everything ran smoothly until Friday 24th when at 5.30 a.m. we were suddenly awakened by someone crying 'Right-oh' boys the Police are here, and so they were, 180 of them and the Heads of the Firm. We stood on our beds half asleep and watched the police walking around waking the chaps up. Some were very indignant at being awakened, but were very surprised when they saw all the police in the room. We were told that we were trespassing and that we should go out quietly, which we did, after collecting our goods:- And so we were evicted.*<sup>63</sup>

The men left almost immediately with their goods and chattels. It was reported that Inspector Toohill, in charge of the police at the eviction, offered the use of a truck for the men to remove their items to their homes but the offer was refused.<sup>64</sup> Although there was resistance from the police to photographers taking images of the eviction,<sup>65</sup> photographs appeared in several newspapers with one of all the evicted strikers as a group appearing in the *Telegraph*. The paper reported that 120 policemen were involved in the eviction. The policemen arrived in



*Eviction - The Telegraph, Brisbane  
24 Sept 1937 p8*

a fleet of police cars with headlights extinguished and entered the buildings just before dawn.<sup>66</sup> In Parliament the Premier, Mr Forgan Smith, was asked if the government had taken the initiative to evict the strikers and stated it was the employers who had initiated the request for the police to assist in the eviction.<sup>67</sup>

The strikers on leaving the premises held a meeting to decide on the next steps in the strike. Local homeowners offered their land as a temporary camp for the goods and chattels on the footpaths. Later in the day the strikers erected a tent as shelter for the duration of the strike. The employers stated that they had not considered free labour and that the striking men could return to work on the same conditions as previous.<sup>68</sup>

*This day became known as 'Black Friday' but to me it was 'Buisy Friday'. It was the Greatest day of the Strike. We*



*crossed the road to a near by house, under which we had breakfast, we then had a meeting to decide what we would do and we then agreed to hire a Marquee tent, and erect it in Mr Raines Paddock. We approached Mr Raine who kindly allowed us to put up our tent on his ground, much to the chagrin of our enemy, 'The Brewery Heads'. It hurt them very much to see the way we 'dug in'.*<sup>69</sup>

The marquee was erected on a vacant allotment in Drane Street to the rear of the brewery. The cook's galley was relocated to the marquee by the men lifting and carrying it to the new headquarters. Once the men were in their new home they took a vote to continue the strike. At the same time, they decided to strengthen the picket of the brewery. Local householders offered the use of their baths to the men. That night the picket was strong at the front and back of the brewery



*Exit from the Brewery, The Telegraph, Brisbane 24 Sept 1937 p1*

and police guards occupied strategic points.<sup>70</sup>

After these developments in the dispute, the workers being paid off at both breweries and the eviction, the TLC Disputes Committee met urgently to discuss the issue. All unions that had members on strike were represented at the Disputes Committee meeting. At this meeting the conduct of the dispute was placed in the hands of the committee. Previously the strike committee of the FLTUQ was responsible for the handling of the strike.<sup>71</sup> The official report from the Disputes Committee was that the Secretary of the TLC, Mr H. J. Harvey, was to seek a conference with the BBA with an intention to resolve the dispute. Harvey was to be the official spokesman for the committee and all reports of the proceedings of the Disputes Committee were to come from him.<sup>72</sup> It was stated by Harvey that *"The unions are solidly behind the men involved and it is intended to take all action necessary and possible to obtain a satisfactory settlement."*<sup>73</sup> There was an appeal to other unions for financial assistance for the men who had been thrown out of work.<sup>74</sup>

A conference between the TLC and the BBA was held on September 28 and ended in a deadlock as neither party was willing to concede their position.<sup>75</sup> On the same day an article was printed in the editorial column of (the ALP supporting and AWU



*Picketing for 40 hour week, courtesy of timeagents.com*

affiliated newspaper) *The Worker* that said the actions of the FLTUQ in trying to achieve the 40-hour week through direct action were stupid. It suggested that the FLTUQ should have used arbitration and that the leaders of the strike had sabotaged themselves. It cited the case that the FLTUQ had run to get the 40-hour week for bar attendants where the Industrial Court had said that they would be willing to look at granting the 40-hour week if the employer could afford it and if it would create employment.<sup>76</sup> At the time, the Industrial Court when ruling on the basic wage and standard hours

had to consider the economic impact on industry and the community.<sup>77</sup>

The Australian Workers Union consequently applied to the Industrial Court for a 40-hour week in the Northern Australian Breweries Ltd Award on October 1. The union argued that the employers could afford it and presented the balance sheet from 1936 as evidence. The employer representative, Mr J. Holiday, appearing for the North Queensland Employers' Association, did not deny prosperity but argued that the court should not rule for individual employers. He argued that the union should be asking for the 40-hour week



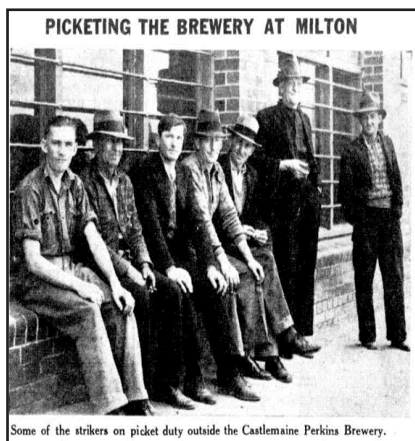
for the whole industry rather than one individual brewery.<sup>78</sup> The Industrial Court on October 5 granted the 40-hour week to the employees of the Cairns Brewery without loss of pay. There was still some cloud over if the reduction in the working week would bring about an increase in employment.<sup>79</sup> As part of the decision it was stated “...that it will award a forty hour week where the employers can afford it and more employment will result.”<sup>80</sup>

On October 7 the Coopers Union filed an injunction against Queensland Brewery in the Industrial Court. The injunction alleged that the brewery had breached the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act by paying off its employees in Fortitude Valley and therefore locking out members of the Coopers Union. The Coopers Union informed the TLC of this action earlier that day. The TLC subsequently voted unanimously to black out the lighted advertising on the roof of the Trades Hall Building that advertised Bulimba Beer (Queensland Brewery); though this was not then carried out for contractual reasons.<sup>81</sup>

On the afternoon of October 7, the BBA advertised for labour at both breweries. Applications for employment were invited from former employees and unionists on Saturday morning. The terms of employment were the same as prior to the dispute, a 44-hour week and the same weekly wage. The Disputes Committee met,

and unions were advised to not let any unemployed members apply for the offered positions. The strikers had met and none would apply for roles until the requested terms were offered by the company.<sup>82</sup>

*Then on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October the Brewers called for free Labour, and during the next few days we had chaps coming to us, who wanted to know, how to get work in the Brewery, we told them they would be ‘scabing’ but they said that they did not mind. We got quite used to the chaps and on Saturday morning, the 9<sup>th</sup> we went up to the front of the Brewery and saw about 800 chaps lined up, and passing into the Office to get their name down. The scabs stood on one side of the road, and we stood*



*Picketing the Brewery, The Telegraph, Brisbane 24 Sept 1937 p8*

*on the other side with about 700 men who were in sympathy with us, we had papers with 40 hour week, on them, and as the trams came along we pointed to the scabs, for the benefit of the tram passengers.<sup>83</sup>*

The employers believed that they would get sufficient labour to be able to begin production the following week. The FLTUQ members at Queensland Brewery all reapplied for their jobs as they were not originally part of the dispute. None of the strikers from the camp applied for their jobs at Castlemaine Brewery. There were a few who had left in previous days who did apply. ARTWU instructed the carters to attend the breweries the following day to start deliveries.<sup>84</sup>

On October 11 the reemployed FLTUQ members at Queensland Brewery were instructed to work with volunteer men and show them the job. Only half of the original employees had been employed and union men asked the head brewer to employ the other union men. When told that the head brewer was not going to reemploy the old hands the men refused to work with the volunteers and left the premises.<sup>85</sup> Deliveries were made from the two breweries but in the case of the Castlemaine Brewery the carters were not asked to commence work. Publicans made their own arrangements with many picking their supplies up in private cars.<sup>86</sup> It was reported that the coopers had not

turned up for work on the first day of the return to work. The employers said that it did not make a difference at this stage that the coopers had not returned. The members of the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association (FEDFA) at both breweries voted in a ballot, 21 to one that they would not join the strike. They had not stopped work during the dispute as they had kept the refrigeration equipment going. This ballot was in response to a Disputes Committee decision the previous day that all unions should involve themselves in the strike.<sup>87</sup>

It was reported that the strike was collapsing. Some of the strikers at the Queensland Brewery decided to return to work. They had been picketing the brewery but by the Wednesday they were reapplying for their jobs. Picketing at both breweries had stopped by the Wednesday night. There was consideration given to calling out the bar attendants by the executive of the FLTUQ. This was a task given to the executive by the TLC Disputes Committee after some straight talking at the meeting earlier in the day. It was pointed out at the Disputes Committee that while the beer was declared 'black' at the brewery due to volunteer labour being used, that members of the FLTUQ were then serving the 'black' beer in the hotels. The executive refused to make the decision and handed the decision back to the Disputes Committee. The Coopers Union, who were on strike, met at Trades Hall to discuss the decision

that had been made by their executive to join the strike. The Disputes Committee asked the executive of the FEDFA to reconsider the decision to not strike.<sup>88</sup> At a meeting of the strikers from both breweries at Trades Hall on October 14 the strike was formally declared off. It was then decided that they would reapply for their jobs as a group. The FLTUQ members attributed some blame to the Disputes Committee in so much as the committee had tried to put the onus back on the FLTUQ to call the bar attendants in the preceding days of the dispute. The strikers camp was broken up after the men had one last meal together.<sup>89</sup>

An analysis of the strike was written by one of the strike participants, Michael Patrick Ryan, described in police correspondence as one of the Leaders of the Communist Party in the State.<sup>90</sup> The analysis was only issued to Communist Party members and contacts but the police obtained a copy.<sup>91</sup> The report details the strike and what Ryan believes went wrong with the strike. In the report the author outlines the lessons he believed could be learnt from the struggle in ten points.<sup>92</sup> Lessons included:

*1. That Sectional Strikes can be won in exceptional circumstances only, and in this case the circumstances were not sufficiently studied...*

*4. That no struggle can be won on tactics, that have no relations with mass action...*

*7. There cannot be too much propaganda put out to the public and the workers in particular, acquainting them of the issues involved and what is being done, linked up the issues with the grievances of the masses generally...*<sup>93</sup>

Ryan's report on the strike included an analysis of what he considered treacherous behaviour of the other unions involved: FEDFA and the Coopers Union. He apportioned blame to the belief that the employers would not band together and stated "...an underestimation of the degree to which the Capitalists are united as a class against the workers..."<sup>94</sup>

This dispute lasted a total of 30 days from the beginning to the end. While this dispute left many of the strikers still out of work at the end of the strike, they showed courage in the face of opposition from the employers, the government and from some other unions. These men never wavered from the ideal of the 40-hour week and displayed incredible valour among the vats. It is difficult to attribute blame for the outcome to any one source and while they did not achieve the outcome they desired, there are some valuable lessons that can be taken from this strike.

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# Women, Work and the Role the Male Breadwinner Concept

Glenda Strachan

## Introduction

Women have always 'worked', but our ideas of what constitutes 'work', especially for women, are subject to change. Shaped by the ideal of the male breadwinner, women's work and economic contribution has at times been written out of Australian history. This article examines women's work in the time since European settlement of Australia, concentrating on the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and draws on much of my previous research. The focus of the article is the European settlers in Australia, for the lives of indigenous women and those from Asian backgrounds, tell a very different story in this era.

This article outlines the changes in the work women did and how it was recognised by the state and concludes with a discussion of the codification of the concept of the male breadwinner in wage regulation. This categorisation of women's work has had profound consequences for women's participation in the labour force and their remuneration. Despite the huge changes in the regulation of women's work and wages since the 1970s including equal pay, maternity leave

and recognition of sexual harassment, the spectre of the male breadwinner hovers over us. Women's inequality in the workforce today can be seen clearly in the segregation of work by gender, the lack of women in senior positions and inequality in wages.

European settlement occurs in the Australian colonies at a time when the industrial revolution was underway in Britain. For centuries most Europeans practised a family economy with all family members, including children, contributing to the household income. With the coming of the industrial revolution, work became separated from the home and new issues arose. How was childcare to be managed and who was to do the household tasks such as food and clothing production needed to keep the family going? Over the course of the nineteenth century a different division of labour emerged within the home and 'work' became synonymous with paid work outside the home. Care of home and children was the dominant role for women. Each family met this 'work-family challenge' as best they could and by the end of the century a model of the male breadwinner with the woman at home emerged and remained the



dominant model for three-quarters of the twentieth century in Australia.

### **Women's Work in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

Women's role in Queensland society in the nineteenth century was seen as wife, mother and domestic carer. Yet in the pre-industrial age Australian colonies, women's role was wider than this, in both social and economic terms. In the first half of the nineteenth century economic development in the Australian colonies was dominated by the pastoral and agricultural industries that mainly employed single male labour. The predominance of single men was problematic for the colonial authorities who believed that the employment of greater numbers of married men had benefits. Wives and daughters provided their domestic needs and married men's work habits were judged to be more stable than single men,<sup>1</sup> a major problem given the periodic severe shortages of labour.<sup>2</sup> The immigration of single women and families was encouraged from the 1840s not only to redress the sex imbalance and improve the tone of the colonies but also to counter the bias towards the employment of single men. As an immigrant European colony, females constituted 44 per cent of the population in Queensland in 1901, and the median age of females was 19 years, compared to 24 years for males.<sup>3</sup>

The reproduction and nurture of labour power was critical for the colony's

economic and social development, and women were the significant players in this enterprise. Most women married in their early 20s and, following marriage, most women could expect to give birth to a child within twelve months.<sup>4</sup> For women born in the 1830s and 1840s, the average completed family size was seven children, reducing gradually to 5.25 children for those women born between 1861 and 1866.<sup>5</sup> In this enterprise, women were creating the state of Queensland.

Women also contributed directly to the economy of the family and the state. The most common pattern of rural employment of women in the first half of the nineteenth century was as part of a family economic unit. Many settlers had little capital, some lived in dire poverty, and "the absence of settled communities and a wider kinship network meant that many families lived and toiled in relative isolation, and that women and older children constituted a vital economic component of the family".<sup>6</sup> The evidence of emigrants' guides, travel diaries and other personal memoirs written by women in the nineteenth century led Grimshaw to conclude that "a good, useful wife would not only be no expense — she would often earn nearly as much as her husband" and children were valuable assistants on farms. This meant that there was "a reversion to a common family pattern reminiscent of eighteenth century society". However, this did not prevent the absorption of new



ideologies: “ideas of partnership within marriage, and of women’s enhanced status, were clearly flourishing among newly settled colonists and, indeed, the very circumstances of pioneering life in some ways accelerated their absorption”. Grimshaw concludes that “the patriarchal subordination of wife to husband did not appear to be a general characteristic of nineteenth-century pioneering society”.<sup>7</sup>

### **Women as Workers<sup>8</sup>**

Most women were primarily committed to the family enterprise. Even those who were unmarried engaged in work in the family ‘business’ such as the farm or the family shop or hotel. Other women engaged in entrepreneurial activity or, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, waged labour outside the home became an option, especially for single women.

#### *Women as Entrepreneurs*

For centuries in Europe female family members had used opportunities to earn money, particularly when their labour was not needed on the farm or other family enterprise and did this usually to shore up family finances rather than for the sake of independence.<sup>9</sup> The same thing happened in the Australian colonies and, as in Europe, the contemporary definition of femininity<sup>10</sup> constrained the kinds of work that women were prepared for or allowed to undertake independently. Most of the work women did, especially the

work for wages, relied on the skills and tasks defined as feminine and was an extension of household labour into the market. The choice of work, however, was severely constrained by social or class origins and family wealth, with the skills a woman had gained being determined by their individual education. Personal and family circumstances also played a part. This can be seen in the instances of women who ran farms in their own names who were usually widowed.<sup>11</sup>

The women who moved furthest from the feminine ideal were those who operated shops in their own names, although there was a tradition of female shop-keepers that pre-dated industrialism.<sup>12</sup> These entrepreneurial women whose enterprises could be expected to return a living income were, of course, only a tiny minority. Other women did more intermittent income producing work using equipment like stoves, sewing machines and pianos. There were a few women who earned an income by nursing. Many women had nursed family and friends, and some had done this frequently enough that it was likely to be an income-earning activity.<sup>13</sup> At a lower social level washing must have been a resource for many.

#### *Women as Wage Earners*

One characteristic that distinguishes the industrial period from preceding ages is the predominance of the wage-earner, the person who made

a living by selling time and labour to an employer, who then resold the product of that labour to the public at a profit.<sup>14</sup> This change in the economic basis of life was accompanied by changes in social life, in particular the separation of work and home and the assumption that the married couple consisted of a male breadwinner who worked in a productive cash economy and a housewife who attended to the reproduction of the worker through housework and childcare,<sup>15</sup> but combinations of waged work and household production of food for sale could continue.<sup>16</sup>

Acceptable work for women was an extension of work in the home. When new occupations opened to women they were deemed suitable based on women's innate caring abilities, their deftness and agility and their capacity to withstand boredom to a greater degree than men. Because of wide social acceptance of what women (and men) should do, women's options were circumscribed and for much of Queensland's post-European history women's employment choices were limited. While women had fewer choices of employment than men, some groups of women had even less choice. The impact of racism meant that non-white women's options were even more circumscribed than white English-speaking women. Aboriginal, Pacific Islander and Chinese women had very limited opportunities.

Women, particularly those who were single, conformed to the growing pattern of industrial societies and were wage-earners. In Europe and the United States domestic service and dressmaking were the traditional waged occupations for women and dated from pre-industrial times.<sup>17</sup> With the coming of mass production of goods, factory and workshop employment for women emerged, but women's factory work centred on the production of food and clothing. A range of new 'feminine' waged occupations for unmarried women were introduced: shop assistant, elementary school teacher, and, in the final decades of the nineteenth century, hospital nurse, hairdresser and office worker, including the designation "typewriter".

Nursing is a classic example of the transition to suitable women's work. Between 1860 and 1900 the occupation of nurse was transformed and the public perception of what a nurse should be changed dramatically. Nursing changed from being an occupation for older, usually married, women in financial need to one that recruited and trained young, single, educated women. By 1890 there was wide community acceptance that nursing was a woman's occupation and most hospitals in the Australian colonies employed female nurses. Witnesses before the Victorian Royal Commission in the 1890s readily accepted the 'naturalness' of women being employed as nurses. Dr Walter Balls-Headley from the Medical

Society of Victoria, elaborated why women were better nurses:

they sit up better and endure better, and I think they are apt to be kinder. Their hands are more delicate; they understand the feeding of people better than men, and they do not, as a rule, drink....Then they do not go out and smoke, and loaf; they very often like their work. I think it is natural to every woman to be, to some extent, a nurse.

His final comment reflects the belief that it was in every woman's nature to be a nurse, a belief that included the idea that women were superior to men in this work. Rev. Mervyn Whitton, a hospital chaplain, endorsed female nursing, saying that 'females are more patient, enter more into details, are more sympathetic, and in nearly every way are better qualified than men for sick nursing'. Specific training courses lasting several years were offered in large hospitals by the early 1890s and, on graduation, most nurses went to work in private practice. All nursing, except mental health nursing, became the exclusive province of women. A woman had to remain single to work in a hospital, however it was not unusual older married or widowed nurses to work in private practice or in small country hospitals.<sup>18</sup>

In Queensland in 1891, 31,456 women were classified by the census as having an occupation. This number

represented 18.5 per cent of all females in the colony and formed 17.7 per cent of the labour force. The occupations recorded for women were limited and were the same across all the Australian colonies. The largest group of women workers (46 percent) recorded in the 1891 Queensland census were in the domestic class, the overwhelming majority of them servants while the remainder provided board and lodging. One fifth (21 per cent) were involved in agriculture. A further 15 per cent were involved in dressmaking and seven per cent in commercial activities, predominantly in shops. The remaining nine per cent were in the Professional Class, the largest sub-group being teaching.<sup>19</sup>

### **Women and the State: Breadwinners and Dependents**

One of the ways that women's work was devalued and hidden from view was through the way the state categorised their contribution to society when collecting reporting demographic data. The census and civil registration records show that very few women were perceived officially as having a specific occupation of their own; rather most were defined as wives and daughters, a situation that was in stark contrast to that of men, whose occupations were recorded. Individual paid work was recognised as valuable; unlike the contribution of women within the home or family enterprise. The occupations of women



The invisible farmer project

A woman and man picking and packing fruit in Merrigum near Shepparton, Victoria, circa 1910-1920, Source: Museums Victoria: <https://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/items/765101>

are mentioned only on rare occasions in the civil registration of demographic events.<sup>20</sup>

The way that work was categorised in nineteenth century censuses differed somewhat between the colonies.<sup>21</sup> The model which saw women's work in the home as unproductive was accepted "more decisively" in the Australian colonies than in Britain "with the result that women were regarded as naturally dependent on their husbands, who were the sole legitimate breadwinners."<sup>22</sup> In

New South Wales in 1861 and Victoria in 1861 and 1871, for instance, only the adult daughters of farmers were automatically recorded as farmers.<sup>23</sup> Women who performed out-work or worked as casual or occasional employees on farms and family businesses were invisible.<sup>24</sup> A model that saw women's work in the home as unproductive was accepted 'with the result that women were regarded as naturally dependent on their husbands, who were the sole legitimate breadwinners.'<sup>25</sup>

The under-enumeration of women workers was codified in the censuses of the Australian colonies. Under the direction of T. A. Coghlan, the statist of New South Wales, the population was divided unequivocally into the two categories of breadwinners and dependents, proceeding “further than the British censuses of 1881 and 1891” in this regard.<sup>26</sup> In his report on the 1891 census Coghlan introduced the categories of “breadwinners and dependents”<sup>27</sup> and in his statistical survey of the colony two years later he used it as the primary division within the chapter on employment: “the population of a country is naturally divided into two broad divisions — breadwinners and dependents.”<sup>28</sup> Dependents were classified into four groups: “persons employed in household duties without wages, chiefly the wives and daughters of breadwinners”; “relatives and others not performing household duties, who were for the most part aged persons, the parents or grandparents of the breadwinners”; “persons of tender years”; those dependent on charity or under detention.<sup>29</sup> The main principle of this classification, as enunciated by another Australian statist, was that “the entire separation of love and duty rendered within the domestic circle, as between the wife, husband, and other related members of a family”.<sup>30</sup> Coghlan “argued that both women’s contributions to family economies and their competition for jobs lowered the wages of men and the community’s

standard of living. A high standard of living and good-quality workmen were found...where men had to support families”.<sup>31</sup> He concluded that “the large employment of women in gainful pursuits is not a matter of gratulation.” It may “with some degree of certitude, be asserted that the condition of a country can in some measure be gauged by the number of such women as are compelled to seek occupations other than in their domestic sphere.”<sup>32</sup>

### **The Ethic of the Male Breadwinner**

In the twentieth century the ethic of the male breadwinner has been of major importance in determining the wages and conditions of workers and the nature of the welfare system. In fact, it could be seen as the major factor in the determination of these systems until the 1970s when increasing numbers of women in the workforce and equal pay cases began to change this ideal. The famous Harvester Decision in 1907, conducted by the eminent Justice Henry Bournes Higgins, set the “basic wage” (later becoming the minimum wage) for a man as sufficient for “the normal needs of the average employee, regarded as a human being living in a civilized community....a wage sufficient to ensure the workman food, shelter, clothing, frugal comfort’ for a man, his wife and three children.”<sup>33</sup> He presented the unskilled worker as “a human being in a civilised community” entitled to marry and raise a family. He believed that “family life was desirable

both for the individual and society". Indeed, "it was not that Higgins disapproved of women working, but he assumed that within the marriage relationship it was desirable, from both male and female points of view, for the man to work and the woman to care for home and children".<sup>34</sup> In this and subsequent decisions he declared that the basic or minimum wage for a man was sacrosanct and had to be able to provide for the needs of a man, his wife and three children.

In another landmark case in the industrial court in Australia in 1912 Higgins struggled with the problem of women's wages which averaged 50 to 60 per cent of men's wages, a potential substantial saving on labour costs for an employer. Higgins asserted that "fortunately for society...the greater number of breadwinners still are men. The women are not all dragged from the homes to work while the men loaf at home".<sup>35</sup> If women and men were judged as equally able to do the work in question, then the result might indeed be that men loafed at home while women worked in the public sphere for wages, a situation clearly unacceptable for Higgins. In this case the workers in question were fruit pickers and fruit packers. Higgins concluded that

If blacksmiths are the class of workers, the minimum rate must be such as recognises that blacksmiths are usually men. If fruit-pickers are the class

of workers, the minimum rate must be such as recognises that, up to the present at least, most of the pickers are men (although women have been paid usually less), and that men and women are fairly in competition as to that class of work. If milliners are the class of workers, the minimum rate must, I think, be such as recognises that all or nearly all milliners are women, and that men are not usually in competition with them.

Higgins awarded male and female pickers the same wage with the consequence that the employer was "at liberty freely to select whichever sex and whichever person he prefers for the work".

While this case is remembered usually for the wage equality awarded to fruit pickers, fruit packers suffered a different fate:

in the case of the women in the packing sheds, the position is different. I have had the advantage of seeing the women performing the lighter operations of packing at a factory; and I have no doubt that the work is essentially adapted for women with their superior deftness and suppleness of fingers. The best test is, I suppose, that if the employers had to employ the same wages to women as to men, they

would always, or nearly always, employ the women; and in such work as this, even if the wages for men and for women were the same, women would be employed in preference....I must, therefore, endeavour to find a fair minimum wage for these women, assuming that they have to find their own food, shelter, and clothing.<sup>36</sup>

The principles outlined in this case remained the same until 1969 when the first equal pay case was conducted. This decision was the foundation on which the unequal wage decisions between women and men were based using the family or breadwinner needs of the man laid out in the 1907 case.

Higgins was reflecting the reality and social expectations of his day. For example, an editorial in a major newspaper could pontificate that

nature fashioned and destined man to be a breadwinner. He has no other *raison d'être*. Unless he works as a breadwinner there is nothing whatever for him to do, and the inevitable penalty of masculine idleness is degeneration. On the other hand, Nature fashioned and destined woman to be a mother....When a man works, he does what Nature commands, and the only thing that he can do. When a woman works (as a breadwinner, of course), she has

to put aside the things that she can do best, and the only things she ought to be concerned with, and in defiance of Nature she undertakes the things which she was never intended to perform, and for the performance of which she is least qualified. The displacement of male workers by female workers....threatens man with moral and physical degradation. It threatens woman with disease and decay. But, above all it menaces the rising generation, for what sort of children can we hope will spring from the union of idle and degenerate males with females who have run counter to Nature.<sup>37</sup>

As Rickard notes, “there were few feminists ready to take Higgins to task, particularly as his awards, in raising wages for men (and, indeed, women) appeared to benefit all concerned”.<sup>38</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The ideal of the male breadwinner grew out of the industrial and social changes of the nineteenth century. Women’s opportunities in the growing area of waged labour were constrained by the social expectations of women’s role. The introduction of state regulated wages in the first decade of the twentieth century reflected and reproduced the model of the male breadwinner, responsible for the economic care of



wife and children. The consequence of this ideal was that women (in almost every instance) earned much less than men, a reality that was legislated. Women's wages were set at about 54 per cent of the male rate, rising to 75 per cent following the Second World War.<sup>39</sup>

For most of the twentieth century this ideal of the male breadwinner with the wife at home prevailed. Childcare was rarely provided or subsidised by the state and the 'work family challenge' was managed by the wife at home looking after family and children and the husband earning the family income. When women did work, except in areas like nursing that were only open to single women, their income was seen as a secondary wage for buying luxuries. Changes occurred from the 1960s as more women, entered the workforce, with the majority of the growth being married women. Beginning in the late 1960s some of the overt discrimination against women in the paid workforce began to be recognised and was gradually changed. The marriage bar was removed,<sup>40</sup> equal pay was introduced in cases from 1969 although the major changes for Australian women were implemented in the 1970s.

As women entered the workforce in greater numbers in Australia and other industrialised countries, the civil rights and women's movement called for greater equality. From the 1970s

Australian governments enacted anti-discrimination legislation. The *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* recognises structural or indirect discrimination that 'arises from the fact that organisational norms, rules and procedures, used to determine the allocation of positions and benefits, have generally been designed...around the behaviour patterns of the historically dominant group in public life (Anglo-Australian, able-bodied, heterosexual males)'.<sup>41</sup> Decisions of the industrial courts and legislation marked government recognition of the equal rights of women at work.

The achievement of equality at work has not been reached, and progress has not been straight forward. An increased presence by women in the labour market has not been associated with reduction in occupational segregation, which in turn has facilitated wage discrimination. While women represent 46.9 per cent of all employed workers in Australia in 2019, average weekly ordinary earnings are 14.1 per cent less than men's, and women in senior management are underrepresented.<sup>42</sup> Reviewing the current statistics can be dispiriting as many changes are slow. Looking further back over a century allows us to see the major changes in women's work and attitudes to working women that have occurred. It allows us to examine the legacy of history and the long shadow of the male breadwinner ethic.



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**Review of *Loving Words: Love Letters of Nettie and Vance Palmer, 1909–1914*, edited by Deborah Jordan. Brandl & Schlesinger, Blackheath, NSW, 2018.**

**Reviewed by John McCollow**

Edward Vivian “Vance” Palmer (1885–1959) and Janet Gertrude “Nettie” Palmer (née Higgins, 1885–1964) were key figures in the Twentieth Century Australian cultural landscape. Their prodigious output of poems, short stories, novels, biographic works, literary studies, articles, reviews and critical essays made a significant contribution to the development of culture in the young nation. They were also committed socialists and Nettie was a first-wave feminist.<sup>1</sup>

The entire extant collection of love letters between Vance and Nettie, from the time immediately following their first encounters (in 1909) leading up to their marriage in 1914 runs to over 350,000 words. Deborah Jordan’s book is a “selection” that focuses on ‘the nature and formation of intimate literary partnerships and the Palmers’ love story’ (p. 18).

Jordan divides the correspondence into nine periods and provides a useful introduction to each, setting the necessary context for a correspondence that took place across numerous diverse settings. While Jordan’s

work is unlikely to attract a large readership outside of the cultural and literary studies communities, it contains much material of interest to a wider readership, including to labour historians.

Though Jordan states that she has omitted a number of letters dealing with social, political and cultural matters, the correspondence between Nettie and Vance provides a useful picture of the visions and hopes that inspired, and ideological debates that dogged Australian intellectuals in the first years of nationhood. The nature of Australia as a nation, and its place internationally were key concerns for Vance and Nettie.

While women’s suffrage had been established federally in Australia in 1902 and in all states by 1908, the couple’s courtship coincided with the height of the suffragette movement in the UK — a campaign which they both followed. Vivie Warren, the “new woman” of George Bernard Shaw’s the controversial play *Mrs Warren’s Profession*, features in a number of their letters. As Jordan observes, a woman of independence and agency such as Vivie Warren would be both an alluring and elusive model for a woman of early Twentieth Century Australia such as Nettie.

This was also the period leading up to the First World War. While there are references in the correspondence

to debates about militarism, there is little evidence that the Palmers foresaw this looming cataclysm despite both spending some of this period in Europe — indeed, Nettie studied in Germany. They were honeymooning in France when the war broke out and had to scurry back to England.

For a labour historian, the correspondence from Vance while he was living on a remote station in western Queensland is of particular interest. He involved himself in the lives of the local people: male and female, white and Indigenous, workers and squattocracy. The experience was, as Jordan describes it, ‘formative ... in the development of Vance’s beliefs’ (p. 93) in several important ways. Vance found the company of the male bush workers irresistible, identifying in them a ‘quick kindness and instinctive sense of camaraderie ... a kindly tolerance of ... human failing ... and fierce scorn for the devilish sin of pride’ (pp. 93–94). In much of his later work, Vance subscribed to and drew on the mythical bush ethos celebrated by Banjo Paterson and Henry Lawson.

Less typical of the age was Vance’s interest in and sympathy for Aboriginal Australians. While, as Jordan notes, his understanding of Aboriginal culture remained limited, Vance did involve himself directly with Aboriginal people, socialising and participating in corroborees. He also came to see some of nature and effects of Aboriginal

dispossession and exploitation, and of his own position of privilege.

In one of his letters Vance describes an interchange between a well-meaning pastoralist and the “half-caste” wife of one of his workers. The pastoralist is concerned about the “roving” proclivities of his workers and has constructed accommodation for them in an attempt to convince them to “settle down”.

Employer: This new house is great improvement ... That old tent wasn’t a very nice home for you all.

Employee’s Wife: Oh no. There’s nothing comfortable about a tent except the feeling of being free. (p. 128)

Vance observes that the conversation tells us much about “dominance” and “subservience” in the Australian context.

#### Note

- 1 Jordan includes a bibliography, including works by and about the Palmers, for those interested in learning more about them.

# In Memorium

## Eric Aarons

16 March 1919–18 January 2019



Eric Aarons was almost certainly the last of a generation of left-wing Australian political leaders whose ideas and activism were formed by the 1917 Russian Revolution and the Great Depression of the 1930s. He died just two months short of his 100th birthday.

Eric spent the first part of his political life deeply committed to the orthodox Marxism that developed in the Soviet Union while the second part of his life was devoted to finding what he variously called a new framework or new vision for the Left based on values and ethics rather than Marx's laws of history and economic determinism.

Largely self-taught in politics and theory, he wrote many books and pamphlets including a very readable 1993 autobiography *What's Left?* (Penguin Books), an early (1980) call for renewable energy, *Let the Sun Shine In*, and a scholarly account of the differing philosophies of one of the founders of neo-liberalism, Friedrich Hayek, and Karl Marx (*Hayek Versus Marx*, Routledge, 2009).

Eric was widely loved and respected by his comrades for his dedication to radical social change and for his personal modesty. According to his own account, he was often shy and introspective in private. Apart from reading, his great love was sculpture and he continued sculpting in stone and wood at his bush-fringed cottage until he was physically unable to stand.

Born in Sydney, he spent his early life in Melbourne after the separation of his parents, Sam Aarons and Doris Thomas. He excelled as a student, later winning a scholarship in 1937 to the University of Sydney where, at 18, he joined the university branch of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). He later graduated with an Honours degree in organic chemistry.

After World War Two he worked as a teacher in the CPA's Marx House in Sydney and later as a local organiser for the party in Sydney's western suburbs. In the late forties he was the main CPA leader on the NSW South Coast during the disastrous 1949 coal strike. In 1951, under threat of banning by the Menzies government, the CPA sent him with 12 others to spend three years studying in the new Peoples' Republic of China. The group was also to be a leadership in exile if the party was banned. On his return he ran CPA's Marxist education in Sydney and was elected to the Central Committee of the party.

His rethinking began in earnest in the early 1960s in the wake of the split between China and the Soviet Union. He later said that this split was the catalyst for the charting of a new and independent course for the CPA. At the 1967 CPA national congress Eric gave a key report entitled "Communists and the battle of ideas" that argued that the CPA needed a Marxism which was "a humanity centred, humanist view". His form of Marxism emphasised the ethical and moral underpinnings of its critique of capitalism.

His report raised controversial questions about fundamental beliefs. For example, he argued, Marxists had previously made big assumptions about the meaning of terms like class, the state, democracy and forms of revolution which they thought were universal, but which were actually based on a very

particular set of conditions (by which he meant the Russian experience and the 1917 revolution). A number of these assumptions were, in his words, 'sometimes plain wrong'.

Overall, he believed, the CPA needed to break out of what he later called its "comfortable mental cocoon". Many of the changes Eric proposed were supported at the decisive 1970 CPA Congress after which he took up work as a casual high school teacher. In 1971 the CPA split and a pro-Moscow group formed the Socialist Party of Australia.

In 1972 Eric published *Philosophy for an Exploding World*, which began its exploration of what he called the "values revolution" by presciently ringing alarm bells about finite resources, pollution and global population. He nominated three key arenas for this values revolution: the issues of race and nationality; women's liberation; and the workers' movement. The book outlined a critique of the prevailing orthodox Marxism and proposed a more creative form while rejecting the possibility that any set of ideas, including Marxism, could be a "unitary theory" explaining all aspects of the world and of history.

Another of his conclusions was an acceptance of political pluralism. Broad coalitions based on shared values rather than the narrowness of a revolutionary party was the better vehicle for radical social change, he reasoned.

In 1974 he re-commenced work for the CPA on *Tribune* and, in 1976, somewhat to his regret, he became one of three national secretaries of the CPA. In the 1980s his high hopes of expanding the CPA through the renewal of its vision proved to be unfounded. After the CPA was dissolved in 1991 Eric Aarons devoted much of his energy to a series of books and pamphlets which discussed the intellectual and moral basis of the Left vision.

In his final work, *Hayek versus Marx and today's challenges* he concluded that the greatest threat facing humanity was global warming and damage to planet Earth. Marx's notion of material abundance and Hayek's assumption of endless economic growth both wrongly assumed the planet had an infinite capacity to expand. While he remained a sharp critic of the neo-liberalism of Hayek and was deeply influenced by Marx, he concluded that properly regulated markets and the profit motive had a role in a new society. Humanity needed such a society in order to deal with historically unprecedented environmental problems which were slowly destroying the bases of its livelihood.

Through his dedicated and perceptive work as a leader and thinker, Eric Aarons will be remembered for many years.

**David McKnight**



## Contributors

**Patricia Hovey** is a member of BLHA and a director on the board of the SEARCH Foundation. Together with Greg Mallory she organised the seminar, Women's Work on behalf of both organisations.

**Bob Russell** is a retired sociologist who resides in Brisbane. He is the author of 4 books on various aspects of work, employment, industrial relations and trade unions as well as numerous journal articles in Australian, British, Canadian and American periodicals. These days much of his time is taken up with climate activism.

**Carol Dian Corless** is a HACCP Co-ordinator and Hygiene Specialist for a food manufacturer in Canberra. Previously Carol had worked at a food manufacturer in Brisbane since 1988 before being made redundant in 2016 when the company moved production capacity to Victoria. Carol was a shop floor union delegate for United Voice which was the union that had coverage of most workers on the site and she was previously the President of United Voice in Qld until her work circumstances changed. Carol is a life member of United Voice Qld.

She graduated in 1985 from Queensland Agricultural College (UQ) with an Assoc Dip in Food Processing. Carol graduated from UNE in 2017 with a Bachelor of Historical Inquiry and Practice. She has recently applied and has started a Master of Philosophy at UNE.

**Professor Glenda Strachan** is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Employment Relations and Human Resources Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia. Her research interests centre on contemporary and historical workplace change especially issues relating to women's working experience. The impact of organisational and national employment policies, especially EEO and diversity management, is a focus of her work and she has published widely in journals. She is co-author of *Managing Diversity in Australia: Theory and Practice*, published in 2010 and co-editor of *Gender and the Professions: International and Comparative Perspectives*, Routledge 2018. In the 1970s and early 1980s she worked as a training officer with the Australian Trade Union Training Authority and has been active in trade unions throughout her working life.

**Dr John McCollow** has been a teacher and a long-time union officer. He is a life member of the Australian Education Union and the Queensland Teachers' Union. His research interests include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, the funding of education, vocational education and training, and teacher unions.

**David McKnight** is an honorary associate professor at the University of NSW. His most recent book is *Populism Now! The case for progressive populism* (NewSouth, 2018). He is the author of several other books including *Rupert Murdoch: An Investigation of Political Power* (Allen & Unwin, 2012) and *Beyond Right and Left: New Politics and the Culture War* (Allen & Unwin, 2005)

He is also historian of the Cold War, having written a history of Australia's internal security, *Australia's Spies and Their Secrets* (1994) and a history of the underground political tradition of the Communist International, *Espionage and the Roots of the Cold War* (2002).

He worked as a journalist on the *Sydney Morning Herald*, on ABC TV's *Four Corners* and on the weekly *Tribune* of which he was the editorial coordinator for two years in the early 1980s.

## **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 each year. Articles of any length up to 7000 words are invited; shorter contributions are encouraged.

First person accounts of trade union, social movement and progressive political struggles and organisations are particularly welcome. Reports on exhibitions, seminars and research projects are sought, as are book reviews and photo essays.

Contributions can be submitted either as hard copy (posted to The Secretary) or as an electronic file, emailed to [craig@amieuqld.asn.au](mailto:craig@amieuqld.asn.au). Please use Styles rather than character formatting from your article as it interferes with the laying out of the journal. Please ensure that your name, any relevant organisational affiliation, and all contact details are included in the article itself, as well as in the covering email.

Please also send details of any graphics, photos, maps, drawings, cartoons etc that might accompany your article.

# The Queensland Journal Of Labour History

No. 28, Autumn 2019  
ISSN 1832-9926

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Brisbane branch of the  
Australian Society for the Study of Labour History