The Queensland Journal of Labour History

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BLHA Brisbane Labour History Association

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The biannual radical history journal of the

Brisbane Labour History Association (BLHA)

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The BLHA is the Brisbane/Meanjin branch of the

Australian Society for the Study of Labour History.

The BLHA 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.
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The Queensland Journal of Labour History (*QJLH*) is compiled and published twice a year by the Brisbane (Meanjin) Labour History Association (BLHA), the Queensland branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. The BLHA is a not-for-profit collective of volunteers.

The BLHA seeks to assist rather than merely to document the activities of the working class. Neither is its conception of labour history narrowly academic, spanning, rather, all social aspects of the productive process. How were class relations formed? What was the role of the state and the production process? How does labour relate to race and gender? What were the industrial and political organisations created by workers and what struggles did they fight? What are the cultural expressions of class? How have these people, those who live by their labour, recorded, remembered, and represented their own history?

Although the BLHA has a particular focus on Meanjin/Brisbane and Queensland, we support the study of working-class history in its local, national and transnational settings. We also encourage the study of social movements in which workers have participated or which have affected workers' personal, social, political or economic circumstances.

Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the views of the BLHA or the editorial committee of the *QJLH*.

Notes for contributors

The *QJLH* is published in Spring and Autumn each year. Articles of any length are invited. Contributors receive one-year membership of the BLHA.

First-person accounts of trade union, social movement and progressive political struggles and organisations are particularly welcome. We encourage oral history.

Reports on exhibitions, seminars and research projects are sought, as are book reviews and photo essays.

Contributions can be submitted either as hardcopy (posted to the Secretary) or as an electronic file emailed to qldlabhist@gmail.com or other BLHA email addresses.

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, photographs, maps, drawings, cartoons etc. that might accompany your article.

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Editorial

Dean Wharton

Since the last issue of our journal was compiled the BLHA has organised or sponsored a number of events that have made their way into the pages of this issues. Details of upcoming events are to be found on our Facebook page, and are sent out to contacts on the BLHA email list.

This issue starts with the Radical History tour that Neil Frost, BLHA Secretary, led in October last year. The tour covered some of the content of the book *Radical Brisbane*, a book that remains essential reading for local labour and radical history buffs.

A few years ago I researched the life of Alex Macdonald and how his Communist Party beliefs impacted on his work as the Secretary of Queensland's Trade and Labour Council (1951-1969). Among the papers in the Trades and Labour Council archive at the University of Queensland's Fryer Library, was an invite to Alex, sent in May 1969, to deliver a lecture at the Third Clergy-Doctor Conference, due to take place in August that year. Alex was asked to deliver his presentation on the afternoon of Friday 15th August. I was already aware that Alex had been taken ill during the evening of Sunday 17th August and had passed away early the following morning, aged only 59. This presentation could have reflected Alex's thinking at the end of his life, and once found, the presentation notes did not disappoint. I circulated the lecture notes to comrades in the BLHA for discussion.

In this issue Howard Guille reflects on the content of Alex's lecture. He discusses Alex's observations of the problems in Australian society and economy in 1969 and considers the political solutions Alex proposes. Many of these problems are still with us, and have got worse.

Notably, Alex's first point of discussion is the inequality faced by Indigenous Australians. This he sees as a national disgrace; and it says much about the lack of success of the Left over the last 55 years that little has changed.

In March the BLHA organised a well-attended showing of Trish Nacy's film *Redundancies...and other Matters* (2003).

In this film Trish filmed rank and file wharfies and MUA organisers in Brisbane during the 1998 Patricks dispute. The workers at Patricks faced a nationwide lockout, organised in collaboration with Howard's Coalition Government, to casualise the waterfront workforce. Trish was a young media student at the time and with little budget created a remarkable film focused on the Brisbane experience. For a number of years she followed a handful of strikers, their families, and their representatives as they fought for their livelihoods in the face of management aggression, and a very questionable union response.

One truly appalling scene was filmed by Trish during the sudden closure of CSX World Terminals in Brisbane in 2001, which impacted on some of the Patricks ex-workers (a closure arranged by new owner, and Patricks CEO, Chris Corrigan, in order to eliminate an efficient competitor). It's hard to find a rationale that isn't entirely political for seeing a MUA official handing out redundancy letters to the workers on behalf of the company.

Alongside Trish, Mick Fulton, a rank and file militant, who appears throughout the film, was available for discussion following our film showing.

The film is currently available on Trish's Youtube channel, at: youtu.be/JB_fk2JEIw8

Trish had met up with our Vice-President, Greg Mallory, when he visited Adelaide back in January and he wanted to thank her for her hospitality considering he had never met her before.

Jeff Rickert's interview with Mike Barber in *QJLH* issues 35 and 36, and his interview with former MUA official Jeff Langdon in this issue, dovetails into this story. These interviews give more context to the response of the MUA in the dispute. Both interviews also discuss how the MUA has evolved since that time.

Lesley Synge has provided us with book reviews of two recent books on Indigenous Australia. The first of these, *How They Fought: Indigenous Tactics and Weaponry of Australian Frontier Wars* (2023) by Ray Kerklove looks at the conquest of Australia in terms of military tactics, revealing much about Indigenous Australian response. *Yalanya. That's the Way it is: The Life and Story of Pastor and Activist Don Kawanj Brady* (2024) by Graham Brady et al, is a biography that was launched in March at the State Library and is published with the assistance of the Uniting Church in Australia which once expelled Don for his radicalism. Both books are available at the State Library of Queensland bookshop and orders are being taken online for the second print run of the biography of Don Brady. wmq.org.au/donbrady

The Brisbane launch of *Knocking the Top Off: A People's History of Alcohol in Australia* edited by Alex Ettling and Iain McIntyre, took place in November 2023 and was supported by the BLHA. In this issue the President of the South Australian branch of the ASSLH, David Faber, has provided us with his review of the book.

Former leader of the ALP and Australian Governer General Bill Hayden passed in October last year. Bill was Brisbane born and bred. His American father was a Wobblie and Bill himself tried unsuccessfully to join the Communist Party of Australia (he was refused, according to one biography, because of his position at the time as a Queensland Police Officer). He was strongly linked to the ALP faction around Jack Egerton. His career in Federal parliament started in 1961 and he was leader of the ALP in opposition between the Dismissal and the 1983 election. Bill's obituary in this issue is written by Di Fingleton who worked alongside him in Parliament and remained a friend for life.

In February BLHA Vice-President Greg Mallory attended the funeral of Manfred Cross which was attended by many ALP members including the Queensland Premier and Deputy Premier. Manfred was a life-member of the BLHA, having been elected as our first President back at the first Annual General Meeting in March 1991. (Greg and *QJLH* editor Allan Gardiner also attended this meeting). Manfred had an extensive interest in history and was an active member of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland. He was patron of the Brisbane History Group for four decades. In this issue Brian Stephenson has provided an obituary of Manfred.

In the last issue of the *QJLH* (issue 37) Dr Phil Griffiths provided an article on the subject of his Alex Macdonald Memorial Lecture on *White Australia and the Australian labour movement*. Phil has written to us to address errors in his article:

Dear comrades,

In my 2023 Alex Macdonald lecture on *White Australia and the Australian labour movement* I said that, 'no historian had ever seriously

examined the class motives that led the vast majority of the Anglo-Australian ruling class to adopt White Australia'.

This was wrong. More than 40 years ago, Verity Burgmann had made a significant contribution to identifying some of these motives, for instance in 'Capital and Labour: Responses to Immigration in the Nineteenth Century' in the collection edited by Ann Curthoys & Andrew Markus, *Who Are Our Enemies: Racism and the Working Class* (1978). Her work has been a foundational influence on my own efforts to understand the development and reasons that a dominant element in the Australian ruling class imposed the White Australia policy.

I was able to get a footnote added to the written text published with the lecture's transcript in *The Queensland Journal of Labour History* Issue No.37, however it was just a footnote. I wanted to supplement that with this more prominent acknowledgement and apology to Professor Burgmann.

My intention was to point out that no historian had ever subjected ruling class motivations for establishing the White Australia policy to a multi-year, book-length investigation despite the obvious gap; indeed, there is a lot more yet to be done on this issue.

As well as apologising to Professor Burgmann, I would to thank the BLHA and *QJLH* for the opportunity to present an outline of my work, however imperfectly, and thank the audience on the night for their insightful questions.

Phil Griffiths

Issue 37 on the BLHA website has been revised in accordance to Phil's instructions (brisbanelabourhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/QJLH-Issue-37.pdf). Ebsco and Informit, the online databases that carry this journal, have also been informed about the revision.

IN other events since the last issue, Janis Healy presented at our AGM in December her research on the woollen mills in Ipswich, with specific reference to the gender inequality experienced by the workers there. An article for publication is currently being edited for our next issue.

A review of Deborah Jordan's book *Australian Women's Justice* (2024), which the BLHA launched in April will also appear.

Thank you, as always, to all the contributors, and all the copy-editors, in making this issue possible.

Articles

Radical Brisbane Walking Tour

Neil Frost

Images c/o Neil Frost

On Sunday 23 October last year (2023), approximately 20 people joined the BLHA's "Radical Brisbane" walking tour of the Brisbane Central Business District. The tour, which went for approximately two hours, involved visits to several sites connected to important events in the struggle for First Nations, women's and workers' rights in Brisbane and Queensland. The tour, conducted by BLHA Secretary Neil Frost, was based on research using a number of sources, particularly Raymond Evans and Carole Ferrier's seminal work which gave its name to the tour (Evans & Ferrier, 2004).

Events discussed on the tour included:

- The 1948 Rail Strike and bashing of Communist Party of Australia Member of Queensland Parliament Fred Paterson.
- The Conscription Riot of 1917.
- Political activism during the Great Depression (1930s).
- The 1912 Brisbane General Strike.
- The Right to March Movement from 1977.
- The Free Speech Fight of 1913-1914.
- First Nations resistance leader Dundalli (1840s-50s).

The tour began near the entrance to Central Station on Edward Street, between Ann and Turbot Streets, a location of great importance during the Railway Strike of 1948. Near this site, on St Patrick's Day 1948, while taking part in a procession of railway workers in support of the strike, Communist MP Fred Paterson was attacked by plain clothes police, suffering injuries so severe that he was not expected to survive the night (Fitzgerald 1997). Despite the seriousness of the assault, the Queensland ALP caucus met and decided that no inquiry would be held, and no charges were ever laid against the police sergeant involved (Ward 2018).

Participants then moved onto the School of Arts in Ann Street, where the events of the conscription riot in 1917 were discussed. On 9 July 1917, a disturbance broke out at the Brisbane School of Arts when a pro-conscription meeting of the Women's Compulsory Service Petition League (WCSPL) was interrupted by activists from the Women's Peace Army (Evans 2004). The efforts of a courageous group of around 20 activists from the Women's Peace Army (WPA), led by Labour activist Margaret Thorp, were the focus of this stop of the tour. Thorp and the WPA activists were attacked by members of the WCSPL when they attempted, quite successfully, to disrupt the meeting (Evans 2004, 158-159).

The tour then progressed to the UQ School of Dentistry, the site of an Unemployed Camp, known as "The Gym", during the Great Depression. During the 1930s, around 180 unemployed men lived in and around the camp. It was a committee-managed hostel, run by the unemployed men themselves (Scott 2004). The committee vetted new arrivals, held weekly meetings, and oversaw the cleaning and upkeep of the hostel. The camp was one of several unemployed camps and hostels in the vicinity of the Brisbane CBD, many of which became centres for unemployed activism. As well as campaigning for improvements to their own living conditions, occupants participated in unemployed protests throughout the 1930s. Activists became involved in a number of campaigns during this time, including for the provision of toilet facilities for the unemployed camped at Victoria Park, campaigns advocating for the right to work, right to live, and a place in "normal society," as well as a successful campaign to prevent evictions in 1937 (Scott 2004).

King George Square was the focus of the next few stops of the tour, with discussion occurring about several events including the 1912 General Strike, the Right to March Movement of the 1970s, and the founding of the Women's Union and the Women's Suffrage Movement. The contribution of women such as Emma Miller and Ellen Hewett during the General Strike, and May Jordan of the Women's Union was a particular focus of this part of the tour (Young 1991; Hamley 2004).

King George Square's importance as a place of protest and as a starting point for street marches going back to the nineteenth century was acknowledged, with a particular focus on the Right to March movement of 1977. The "right to protest" marches that followed the Bjelke-Petersen Government's banning of street marches were among the most significant public demonstrations held in Australia. More than 2000 people were arrested at 26 separate protests, 418 on one afternoon in October alone, as they attempted to defy the ban by walking out of King George Square (Smee 2019).

The long battle for freedom of speech was the subject of the tour's second last stop at the bottom of the Queen Street Mall, where the Free Speech Fight of 1913-1914 was discussed. The fight began three years after the passing of the

Brisbane Traffic Amendment Act of 1910, wide-sweeping legislation, a section of which had the effect of restricting the holding of meetings and street protests (Evans 2004). Over the following two years, Central Brisbane was the scene for extended public protests that involved socialists, Russian revolutionaries, and members of the Industrial Workers of the World. They demanded the right to hold Sunday political forums for the discussion of working-class issues. The protests were recognised in the press at the time as 'one of the most interesting combats ever fought in Australia,' and even featured in the British Press (Evans 2004).

For the final stop of the tour, participants gathered at the memorial for First Nations resistance leader Dundalli in Post Office Square, opposite the scene of his execution on the site of what is now the GPO building in Queen Street. Here, First Nations activist Sam Woripa Watson spoke eloquently of the contribution of Dundalli and other resistance leaders in the struggle against the impact of British colonialism and the continued injustices faced by First Nations peoples in so-called Australia.

The BLHA will be holding further tours in future, with planning underway for a tour of Ipswich in the next twelve months.

Neil Frost is a former industrial officer at the AMWU. He is a Modern History teacher and Secretary of the Brisbane Labour History Association.

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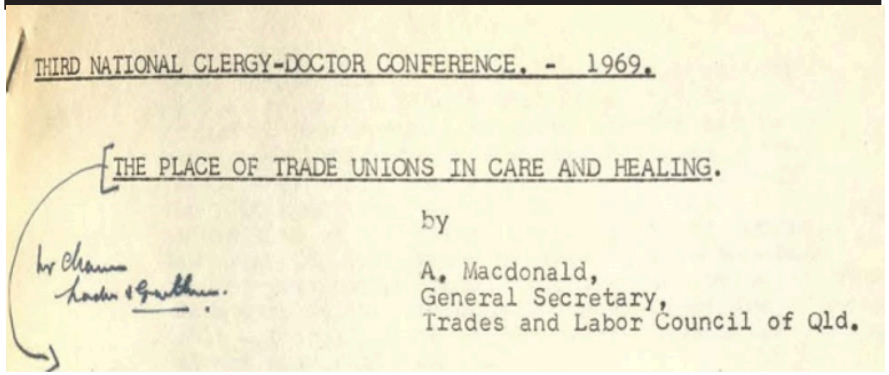
The Place of Trade Unions:

A Review of the last lecture by Alex Macdonald

Howard Guille


THIRD NATIONAL CLERGY-DOCTOR CONFERENCE. - 1969.

THE PLACE OF TRADE UNIONS IN CARE AND HEALING.

by

A. Macdonald,
General Secretary,
Trades and Labor Council of Qld.

Figure 1

Alex Macdonald, the General Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council of Queensland died suddenly of a myocardial infarction (heart attack) on 18th August 1969 at the age of 59.[1,2]

His last known public presentation was days earlier in Brisbane at the Third National Clergy-Doctor Conference held from August 14-17.[3] The presentation, archived in the Fryer Library of the University of Queensland and in a US College Library, is a discourse by Alex on the place and role of trade unions.

The speech is significant in itself - most notably for the strong progressive position on a wide range of topics. Many of the proposals made by Alex in 1969 have still not been achieved in 2024. Moreover, most of the positions he put in 1969 are well in advance of those held across the industrial and political left in 2024. This makes poignant the loss his early demise meant to unions and the left.

A sketch list of events from 1969 will give context. The Coalition Gorton government was narrowly re-elected on 25 October. This was Gough Whitlam's first election as ALP leader. Neil Armstrong walked on the Moon on July 21.

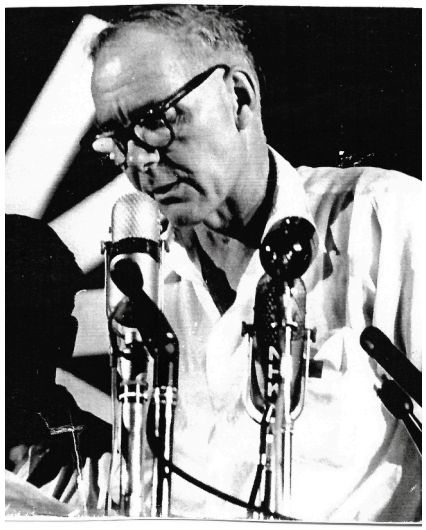
The Arbitration Commission ruled that equal pay for women doing the same work as men must be phased in by 1972. Joh Bjelke-Petersen completed his first year as Premier of Queensland. The Woodstock Festival took place from August 15 to 18. Australia's commitment to the Vietnam War reached 7,672 combat troops in 1969 - its peak.

The title of Alex's was "*The Place of Trade Unions in Care and Healing*". The heading is shown in figure 1. It is 36 typed pages (including some detailed statistical tables) with 6 pages of attachments including extracts from the Minutes of meetings of the Operative Stonemasons Society of 1887 and 1868. The latter are included 'to show the way in which early trade unions carried through the principles of "care" for their members'.

Stating Some Fundamentals

Alex begins his speech with a strong statement about the imperative of making a better future:

> All institutions, groups, establishments, are being challenged to-day; challenged as to their adequacy to meet and deal successfully with the economic, political, moral and social problems of this and other continents of to-day and to-morrow. Behind this challenge is the demand that society in the future will not make the mistakes of the past; the demand that men will go forward together, fulfilling all goals that protect and further life - and without the destruction that we have known in our lives.



Alex Macdonald

And, he says that trade unions must also change:

> Trade Unions themselves are under challenge. Ideals of yesterday will be striven for in a new way - in a manner suited to the new outlooks of today and tomorrow. This means changed, updated approaches to a multiplicity of problems.

These statements are far from the platitudes that passes for much public speaking. They convey depth of thinking and a tangible humanity. Alex's speech is candid about the need for unions to continue to seek for radical change and critical of basking in the past. For example:

> We cannot meet pressing problems of today and tomorrow by basking in reflected glory of past achievements. We have to correctly assess the problems ahead and set out to solve them. We have to update our thinking and actions and act more quickly. Our task is to so work as to assist the growing generation to take its rightful place as the future leaders.

Alex notes the mutuality between trade unions and humanists which developed in the Nineteenth Century:

> The Trade Unions became powerful mass organisations in the process and developed their own political goals. They were supported by humanists, including men of religion and medicine.

Alex argues that "care and healing" must be considered in "the mass, preventative sense"; the latter can, I think, be taken as meaning structural analysis and systematic change. In the body of the speech, Alex applies this to six major topics. The gist of these is presented here with, as appropriate, some comparison to the situation in 2024.

Aboriginal People

Aborigines are the first topic he raises:

> When are we going to end the scandalous situation in which, after over 100 years, a section of the population - the Aborigines - are still second class citizens revealing continuing discrimination in our midst...
> The majority of (the) original people (are) living in a backward state so far as education, employment and general economic status are concerned.

He documented this with reference to comparative statistics showing how much Aboriginal people lagged on employment,

unemployment and education. The situation is little better 65 years later. In 2023 only four of 19 socio-economic 'Meet the Gap' outcomes were on track to meet their targets.[4]

It is especially notable that Alex, speaking as a trade union leader in 1969, made Aboriginal people the first topic he raised with the audience of doctors and clergy. He was explicit about the importance of Aboriginal people achieving 'equal social life' though action:

> not through "care" on the basis of charity - but "care" on the basis of equality - with wide participation of Aboriginal people.

In other words, Aboriginal solutions led by Aboriginal people. Or, in more legalistic language based on "prior and informed consent". These were not widespread sentiments at the time. They are also more profound and require more substantive political change than was perhaps evident in the 2023 Voice Referendum.

Social Services

The second topic is 'social services'; this includes a discussion of unemployment. He introduces the topic saying:

> When is society going to seriously tackle the great problem of poverty, much of it hidden in Australia, including aged and invalid pensioners, social service recipients, deserted wives, the unemployed and others.

and

> It is suggested by some experts that in Australia's major cities almost 5% of the working age population live on an income below the "poverty level". Another estimate is that at least one (1) million Australians are victims of poverty or marginal poverty.

He relates the levels of poverty to unemployment and to the inadequacy of social service payments and advocates that these should be related to average weekly earnings.

The measured unemployment rate in 1969 was low by the level in subsequent years. Figure 2 shows the ABS Historical data from the late 1960s to the early 2020s. In July 1969, the unemployment rate for all persons was 1.7 % comprising 1.1% for men and 3.1% for women.[5] In March 2024 the seasonally adjusted unemployment

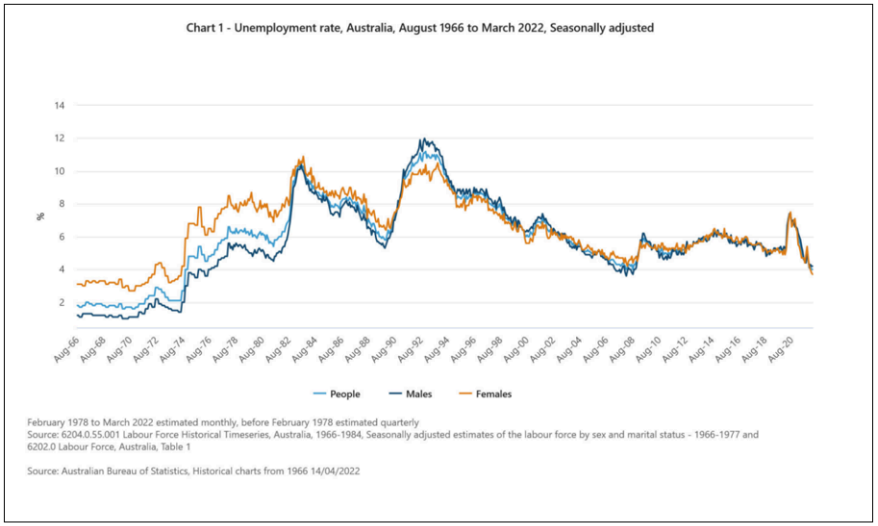


Figure 2

rates was 3.8%[6] compared to the most recent peak of 7.5% in July 2020.

The concerns Alex raised about unemployment and social services in 1969, have intensified since. Social benefits still condemn recipients to poverty. As the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) said of the 2024 Federal Budget:

> At a time when unemployment is being deliberately increased to curb inflation, the government is deliberately and cruelly denying people receiving unemployment payments decent income support.

and

> This budget will deliver eye-watering tax cuts to the wealthiest people in the country, and, at the same time, it cruelly denies the increase in income support that over one million people struggling to survive on JobSeeker and Youth Allowance desperately need.

And much is still required to meet Alex's request in 1969 that

> When will our Social Services provide nation-wide free hospitalisation, covering medical, dental etc., for all when required as a right and not

Figure 3[10]

be a nightmare as it is in many parts of Australia, resulting in many difficult social problems, including added poverty.

Employment

Discussion of employment is a substantial part of the speech. This is even though, as shown above, the unemployment rate in 1969 was low compared to what was to come. Alex's views on employment are explicit:

> Trade Union policy is full employment for all. The right to work. We do not agree that it is necessary to create unemployment pools so as to effect a brake on spending, as is talked about today.

This statement was before macro-economists set out on the search for the eternal balance of employment and inflation and before NAIRU, the Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment, came to prominence in the 1970s and remains at the core of the thinking of the Reserve Bank of Australia.[8]

Alex stressed the effects of unemployment on people. There were 10,908 registered unemployed in Queensland in June 1969 which amounted to $5^{1}/_{2}$ people for each registered job vacancy. He also emphasises that 30% of the registered unemployed were under 21[9] which was disproportionately high and, he suggests, one of the 'sources of anti-social behaviour' that required positive action in 'providing jobs, vocations, apprenticeships, job opportunity generally for young people'.

The situation for young people has only changed in one respect - in the 2020s a higher proportion are in full-time education. But unemployment is still high as shown by figure 3 with rates between 11 and almost 20% over the last four years.

The need for 'positive action' about youth employment remains. This has got much worse for young people since 1969. They are the part of the workforce most vulnerable to economic shocks; they are the largest proportion of those who have disengaged from the labour force and classed as 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET)[11]. The outcome, as described in 2022, is that:

> Young people have long suffered from disproportionately high unemployment rates, low pay, high turnover rates, low skills, high incidence of non-standard employment and non-career path positions. These features tend to be accumulative and mutually reinforcing, making it difficult for many young people in the labour market to escape from a cycle of unemployment and insecurity.[12]

One of the biggest and most disastrous differences between 1969 and the 2020s is that the Commonwealth Employment Services has been replaced by a privatised system run by for-profit and not-for-profit providers. This was renamed Workforce Australia in 2022. It is accompanied by stringent 'mutual obligation requirements' on job seekers including *Work for the Dole*.[13]

Global Employment

Alex was a strong internationalist and raised the question of 'population development in Southeast Asia' saying we (ie Australians):

> have special responsibilities, due to our geographic position, to assist, on a basis of equality, those who live near to our shores.

And asking

> Do we really ponder the problem of employment and development in the countries to the near north of Australia?

He argues the imperative to expand and support the International Labor Office (ILO) World Employment Programme. The 'drive for employment' he says, is 'one of the world's greatest problems' so that,

> The problem of finding useful and productive employment for young people in the developing countries will be one of the most urgent and important tasks for the I.L.O. and other organisations and member states in the years to come.

This includes issues about:

> …the status and conditions of young people in their early years of employment; their incomes and prospects of advancement; and their attitudes towards work and other institutions of society

Serious action is also needed, he said, about the role and status of women in economic and social life of which employment is one part. And about older people whose community sources of support are being lost with 'development'.

Employment is one aspect of technological change; in dealing with both, he says,'Our concepts of "care" must be international to be successful nationally'. This is extremely thought-provoking; viz

> What role will we play in the technological revolution - for example, in assisting development in other countries, emerging from colonialism. Is Bougainville to be the norm by which we work or are we going to assist the development in these nations through aims of equality? Will we assist millions of people to the standards of social progress that we enjoy, with them being the arbiters of their own destiny? The road to our "care" is bound up with "care" of populations in other countries.

This is a call for global equality and self-determination. The reference to Bouganville is germane because of the conflict in the 1960s over the Panguna mine - starting with the prospecting authority given to CRA in 1963, the decision of the Australian High Court in 1969 to uphold the Special Mining Lease granted to CRA (Rio-Tinto) and the direct action by Napidakoe Navitu both against the mine and in favour of Bouganville separation.[14] This

was on the agenda for the ACTU at the time of Alex's speech and death. As Pete Thomas reported, the priorities for the ACTU in 1969 included:

> Aboriginal rights and of especial significance right now because of the rape of Bougainville people's land rights, the trade union movement's standpoint for Papua-New Guinea rights to freedom from colonialist repression and exploitation[15]

In 1969, the global chair of Rio-Tinto described the Panguna copper mine as 'the jewel in our crown'.[16] The battles over environmental damage, land-owner rights and Bouganville independence continue to the present.[17]

Technological Change

Alex's argument is about using technology for the good of all -viz

> We say that as a community, mechanisation, automation, and cybernation can work for us or against us, according to the extent of our concern to use them as instruments for the common good or our apathy in allowing their use mainly as devices to make profits to enlarge industrial prestige.

He quotes an address made on behalf of the ACTU that:

> The benefit that automation can and must be made to confer is a higher standard of living, both for the relatively poor of our community and the desperately needy poor beyond our shores. These benefits can and should be in the form of more material things and greater paid leisure.

These remain a principle that unions and the left should hold in 2024; they are still a long way from achievement and, indeed, the profits of the corporations and their owners which dominate information technology and social media are flowing in ever greater concentrations to private holdings held in tax havens.[18]

This fuels the concentration of wealth and income. In Australia, the top 10% of income earners get a third of all personal income. The highest 10% of households by wealth (the 'richest') has an average of $6.1 million in assets and 46% of all wealth. The lower 60% by wealth have an average of $376,000 in assets and just 17% of all wealth.[19]

Industrial Accidents and Their Prevention

The last theme was health and safety; Alex concisely set out 'at all times the aim is safety protecting man's and woman's mental and physical capacity as citizens and workers'. Noise, repetitive activity, mental stress, and chemicals were given as matters requiring more preventative and protective action. He highlighted the long campaign of Jack Hansen and the Painters' Union on removing lead pigment from paint.

And, still redolent to the present, unions must have 'full participation in all work associated with achieving a drastic drop in industrial accidents. We are against situations in which profits will be put before safety needs'.

Two Final Points

The 1969 speech ends on two points. One is:

> We live in times of conflict -we say that unless Peace is securely established, other problems whether social, economic, political or industrial, are not possible of solution.

The same could and should be said in 2024. There are still too many wars and too much killing and physical destruction.

His other point is:

> Most facets of life are subject to planning, but do we plan so that the benefits of such changes will be shared equitably throughout the nation thereby minimising the problems we discuss to-day. Can we minimise economic and social suffering? We believe that we can. This sums up the role that the Trade Unions and their two (2) million members will play in the future, as they have done in the past.

A suitable profound memoriam for an outstanding person who was honoured to serve unions and the working class. And whose words from 1969 continue to teach us how to serve. Ted Bacon in his eulogy at Alex's funeral said:

> He (Alex Macdonald) believed that the socialist concept of a world without national barriers could be achieved only through a long and complex process of co-operation on the basis of absolutely equal rights.[20]

Howard Guille retired as Queensland Secretary of the NTEU in 2006 and is the secretary of the North Stradbroke Island Musuem on Minjerribah.

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Clergy, Doctor Conference - Brisbane, Q., Australia, 1969 August 14-17

File — Box: 310, Folder: 92
Identifier: Folder 92
Scope and ContentsFrom the Series:
clippings collected by Muggeridge, arranged alphabetically
Dates: Created: 1969 August 14-17
Found in: Special Collections / SC-004, Malcolm Muggeridge Papers / Vertical File

Figure 4

An Addendum on how Alex Macdonald's August 1969 Presentation has surfaced in an American religious library!

Material about Queensland unions including the Trades and Labour Council and Alex Macdonald are held by the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland in UQFL118 Trades and Labour Council of Queensland Records. More material, particularly papers and records of Alex are held by the Fryer as as part of the Cecily Cameron Papers. Cecily worked at the TLC during Alex's secretaryship. A copy of the paper presented to the Third National Clergy-Doctor Conference is in the Fryer Library.

During the research for this QJLH article a separate archival copy of the same paper was sourced in the Special Collections Repository at the Wheaton College Library in Illinois, USA. The provenance of this paper is, to say the least, full of curiosities. In particular, how has a speech from an active Brisbane communist come to be in the special collection of an explicitly Christian tertiary education institution in the United States.

Figure 4 (across) shows the on-line reference for the paper at the Wheaton College.

Some summary 'facts'

- Wheaton College is a private Evangelical Christian liberal arts college in Wheaton, Illinois, USA 'where the pursuit of faith and learning is taken seriously.' [1]
- It has around some 2,500 undergraduate students and about 40 majors.[2]
- Wheaton's general education program, *"*Christ at the Core*"*, 'prepares students for a lifetime of apprehending truth through the exploration, reflection, connection, and implementation of knowledge'.[3]
- Wheaton College is ranked as 'the quintessential Christian Liberal Arts college, the academic home for globally diverse, intellectually ambitious, deeply faithful Christians who want comprehensive world-class quality in an environment of curiosity, conviction, and community'.[4]
- It is extremely well-endowed as demonstrated by its buildings and library collections.
- The Special Collections of Wheaton 'seek to collect, preserve, and make available materials related to the lives and work of significant adherents to the Christian faith.'[5] This includes buying collections.

The papers from the 1969 Clergy-Doctor Conference, including Alex Macdonald's speech, are part of the Malcolm Muggeridge Papers which comprises 326 boxes and occupies 138 Linear Feet.[6] The collection is described:

> The collection of papers traces the pilgrimage of this individual from his roots in socialism through his long search for meaning in life, until he finally embraced Christianity. Throughout his life he took a strong stand on various issues of ethics in government, sanctity of life and moral conduct. He prophesied concerning the woes due a civilization that would not take heed to the decay he described.

Malcolm Muggeridge

Malcolm Muggeridge (24 March 1903 – 14 November 1990) was an

extremely well-known and significant English journalist and satirist with numerous publications and television productions.[7] As the Wheaton Library citation states, he 'travelled' from being religiously agnostic and part of the left wing politics of the 1930s to a very moral Christianity in the late 1960s.

Wikipedia provides an extensive account of his life, including politics and religion.[8] *The Catholic Weekly* reminds us of his 1956 description of Australia as 'a "second-hand" country, which had not managed to shake off its anachronistic loyalty to England but was now being absorbed by the facile conformities of mass American culture'.[9] With which many of the current Left would agree!
'

His father, H. T. Muggeridge, was a socialist politician and one of the early British Labour Party Members of Parliament. In his twenties, Muggeridge was attracted to communism and went to live in the Soviet Union in the 1930s, and the experience, especially of the Holodomor, the famine in Soviet Ukraine during 1932 and 1933 with 3 to 5 million deaths[10] turned him into an anti-communist.

Malcolm Muggeridge became a Protestant Christian in 1969 and converted to Catholicism in 1982. The latter is said to be 'largely under the influence of Mother Teresa about whom he had written a book, *Something Beautiful for God* '.[11]

Malcolm Muggeridge visited Australia at least twice - first in 1969 and again in 1977. The 1977 visit was a speaking tour for the Festival of Light which included an address to some 35,000 in Hyde Park, Sydney.[12] A recollection of the tour was edited by Fred Nile and published by the under the title *The gentle prophet pays a visit*.[13]

The 1969 Visit with Barry Jones

Malcolm Muggeridge's 1969 visit to Australia was in July.[14] It can be envisaged that he made a contact with someone who was attending the Doctor-Clergy Conference in August and that this person subsequently provided Muggeridge with the conference materials. Later they formed part of the collection of Muggeridge papers acquired by the Wheaton Library.

But the curiosities and coincidences continue. One purpose for his visit was 'to do a series of television programmes with quiz king, Barry Jones' with whom he stayed.[15] Barry Jones, of course, went on to be an ALP member of the Victorian Parliament from 1972-77 and the Federal Parliament from 1977-98. He was Minister of Science from 1983-90.

It is conceivable that Barry provided the material from the Brisbane conference as the subjects would be within his interests. While this must be speculation, the *Canberra Times* is undoubtedly apt in its comment that, the time they spent together 'would have been the scene today of some entertaining conversation between two great talkers'! [16]

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“I wasn’t very well liked by the boss.” An interview with Jeff Langdon

Jeff Rickertt

Jeff Langdon became a wharfie in 1970. After working on the waterfront in Sydney, Port Kembla and Brisbane and serving for many years as an official for the Waterside Workers’ Federation (WWF) and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), he left the industry after the Patrick lockout in 1998 but continued to take an active interest in the MUA. In August 2022 Jeff Rickertt talked with him about work and unionism on the Australian waterfront.

Jeff Langdon 2022

Getting Started

JR: You got your start on the waterfront in Sydney in 1970. How did that come about?

JL: I saw an ad for waterfront jobs in the paper. I was 22 at the time. I was sharing a house with eight others in Coogee in Sydney. All nine of us applied. The other eight got offered jobs before me but they all stayed working on the construction of the Opera House. I applied for the job not thinking I’d get anywhere, because I'd heard all those rumours that you had to have a family history in the industry. Most of my family had been railway workers; I was a baker by trade. But I got a telegram telling me to ring up and come in for an interview. So, I did.

There were eight people on the panel: four wharfies and four from management. They asked me questions like, “Do you like shift work?” I said, “Yeah, I like shift work.” One of them said, “Of course, you're a baker.” And I said, “Yeah, but that's not shift work. That's continuous, 12 o'clock at night to six.” That's the only thing I didn't like in the baking game.

They asked, “Do you mind earning big money?” Actually, the first six months that I was on the waterfront, I earned less than what I thought I'd earn because there was a downturn. And then all of a sudden it picked up and I did earn reasonable money, but you had to put in a lot of hours for it. You'd have to do afternoon shift, then go back to day shift, then go to midnight and then come back.

Working Life

JR: In the decade leading up to when you started, the WWF under the leadership of Charlie Fitzgibbon had cooperated with the employers over the containerization of the industry and the consequent reduction in jobs, in return for benefits such as permanency and a 35-hour week. By the time you started in 1970, was ordinary cargo fully containerized?

JL: No. When I started in 1970, bags of cement, 150-pound bags of flour, and cargo like tinned tomatoes were not imported into this country in containers. A lot of timber wouldn't go in the containers. Then motor cars started being imported into the country.

I'll say this about Charlie Fitzgibbon. He was a good leader. He did a lot of good things for the waterfront, and he didn't get the accolades that he should have got. On the question of permanency, a lot of blokes left the waterfront because they didn't want to work permanently. They liked the casual life. Some of them who left later regretted leaving. They missed out on superannuation; they missed out on the 35-hour week.

I started as a permanent.

JR: How was the work allocated? What were the shift arrangements?

JL: There was a day shift, an afternoon shift, and a midnight shift. They could leave you on three weeks of midnights, and three weeks of afternoon shifts. The family men didn't like it. It didn't worry me at the time. I was playing football, and I could still get away to training. If you were on a week of day shifts, you didn't earn much money. You got time and a half on afternoon shift, and you got double time on midnight shift, and then you got double time and a half for a Sunday.

The money may have been ok on midnights but there was resistance to their introduction. Some say the worst thing old Jimmy Healy ever did was agree to us copping midnighters. When it was proposed, an old bloke got up at the stop work

meeting and said midnight shifts were only made for loving. That brought the house down, but in the end they voted for it.

Healy is also remembered for agreeing to accept wet weather gear. The implication was that you would work when it was wet. But Healy included a proviso: we'd wear wet weather gear, but if it's dangerous, we won't work.

JR: Who got to decide whether or not it was safe?

JL: The labour on the job, not the bosses. When I was in Port Kembla, it was pissing down rain one day, and one of the managers said, "It's not raining, it's only moisture falling from the sky." The old boys told him in no uncertain manner where to go.

JR: Take me through a typical shift in the early 70s.

JL: First of all, they were eight-hour shifts before we got the 35-hour week. The lunchrooms and the shower amenities were terrible. Blokes used to have to bring their own nails in and nail them to the wall so they could hang their clothes and towels.

We'd do jobs like lamp black, which was used for the black in tyres. You'd get off the job, you'd get on the bus or on the train to go home, because not many wharfies had cars in them days, and other passengers would get out of your road because you'd still have lamp black coming out of your pores.

And then there was fish meal. Your wife wouldn't even go near you when you came home because you'd stink of fish meal.

Flour jobs weren't dirty, but they were heavy. You were carrying bags of 150 pounds. And you might have a long carry on one of the bulk ships of probably 15 or 20 yards to walk from where they'd come in on the slide, and you'd have to do this all day.

And they tried to make you do it for two or three weeks. That's when we said no. We even had to argue with the union about it. It was too much. You can do hard yakka for a short period, but you can't do it seven days or five days a week for weeks.

JR: What about older guys who weren't physically up to that kind of thing? How did they get work?

JL: We either put them up on deck and got them trained to be deckmen, or we put them on the gangway, which was the area where the cargo went from the ship to the wharf and vice versa. The younger fellas would look after them. Some of those old guys were 80 years of age; they were there because for most of their working lives, they'd had no decent superannuation.

JR: In the kinds of conditions you're describing, were there accidents and injuries?

JL: Yeah, there were a few, but not as bad as in the later stages of the waterfront before I left. There were more deaths after the industry was casualised again. I've admitted to this at a stop work meeting. The new category of casual labour they introduced – 'supplementaries' or 'sups' they were called – were more willing to take risks. Some of them would do anything without the leadership of the branch knowing. They'd drive machinery that wasn't safe. They'd go on board a ship where the ladders weren't good. They'd overload the cargo. But as soon as the delegates got to know the rights and the wrongs, they started pulling these guys back into gear.

Back in the 70s we wouldn't cop dangerous situations. On the first passenger ship I worked, there was a 46-feet drop to the bottom of the hatch, and you had to go over the side of the ship into the hatch, straight down a ladder with no protective hoops. There was no angle to the ladder, and you didn't have a proper foothold because the ladder sat on the face of the hatch, and you had nowhere to put your feet until you got down to the third or fourth rung. So, you'd more or less hang in free space.

The union said, "No, this is no good. We're going to have a campaign on this." So, they looked up the *Navigation Act*, and found you had to have at least four inches, that's 100mm now if I'm correct, of space between the side of the hatch and the rung so that you could get your foot on half of the rung. We also forced them to install angled ladders. We forced them to instal safety hoops and platforms on the ladders on the cranes.

JR: Did you need stoppages to win those improvements?

JL: Yeah, we might walk off the job because it was too unsafe. When there was a safety dispute, the foreman – the representative of the ship owner – might try to transfer a gang from another hatch into the hatch in dispute. Those wharfies would say, "No, it's unsafe for them, it's unsafe for us." The foreman would sack the whole ship. And then we'd go in for a claim and prove that it was unsafe.

In Sydney and all over Australia, no one liked foremen. Blokes wouldn't put their hands up to become a foreman because you had to be a rat or a dog to do it. They would bring in people from outside the industry. You didn't have to have any brains to be a foreman, you just had to hate other working-class people.

There was an old bloke down in Port Kembla, Harry Smith, and he used to tell a story about an incident with a foreman they called Onion Eyes. His eyes used to water, so they called him Onion Eyes. Anyway, Harry walked up to Onion Eyes one day and said, "What would you do if I called you a c...t?" And Onion Eyes replied, "Harry, I'd sack you." Harry said, "Well, what would you do if I thought you were a c...t?" "Well," said Onion Eyes, "There's nothing I can do about what you think." "OK," Harry responded, "I think you're a c...t." There were 200 people standing there.

Representing the Members

JR: While you were in Sydney, did you hold any positions in the union?

JL: Only as a delegate. Davey Boyd was the delegate and gang leader in my work gang. He was getting a bit on the older side of things. So, he said, "Well, what about you, Jeff? Will you take it up?" And so, I became the gang leader and also stood for the delegate's job.

I say "only" a delegate, but you had to know all the rules and conditions. And you also had to have a lot of common sense. If you were a registered delegate, at the job meetings you had to stand in front of the blokes. Sometimes we would have seven gangs on a ship, so there might be 14 delegates out of those men. You would all stand out the front. And we had a chairman who was just one of the boys there. Whoever the wharfies wanted as their delegate became their delegate. If you were the delegate and the membership wanted you to represent them, the boss had to deal with you.

JR: If a local dispute arose over some matter on a ship, what did you have to do as a delegate? What was the process?

JL: You'd go and talk to the boys. They would sing out for you. They might be in hatch four and you're in hatch three. You have to get up the ladder, go and talk to the guys, and then go to the foreman. And then the supervisor would stick his nose in. When you couldn't get an agreement, you'd ring the union.

Whether day, afternoon, or midnight shifts, you'd always be able to get one of the officials.

One of the Sydney office staff – a woman - was as good as any of the officials. She knew the rules backwards and forwards. If someone wasn't there for you, because they might be in a meeting somewhere or doing something else on another dispute, she would give you a ruling. That was really handy for the young delegates. We also held committee meetings of the delegates. Obviously, there were a lot of issues to deal with in those years, both local and broader issues.

The Vietnam War and Conscription

JR: Some of the broader issues included political matters, such as opposition to military conscription, the American war in Vietnam, apartheid in South Africa. Did the threat of conscription directly affect you?

JL: No, but I was one of the lucky ones. One of the boys I travelled around Australia with early on, Danny Wilson, he got conscripted, and he said he would not go. So, they put him in a first aid position. Danny stuck to his guns. They sent him all over Australia doing first aid. His platoon went away many times, and he just wouldn't go. He marched in the antiwar marches in Victoria.

I didn't get called up because my birthday fell on an even number – 4 February 1947. Only the odd numbers were called. I was very proud of my mother and father for having me born at the right time.

JR: How did the union go about educating members about those bigger political issues? And how did it organise them to support those movements?

JL: By word of mouth from the delegates and the union officials coming down every day and holding job meetings; and by the branch news printed by the union officials and delivered to the boys on the job. Conscription and Vietnam were spoken about a lot, in every club and every pub where wharfies gathered in Sydney at the time.

The wharfies were 99.9% against being conscripted and against people volunteering and following the American line. They said it would be the same as being in Sydney and being called upon to fight for New South Wales against Victoria.

The wharfies warned the government that they weren't going to load certain ships because those

Port Kembla wharfies protest against Vietnam War, 1967 (ANU Archives E206-37)

ships were only supposed to be carrying mail, but they were carrying tanks and ammunition as well. Every job that the boys got sent to like that, they would put their hands up at the start of the shift and say, no, no support. That was quite common.

There were media people like John Laws and Allan Jones trying to change the people's opinion by telling lies. We marched to their radio stations and the newspaper offices.

JR: Were you directly involved in the bans on ships carrying military equipment to Vietnam?

JL: Oh, yeah. You'd get rostered to a ship. You'd ring up the night before and they'd say, "You're going to Darling Harbour." And so, you'd go into work and as soon as you got there, you'd just say, "No, we're not turning to." The delegate, whoever was elected, would go and tell management, the supervisor and the charge foreman that we weren't turning to. And that was it. We'd walk off.

JR: Did you have the support of the branch officials?

JL: There wasn't one branch official that would say to you, "Go back and do the right thing and turn to," because they knew the feeling of the membership. The members didn't need a lot of education about what that war was about. They already understood in a sense. But education is better if you're getting it from the branch officials. They had their hand on the pulse, more so than what the average wharfie did. We had very good militant wharfies who were members of the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, the Chinese line party. They were all supportive. I was never in a meeting where anybody put their hand up in favour of a war.

Waterfront Politics

JR: A number of wharfies and seamen joined the Communist Party of Australia or the Socialist Party of Australia or the Maoists. While sympathetic to socialist politics, you never joined any of the communist groups. What was your view in the '70s on the various communist organisations?

JL: I thought it was the best thing we ever had on the Sydney waterfront, because you would get a true cross-section of people from different groups. And never more so on a Thursday when it was pay day. Where we would get paid, there would be buckets lined up on the wall and one of the boys from each of those parties would be standing beside their bucket, and everybody would throw in. Oh, sometimes a bloke would try and jump the fence and not get involved, but the wharfies would say to him, "Didn't you see the bucket?" We would embarrass him, and he'd come back and throw something in. The average bloke on the waterfront believed he was getting served by all these parties, so he'd put money in each of the buckets. They might put money in the socialist bin *and* the communist bin.

JR: So, you were pleased to have the various socialist organisations there, but you didn't feel inclined to join them yourself?

JL: No, because I didn't believe I could serve two masters. The master that I served was the union. I didn't get involved in the politics in Sydney. I still handed out their pamphlets and things like that. If they came down on the job, and they couldn't stay there for smoko, I would hand out their pamphlets. I used to hand out the material from the Labor Party, the Communist Party, the Socialists and all the rest. Definitely. Because everybody's entitled to know the truth. And because those socialist groups did a lot of good things for the Sydney branch. On the leadership we had two and two: two from the Communist Party and two from the Socialist Party. They might disagree on the politics, but they had to serve the membership so that they would

keep being re-elected. They'd go to stop work meetings and they'd argue about things. But when it came around to a vote, there'd be no saying, "Oh, that mongrel voted this way." They accepted the vote.

Port Kembla

JR: In 1978, you moved to Port Kembla. What motivated that move?

JL: Money. We had an overflow of people on the Sydney waterfront and a shortage in Port Kembla. They were offering transfers. You got a housing loan. You got your furniture moved down. You got travelling time for your kids and for your wife. Before that offer, we used to go down there on mobile transfers. You would go down there for a week and then you'd come back and next week another lot would go down if they wanted to. They volunteered, no one was ever forced. And once you went down there and you saw the money that they were earning, well… And it was a good militant port, Port Kembla. It was a good safe port with the leadership of George Murray, a member of the Communist Party. He died in 1999 after the Patrick dispute. I still keep in touch with a lot of the blokes from my Port Kembla days, blokes like Paul Mara, Jim Keogh, Tony Adcock and Kenny McBride. All of them great people.

JR: Was Port Kembla noticeably different from what you had experienced in Sydney?

JL: There were a lot more people in Sydney, for one. And a lot more socialist parties. Port Kembla was a Communist Party port. The Socialist Party had the Munroes, who were a good militant family, and Joey Deakin, who ended up becoming an official of the Sydney branch.

The SPA probably had about seven or eight members, but the rest of the people supported George Murray and Ted McAlear. Even the Chinese-aligned Communists supported George Murray. And George was CPA.

JR: Did you take up positions in the union there?

JL: Yes, I was a delegate and then I ended up on the branch executive, and I used to relieve as an official. That was an experience. I wasn't very well liked by the boss. I could never see eye to eye with a foreman. I just couldn't, not with anybody who

Jeff Langdon, interviewed by the ABC during the 1998 Patricks dispute
QLD Branch MUA Youtube site:
youtu.be/wzJhRYB19l4?si=AfjsIdk_hrYGw_WW

sacks another person for a minor thing.

When you're an official, you would visit members who had been hospitalised. The worst case I ever did was visit Joe Wilson, one of twins on the Port Kembla waterfront. Joe had a massive heart attack. I went into the hospital two days later to see him. I came back to the office and told Des Wolfslager, who was in the office relieving at the time, that Joe looked terrific. He said, "Don't say that, Jeff. People that look really good after a massive heart attack die a couple of days later." Sure enough, poor old Joe died. That was an eye opener for me.

When I decided to leave Port Kembla [to move to Brisbane], some of the wharfies said, "You've got to stay, Jeff, because you'll be our next branch official." I said, "I never got on the waterfront to be a branch official. I got on the waterfront because I had the chance. And it was the best chance I ever had. So, I took it, but not to be an official."

At the time, I said to my wife, "In Brisbane I'm going to be Joe Blow, the average wharfie." She looked at me and said, "It won't happen." I said, "Yes it will." But the first day I got on the job in Brisbane, the boys elected me as a delegate. I said, "Fellas, come on. We've got other people here with 20 and 30 years of experience." "No," they said, "We've heard of your record from Port Kembla. We want you to be the delegate." And that was the end of me.

Brisbane

JR: You arrived in Brisbane in 1985, which was a pretty heady industrial period in Queensland because the government of Johannes Bjelke Petersen had launched its attack on the Electrical Trades Union in the government-owned electricity distribution sector. Bjelke Petersen sacked 1002 SEQEB linesmen for striking against the introduction of individual, non-

union employment contracts. Tell me about your involvement in that dispute?

JL: As wharfies we gave them more support than parts of their own union did. We took up collections. When I worked at the P&O terminal down at Fisherman's Island, we had members of the Electrical Trades Union who weren't walking off. They looked after the freezer boxes containing meat or fish or whatever. They claimed that if they walked off, management would bring in people from outside and they would lose their jobs. They knew that wasn't true because if the bosses put scabs in, we wouldn't have worked with them.

I also recall the members of the Transport Workers Union who drove the SEQEB trucks. Because their union didn't call them out, they were treated like scabs. These TWU members were being spat on by people saying, "You're a scab." They weren't scabs. I met a couple of them, and they still get a tear in the eye when they remember people spitting at them. They were working as Transport Workers' Union members. The people working on the power lines were the scabs, not the truck drivers.

JR: Did you go to the picket lines and the actions at the depots and so on?

JL: Wherever I could get to them. We didn't walk off every day – we couldn't afford to walk off every day. But the days that we walked off, if there was a meeting on or something, we'd roll up. I never got arrested at the picket lines. Unlike [Bob] Carnegie, who was trying to set a record, I think!

JR: You were elected as a delegate in Brisbane. What other roles did you have in the Branch?

JL: I ran in an election for a position on the wharfies' committee at the P&O terminal. There were 300 people there and 299 voted for me. To this day, people ask, "Jeff, who voted against you?" I tell them, "I did." Because I believe that when you're in an election, you should not have the right to vote for yourself.

Later, I was elected Vigilance Office (VO) and WWF Branch President. I didn't like the way that the VO-President at the time was doing the job. He was a lovely man and a good person, but he wasn't an effective official. At one point I went into the union office to relieve another official when he went on holidays. This VO-President handed me his work mobile phone when the office closed at 4.30. He said to me, "I turn it off at half past four because I'm finished for the day." I said, "You're an elected official. The reason you get paid the wage you receive is because you're available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. There's no overtime. It's built into your wage."

That's one reason I decided to challenge him at the election. Another reason is that he wouldn't come down on the job to see the members unless he had another official with him. He was frightened of the questions we'd ask. When a wharfie went to a stop work meeting, they could ask anything they wanted, and they had a right to an answer, whether the official liked it or not. But the VO-President couldn't answer the questions from the rank and file. So, he would come down with a second bloke, and we would challenge him too. Except it wasn't a challenge, they were simply questions. "Have you heard what's happened in Sydney? Have you heard what happened over at Patrick's job last night?" All these things that the blokes would want to know about. But the VO-President wasn't up to answering. I don't know if he didn't want to, or he been there too long and got stale; whatever. But that's how I ended up getting elected.

JR: Did taking on fulltime union roles change your perspective?

JL: To a degree, but I still hated the boss. When we did the restructuring and we had older foremen who had previously been members of the foremen's union come across to the MUA, I had to change my opinion to a degree. Some didn't represent the members on the job as well as they should have as a foreman; they'd sway across to the boss, but the majority of them did the right thing. So that changed me. Also, when I become a negotiator for the EBAs, I couldn't tell [management] blokes that they were c...ts anymore. You had to be selective in the things you said.

We had a manager down at Hamilton Wharf, a bloke by the name of Greg Nugent. He used to spit in front of wharfies. When I was a TA, a tradesman's assistant, for a short time, he told the blokes that an electric drill from the workshop had gone missing and accused me of taking it. I went to the manager for the tradesman and the workshop, a bloke called Graeme Woods. I told him what had happened. He said, "Take him on using the procedures of the EBA." So, I did. A meeting was called. Nugent said his piece: "I never said this, I never said that." I waited till he finished. Then I said, "Have a look at his lip. It's shaking. It shakes when he tells lies." I gave him a big mouthful. Soon after, I got a letter from the company saying that Jeff Langdon is a good worker, they had never had any trouble with his honesty and all the rest of it.

Six months later, when I went into the union office as a relieving official, I was visiting Hamilton Wharves. Nugent came over to me and said, "Jeff, everything that's happened previously is all forgotten, isn't it?" I said, "You've got to be fucking kidding." The next day, I went to a job at Hamilton. I go up in the crane and find the boys there working without any air conditioning. It was stinking hot. They said, "What are we going to do?" I said, "Wait until one o'clock, when they haven't cancelled your double header, and then complain. Ring me up and I'll come down and tell them that under Marine Orders Part 32, you do not have to work in this crane." Every day after that until I retired, Greg Nugent knew that every ship that came into Hamilton had to be 100%. Not 99% - 100%.

One thing I've got to say that I did, and I'm proud of it, is that I got out all the literature on the Marine Orders Part 32 and put it on the job in every Brisbane terminal. These Orders covered all the minimum safety standards: the ladders, the ship's cranes, air conditioning and all those things. I made sure the membership had the Orders available to read in their lunchrooms. Before that, they were on hand only for the foreman and bosses.

JR: You were in the VO-President position at the time of the amalgamation between the WWF and the Seamen's Union of Australia (SUA). What happened with the position?

JL: After amalgamation we had two Joint Branch Secretaries, and two VOs: me and Bob Carnegie, who came from the SUA side. But I also had the President's position. Bob was VO and I was VO-President. I was the last President in the Federation to hold that title.

1998 Patrick Lockout

JR: The main strategy of the national leadership during the 1998 Patrick dispute was to limit the dispute to the Patrick company, not pull out anyone else, and rely on the courts for victory. At the time, did you agree with that approach?

JL: Yes. Maybe some people didn't think it was right. Quite a few people. But Bob Carnegie, Mick Carr, [Branch Secretary] Col Davies and myself, we went to numerous places where they were training the scabs. Like at Ipswich; they were training and employing scabs with their dogs. So, we knew what was going on in the background. I was getting heaps of calls from people – ex-army, present-day army, people that were

Patrick Lockout, 1998

involved in the trade union movement – telling me that their sons or daughters had been offered jobs to go down to Melbourne and work on the cranes at Webb Dock.

I'd come in every day after I finished my rounds, and I'd say to Col Davies, "I've had a phone call, this phone call, that phone call, and told him what was going on. He said, ring Mick O'Leary, he's been delegated this job to look after it.

Mick was a national official. I rang him and told him, and he said, "Just keep passing all these messages on to me, Jeff." He said, "We believe you, but we've got to keep it close to our chest and not let people from the press and all the rest know." But I was telling the boys on the job, they knew what was going on. If you don't inform the membership what's going on, they don't know the full picture. So we knew it was coming. There's no two ways about it. But we didn't know when.

That's why I was in favour of the strategy, because I knew about the bosses' rotten, filthy plan. They illegally locked us out. It wasn't the money; we wanted our jobs back.

I get very emotional about this. When you see fellow workers getting led out of the amenities room by scabby fucking people with dogs and guards, marching them out of the place…. People say, why do you get so emotional? Well, they're my mates. I get emotional about it because it's

Jeff Langdon (left) & Bob Carnegie blockading the Port of Brisbane, 1998

wrong. You wouldn't have ever thought you'd see something like that, you know, in your life. It was terrible.

JR: There are two ways of viewing that dispute. There was the cost to workers in terms of the subsequent agreement and the loss of jobs and conditions and so on, and then there was the preservation of the union itself. There is a view that the preservation of the union trumped the outcome for the members, because ultimately it was about living to fight another day. What's your view on the outcome?

JL: I still believe we won. We didn't win the way that people thought we did, but our aim was to get back in the gate. No two ways about it. When we did, the Patrick agreement was done down in Sydney. I didn't go down for it. I don't think Col went down for it. It was done by the powers that be. It could have been better, but we had to win that back on the job. If we go back over the years, everything we got we had to struggle for – we got tea, coffee, milk, and sugar and all that because we struggled for it. This struggle – against the lockout – was to see the boys walk back inside the gate, and when they got back inside the gate, then the next struggle began – the terms of employment.

Sydney under Jim Donovan's leadership took a different approach to negotiating the agreement. He didn't give away as much as what we did in Brisbane. We were given the document, and that's what we agreed to. When Davies and I were doing the EBA for Patrick's competitor, P&O, we kept saying all the time, "It's got to be better than the Patrick agreement. We've got to have better conditions, better wages, and then we struggle on again."

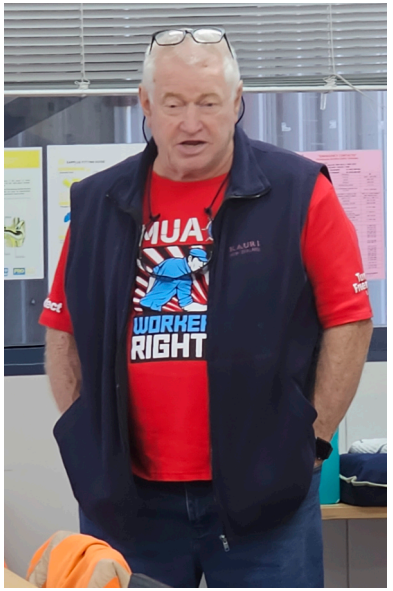
JR: So, the outcome of '98 could have been much better, but that was a result of the failure of the subsequent struggle. It wasn't a result of the outcome of the lockout itself. Is that what you're saying?

JL: Too much was given away. But we still won. I know it's a hard thing to say, but to see those blokes that were forced out of the job walk back through that gate was worth it. I can only speak about Brisbane. Everybody who wanted to go back to work went back to work, and those who didn't want to go back to work went out of the industry with a good payout. It mightn't sound right, but it's the way it was. They said that they wanted to get rid of 30 or 40 delegates because they were militants. Well, they never got rid of any delegates in Brisbane.

After 1998

JL: I walked out of that joint in 1999 over a lie and a dispute with Mick Carr. The bloke who took over from me, Trevor Munday, said, "We will do the same as what you did, Jeff. We'll be down on the job every day, we'll talk to the members, we'll work to replace all these casual positions," and all the rest of it. Today, there are about seven different varieties of casuals. It's like Heinz, 57 varieties.

There was an argument on the wharf the other week. Two young blokes were accused of doing something which they didn't do, and [then Assistant Branch Secretary] Paul Petersen, to his great credit, argued and argued the case. So, they went to the [Fair Work] Commission. The company came along to the two blokes and said, "We'll never end this case, but we're willing to pay you out." They weren't guilty of anything, but it was easy for the company to settle because they were casuals. They should never have been casuals; they should have had permanency.



Jeff Langdon addressing Brisbane wharfies, 2023

After 1998 the union didn't struggle hard enough.

That hasn't changed. Now, within the union, people are being parachuted into positions. We've got more people in the federal MUA office than we've ever had. They've all been appointed to those positions by [General Secretary] Paddy Crumlin. Not elected. When the four-yearly elections come around, every one of those people start 50 per cent better off than the people who might want to stand against them. They get free publicity in the union journal. They go around all the ports electioneering but claim it's not electioneering. Poor Joe Blow, who's working his guts out on the job and wants to run for a position, doesn't have a chance. He doesn't even get the members' email addresses or anything like that until two months before the election. Sorry, that's not right. So, I believe things are different now. The people in these positions will never challenge Paddy Crumlin, because he put them there.

JR: After you left your job with the MUA, you continued to take an active interest in the union. For years you have regularly attended the monthly branch meetings in Brisbane as a retired member. Why have you stayed involved?

JL: I helped build that union, and I am not about to sit back and see it torn down.

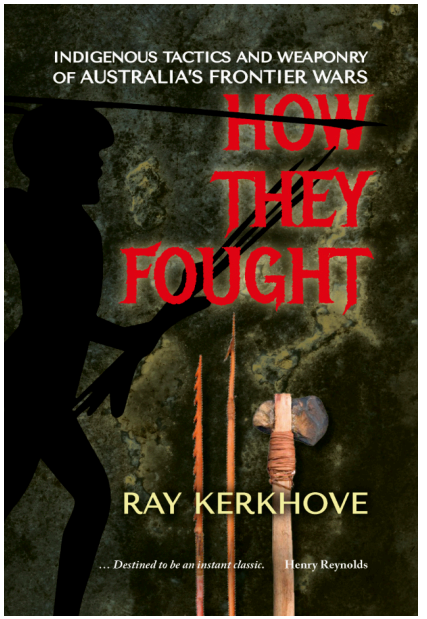
Jeff Rickertt is an historian and activist who recently retired from a career as a librarian.
He is a former BLHA President and editor of this journal. Jeff co-edited *Radical Brisbane: An Unruly History*, and authored *The Conscientious Communist: Ernie Lane and the Rise of Australian Socialism.*

Book Reviews

The Work of Warriors

Lesley Synge

How They Fought: Indigenous Tactics and Weaponry of Australian Frontier Wars
by Ray Kerkhove
Boolarong Press (2023)



In *How They Fought*, Ray Kerkhove surveys the methods of the Aboriginal resistance in the Australian Frontier Wars through the lens of military history. Within a global context of Indigenous responses to European colonization, he presents his findings from across the nation, with a plentitude of examples from colonial Queensland.

Kerkhove mines original, mostly nineteenth century material for evidence of actions he identifies as battles, ambushes, sieges, decoys, defenses and training. He finds a wealth of evidence of sophisticated warfare, particularly in white settler journals, letters, and newspaper reports.

Traditionally, the Ancestors inspired heroism and tribes made fighting prowess central to qualifying for adulthood (pp.68–70). In the Springsure area for example, older and more experienced men trained the youth.

When the yet-to-be-initiated young fellas were proficient with mock weaponry, they faced the real thing with only shields to deflect boomerangs, nulla, daggers and spears (p.66).

Kerkhove poignantly charts the transition from intertribal conflict to the bigger fight against the European invasion. In traditional times if there was a grievance, the tribe sent a message to another tribe by smoke. A messenger might follow up with a challenge, then the terms were agreed upon prior to an open battle. There was often more venting than violence, a strategy of verbal threats and boasts. In time, they employed the tactic against white settlers.

'Apart from [in] Tasmania,' writes Kerkhove:

> First Nations forces were often large … regularly fielding the equivalent of a military company (80 – 250 men) or even a battalion (300 – 1,000 people)…the Hornet Bank massacre [in Central Queensland] involved at least 100 warriors (p.20).

The Kalkadoons in the state's northwest mustered something like 1,000 warriors. Some 1,500 to 3,500 warriors were called upon by Jagera warriors Moppy and his son Multuggerah when they led the action to avenge killings on Kilcoy and Cressbrook pastoral stations in the 1840s (p.21). Smoke signals probably rounded up support from more distant tribes in both instances (p.20).

When the resistance concluded that open pitched battles didn't work—bullets triumphed over shields—guerrilla tactics came to the fore. Settlers often lived with dread, fatigued from continual vigilance (p.164). Squatters attempting to establish pastoral stations in Central Queensland found that spearmen blocked their advance 'almost every day for months'(p.25). When death tolls of isolated shepherds, travellers, transients, and miners mounted, the psychological impact was considerable. When settlers made chase on horseback, they often found that the warriors had vanished, as if into thin air (p.22).

One defensive strategy—in common across the colonies—was to remove firearms from whites. The warriors who attacked Cullin-la Ringo and Hornet Bank stations piled up arms and burnt them and emptied cannisters of ammunition (pp.233, 223, 253, 256).

When Aboriginal groups acquired guns, they quickly became expert marksmen. Crooked-toed Jimmy, one of the leaders of the Hornet Bank and Cullin-la-Ringo massacres, was known as a good shot who always carried a loaded gun (p.259). There are instances of manufacture of ammunition. Trooper Nicky Nicky in Far North Queensland deserted from the Native Mounted Police Force to led a resistance movement. He melted down the lead lining of tea chests to make his own bullets (p.261).

Innovation was a feature of resistance to try to overcome the disadvantage of stone weaponry. Warriors repurposed the iron that sheep shears were made of and used telegraph wire to make spearheads. Spears caused most settler deaths (p.218).

Strategies like lighting fires and economic sabotage had the objective of annoying settlers into 'quitting their holdings' (p.127). First Nations people sometimes stole entire flocks of sheep and even took over entire stations (p120). Warriors asked, With our land stolen by people too greedy to share, why not take? (p.169)

'First Nations fighters knew their landscapes' says Kerkhove, and used hills and other landforms for protection (p.202). For example, after retreating to a hill they might roll down rocks and boulders. They had hidden pathways that led to hideouts, caves, waterholes, and rivers (p.281).

In probing the similarities and differences involved in the American subjugation of its native peoples, Kerkhove establishes a rewarding line of inquiry. To better interrogate the Australian Frontier Wars, why not think in terms of braves? Or totemic warrior lodges? Or confederacies (inter-tribal alliances)? To illustrate how confederacies might have played a role in Australia, Kerkhove reminds us that 'Long-distance trade, communication, and associated inter-tribal gatherings could well have provided the necessary means' for military alliances. The cultural Bunya Festival held in the Bunya Mountains south of Kingaroy, for example, relied on messaging networks that spanned over 1,000 kilometres and roughly corresponded to the fighting Mountain Tribes Alliance (p.53).

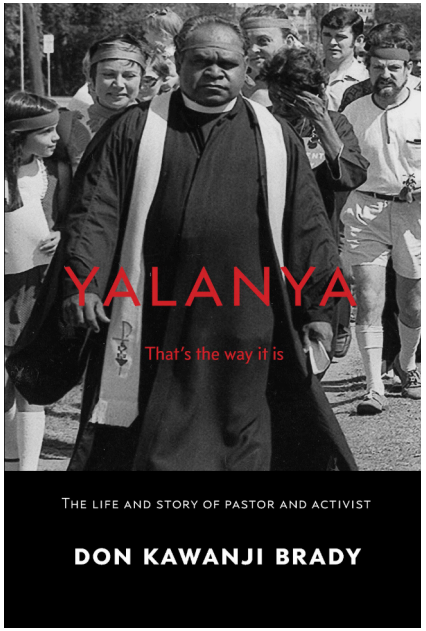
In the end, shields were no match for metal bullets. Despite their valour, First Nations experienced military defeat.

How They Fought boldly opens up the conversation about the

Australian Frontier Wars and widens the knowledge base about the character of Aboriginal resistance. Some experts in related fields such as anthropology are more cautious about drawing the conclusions Kerkhove does, and some label his work too controversial. I would have liked a more conscious effort of asking *what about the women*? to broaden the conversation further and to assemble the scattered mentions of their participation into something more holistic.

The depth of the research is revealed in its extensive use of endnotes, and the impressive bibliography. Gripping enough to read cover-to-cover, it contains a riveting collection of visual evidence: photographs, sketches, maps, and statistics in a generous sprinkling of tables.

Kerkhove's approach rewrites Australian military history and adds weight to the call by Marcia Langton and other activists that the Australian War Memorial in Canberra acknowledge the Australian Frontier Wars as the most significant wars ever fought by Australians. A ground-breaking work.



Yalanya. That's the way it is: The Life and Story of Pastor and Activist Don Kawanji Brady

by Graham Brady et al.

Jawiyabba Warra (2024)

The defeat of the Aboriginal resistance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid down the challenges for the twentieth century. The white settler victory led to the consequent strategy of segregating Aborigines – the vanquished – in reserves. An activist to emerge from one of these reserves was Pastor Don Brady (1927–1984).

In common with a generation of 1970s Brisbane activists radicalized on the University of Queensland campus, I encountered Brady personally. The most memorable occasion was on Minjerribah-Stradbroke Island. Kath Walker (later Oodgeroo Noonuccal, 1920–1993) often invited me to help her with looking after groups of Aboriginal children to whom she was teaching culture on her 'Moongalba' property. Don Brady and his large family were far more frequent visitors than I was, but we happened to be on the island on the same weekend sometime in the early 1970s. We ate fish stew together and gathered around the campfire under the stars as Vincent, one of the 'Brisbane Brady bunch', strummed a guitar and led the singing.

It awes me to write that I sat around a campfire with Kath Walker and Don Brady! They are now recognised as giants in the struggle for dignity for Aboriginal people, not only in our shared home state of Queensland, but nationally. It remains my undeserved good fortune to have once been in their presence. They were so gracious and hospitable to us young students when the reality – as this biography shows – was that each was exhausted by Brisbane politics,

Don and Aileen Brady
c/o https://www.wmq.org.au/donbrady#about

Kath by political organisations and Don by church politics – the Methodist Church (later Uniting Church of Australia) had expelled him from his position as minister of the Leichhardt Street Methodist Church in Spring Hill.

It must be said that Wesley Mission Australia has swung its support behind this book to right the wrongs of September 1972. Uniting Church historians Thom Blake and Noel Preston have joined forces with Brady descendants to write the biography collectively and the church has funded publication. A real asset to the biography is Thom Blakes's deep understanding of the Queensland reserve system gained from writing *A Dumping Ground: a history of the Cherbourg Aboriginal Settlement* (2001; 2023).

Don Brady was born on Palm Island Reserve off the coast of Townsville to a father who had been removed from Western Yalanji traditional lands around the Palmer River in Cape York in Far North Queensland, and a Pitta Pitta mother from Boulia in western Queensland. A keen churchgoer, he left Palm Island to train as a missionary for Aboriginal Inland Mission (AIM) in 1943 at 20. The Methodist Church later recruited him.

In 1972, exhausted by the struggle to minister to the poorest people in Brisbane and gutted by his sacking, Brady returned temporarily to Palm Island in his mid-40s. 'Jesus Christ is a coloured man…in whom I really trust' he said at the time (p.131).

The sacking also meant the loss of his church-provided home at 57 Warmington Street Paddington, a high-set Queenslander that he'd turned into a refuge for the hungry, displaced and homeless, there being no government services for blackfellas at the time.

Strangely enough, it was in this inner-city Brisbane neighbourhood of Paddington around late 1968 when I first encountered Pastor Don Brady. I was a teenager on a visit to my great-aunt who ran a corner store on Latrobe Terrace to support herself. I served the Aboriginal man who needed to buy some items 'on tick', groceries he was probably taking home for his wife Aileen (a descendant of Kullilli, Batjala and Melanesian people who'd been removed to Barambah-Cherbourg Reserve, and a staunch Christian herself) to turn into a meal for the many they sheltered and fed. Aileen (1927–2008) always gave 'immeasurable support' (p.159).

'That's Pastor Don Brady,' said my aunt, an avid reader of *The Courier-Mail*, the daily newspaper, indicating he was someone I should take note of.

That encounter must have been just before he travelled to New Zealand and the United States in 1969 on a Churchill Fellowship. America was 'a turning point.' Treated as a brother on a Sioux Indian Reservation, he was gifted a chief's headdress. He realized that his tireless efforts to feed and accommodate his people would never be enough. Aboriginal people needed self-determination – a political solution (p.72). He adopted his tribal name of Kawanji – as Kath Walker similarly adopted Oodgeroo Noonuccal in 1988 – and advocated for the revival of culture. 'You've gotta remember your culture, your dance, your language'(p.157).

In the next few years, the man the papers dubbed 'the punching pastor' was everywhere.

He moved in circles that few white Brisbane students even dreamed about and his fame as a black activist went international. In 1973 American beat poet Allen Ginsberg asked to meet him. When the Rolling Stones toured, Mick Jagger invited Don Brady to play didgeridoo for him in his suite in the Park Royal Hotel (pp.129-30).

What really mattered to Don Brady was justice for Aboriginal people. ASIO began monitoring him in 1970 when after a visit to Palm Island and back on the mainland in Townsville, he publicly spat on, then burnt, a copy of 'the Act', the repressive *Aboriginals Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act 1897* legislation that legitimized oppressive segregationist policies such as the reserve system. It was a Biblical scene like the rage of Jesus at the money lenders in the temple. He lived to see the legislation abolished in 1982 after a broad 'Smash the Act' campaign.

When white Australia celebrated the bicentenary of Captain Cook's claim of what he called New South Wales for George III with a visit by Queen Elizabeth II the same year, Brady added a red headband to his black church robes and led a Mourning March to the Spring Hill Methodist Church where he preached. 'The headband represented the remembrance of the lost Aboriginal lives and the blood spilled in the undeclared war that spanned 200 years' (p.86). A photograph of him leading this march – a stocky, determined figure – graces the cover of the biography.

Fellow-activist Kath Walker stood on the church steps before the crowd and performed poetry and a representative of the Jewish community laid a wreath with a note that read:

> My great sympathy…you have as little reason to rejoice at Cook's discovery of your land as the Jewish people have to celebrate the birth of Adolph Hitler (p.90).

In December 1971, Nazis firebombed the family car parked outside their home.

His association with Kath Walker's son Denis, a highly articulate activist who founded the Black Panthers Party in January 1972 and whose rhetoric became increasingly bellicose, guaranteed continued surveillance by Nazis and ASIO alike. With constant newspaper stories, the church grew increasingly nervous about their pastor's radical profile, and matters came to a head, as mentioned, in September 1972.

The above summary of Kawanji's enormously influential life is a taste of the hitherto submerged history that the biography uncovers, particularly for the generation of activists who encountered Kawanji personally when challenging Queensland racism. He wasn't, for example, mentioned in the biography, *Oodgeroo*, by Kathie Cochrane (1994) despite their political partnership in the 1970s. *Yalanya* is measured, readable and informative, with plenty of oral histories and illustrations. Its joint authorship is an excellent example of collaboration between whitefellas and blackfellas.

For people like myself with a personal involvement in Queensland political life, reading the biography of Pastor Don Brady gives something like closure – it's as if the radical history we experienced in-the-making falls more completely into place. *Yalanya* is a much-needed study of the life of the man called 'the Martin Luther King of the Aboriginal race', and ensures that his legacy to the state and the nation is not forgotten.

Lesley Synge lives in Brisbane/ Meanjin. She is the co-author of the life story, *Wharfie*, and an award-winning writer of Central Queensland history. She is also the author of three poetry collections, two novels and many reviews. She has been researching the role of Aboriginal workers on a Queensland government horse stud in the Central Highlands since 2021.

Knocking the Top Off: A People's History of Alcohol in Australia

Ed. Alex Ettling & Iain McIntyre

Melbourne: Interventions Inc., Trades Hall (2023)

Reviewed by **David Faber**

Here finally is a book about the place in radical, progressive and labour annals of the nation, of the risky and rewarding practice of social drinking, from the thoughtful to the ebullient and back again. The editors' scintillating and sober introduction folds the particular details emphasised by contributors into the themes of the book and Australian socioeconomic and cultural history. This excellent and needful social history explores new insights into popular political culture, of organising and mobilising the Australian working class. It employs the grass roots perspective of social and labour history from below, long well regarded by the Labour History sub-discipline in this country and internationally. The yeoman editors are major contributors, and cast a wide net amongst collaborators, many themselves makers of this history. Alcohol as a socialising agent has bulked large in the history of socioeconomic and cultural agency in this country, being a well tried and tested social lubricant at the conception of so many cutting-edge antipodean ideas. This work expands the reach of democratic social and labour history, forging new perspectives in national critical thought and drinking, whether wowsers admit it or not. It is labour and social history bottled and pickled.

Etterling and McIntyre introduce the collection with scientific good humour. There can be no doubt of the socioeconomic centrality of alcoholic beverages in Australian life, as fulsomely demonstrated in this consummate collection. From the nefarious subversion from above of the Rum Corp to the traditional scourge of alcoholism, intoxicating brews and liquors have soothed the fatigue of labour and the broiling impact of the sun in these southern climes. The public house has been the people's social retreat and living room, resorted to by the hard-working petty-bourgeoisie and labouring workers alike. In pub meeting rooms many an association has been born and conducted its organisational life decade after decade, if fortune favoured. In these venues, lubricated by drink, social, political and industrial networks

have been formed. Political and artistic endeavour have long mixed with drink. As editors Ettling and McIntyre emphasise, socioeconomic factors and alcohol production and consumption have dialectically shaped the country since 1788. The importation from the United Kingdom of the evangelical Temperance movement in the 19th century, contributed to a wide and relatively progressive range of causes, from working hours to social control [although the Women's Christian Temperance Union was to back Conscription in 1916 and 1917, even advising sisters to withhold their kisses from men of military age who did not volunteer for the front]. This is but one example of the political consequences of drinking, predating the recent 2021-2 Summer of Fire, when the fortunes of the delinquent Tory Prime Minister, `Scotty from Marketing', slumped amongst the people, given his sipping cocktails overseas when he should have been at home supporting firefighters with leadership and restorative beer. The impact of drinking on the political and social agenda associated with cultural and socioeconomic affairs is well canvassed, including the restriction of access to alcohol and related venues of First Nations imbibers, the poor and destitute and women, in some cases into the present day.

The particular arguments begin at the beginning with the convict's balm, grog. The informed analysis of Michael Quinlan and Hamish Maxwell-Stewart, records primarily the traumatic experience of convict

labourers in that infamous place of secondary punishment, Van Diemen's Land. Its global ill repute was so notorious that the island gentry through its parliament had to change its name in 1854, after the closure of the transportation era, so as not to discourage further free settlement by cashed up immigrants. Many vandemonian convicts took to the bottle, despite severe legal sanctions. The statistics that settle key points of historiographical controversy and perspective are generated by the author's pioneering digital historical research methods, which have borne important early fruit in their essay for this collection `Grog for Me'. As Etterling gleefully points out, a few cheeky Socialists were in the pub early, amiably and artfully pioneering solidarity. The interclass progressives who formed the federation of Australian Labour parties, the oldest political organisation in the country, were not the last political formation to avail themselves of the popular allure of the front bar.

Being of vandemonian origin myself, I can only endorse the editors' critical celebration of the brief, alcohol-infused, bushranging career of that fair island's Mancusian convict hero, Matthew Brady. Brady was of the Manchester working poor, and his rebellion against authority was probably initially occasioned by witnessing the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 and the following year by poverty induced by a capitalist bust. Brady was transported for seven years for food theft. He characteristically shared his ill-gotten sustenance with two women. Brady arrived in chains in Van Diemen's Land in December 1820. He repeatedly resisted the penal colonial disciplinary code, for which he had little if any respect. Brady broke out of the notorious Macquarie Harbour Penal Station on the inhospitable West Coast of the island in 1824. He did so spectacularly by sailing a whaling boat and convict crew through the narrow, treacherous channel known tellingly to this day as Hell's Gates. He had no intention of longer being worked for profit, up to his waist in water, extracting that prime naval timber, the commercially valuable Huon pine. At large on the island with a party of sometimes over a dozen escaped convicts, Brady demonstrated the instincts of a capable guerrilla leader. He monitored the parties of troopers sent after him from Hobarton by their dust-cloud from the elevation still known as Brady's Lookout. As a commander of outlaws, he benefitted from convict adulation and feared convict susceptibility to reward and pardon for betrayal. Unable as a European to live off the

bush, he led his men in homestead raids. Distributing supplies and grog to his followers increased his prestige, not to mention inhibited `right-minded' pursuers. His mercy to convict servants, especially women, moderated the risk of betrayal. Captured in a firefight in the bush in 1826, his death cell in Old Hobart Gaol was said to have been knee deep in flowers from female admirers, not all of them convicts. Considered a gentleman in his conduct, he died game, aged 27.

It has been pointed out that the labour movement needs not only sobering accounts of the hard yakka of struggle, but also celebration from time to time of encouraging little victories. Phoebe Kelloway recounts the fair success in Adelaide of West End Brewery workers, who stood together to improve their redundancy package in 2021.

One of the most substantial contributions is by well-known journalism academic Wendy Bacon. Her account of `critical drinking' is an important celebration of the Sydney Push and its Andersonian anarchic inspiration at the University of Sydney. It leaves the reader hankering for more, for a where-are-they-now sequel for balance and completion. But that is another story.

These sample summaries must suffice in place of a complete review of the excellent and extensive table of contents. With innovative books like this being published by the Melbourne house Interventions, labour and social history is distributed amongst the reading public, because it is more interesting than most fiction.

While there is no index proper as such, the table of contents functions like one, particularly given the well-focussed brevity of so many of the essay articles. A further reading section, near the end of this 501-page tome, complements this device with lists of primary and secondary sources, handily laid out relative to each chapter.

Dr David Faber is currently Adjunct Research Fellow in the College of Humanities, Arts & Social Sciences at Flinders University. He is also the President of the Labour History Society South Australia.

Obituaries

Bill Hayden

23/1/1933-21/10/2023

The Bill I Knew

Di Fingleton

Bill Hayden's death in October 2023 was the subject of many laudatory tributes about his life as a Member of Parliament, Minister, Treasurer, a Leader of the ALP Opposition, a Minister for Foreign Affairs and, eventually Governor-General of Australia – not bad for a working- class boy from Highgate Hill, Brisbane. Paul Keating's eulogy at Bill's funeral was outstanding in its reminiscences on Bill's achievements throughout his life.

Bill Hayden (1971)

Public Domain, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=114006334

Anyone following politics at the time – the lead up to the Whitlam Labor Government (I prefer the old spelling but there we are) – is aware of Bill's momentous contributions to the reform elements of that short-lived but notable government. Two of Bill's most remarkable achievements – Medibank and the Supporting Parent's Allowance – remain in force today but little is known about the struggle to introduce the former. Keating, in his Hayden Oration in 2017, said, about the introduction of Medibank. "Not everyone will know or appreciate the virulent opposition he met from the medical profession or the fact that Gough himself thought he and Bill might have to, in the end, give up". Bill never gave up and he pursued one of the most spectacular reforms in Australian political history by introducing a universal health policy for all Australians. The fact that "Medicare" is constantly and

still referred to as the baby of a Hawke-led government and not based on Medibank, is both erroneous and unfair and should stop.

Whitlam was heard to say that he should have had Bill as his Treasurer in the first place. He did reach this position in 1975, only a few months before his dismissal.

Bill, as Leader of the Opposition after Whitlam and leading up to the 1983 election, worked tirelessly, with talented members of his Shadow Cabinet, to lay down a set of policies which would mean Labor could win that election. We know Bill also famously said – "a drover's dog" could win, with those policies. Having to surrender the leadership was another slap in the face for Bill and he was angry, very angry. The Caucus of the time preferred charisma in the person of Bob Hawke, to the creative and experienced politician that Bill was.

Keating spoke of this time, saying - "This period of Bill's leadership was hugely successful for the Labor party. Not a lot of Labor leaders have this much success and can turn a party around so rapidly and quickly, but he was hugely successful as Labor leader, rebuilding the Labor party as a parliamentary force and competent opposition … enabling it to represent itself as a credible, alternative government".

However, Bill remained part of the team in the Hawke government and Keating at the funeral pointed out that, in the role of Minister for Foreign Affairs throughout the 1980s Cold War era, Hayden "sought to bury the erroneous notion" that the country was totally dependent on the Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty. Bill was adamant that Australia presenting as a sycophant or supplicant would carry unacceptable risks where our interests would simply be subsumed by Washington. Is it possible that Bill, being relieved of the need to be a Leader having to occupy the centre of politics, could revert to some of his thinking when he was more left wing oriented?

Our current Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, spoke, in the Condolence Session for Bill on 28 November 2023, in the presence of Bill's wife, Dallas, and their children saying that Bill "gave the ALP the chance of a future. Patiently, humbly, courageously, he gave Labor fresh relevance and a new focus… Bill Hayden was the fulcrum on which the Labor Party's fortunes turned for the better. His leadership laid the foundation for the social and economic reforms that created three decades of consecutive economic growth and delivered Australia a new era in education, foreign affairs, environment policy and, of course, universal health care". Bill would love to have heard that. Albanese resembles Bill in some ways, particularly his determination to never forget where he came from and, indeed, how his single mother benefited from the Supporting Parent's Benefit, introduced by Bill.

Jim Chalmers, the current Treasurer, at the same Condolences Sitting, spoke of how Bill was "somehow humble and historic at the same time and that was really his genius – to take what he gleaned from real people in real communities like the ones he and other Queensland Labor Members represent and translate that into real and lasting change here at home but also around the world".

I agree with all of these tributes to, and reminiscences of, Bill Hayden and it was, indeed, one of the privileges of my life to have worked for him and to have remained his friend for life. I joined Bill's staff midway through 1974, approximately halfway through the Whitlam Labor Government's term. It was just at the time that Medibank was coming into effect, but I was aware of the tremendous amount of work that had gone into that particular social reform. I was in total awe of government, parliament, and personalities like Gough and some of his Ministers. My first vote was in the 1972 election – I was one of those young people who came back to Australia that year, because it was "Time"! I have been a die-hard supporter of the ALP ever since. I could hardly not have been, due to the influence of my father – a unionist and wharfie for many years.

I came to Bill's staff with good secretarial skills, and he appreciated that I could take shorthand. This was handy for him, including when we flew back and forth from Brisbane to Canberra, during Sitting weeks and he could dictate as we went. I found the whole experience fascinating. When we heard that Gough was "on fire" during Question Time, we would hurry to the Chamber to hear what was, of course, history in the making. Bill was not one of the great orators nor one of the great wits, but he was one of the hardest working and productive ministers at the time. He was a great boss – hard-working and fair and that was what he expected of us. We were one of the busiest and happiest

Bill Hayden at the Aldermaston Peace March, Brisbane, 1965
Grahame Garner Collection, UQ Fryer Library F3400, Folder 6, item 1

offices in the old Parliament House and this attracted other ministers and members of Parliament to visit.

It was magic to experience an interchange, like the following one between Gough and Bill, for instance. One day Gough needed to talk to him urgently, so he came into our office. Bill had just been made Treasurer and was concerned about the security of various files in his office. He was about to go to lunch and had locked up his office when Gough arrived. Bill couldn't open the door with his keys, as he was a bit flustered. Gough immediately said "Gee, Bill – you need an office co-ordinator", referring to the title of, Junie Morosi the very controversial Senior Private Secretary to the previous Treasurer, Jim Cairns. It was so typical of Gough's wit and the story was much appreciated by other staffers in the Non- Members Bar that evening.

After the dismissal, as I had lost my job on Bill's ministerial staff on the day of the dismissal, I remained on his staff at the electorate office in Ipswich. I remained a member of the Labor Party, as I had been since before the 1972 election, but I was beginning to lean to the left unlike Bill, who remained in the Centre. This was to cause a split between the two of us, which I totally understood. In any case, I was heading towards the idea of studying to be a lawyer. Bill was right behind me on this, although he had wanted me to work towards becoming a Labor politician. However, I was most attracted to

two of the great initiatives of the Whitlam Government, of the establishment of Legal Aid Offices and Community Legal Centres. I was thrilled to eventually work in both of those areas, as a lawyer.

My friendship with Bill remained constant and fruitful and I enjoyed the companionship of Dallas and his growing family over the years. It survived even my telling him and Dallas at a Labor conference, that he should not accept the position of Governor-General, only to be asked to his swearing-in and, later, a personal visit to Yarralumla. Bill and Dallas supported me through the greatest challenge of my life, being wrongly charged, as Chief Magistrate of Queensland, with criminal offences and going to jail – something so horrendous in my life. They, among others, were there for me – at court and visiting me in prison. Bill understood what it was like to be suddenly tumbled from a pedestal, despite so much hard work on your behalf to get there!

Bill loved classical music and eastern art and would have myself or another secretary call the ABC sometimes, to find out the name of a piece of music he had heard on radio that morning. He loved his family – Dallas and his three surviving children. He and Dallas suffered the heartbreak of the death of one of their children, Mikhaela, when she was a small girl. Bill told me that that was the time when he lost his Catholic faith, but he was to renew that faith in his late age. Not all his friends, like me, understood this late change but supported him, as he had supported us, many times. I have lost, like so many others, a dear friend and often say that Bill Hayden was the best Prime Minister we never had. I concur with Paul Keating when he said, at Bill's funeral – "We may see the likes of Bill Hayden again, but I doubt it."

Di Fingleton is a former Chief Magistrate of Queensland. Born and educated in Brisbane, she worked as a secretary from 1964-1979. She completed her BA and LLB at the University of Queensland in 1983 and was admitted as a Solicitor in 1984. She worked in private practice and then as Legal Co-ordinator of Caxton Street Legal Service from 1985-1989. Co-founder of the Women's Legal Service, she also served on management commitees of other community legal services.
Between 1991 & 1995 she worked in the Women's Policy unit in the Office Cabinet under the ALP Goss Government and the Consumers Affairs Department.
She was appointed as a Magistrate in 1995, became a Deputy Chief Magistrate in 1999 and was appointed Chief Magistrate in 2000. She resigned as a Magistrate in 2010. She is married to John McGrath, a retired Solicitor.

Manfred Douglas Cross

12/08/1929-30/01/2024

Brian Stephenson

Though he was never a minister, Manfred Douglas Cross was everything a model parliamentarian should be. His engaging but thoughtful and reflective personality, his wide range of interests and experience, earned both inside the Federal Parliament and out, his prodigious memory and his unquestioned integrity would have stood him in good stead no matter what portfolio he filled. That he was never selected for a Cabinet post says much more about Cabinet selection's dependence on factional considerations rather than it does for the qualities of this remarkable but modest man.

Manfred Cross 1971
National Archives of Australia A1200 L96436

Manfred Douglas Cross was born in Brisbane on 12 August 1929, son of Manfred Cross, telegraph operator, and Mary McLennan, a dressmaker. He was educated at Rainworth State School, and then at Brisbane State High School. Involved in scouting from an early age, he served as a young Scout Aide-de-Camp to the Governor, Sir Leslie Wilson, thus freeing up an adult person to serve in the armed forces.

In 1946 he became a member of the Rainworth branch of the Australian Labor Party, a branch that his father had helped to found. He had vivid memories of the Labor party in Queensland from the time of Ned Hanlon, who was Premier from 1946 to 1952 and shared them freely, most significantly with the Queensland Speaks project.

During most of the 1950s he was a Commonwealth public servant, but he found time for party activity as well. His friend Lee Duffield recalled how he travelled around the state during a bitter and divisive time for the party, the 1957 split that was to keep Labor out of office in Queensland for a gruelling thirty-two years. Manfred, ever calm, patient and respectful, but firm, spent many evenings 'attending wild meetings and brokering local settlements' as he tried to keep the party together, but his efforts and those of so many others were in vain. While the rough-and-tumble conflict was foreign to his nature, Duffield opined that Manfred 'quietly relished' the spectacle.

In 1961 Manfred entered Federal Parliament as the member for Brisbane, taking over from veteran ALP member George Lawson, whose biography Manfred would later write in an article for the *Royal Historical Society of Queensland Journal* and also the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

The theme of his first speech in Parliament was a familiar one, the Federal government's neglect of Queensland, and the failure to develop Queensland as well as the other northern regions of Australia. He also wondered – rhetorically - how the conservative Liberal-Country Party government could condemn socialism after the success of the still in progress Snowy Mountains Scheme, the Australian National University and the Commonwealth Bank, noting that 'public enterprise has a major role in creating opportunities for development.'

Headline opportunities for Opposition backbenchers are few and Manfred was no exception to the rule. But he did receive unexpected accolades in August 1964 when he took up the cudgels over an issue that affected approximately half of the voting population – the poor quality of nylon stockings then available. Manfred arranged for a quantity of disused stockings to be sent to Prime Minister R G Menzies, prompting the Canberra Times of 25 August to say of him that 'the Queensland women's champion of nylon quality could be the biggest vote-winner Australian Labor has produced since Ben Chifley died.'

A couple of days later, a Liberal backbencher, Malcolm Mackay, asked Menzies about the stockings, which had been sent to the PM by 'a certain cross parliamentarian.' Menzies replied that his wife had been complaining about stocking quality for years, but gave no indication that he intended following up the problem.

There is evidence in the election results that Manfred was quietly cementing his position as a popular, albeit quiet achiever in his Brisbane seat. In the 1966 election, fought against the background of a strong economy and enthusiastic support for the Vietnam War, the swing against Labor was 5.49 percent, but Manfred only suffered a swing of 1.5 percent against him. In 1969, when there was a massive swing of 6.98 percent to Labor, Manfred even topped that with a

7.6 percent swing to himself. Clearly, the Federal member for Brisbane was doing something right.

In Opposition Manfred served on the House of Representatives Standing Committee for the Parliamentary Library, a very fitting niche for a bibliophile, and also on the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, in both cases from 1967. When Labor under Gough Whitlam finally won government in 1972 after twenty-three years in Opposition, it was widely expected, even understood, that Manfred would be awarded the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs. Lee Duffield recalled how Manfred had created and seen through a policy on Aboriginal Australians through a series of party conferences. According to political writer Wallace Brown in the *Courier-Mail* of 20 October 1973, Whitlam wanted Manfred in the portfolio, but it was given to another member. Two others would hold the portfolio in the less than three years that the Whitlam government was in power.

Gough Whitlam once said that recessions were hard on incumbent governments, particularly reform governments. Although both Manfred and the Whitlam government survived the double dissolution election of 1974 by late 1975, the issues of rampant inflation, higher unemployment than any time since the Depression and the discontent of many with the rapidity and indeed the nature of government-wrought social changes had turned the tide well and truly against Labor. When the Senate, recently 'graced' by the addition of a couple of unconventionally placed appointees, had the numbers to decline Supply, the political deadlock was solved in the Liberal-Country Party's favour when a compliant, complacent and complaisant Governor-General dismissed the Whitlam government and appointed a caretaker Coalition government in its place.

Even a long-serving and personally popular member such as Manfred Cross was not immune to the prevailing political winds, and in the 1975 election he lost to a Liberal. The National Party also ran in Manfred's seat that year, and it is likely that the Liberal candidate got most of the preferences from the twelve percent who supported them in the Brisbane electorate. With this in consideration, it is a tribute, though a cold comfort one, that he only suffered a 3.9% swing compared to the 6.46% against Labor nationwide. Manfred tried in 1977 to win back his old seat, but was unsuccessful.

Manfred would return to Parliament in October 1980, though he would be in Opposition for another three years. But even before his return, his conciliatory skills would be needed in negotiations during an internecine

Manfred Cross addresses a group in Barcaldine for Barcaldine's Centenary Strike Celebrations, 1991
Uuniversity of Queensland Fryer Library F3400, Folder 6, item 1

struggle between the incumbent – 'Old Guard' – of the Labor Party, dominated by aging and conservative trade union leaders in Queensland, and the party members associated with attempts to reform the party from within, the 'New Guard', or the Reform Group, started by Peter Beattie and the late Dr Denis Murphy and supported by many others, including Manfred. The then ALP Federal leader, Bill Hayden, supported Federal intervention into the troubled state branch of the party and the courts decided in early 1981 that intervention was legal. Manfred served as state secretary for the new look party administration.

Manfred's friend, Bill Hayden, who had entered Parliament with him in the same year, 1961, was replaced as party leader by Bob Hawke in February 1983, a few weeks before Hawke took Labor to victory in the 5 March 1983 Federal election. Manfred had supported Hayden in the leadership challenge so there was little chance that he would be offered a portfolio in the incoming government, and he was not, but continued to serve his constituents well.

By the time he retired from Parliament in 1990, Manfred had served on several committees, including two terms on the Aboriginal Affairs committee, the first time as chair. He did not make a valedictory speech as such, but on 26 May 1988 he paid tribute to the many parliamentarians on both sides of the house with whom he had served. Gough Whitlam, Bill Hayden, Arthur Calwell, Kim Beazley Senior, Frank Crean and

Fred Daly from his own side were mentioned, as were Sir Robert Menzies (who was singled out for his encouragement of backbenchers, even those on the other side), Sir Garfield Barwick and Sir Paul Hasluck from the conservative ranks. Manfred ceased to be a member of Parliament on 19 February 1990.

Blessed with a long retirement Manfred continued to serve his community in many ways. For many years he was on the committee of the Queensland Working Party of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. He chaired the Library Board of Queensland from 1988 to 1996. He was a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Queensland, and was awarded an Order of Australia medal in 1992. Along with his wife Barbara, he was interested in ornithology and had many trips to outback Queensland in search of more elusive feathered species. His life was full for many years after Parliament. He left our world on 30 January 2024.

I personally will treasure the fond memories of Manfred on the Bardon bus, and at the State Library or wherever I bumped into him, often in a bookstore. I was privileged to get to know him, firstly as a staff member of the State Library of Queensland, and later when I was on the working party for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. He was always willing to help other researchers and took some time out of his own busy schedule to read an early incarnation of my PhD on Manfred's friend and sometime political adversary, Vince Gair. I don't know how long he took to read it, but the ensuing phone conversation hearing Manfred's sound and well-based suggestions took two hours, and was great advice given temperately and without condescension.

For his friend, Dr Lee Duffield, Manfred Douglas Cross 'towered above the great majority of his colleagues in Canberra, where his honesty and dignity surpassed the go-getter greed, cynicism and bullying that makes up too much of the culture of that place.' For me, it was great to be one of the thousands who knew and admired him. Sleep warm in your eternal rest, Manfred, you have earned it.

Originally from Brisbane, **Dr. Brian Stephenson** has lived in Cairns since 2000. Formerly a librarian, he is now a radio presenter and the station president of a community radio station in Cairns He is the author of several books and articles on Queensland history and politics and has written over twenty entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* and similar works. The doctoral thesis for his Doctorate in Politics from Griffith University in 2007 was on the life of Vince Gair.

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