

Labour and Anzac: one-day conference and *Labour History* 'thematic'

Call for Papers

Conference Date: **Friday 21 September**

Venue: **National Archives of Australia, Queen Victoria Terrace, Parkes, Canberra, ACT 2600**

The centenary of the First World War will be widely observed in Australia. This thematic section of *Labour History* on 'Labour and Anzac', to be published to coincide with the centenary of the beginning of the war, invites contributors to consider what labour history and labour historians have to contribute to an understanding of the history of Anzac.

The Anzac Legend has been the subject of vigorous debate among historians, but there has been insufficient attention given to the highly contested nature of Anzac from the very beginning of its history. The labour movement and working-class Australians have been in the forefront of this contention, refusing to allow conservatives to monopolise its cultural and historical meanings. Working-class men comprised the bulk of the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF), and the same class and its institutions were also active in shaping the cultural memory of Australia's wartime experience in the decades that followed. Meanwhile, research on political activism, working life, war and memory, mourning and return have built up an increasingly nuanced picture of the activities and contributions of working-class and labour movement women.

The 'thematic' will seek to bring together research being carried out by scholars working on various aspects of the relationship between the Anzac Legend, the labour movement and the working class. We hope that the result will be a collection of papers that will complicate an argument about the past that tends towards polarisation between critics and defenders of the Legend.

Anzac has been a site for intense intense political debate and social division, as well as a focus of national unity. Its meanings have altered much over time and there has been little attention paid to how those meanings differ among different communities. Labour historians might be able to contribute to recovering a sense of this unsettling history.

A one-day conference is being held in Canberra on **Friday 21 September 2012** at the **National Archives of Australia** for the presentation of papers. Expressions of interest and abstracts of 200 words should be sent to frank.bongiorno@anu.edu.au by **28 May 2012** (*Deadline extended*)

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