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Labour History (ISSN: 0023 6942) is an internationally recognised journal and part of the prestigious History Co-operative of the University of Illinois. It is published twice a year, in November and May, by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History – a non-profit organisation to which the Brisbane Labour History Association is affiliated.

Members of the **BLHA** who are not already receiving *Labour History* are encouraged to subscribe – the full rate for individuals is \$50.00 (concession rate for students/unwaged is \$35.00). Rates are kept relatively low as ASSLH is a non-profit organisation. New subscribers to *Labour History* receive the current year's journals and a free back issue of their choice.

The support of the journal by individual subscribers makes it possible for *Labour History* to continue to promote and publish labour history research in Australia and beyond. Please send for the *Guidelines* if you are interested in contributing to the journal.

The May 2006 issue of *Labour History* will contain articles on various industries: steel, stovemakers, manufacturing, shearing (the wide comb dispute); articles dealing with the big picture – the great strike of 1917 in Victoria and also the plight of an individual as exemplified in a farmhand's claim for wages in 1929 when they had to 'prove first you're a male'; articles dealing with public policy making, Labor and the Vietnam War, and a comparative look at the Australian and British Labor parties. A new feature in the journal will highlight historical perspectives of current affairs – sedition and IR legislation being considered in the forthcoming issue. Book reviews, research reports, conference reports and obituaries add to the mix.

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tionship between the labour movement and the folk movement in Australia with a particular emphasis on Queensland. A committee is in the process of planning the event

Mark Gregory from the Blue Mountains Union Council and archivist of trade union/labour songs and Bob and Margaret Fagan have indicated that they will attend. The Fagans will discuss and sing songs from the Sydney Realists movement. Dale Jacobsen and Doug Eaton are organising a Queensland component which will include a session on John Manifold.

The date of the event has been chosen so that people will also have the opportunity to attend a conference on the following Monday 25 September, on industrial relations and popular culture (see below). For more information contact the President, Greg Mallory, on gmallory@vtown.com.au or Dale Jacobsen on srmusic@ozemail.com.au.

WORK, INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND POPULAR CULTURE CONFERENCE

**25 September 2006
Brisbane**

Dr Keith Townsend (Work and Industry Futures, QUT) and Professor David Peetz (Department of Industrial Relations, Griffith University) are convening a one-day conference that explores Work, Industrial Relations and Popular Culture. Papers must be submitted in August.

Sub-themes for the conference include:

- Policy, Influence and Modern Media
- Which is Reality, Work or TV?
- Popular Music: Is it the End of the Working Class Man?
- Working in the Movies: What do we See?
- Popular Culture as a Teaching Tool
- Linkages between Popular Culture and Labour Culture in History

Papers are however not limited to the above sub-themes. The organisers welcome contributions that explore any aspect of the way in which popular culture is used by unions, management or policy makers or, alternatively, how work and industrial relations is represented within popular culture.

Questions about papers or the conference should be directed to Keith Townsend at k.townsend@qut.edu.au.

pjlove@infoxchange.net.au. Further information available on the ASSLH website.

This conference will be followed by the 'New Standards for the New Times' conference on 22-23 June at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. This conference explores contemporary work-life issues; contact Iain Campbell (iain.campbell@rmit.edu.au) or Cathy Brigden (cathy.brigden@rmit.edu.au) for further details.

OUR WORK ... OUR LIVES: NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

12 – 14 July 2006

Brisbane

A two and a half day conference that puts the spotlight on women, gender and work. Designed to contribute to public debate about the new Work Choices legislation, as well as to highlight issues about gender and work more widely, this conference will incorporate a range of plenaries with high profile speakers, plus parallel sessions of papers, forums and workshops to which unionists and other social change activists can contribute. The major venue is Rydges Hotel, South Bank. Co-sponsored by the Queensland Working Women's Service and Griffith University's Department of Industrial Relations, this is a conference not to be missed. Speakers include renowned Australian researcher Professor Barbara Pocock.

If you wish to submit a paper or workshops proposal on any aspect of gender, women, work and/or welfare, a 200-word summary and a 50-word biography must be submitted to the Conference's organisers, Portmann Events, by 13 April (closing date extended from 31 March). All details (including cost, registration form, and how to submit a proposal) are on the conference website: <http://www.qwws.org.au>.

LABOUR MOVEMENT AND FOLK MOVEMENT: BLHA CONFERENCE/DINNER/CONCERT

23 September 2006

Brisbane

The Brisbane Labour History Association is holding a Conference/Dinner/Concert on Saturday 23 September. This event will explore the historical rela-

Editorial

Janis Bailey

Welcome to Number 2 of *The Queensland Journal of Labour History*. The main articles are two pieces by BLHA members Connie Healy and Dale Lorna Jacobsen.

Connie's article describes her friendship with exiled Indonesian activists living in Australia at the time of 'the Black Armada', when Australian unions led a ban against Dutch shipping in a show of solidarity with the struggle against colonialism in Indonesia. She also describes the subsequent involvement of her late husband, Mick Healy, Queensland Trades and Labour Council Secretary from 1943 to 1952, in ongoing links with SOBSI, the All-Indonesian Trade Union Federation, and other activists in the country. This article illustrates several important aspects of the role of international union linkages, including their dependence on both personal friendships and formal ties.

Dale's article describes a period in the life of her grandfather, Jack O'Leary, in the 1920s, when he was involved as an activist and then an organiser in the Australian Railways Union (ARU), as well as being a

branch officeholder in the Australian Labor Party (ALP). The story of one chapter in a long-standing feud between the ALP and the ARU in Queensland is woven into this article.

Both pieces are built on personal experience and research: Connie's direct experiences and her access to private papers, and Dale's inheritance of an oral tradition from her family that led her to the scholarly task of researching the life of a grandfather who had died long before she was born.

The editorial committee is grateful for these beautifully written pieces. They speak for themselves, and the reader will enjoy them. The addition of photographs to both articles is a great bonus.

Connie and Dale's work underscores the necessity for and importance of this journal. Written history is often a 'top people's' history in which other voices are not heard. Much history simply gets passed down as an oral tradition and eventually dies out, or circulates in private documents amongst family members.

Both these avenues are very important, but it is only publication that provides a wider voice, and calls the public's attention to these significant stories.

I thank all the contributors to this issue, including book reviewers Terry Burke, Dan O'Neill and John McCollow for their analytical reports, Ross Gwyther for his piece on the recent BLHA one-day seminar *Workers or Slaves?*, and BLHA President Greg Mallory for the first 'President's Column'. Connie Healy's *In Memoriam* items celebrate the lives and achievements of three important people: Nancy Wills, Jenny Prohaska and Clarrie Beekingham.

When I lived in Western Australia, from time to time I edited issues of *Papers in Labour History*, the journal of the Perth branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, begun in 1988 under the editorship of Michael Hess and still going strong. Due to the support of the ASSLH (Perth Branch), the wonderful stream of contributions from members and others, and the various editors over 18 years, *Papers* now provides a vitally important collection of stories from the state's labour history that would not exist otherwise. I dipped into back copies recently when writing a piece on 'labour culture' for the *Historical Encyclopaedia of Western Australia*. *Papers* was one of the most important single sources of information on

the topic I was exploring.

This journal will emulate the efforts of various branches of the ASSLH which, like the Perth branch, have launched into publication. As a relative newcomer to Queensland, I especially value the privilege of being asked to begin the journal, with Helen Ester, and to edit its first two numbers. It brings me into contact with a range of people with whom it is a joy to be associated – including the BLHA Committee and the journal's contributors.

This is your journal. Members of the BLHA, and anyone else who has contributed to and/or would like to document the history of labour and other social movements in Queensland, are invited to contribute. We are also looking for volunteers to edit the journal.

One of my comrades in the Perth Branch, Ric McCracken, uses a wonderful phrase to describe WA's *Papers*: 'history with attitude'. May this journal carry on that proud tradition.

* * * *

Noticeboard

EXHIBITION

TAKING TO THE STREETS: TWO DECADES THAT CHANGED BRISBANE 1965 - 1985

7 April - 27 August 2006
Museum of Brisbane, City Hall

The exhibition will explore protest activities such as those against the Vietnam war and the apartheid regime in South Africa, as well as events specific to Brisbane and Queensland such as the Right to March campaign and the struggle for Aboriginal rights. The exhibition will present a myriad of such items as badges, t-shirts, clothing, jewellery, banners, chants, songs, leaflets, newsletters, photos and the moving image - and more.

Profiles of many of those involved in the protest activity will be seen and heard as well as the voices and stories of activists in the years before which led up to this explosive period. Members of the Brisbane Labour History Association will be amongst those who tell of their personal involvement. Keep in touch with the MoB for more information: <http://www.sites.ourbrisbane.com/MoB/home>.

CONFERENCES

WORKING TO LIVE: HISTORIES OF THE 8 HOUR DAY AND WORKING LIFE

20 - 21 June 2006
University of Melbourne

Part of a series of events to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Melbourne Stonemasons' establishment of the '8 Hour System', this is a joint initiative of the Melbourne Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History and the Australian Centre at the University of Melbourne.

Abstracts of proposed papers are due by 31 January 2006 and full papers (5,000 word maximum) by 20 May 2006. Proposals and papers to Peter Love at

Dale Jacobsen is a writer living in the mountains of Maleny in south-east Queensland, prior to which she was an environmental scientist at Griffith University. She was a Queensland delegate to the 1989 Communist Party of Australia Congress in Sydney, at which the vote was taken to wind up the party.

John McCollow is a research officer with the Queensland Teachers' Union. He is a former secondary school teacher and has lectured in educational policy at the University of Queensland. He is a vice-president of the Industrial Relations Society of Queensland.

Greg Mallory is an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Industrial Relations at Griffith University. His book *Uncharted Waters: Social Responsibility in Australian Trade Unions* was published last year. He is currently working on a history of the Queensland Coal Miners' Union for the CFMEU. Greg is also a sports historian and is currently working on a history of the Brisbane Rugby League. Greg is President of the Brisbane Labour History Association.

Dan O'Neill was for many years a lecturer in English at the University of Queensland, and during the late 60s was a member of the Society for Democratic Action which later became the Revolutionary Socialist Students Alliance. He has frequently marched and demonstrated on various issues of interest to radicals over the last forty years, especially during the struggles with National Party Governments over civil liberties and workers' rights.

President's Column

Greg Mallory

It is with great pleasure that I write the first President's column for *The Queensland Journal of Labour History*, which I hope will become a regular feature of our publication. I would first of all like to acknowledge the Editors of the first issue, Janis Bailey and Helen Ester, and the Publications Committee for the work undertaken. The response to our first edition has been overwhelming with congratulations coming from Rae Frances, the President of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History (ASSLH), as well as Terry Irving, former President of ASSLH, and others. We have had a number of interstate people joining the Association, including a number of organisations becoming institutional members, including the Canberra Branch of ASSLH, the CFMEU Mining and Energy Division, Queensland, the CEPU Plumbers Division, Queensland, and the Queensland Teachers Union.

Our conferences and seminars, together with our publications such as

the newsletter, *The Queensland Journal of Labour History* and our webpage all involve work behind the scenes. I wish to thank our committee for doing the work that underpins the success of our organisation, in particular our Secretary, Ted Riethmuller.

Greetings From Around the World

I bring back greetings from the UK and the USA from like-minded organisations. From October to December I was fortunate enough to visit the USA, Canada, England, Ireland and Europe. It was mainly a holiday, but I spoke at the North American Labor History Conference in Detroit, as well as the Industrial Relations Department of Keele University in Staffordshire and Ruskin College, Oxford. In my travels I also met with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 in San Francisco, participated in a party celebrating 100 years of the Industrial Workers



Greg Mallory with a longshoreman, ILWU Local 10 Hall, San Francisco.

of the World (IWW) in Detroit, spent a small amount of time on a picket line in Vancouver, visited Marx's grave in London and met some ex-Russian communists. At one point I was unable to get a ferry out of Ireland due to the entire workforce of 'Irish Ferries' being 'sacked' and replaced by what was described as 'cheap Eastern European labour'.

One of my intentions in travelling was to promote my book *Uncharted Waters* as well as the Brisbane Labour History Association (BLHA)

and *The Queensland Journal of Labour History*. I am pleased to report that I presented our journal to the ILWU Local 10 in San Francisco; to the Labor and Working Class History Association (LAWCHA) in Detroit, both the Illinois and Michigan Labor History Societies, Reuthers Library at Wayne State University in Detroit, Keele University's Industrial Relations Department and Ruskin College, Oxford. Each of these institutions has an interesting history.

The ILWU is a proud militant union,

CONTRIBUTORS

Janis Bailey is a lecturer in the Department of Industrial Relations at Griffith University. Her research interests include union strategy and culture. Before moving to Queensland in 2002, she taught at the University of WA and Edith Cowan University, and was variously secretary, editor and committee member of the Perth Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. She worked as a union industrial officer in the 1980s and 90s for various blue- and white-collar unions in Perth.

Terry Burke is General Secretary of the Queensland Independent Education Union and a former Catholic secondary school teacher and administrator. He holds degrees of Bachelor of Education, Master of Educational Administration and a Graduate Diploma in Religious Education. Terry has served on the Queensland Board of Teacher Registration and is currently a member of the Executive of the Queensland Council of Unions. He is a Director of Teachers' Union Health, Union Shopper, QIEC Super and The Private Capital Group.

Ross Gwyther is an organiser with the Qld Division of the National Tertiary Education Union. He has been closely involved with community politics for many years, including the anti-uranium and environment campaigns of the 1970s, the nuclear disarmament movement during the 1980s, and the peace and anti-war movement in the past decade. After spending more than 20 years as a geophysicist researching earthquakes, he decided three years ago to become more closely involved in the working class struggle by working for the NTEU.

Connie Healy worked in trade union offices and at The University of Queensland. She is twice married: her first husband, an air force navigator, was killed in World War Two; her second was Queensland Trades and Labour Council Secretary 1943-52. Her book *Defiance: Political Theatre in Brisbane 1930-1962* was published in 2000, and she contributed five articles to *Radical Brisbane: An Unruly History* (2004). Awards include the 1992 Denis J. Murphy Memorial Scholarship, University of Queensland, to a postgraduate student intending to undertake research into the history of the labour movement, and in 2001 the Centenary Medal 'For distinguished service to industrial relations'.

cont

trade unionism, education, sexual liberation and environmentalism. A common complaint in reviews of collected essays is a lack of overall coherence. This is certainly not the case here. Each contributor is insistent on the primacy of economic relations in constituting social relations and consciousness and of the imperative of revolutionary change. The purpose of the authors goes beyond simply providing an overview of class theory; all describe themselves as political activists and they clearly see their contributions to this book as political interventions.

The book is easy to read and the arguments presented are easy to follow — a rare and laudable accomplishment amongst sociology/economics texts. In the best chapters (e.g. Bloodworth on ‘women, class and oppression’, Bramble on ‘labour movement leadership’, Griffiths on ‘racism’), the authors do a good job of providing an accessible class-based analysis of the issues and a critique of alternative approaches. These are worth reading even for those already well familiar with class analysis.

Over all, however, while the writers do what they set out to do quite well, I suspect that many readers will share my dissatisfaction with the orthodoxy of the Marxism that informs the analysis. The book can be contrasted in this regard, for example, with Stanley Aronowitz’s recent *How Class Works* (2003)

which engages with a variety of Marxist and non-Marxist writers to develop what seems to me to be a more nuanced class analysis.

Reference

Stanley Aronowitz, *How Class Works: Power and Social Movement*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2003.

John McCollow

* * * *

founded by Australian Harry Bridges in the 1930s, and still operates a union hire system. I was fortunate to see it in operation very early in the morning at the union hall of Local 10, situated in the Fisherman’s Wharf Area of San Francisco. LAWCHA is one of the sponsors of the North American Labor History conference and its aim is to promote a wider understanding of working class people, communities and organisations in the USA. Both Illinois and Michigan Labor History Societies are local labour history groups, somewhat like the BLHA, and promote labour history at the local level. Reuthers Library, situated in Wayne State University, Detroit, is funded by the United Automobile Workers (UAW) and is one of the biggest labour archives in the USA.

In England I spoke at Keele University’s Industrial Relations Department and at Ruskin College, Oxford. Keele’s Industrial Relations Department has a strong labour history orientation. Ruskin College is an independent college that provides educational opportunities for adults with few or no qualifications. It is regarded as being one of the world’s leading trade union colleges, running courses for trade unionists and works closely with international trade union organisations such as the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Brussels. It was named after John Ruskin, nineteenth century poet, artist, critic, social revolutionary and conservationist.

Observations

I would like to present some brief observations in relation to my experiences with these different organisations and institutions. In presenting seminars on my book *Uncharted Waters* in the USA and England, I felt that trade union consciousness in relation to environmental matters was fairly low, with the exception of Ruskin College. It reinforced my view that the NSW Builders Labourers Federation was truly unique in its Green Ban actions.

In relation to the industrial relations debate in Australia, I feel it is important that we understand this debate from an international perspective. In Vancouver I briefly joined a picket line made up of telecommunications workers against the IT company, Telos. The issue was contract negotiations (somewhat similar to our enterprise bargaining agreements) and some lay-offs of workers. However, the picket captain pointed out to me the ‘union-busters’. It appears that as soon as a picket is set up by a union, the company employs a ‘union-busting’ consultant who photographs everyone on the line. The union busters whom I saw were young people operating video equipment and they were protected behind a glass door by large security men. However the picket captain told me that the union-busters’ main job was to obtain evidence on unionists that could be used against them in court. So at

various stages union busters go into the picket line, start fights, get it photographed and proceed to take legal action against the unionists. He also told me of instances of unionists being run off the road in their cars by the union busters on their way to a picket line. Is this the sort of thing that the present Federal Government has in store for Australian unions?

The second action regards the sacking of an entire workforce by the company Irish Ferries and its replacement by cheap East European labour. When I asked English people how the Irish and British governments could allow this situation to occur without government intervention, I was told that this was the norm. Talk-back radio coverage confirmed this. Whole industries in



Greg Mallory presents a copy of the first issue of *The Queensland Journal of Labour History* to tutor Denis Gregory at Ruskin College, Oxford.

Britain which have traditionally employed local workers now can sack their entire workforce and replace them with the 'pool' of East European labour who will work for the lowest wage (which Marx described as the 'reserve army of labour'). Once again is this what the Howard government has in mind for Australian workers?

In summary, these overseas experiences made me feel that in order to understand what is happening in Australian industrial relations, we must attempt to understand the situation in an international context.

BLHA Conference, Dinner and Concert on the Labour and Folk Movement

I would like to take this opportunity to publicise the BLHA's next major event. In September the BLHA, in conjunction with members of the folk movement, will be holding a conference, dinner and concert exploring the historical relationship between the labour movement and the folk movement. Interest has been shown by long-time members of the folk movement both in Queensland and interstate. Work will begin on planning this event in early March. People who are interested in being involved in this event should contact the President or Dale Jacobsen. (See Noticeboard item on p. 58 for further details).

* * * *

provides a spirited defence, creates some interesting outcomes. For example, 11 of the top 15 richest died prior to 1850 and only two lived in the twentieth century. Of the top 100, only 18 lived in the twentieth century (and 13 of these were deceased in its first two decades). Rubinstein argues that this reflects the greater capacity of the pre-twentieth century rich to 'amass a fortune of staggering comparative size' (p. viii), to the extent that the super rich of nineteenth century Australia could 'live in a way which today only the Sultan of Brunei and a few hundred powerful international magnates and tycoons could possibly imitate' (p. vii). Interestingly, Rubinstein notes that although for the period 1940-70, income distribution constricted due to 'very high taxation, restrictions on capital flows' and other factors (p. viii), since 1980 there has been an expansion of wealth inequality to the extent that 'we see Australian fortunes of comparative sizes that are as great as those in the country's distant past' (p. viii). All of this is accompanied by 'little or no public hostility towards, or criticism of, today's multimillionaire tycoons' (p. viii).

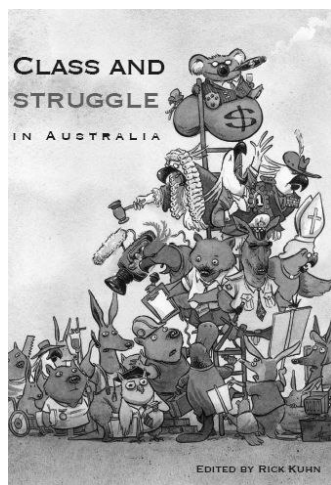
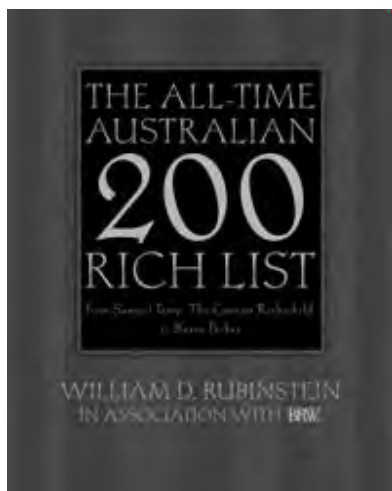
Rubinstein divides his rich list into four eras (1788-1849, 1850-1899, 1900-1980, 1980- present). For each era he provides an introductory overview which identifies some useful facts (e.g. on the incidence of amongst the wealthy of ex-convicts and the overwhelmingly pre-

dominance of wealthy Protestants and of English and Scots). But not all of the effects of Rubinstein's methodology yield information of interest or use. Basing the rankings on the value of deceased estates yields some entries for people who had little historical importance; for example, Edward Terry (p.31) whose only accomplishment was to inherit his father's wealth and then die, or Dougall Macdougall (p. 26) about whom little is known and who may never have lived in Australia.

The All-Time Australian 200 Rich List provides some useful information for historians as a sort of 'Australian Dictionary of Biography of Rich People' and is written in an accessible and entertaining style. While there are some interesting and suggestive tidbits of information scattered throughout, in the end the book is severely constrained by its nature as a list. Many interesting themes are suggested but only tentatively explored.

Class and Struggle in Australia, on the other hand, is all about developing a theme — the nature and role of class in Australia. It is obviously intended as a primer for university students who are unfamiliar with class theory and it works very well in this regard. All chapters include lists of suggested further reading and footnotes.

Various writers apply Marxist class theory to topics such as racism,



In Memoriam

Nancy Wills (Nance Macmillan) – Working Class Playwright: 1920 - 2005

The recent death of Nancy Wills (also known as Nance Macmillan) is a serious loss to progressive theatre and working class cultural activities. Born in 1920 in Perth, her interest in the theatre dates back to the depression years in Melbourne when she took dancing lessons and joined a little theatre as an actress about 1939. She joined the Realist Writers' Group in Melbourne and, in 1944, the Communist Party of Australia.

She attended the World Peace Conference in Paris in 1949 and met Paul Robeson, the famous black singer, who was an ardent campaigner for workers' rights, peace and equality. This meeting provided the inspiration for her play *Land of Morning Calm* written in the following year and presented in 1952 by Brisbane New Theatre. She wrote a number of plays with a major emphasis on peace and social justice, including *The Painter* (1961), based

on the life of Aboriginal artist Albert Namatjira, in which she raised the issue of civil rights for Aborigines. Her interest in writing the play, she said, was prompted after reading Namatjira's passionate plea, his cry from the heart, during his imprisonment: 'Better they shoot us all, get rid of us and save all this trouble if we are not allowed to live like men'.

In 1962 Nance collaborated with well-known poet and academic Dorothy Hewett to write the *Ballad for Women*. A one-act play, it celebrated the role of women in Australia. She also wrote a very successful musical play *Deep Bells Ring* dealing with the life and work of Paul Robeson. Directed by well-known playwright Errol O'Neill, it premiered in Brisbane in 1987 at the Princess Theatre and toured Australia in commercial theatres.

Nancy and Geoff Wills' home at Lota was a working class cultural centre. For at least 30 years local writers, singers and musicians took part in presenting poetry and play readings to their neighbours and friends and to the broader community in Brisbane poetry and play readings. In their spacious backyard amongst the trees folk singers sang ballads and classical music was

Reviews of

The All-Time Australian 200 Rich List

**By William D.
Rubinstein**

*Allen & Unwin/Business Review
Weekly, Sydney, 2004.*

\$29.95, paperback, 202 + xxii pp.

and

Class and Struggle in Australia

By Rick Kuhn (Ed.)

Pearson Longman, Sydney, 2005.

\$41.95, paperback, 224 + vii pp.

These are two very different books relating to wealth distribution in Australia.

Rubinstein's is a cross between a reference book (he is Chair of History at the University of Aberystwyth) and the league tables that are a popular staple of the mass media (e.g. 'the 100 best films of all time', 'Brisbane's 10 most desirable suburbs'). For the more recently wealthy, Rubinstein uses the BRW annual 'rich lists' (methodology unexplained) but his methodology is primarily based on meticulous examination of colonial and state probate records. The size of the estate is then expressed as a proportion of GDP at the time, which provides the basis calculating its 'current value' and this is used to rank the fortunes of the rich.

Rubinstein's approach, for which he

played on Geoff's handmade instruments.

We say a sad farewell to Nance and offer our sincere condolences to her two children Rocky and Josie.

Jenny Prohaska - A Life Well Spent: 1911 - 2005

Women activists, feminists and peace lovers are saddened at the loss of Jenny Prohaska, who died in July this year after a long life devoted to women's rights and anti-war activities. Born in Paddington, Brisbane in 1911, a year after her family migrated to Australia from Scotland, she was educated at Petrie Terrace Girls and Infants Primary School and later at Brisbane State High School.

A keen athlete, Jenny demonstrated ability in high jump, basketball and swimming in which she particularly excelled. After leaving school she became an inaugural member of the Lady Neptunes, the first women's lifesaving club based at the Gold Coast, a membership she retained all her life. In latter years, she demonstrated more diverse skills. She acted in progressive Street Arts theatre productions at the Paint Factory on the south side. Her ability was so impressive that Queensland Theatre Company offered her a professional job, which she regretfully

declined because of its demanding schedule.

During the Depression years, she and her husband John whom she married in 1931, endured great poverty as they raised their three children John, Isabel and Claire between 1932 and 1939. Her husband John suffered ill health as a result of war service in Borneo from 1939 to 1946 and died in 1949. His death, and the loss of her brother in the First World War, resulted in Jenny's lifelong commitment to the cause of world peace. Jenny met her second husband Edward Prohaska in 1965 at a Trades Hall dance she had helped to organise to raise money for war widows.

Jenny is fondly remembered by surviving members of the Union of Australian Women (UAW) which she joined in 1958. She helped in their many campaigns to improve the status of women, such as equal pay and particularly affordable childcare. Her commitment to the latter had already been shown in the 1940's in organising to establish a childcare centre in Stones Corner to make life easier for working women with children during the war years. She established the Women's Abortion Rights Coalition, which represented 20 women's groups, which lobbied the Queensland Government to amend abortion laws to allow women to have a choice. She strongly supported the UAW's opposition to the war and against the

countries are there, well buttressed by supporting popular activism, as is the inspiring predecessor of these, the Zapatista movement that seems to have produced a rebirth of genuine rank and file consciousness. (The author quotes radical historian Elizabeth Martinez: 'The Zapatistas say they are not proposing to take power but rather to contribute to a vast movement that would return power to civil society, using different forms of struggle.') The popular movements that led to the collapse of the Berlin Wall and then the collapse of the whole Soviet bloc, the huge protests at the WTO on November 30, 1999, and the even more impressive sequel at the Cancun ministerial in September 2003 of which George Monbiot wrote that 'the weak nations stood up to the most powerful nations on earth and were not broken. The lesson they will bring home is that if this is possible, almost anything is.' So it goes on as chapter after chapter relates stories of famous or less famous struggles, all of which are calculated to show the hopeful emergence of a possible new world.

Solnit sees it as a huge global social justice movement and quotes Charles Derber to call it the 'third wave' coming after 'the first wave of 1960s-style activism and the second wave of fragmented identity politics.' Reflecting the huge variety of its constituencies and the great variety of issues and viewpoints, 'it is basically antidoctrinal, in contrast to both the first and sec-

ond waves.' Naomi Klein is quoted to the effect that rather than lacking any overall vision what global justice activists lack is an overarching revolutionary philosophy. Solnit seems to want to appropriate to them the description Klein makes of the methods of the Zapatistas: 'non-hierarchical decision-making, decentralized organizing, and deep community democracy.' Both writers approve of this. For this amounts to a vision relating means to ends.

If I had more space I could go more deeply into the detail of the accounts which the book gives and debate the adequacy of this activist-eye view of the contending forces in the contemporary world, but given the present complexity of the world and the doubtful purchase on it of the systematic explanatory and action-guiding theories that the nineteenth century bequeathed to the twentieth century it seems more interesting and wiser at the moment to pay closer attention to what those who are actually doing something in this century with their hearts in the right place are saying as they do it. Here's what one of them is saying: 'If there were purist or puritan tendencies in earlier waves of activism, this is generously, joyously impure, with the impurity that comes from mixing and circulating and stirring things up.' Let's at least be glad that the world still seems to be throwing up stirrers.

Dan O'Neill

a grim-faced accommodation to the needs of a revolution which will bring about a better life some time in the future. It's a world away from that poem of Brecht's which asks for the understanding of those born later and has the lines: "...Oh, we/ Who wanted to prepare the ground for friendliness/ Could not ourselves be friendly." Prefiguring the changed world now by making the means of change participate already in the end proposed – this is seen as part of the new attitude to activism shared by a lot of the activists in many movements. They come after, well after, the long period of ideologically based historicist vanguardism, and they see history as a much trickier thing, with many layers to it, moving with many different speeds at different levels, full of surprises, not amenable to any simplistic account of cause and effect, more like the weather than a train-track, subject to long-term tensions that may have remained underground for a long term and that are welcomed by no shrewd commentators apprised of the imminence of their sudden surfacing.

Solnit stops well short of presenting any theory of it all, but all through the book there are passages with metaphorical accounts like this: 'Cause and effect assumes history marches forward, but history is not an army. It is a crab scuttling sideways, a drip of soft water wearing away stone, an earthquake breaking centuries of tension.' And later: '... and the apocalypse is always easier

to imagine than the strange circuitous routes to what actually comes next.' Then again '...groundswells, sea changes and alternatives, the forms in which popular power most often manifests itself.' Instead of any end of the world we are told of 'the strange sidelong paths of change in a world without end.' Not grasping this fact of the way history actually is leads to some of the sclerosis of the intellectual and emotional arteries from which certain serious-faced activists can suffer. 'They expect finality, definitiveness, straightforward cause-and-effect relationships, instant returns, and as a result they specialize in disappointment, which sinks in as bitterness, cynicism, defeatism, knowingness. They operate on the premise that for every action there is an equal and opposite and punctual reaction and regard the lack of one as failure.' Hence the discouragement that would not occur so readily if they saw a different reality and the place of activism in it: 'History is made out of common dreams, groundswells, turning points, watersheds – it's a landscape more complicated than commensurate cause and effect ...'

In a sense each chapter starts the book anew, each is a venture into showing how hope has emerged in this or that location on this or that issue, but also how it all starts more and more to connect, to illustrate reciprocally, to build a new sense of the world. The recent election results in a number of Latin American

promotion of war toys for children. She opposed the Vietnam War and participated in several protest marches. In 1991 she received the OAM (Order of Australia) medal for commitment to women's rights and work to promote peace.

To her surviving children Colin Palmer and Claire Chen, her seven grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren, we express our sincere sympathy at her loss to her family and also to the wider community.

Clarrie Beckingham Honoured: 1905 - 1998

On Saturday, 13th August 2005 at 60 Glenvillan Place, Bridgeman Downs, a northern suburb of Brisbane, part of the original land owned by Clarrie Beckingham was officially named in his honour 'The Clarrie Beckingham Reserve'. The function was organised by Carol Cashman, Councillor for Bracken Ridge Ward, and the Lord Mayor officially named the Reserve. Clarrie's son Ralph and his daughter Iris were present. As Clarrie was well known in his neighbourhood and amongst his friends as a conservationist, it was fitting that this land should commemorate his life.

Clarrie, who died in 1998, was born in Ravenswood, North Queensland, in 1905. He moved to Brisbane in

1924 and ran Brisbane Spare Parts in Fortitude Valley. He bought the Darien Street land (part of which now forms the Reserve) in 1961, running it as a dairy farm, 'Fairview', supplying the Caboolture Butter Factory.

But Clarrie Beckingham was also well known for his activities in support of the Australian Russian Society. In September 1947, when he was Queensland Secretary of the Society, with his wife and two children he conducted a film screening tour of Queensland in 10 days, covering 3,000 miles. His audiences included Italians, Aborigines, Chinese and Malaysians. Russian films such as *The Battle for Russia* were screened at Mackay, Bowen, Collinsville, Townsville, Ingham, Tully, Innisfail, Gordonvale, Cairns and Charters Towers with an average attendance of more than 100 people. He was also responsible for many screenings of Soviet films in the Brisbane City Hall on behalf of the Society. His wife Dorothy, who had lived in Paraguay as a child, shared his interest in promoting peace, friendship between nations and socialist ideals.

Connie Healy

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From top left, clockwise: *Workers or Slaves?* Seminar speakers Margaret Lee, Terri Butler, Humphrey McQueen, Stephane Lequeux and Dick Williams.

Photos: Warrick Bailey



Review of **Hope in the Dark: The Untold History of People Power**

By Rebecca Solnit

Text, Melbourne, 2005.

\$22.95, paperback, 181 pp.

Rebecca Solnit has not written anything like an academic or systematic history of the recently recurrent phenomenon of people power, the sort of thing that got rid of the Marcos regime in the Philippines. Although the book is full of the sort of facts that might be marshalled in chronological sequence and then explained in historiographical and sociological terms in such a text, the approach here is a more informal one. In an easy, readable style the writer presents herself precisely as a writer, but also as a frequent participant in and observer of large rallies and marches. She refers continually to a wide range of other activists, some of whom are her friends across the United States and in other countries, quoting from their writings and oral remarks and thus cumulatively giving a sort of living sense of the distinctively new feel and political mood and the implicit atti-

tudes to political theory and strategy of many of the contemporary groups of activists in a number of social movements.

It is not written principally as a record. It addresses the problem of discouragement and frustration at the apparent incapacity of so many of the initiatives for change to bring it about either quickly or on a big scale or in a way that makes it hold firm over time. It argues the case for being hopeful even against the perception that the status quo of neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism is so powerful and so supported by supine mass media and apathetic masses as to seem immovable.

The first section of the book is about the nature of this hope. 'Hope just means another world might be possible, not promised, not guaranteed. Hope calls for action; action is impossible without hope.' At the beginning of his massive treatise on hope, the German philosopher Ernst Bloch wrote, 'The work of this emotion requires people who throw themselves actively into what is becoming, to which they themselves belong. To hope is to give ourselves to the future, and that commitment to the future is what makes the present inhabitable.'

That last sentence is an important indication of Solnit's approach. Living with hope and acting on that hope is not just a functional requirement of an activism that puts human happiness into abeyance in favour of

by diversity but a mono-culture where all employees share the organisation's vision and mimic behaviour which ensures their 'inclusion' and avoids behaviour which would result in 'exclusion'.

Peetz gives some consideration to the nature of the response unions and their members must make to the attack on their collective and the exercise of power. These are useful insights but not his greatest contribution to the current debate on industrial relations.

Rather, in a well argued and insightful discussion Peetz's critical contribution to those who want to rebuild the employee collective (unions) is to point out that the contest between individualism and collectivism is a phoney debate. The real debate is about who has the power and the rhetoric of 'individualism' and 'choice' is really a smokescreen. The individualisation of employment relations through individual contracts is a strategy designed to increase the power of the already powerful. In the absence of any institutional power to workers as Australians once enjoyed, workers have to build their own power through their collective unions. That is the challenge facing workers not only in Australia.

David Peetz has written a book that should be in the hands of all those who believe in the dignity of labour and believe in a world where work-

ers have some power at work and a say in those matters that affect them. For those who are seeking to rebuild a strong union movement there is much insight in this book and it is essential reading.

Terry Burke

SEMINAR REPORT

Can We Do Anything Besides Watch? Workers or Slaves? BLHA IR Conference, 25 February 2006

Ross Gwyther

'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, ... it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair...'. Dickens's dialectical introduction to his tale of the French Revolution has been oft-quoted, and maybe over-quoted – but it kept springing to mind during the recent special BLHA conference on the "New Industrial Relations Legislation and the Labour Movement".

Amongst those involved in the labour movement, there has been widespread discussion of the new IR laws over the past year, but now there is a feeling or impatience that we need to start 'doing something about it'. US labour activist Bill Fletcher asked last year in a *Monthly Review* article: *'Can we do anything besides watch?'*

The BLHA conference served as a useful reminder that we need at least three strings to our bow. Firstly, we need an accurate, comprehensive picture of what we are up against – the facts about the existing reality. We also need to have a broad enough analysis of what this reality

means and where it fits in to the overall assaults by capital – in other words a strategic analysis based on an historical and class perspective. Thirdly, we need to work out the details of our on-the-ground responses – the day-to-day tactics we can employ.

In each of these areas the conference made some headway.

Margaret Lee, an IR academic and union activist from Griffith University, and labour lawyer Terri Butler filled the morning session with a thorough summary of the new legislation and the strictures it places on workers' organising capacity. The session provided much of the essential detail which we need to be aware of. One of the clear implications of their talks is that the ability of workers to bargain collectively through their unions will be 'virtually destroyed' by the new IR laws – to paraphrase Peter Hendy of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, this takes us back to the 'horse-and-buggy' era (except it's the employers, not the workers, who are responsible for this regression).

Dick Williams, State Secretary of the ETU, gave a comprehensive picture of how his union is fighting back at the grass roots level. He was also speaking as a representative of the QCU – it was encouraging to see that the peak union body in Queensland is willing to endorse the study of labour history as an important part of the struggle. Griffith

academic Stephane Le Queux provided an international perspective from the experience of Europe, where there is a resurgence of both the ‘left of the left’, and of the fascist right. He characterised the struggle of dock workers in Europe, who have recently been carrying out a major struggle, as not industrial action so much as industrial warfare.

Keynote speaker, historian and social activist Humphrey McQueen, spoke on ‘If it is not fascism, then what is it?’, masterfully combining minute historical detail into a broad sweep of history, society and economics. He was pleased to see a labour history society taking up the challenge of talking about the present and the future, since these are intimately linked to the past. One of his key points was that, rather than discussing ‘fair wages’, the workers’ movement is at a stage in history when it needs to take up the issue of the inherent exploitation of labour time in capitalism. He argued that the state has an ongoing role in both organising capital and disorganising labour.

The afternoon session was devoted to a panel discussion on the tactics for the future struggle. Labor Senator Claire Moore pointed out that Griffith IR professor, David Peetz, has become infamous in parliamentary debates since writing his oft-quoted research papers into the new laws and their impacts – although it is his interest in song writing, rather than the results of his research, that have attracted the most attention

from those unwilling to hear the message. David has previously shown that, whilst individual contracts do nothing to increase worker productivity, they do increase business profits, thus explaining the taste which a section of the capitalist class has for them. He talked of a need to develop ‘sustainable IR laws’, which will stand through a variety of governments. Claire reminded people that the new WorkChoices laws are intrinsically linked to the new ‘Welfare to Work’ laws, and that we need to struggle against both of these laws. Finally, State Labor politician Geoff Wilson gave a positive story of hope to finish off the day, regarding a forum on the new laws held in his electorate. He had expected 50 people and instead 200 very angry local community members turned up. His message was that there is much more that needs to be done at a local level.

While the conference did not answer all our questions, it did give us a few extra things to think about. Indeed, one of the final comments from the floor was ‘Yes, but after all the talk today, what can we do about these laws?’. Humphrey McQueen’s reply had some useful food for thought: *‘If we have a materialist conception of history – as opposed to a police conception of history – then we can’t hope to lay down a blueprint of what to do. That can only develop as we go along in the struggle!’* The BLHA showed through this conference that it is an important part of that struggle.

the ground in Australia to explore key elements of this competition for the hearts and minds of workers. In a powerful critique he unpacks the forces and trends which have seen the demise of a central arbitral system of industrial relations and its substitution by the ideology of the neo-conservatives under the cover of the support of the individual’s right to choose.

WorkChoices legislation clearly adds sharp focus to the competing claim on workers’ allegiances and as Peetz points out employers are generally winning and power is flowing to the employers.

Individual contracting and collective bargaining are fundamentally about the exercise of power – the ability to influence an outcome and get what a group wants.

Historically, Australian workers have been able to access a conciliation and arbitral system that resolved the overtly conflicting interest of employers and employees.

It has always been the case that, for some workers, their interests are subverted because key issues of concern to them are absent from decision making processes. The WorkChoices legislation will mean that this situation is likely to become the norm with employers able to ignore the interests of workers with an individual contract in place.

Peetz points out, however, that there is another power dynamic where conflict is latent (present but not active) because the interests of the stronger prevail over the worker who is conditioned to accept their role. For some workers in this power relationship the acceptance of that role is because they cannot see or imagine an alternative. For others, it is the natural order of things and may even be seen as divinely ordained or seen as beneficial. Employees are essentially compliant and in the hands of the employer who professes to know ‘what is good for employees’.

The actions of employers to create a feeling of powerlessness in the minds of employees have a symbolic dimension to the overt action. Employers determined to enforce employee helplessness according to Peetz undertake actions which send workers a message that tells the employee that they are either part of the organisation (inclusivist behaviour) or not part of the organisation (exclusivist behaviour).

The symbolism in the actions aims to shape workers’ identity and spirit so that they see themselves as belonging not to an employee focused collective (i.e. their employee union) but rather a corporation focused on the collective of the employer – the organisation.

Thus employers do not seek a workforce and workplace characterised



Review of

Brave New Workplace: How Individual Contracts Are Changing Our Jobs

By David Peetz

Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2006

\$29.95, paperback, 262 + x pp.

It is currently fashionable to see the dominant competing ideologies in industrial relations and the community more generally, as a clash between 'individualism' and 'collectivism'.

In what will become a seminal work on the topic, David Peetz in his new work 'Brave New Workplace' (Allen and Unwin) exposes the truth behind the contemporary rhetoric of the neo-conservative forces and their claims to champion the rights and needs of the individual.

The title of the book clearly alludes to Aldous Huxley's classic novel and Peetz goes sharply to the essence of the group think and narrowing of discourse described in Huxley's world of monoculture and the propagandist.

Peetz's essential thesis is that the modern corporation uses individualistic rhetoric as a deliberate strategy to promote employee identification with the 'collective of the employer' rather than the 'collective of the employee' in the form of unions. It is a challenging thesis written in an easy to read style.

Corporations according to Peetz don't seek the end of collectivism but rather a reorientation of workers' collective identity to the employer's view of the world. The corporation's claim to promoting the individual is nothing but semantics in a battle of allegiance. 'Collective identity' with the employer becomes 'individualism' with the individual contract the weapon in this war of interests.

Peetz analyses the current debate on

Recollections of 'The Black Armada' in Brisbane

Connie Healy

Since Boxing Day 2004, the attention of all Australians has been focussed on countries in Asia, particularly Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India. These countries were the worst affected by the devastating tsunami which struck their coastlines and other areas in the region such as Thailand, the Maldives and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Australians have been generous in their aid to assist those who survived to help rebuild their devastated countries and their lives.

This is not the first time Australians have come to the forefront in assisting the Indonesian people. In the 1940s Australian trade unionists were the first to respond to an appeal from Indonesian trade unions. This appeal was directed to the 'democratic and peaceful peoples everywhere, and "especially to the working class" in all countries of the world, "to boycott all that is Dutch in all harbours, stores, roadways and other places throughout the world in the event of the outbreak of warfare in Indonesia"'.¹ The boycott of Dutch shipping in Australia, colourfully described by journalist Rupert Lockwood as 'the Black Armada', was instrumental in preventing the

return of Dutch shipping for the re-occupation of the Indies and the re-establishment of Dutch rule. It thus made way for the foundation of the Indonesian Republic. The embargo began in Brisbane and held up 559 vessels.²

In the early 1940s, in suburban Brisbane, my family befriended some Indonesians who had been brought by the Dutch to Australia following the invasion of Indonesia by the Japanese. Some had already spent many years in exile prior to their move to Australia. They were to play an important role in the struggle against the reinstatement of Dutch rule in Indonesia. This article therefore tells a story of international union links and solidarity that was played out more than half a century ago.

The War Years: Our Indonesian Friends Prowito, Asir and Slamet

Our family consisted of my mother, my two sisters and their two small children and myself. (Our husbands were in the army in New Guinea, in navy small craft around the islands to the north and in the air force in Britain). In the large, rambling house on the top of the hill in a Brisbane suburb, we welcomed many visitors during the war years. Our many visitors included Australian and American soldiers, sailors and airmen, Chinese and Indonesians.

Two Indonesians, Prowito and Asir, with whom we became firm friends, told us our household resembled their own extended households in Indonesia. They told us they felt welcomed and at home. When we met the family they were living in a type of boarding house in New Farm. A whole lot of Indonesians were housed there in a building near what was the old Brewery in Brunswick Street. One of Prowito's children came top of the New Farm School that they attended. On one occasion, Prowito came to the door when my sisters and I were at work. He asked my mother if he could use our sewing machine. He explained that he wanted to make some pyjamas for his children. 'Of course', she said, very surprised. It wasn't very common for Australian men to do the household sewing! At this time Prowito was employed by the Dutch. Asir was employed on a farm outside Brisbane but came to visit by train in the weekends. Prowito was a teacher, who had been involved in the teachers' strike in 1926, part of an abortive uprising against Dutch colonial rule. Prowito often brought his wife and several children with him on his many visits and we had many talks about life as it was in Indonesia when he left there.

But what were the events which led to the arrival of these Indonesians on Australian shores? In history classes at school we were told about the 'Spice Islands' to our north

where the happy Indonesian people lived under benevolent Dutch rule. But in fact I discovered later that for 350 years Indonesians had lived as a colonial country under the rule of the Dutch. The Dutch used the country's rich resources not for the benefit of the country or its people but largely for European investors: 'a rich country but her people were kept poor'.³

In 1919 a central trade union organisation was established in Indonesia and a wave of strikes followed. The PKI (Partai Komunis Indonesia) was formed in 1920, and its influence spread rapidly up to 1926-1927.⁴ Following these strikes, some 13,000 arrests were made, and of those arrested an unspecified number was shot and thousands were sent to prison. Dutch autocratic law specified that 'those who can be considered by the government to disturb or have disturbed the public peace and order will be "without any legal proceedings" exiled for an indefinite time at a specially appointed place.'⁵ Thirteen hundred were sent into exile to Tanah Merah, a notorious concentration camp at Boven Digul, West Irian, then Dutch New Guinea.⁶

In February 1942, Japan invaded the Netherlands East Indies. On 8 March all organised Dutch resistance ceased. On 10 March a nucleus of the NEI administration was evacuated to Australia. As a result, in March 1942 the Australian gov-

1889-1965), D.J. Murphy (ed.), University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1983, p. 171; R. Fitzgerald, *Labor in Queensland: From the 1880s to 1918*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1989, p. 38.

24. DS, 2 November 1925.

25. ALP, 1924-26

26. Psephos - Adam Carr's Election Archive, available from: <http://psephos.adam-carr.net/countries/a/australia/index1925.shtml>, accessed 5 January 2006.

27. *Minutes of the Queensland Central Executive of the A.L.P. (Old Branch)*, 2 December 1925, p. 4.

28. *Minutes of the State Council Committee of the ARU (Qld Branch)* (hereinafter ARU SC Minutes), 20-24 January 1926, p. 12.

29. ALP, 1924-26.

30. ARU SC Minutes, March 1926, p. 35.

31. *Advocate*, February 1926, p. 1; Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, p. 23.

32. Lane, *Dawn to Dusk*, p. 283-5.

33. ARU SC Minutes, March 1926, p. 37.

34. *Ibid*, pp. 90-99.

35. *Minutes of the South-Eastern District Committee of the ARU (Qld Branch)*, 4 June 1926, p. 3.

36. pers. comm. Tim Moroney (Jnr), 26 August 2005.

37. Kennedy, *Labor in Power*, p. 378.

38. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, p. 32.

39. Lane *Dawn to Dusk*, 1993, p. 203.

40. S. Macintyre, *The Reds: The Communist Party of Australia From Origins to Illegality*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1998, pp. 65, 273.

41. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, p. 112.

42. *Advocate*, March 1927, p. 10.

43. *Ibid*.

44. *Advocate*, December 1927, p. 4.

45. *Form of Proceedings for District Courts-Martial*, 20 August 1918, National Archives of Australia, Canberra, doc. 4 D2.

46. T.C. Campbell, *The A.R.U. in Queensland: 100 Years of Service to Rail Workers 1886-1986*, ARU 1986, p. 16.

47. K.H. Kennedy, 'The South Johnstone Strike, 1927', in *The Big Strikes (Queensland 1889-1965)*, D.J. Murphy (ed.), University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1983.

48. *Advocate*, September 1927.

49. Kennedy, *South Johnstone Strike*, p. 184.

50. *Advocate*, September 1927, pp. 14, 15.

51. *Advocate*, February 1928, p. 18.

52. *Advocate*, May 1928, p. 12.

53. Campbell, *A.R.U. in Qld*, p. 15.

54. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, p. 47.

55. *Ibid*, p. 49.

56. *Advocate*, October 1929, p. 11.

57. *Advocate*, March 1930, p. 17.

58. *Ibid*, p. 3.

59. Murphy, *The Big Strikes*, p. 197.

60. *Advocate*, May 1930, p. 3.

61. For a detailed account of the Royal Commission, the reader is referred to Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*.

62. *Advocate*, April 1930, p. 14.

63. *Ibid*, September 1930, p. 16.

64. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, p. 74.

65. R. Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s: A History of Qld*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1984, p. 89.

66. Murphy, *Labor in Power*, p. 415.

67. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, p. 115.

68. *Murder File: O'Leary John*, 7 December 1936 - 21 January 1939, Queensland State Archives, Brisbane.

69. *Ibid*.

Endnotes

Acknowledgements

Without the enthusiastic assistance given by Les Crofton (retired Secretary of RTBU), the details of my grandfather's union days would have remained a mystery. Thanks are also due to Tim Moroney (Historical Projects Officer, Queensland Parliamentary Library, and son of Tim Moroney, Secretary, ARU [Qld. Branch]).

Abbreviations

ALP Australian Labour/Labor Party
ARU Australian Railways Union
AWU Australian Workers Union
OBU One Big Union
QCE Queensland Central Executive
QRU Queensland Railways Union
QUREA Queensland United Railway Employees' Association
RTBU Rail Tram and Bus Union
SEDC South-eastern District Committee

1. Dale is currently working on a manuscript detailing Jack O'Leary's railway union life in Australia: 1911-1936.
2. QUREA became the Queensland Railways Union (QRU) in 1913 then ARU (Queensland Branch) in 1921, Tim Moroney (Jnr), 'Moroney 1890-1944: A Staunch Fighter for the People', in *Proceedings Brisbane Catholic Historical Society*, vol. 2, 1990, p. 56.
3. ALP (Qld Branch) officially adopted the spelling 'Labor' in November 1918, K.H. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair: State Mining and Political Corruption in the 1920s*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1978.
4. Correspondence: Annerley Branch Logan and Oxley A.L.P. 1925, in *A.L.P. Qld Branch Miscellaneous 1924-26*, John Oxley Library.
5. Woollongabba spelt consistently by

the Railway Department with only one 'l' from practically the time the line opened until it closed. J. Kerr and J. Armstrong, *Destination South Brisbane: An Illustrated History of the Southside Railways of Brisbane*, Australian Railway Historical Society, Qld Division, 1978, p. 13.

6. E.H. Lane ('Jack Cade'), *Dawn to Dusk: Reminiscences of a Rebel*, first published by William Brooks & Co., Queensland, 1939, republished by SHAPE (Social History of Australia Publishing Enterprise), Brisbane, 1993, p. 254.
7. *Employees Record - Central Division*, Queensland Railways Records Management Services, 1914-26.
8. *Advocate*, various.
9. pers. comm. Hazel McCracken (nee O'Leary), July 2000.
10. P.H. Hickey, *Railwaymen and Unionism: A Case for Amalgamation*, ARU pamphlet, circa 1925.
11. K.H. Kennedy, 'Anti-Communist Pledge Crisis', in *Labor in Power: The Labor Party and Governments in Queensland 1915-57*, D.J. Murphy R.B. Joyce and C.A. Hughes (eds), University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1980, p. 370.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, introduction.
14. Kennedy, *Labor in Power*, p. 371.
15. ALP, 1924-26.
16. Lane, *Dawn to Dusk*, p. 299.
17. *Advocate*, April 1925, p. 11.
18. ALP 1924-26, John Oxley Library.
19. *Advocate*, May 1925, p. 11.
20. *Advocate*, July 1925, p. 6.
21. Kennedy, *The Mungana Affair*, pp. 16, 22.
22. *Daily Standard* (hereinafter DS), 31 August 1925.
23. A. Smith, 'The Railway Strike, 1925', in *The Big Strikes (Queensland*

ernment reluctantly became host to the Netherlands East Indies Government-in-Exile (formerly the Dutch colonial government in Indonesia). In Brisbane, their headquarters were at Wacol Army Camp and their Air Force at Amberley Air Force base.

Life in Tanah Merah

Prowito was part of the group that had been exiled after the 1926 teachers' strike. He was 'betrothed' (as he put it) at the time of his arrest and was given the option of taking his wife-to-be with him. She agreed, and their seven children were born in imprisonment.

During the long years of imprisonment in this strange land across the seas far from their homeland, the prisoners managed to carry out the tasks of daily life. The place was unhealthy, surrounded by mosquito-infested swamps. Many prisoners contracted malaria and other illnesses; the jungle country was reputed to be inhabited by headhunting tribes, and the perils of the crocodile infested Digul River were a deterrent to any would-be escapees. The Indonesians were completely isolated during their imprisonment in Tanah Merah. They obtained some information about the world from any new prisoners who might be brought there. Prowito told us that until he reached Australia, he had no knowledge of the war and he was shocked to learn of the

development of Nazism in Germany and Japan.

A few prisoners did escape in 1929. Prowito told us that he knew of the escape and had heard of their remarkable journey to Thursday Island where they were handed back to the Dutch for re-imprisonment.⁷ Whilst in Tanah Merah, Prowito continued his teaching, and when we decided to learn Malay, he again became a teacher for a small group in our home. I don't think we were particularly good students!

Arrival in Australia

Prowito and his family remained in Tanah Merah until June 1943 when the Dutch Government-in-Exile transferred the surviving 500 political prisoners and their families to Australia on the steamship *Both*. The Indonesian political prisoners arrived in Bowen, and then continued to Sydney where they were eventually transported by train to military prison camps. They were held and guarded by Australian military personnel. With great daring and initiative, the prisoners made their plight known to Australian rail and waterside workers. They threw notes to workers on the Bowen wharf and from the train to rail workers on the lines explaining their presence and their predicament.

Prowito told me the harrowing story

of the train journey in Australia with his very sick child. He attempted, with limited English, to get medical attention from a train guard. I asked him how he did this, and he said, 'I spoke to the guard and I told him that my little boy had a "pine in his billy"'. (He had obviously heard some Australians speaking!) Understanding was eventually reached with a sympathetic guard who gave him assistance.

In December 1943, pressure was exerted on the government, principally by Australian trade unions and civil libertarian organisations, to secure the release of Indonesian prisoners and their families. Eventually, after his release, Prowito accepted service with the Dutch government in Australia, not only to help the anti-Japanese war effort in Australia, but he told us, to sabotage Dutch re-occupation of his country.

Ban on Dutch Ships – the Indonesian Independence Committee

After the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic on 1 September 1945, the Central Committee for Indonesian Independence (CENKIM) in Brisbane called on all Indonesians in Australia to mutiny and asked for Australian support for the nationalist cause. So on the weekend of 22-23 September 1945, in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, Indonesian merchant seamen walked

off Dutch ships that were being loaded with supplies for Dutch re-occupation of the East Indies. The walk-off marked the beginning of the renowned Dutch shipping ban, which held Dutch ships in Australia for four long years.

Prowito and Slamet were to play a significant role in Australia in the Indonesian independence struggle. They were the two members of the Indonesian Independence Committee who accompanied Ted Englart and Alby Graham (officials of the Waterside Workers' Federation [WWF]), Archie Nicol (an organiser of the Building Workers Union) and Mick Healy (Secretary of the Trades and Labour Council [TLC]) when they met with representatives of seamen on Dutch ships in Brisbane. At this meeting tactics were finalised for the seamen's walk-off in support of wage demands linked with demands for non-interference by the Dutch government with the newly proclaimed republic.

The 500 Indonesian seamen who walked off the ships were housed in the top floor of Trades Hall (the dance floor) for three weeks. Blankets were provided from American stores by Chinese working for the Americans at Bulimba, and meals were brought from Chinese restaurants. Many of the Chinese met at the long table in the dining room at our house on the hill and their leader Albert was the only one, to my knowledge, who spoke English.

year Theodore applied to be readmitted to the ALP. A resolution was carried 100 to 2 that he not be readmitted to the Party.

* * *

Postscript: The Murder of Jack O'Leary

This story of my grandfather has a tragic conclusion.

On 5 December 1936 he caught a tram to the Anzac Club in Elizabeth Street and, with a couple of mates, listened to a broadcast of England playing Australia at the 'Gabba.

They crossed the road to the Grand Central Hotel for a shandy on their way home. Jack said he could only have the one; he was expected home to take his daughter Hazel (my mother) to the pictures.

One of his mates went to the toilet in the laneway, and was jumped by a couple of youths. Jack went to investigate and one of the youths yelled: 'You keep out of this. It's got nothing to do with you.'⁶⁸

One punch and Jack was dead. He was just 48 years old.

Francis John Ryan was charged with the murder of John Laurence O'Leary, invalid pensioner, and before judge and jury, found guilty on 15 April 1937.⁶⁹ He was sentenced to two years' hard labour, but re-

leased at the end of nine months on a bond of good behaviour, the conditions of which were broken within the year. No further action was taken.

Of note is that during the dark days of 1925, when Jack replaced Hayes in the 'black secretaryship', the daily papers carried stories of victims of brutal bashings being found on the banks of the Brisbane River and in dark alleyways between shops in the centre of Brisbane. All victims were supporters of the ARU Executive in one form or another, and it was common knowledge amongst the unionists that out-of-work men who hung around the pubs were slipped a quid to do the work.

I am not suggesting that Ryan was paid to pick a fight with Jack. Jack's active involvement in the ARU and the ALP was over by this time and, although he still followed politics and union activity with great interest, he no longer posed a threat. Perhaps it is simply a sad irony that he met his death at the hands of one who had, in all probability, received payment for such actions in the past; perhaps Jack was collateral damage in another target. However, my family has always questioned why Ryan was treated so leniently.

* * * *

was failing. Never a robust man, he now weighed just over eight stone and was sometimes hospitalised for weeks. That August, his work for the ARU came to an end.

McCormack and Theodore Called to Account

In submitting his report to Cabinet on 4 July 1930, Justice Campbell concluded that, in the Royal Commission into the Mungana Mines affair:

‘Theodore, McCormack, Goddard [general manager Chillagoe Smelters] and Reid were guilty of fraud and dishonesty in procuring the State to purchase the Mungana mines for 40,000 pounds’ and that the ‘moneys shared between them as proceeds of that transaction were fraudulently obtained’, [and] that they had ‘betrayed, for personal gain, the trust reposed in them, and [had] ... acted corruptly and dishonestly ...’.⁶⁴

On 8 July Prime Minister Scullin announced Theodore’s resignation from his portfolio. Attempts to have him reappointed early the following year split the NSW Party, and the left wing, led by Jack Lang, withdrew from Caucus.

Civil proceedings against the four named in Campbell’s report commenced on 22 July 1931. Evidence

presented at the Royal Commission was not permitted, and neither McCormack nor Theodore entered the witness box. A jury of four found that none of the four were answerable to the 25 charges made by the Royal Commission. The defendants celebrated with champagne.

Leaving the ALP

In 1931, an organisation in support of Jack Lang’s plan to withhold interest payments on British loans and reduce interest on domestic loans, was formed in Brisbane. The Labor Party declared its opposition to this organisation, and the QCE threatened to dissolve branches supporting Lang.⁶⁵

In October O’Leary, who naturally drifted towards Lang’s ideals, was one of four executives who were dismissed from their positions in the ALP.⁶⁶

That Theodore was expelled from the ALP was little comfort to O’Leary, but it was great comfort to him when Theodore was defeated in the December elections.

1935: The Fruits of His Labour

By 1935 Theodore had begun building other empires: with Frank Packer in newspapers and with John Wren in gold mining in Fiji.⁶⁷ In that

They were delighted when my mother and we three girls waited on them with tea and cakes. On one occasion Albert took us down to their Bulimba camp where we were surprised to see that the Chinese seemed to run the camp!

Eventually complaints from Trades Hall office staff and the Health Department led to the removal of the Indonesians by trade union officials, who transported them to different stations along the Ipswich line and put them on the Ipswich bound train. They then walked in to the Dutch camp at Wacol in small groups, and the Dutch authorities, taken by surprise, were forced to accommodate and feed them. Later the Dutch government asked the Australian government to accept responsibility for them and they were then housed at a CCC (Civil Constructional Corps, often colloquially known as the Civil *Construction* Corps) camp at Chermide.

Mick and I were invited to a wonderful dinner and concert organised by the Indonesians at the Wacol Army camp some time in 1945. After dinner, there was singing and dancing and an Indonesian play. We went backstage after the play to be introduced to the players. To my surprise the very beautiful young women in the play were our (male) Indonesian friends! I learned that as part of their traditions women were not permitted to take part in public displays of this nature and were represented by men dressed in women’s

costumes.

Prowito and Fellow Indonesians Return Home

Australian trade unions and the Council for Civil Liberties had continually exerted pressure on the Federal government to repatriate the striking seamen and other striking Indonesians from the Dutch army (including Tanah Merah deportees) and had ensured that the Dutch government would grant them political amnesty on their arrival in Indonesia. Prowito left Brisbane, along with hundreds of other Indonesian men, women and children and Australian-born wives (about 800 in all) on the steamship *Manoora*⁸ in February 1946. The HMAS *Manoora* was an Adelaide Steamship Company coastal passenger ship converted to a landing-craft carrier. Mick Healy (who had come to know many of the Indonesians well) and other trade union officials went down to where the ship was berthed at a little-used wharf across the river from Hamilton to see them off.

After leaving Brisbane, the ship called at Mackay to take other Indonesians aboard, most of them Tanah Merah survivors for whom Mackay had been a main centre. Mick also went to Mackay to say farewell to the 80 Indonesians who joined the ship there. On arrival at Tanjong Priok in Java, defying Dutch demands that Indonesian repatriates be handed over, the repatriated Indone-

sians were escorted by Gurkhas, at Australian Captain Cousin's request, to Republican territory about 60 miles from Batavia. Women and children were escorted ashore later.⁹

For Prowito and his family it was a sad homecoming. He had complained of stomach problems for some time whilst in Australia. Sadly he died shortly after his arrival in Indonesia. He had spoken proudly of his eldest son who had studied in Melbourne to become an aircraftsman. The young man also died fighting in the Indonesian Air Force against the Dutch. We heard of their deaths in a letter from a fellow Indonesian who had been in Australia. At least they reached the shores of the land that they loved so well. I do not know the fate of Asir, a simple countryman, whose dream was an Indonesia free from Dutch rule.

Mick Healy and Ted Roach attend SOBSI

In May 1946 the central organisation of the All-Indonesian Trade Unions (SOBSI) invited Mick Healy (still Secretary of the TLC) and Ted Roach (still Assistant Secretary of the WWF) to attend its first conference since the Republic was proclaimed. The conference was held in Malang in Java and, according to Mick, they received a tremendous reception similar to those accorded to other Australian visitors at the

time. For example, Sir Richard Kirby, who played a leading role in mediation efforts, recalled that when visiting Yogyakarta in July 1946 with Republican Prime Minister Sultan Sjahrir, 'they were greeted by cheering crowds who were shouting "Australia, Australia" and showering them with flower petals.'¹⁰ Ted and Mick went from Jakarta by train to Malang with Indonesian trade unionists and interpreters. About 600 to 800 delegates, including two Dutch trade union representatives from Holland, attended the conference. Most delegates came from Java but oil workers from Borneo, sugar and tobacco workers from Sumatra were also present. A humorous incident occurred on the train. One of the Indonesians asked Mick if he could come back to Australia as his house-servant. Mick had great difficulty in convincing him that he didn't have a house – just a flat – and couldn't afford a servant even if he wanted one! Women workers, including schoolteachers and cane basket makers, also attended the conference. They later took the Australian delegates to a small factory, presenting them with little baskets which Mick brought back for our baby son.

Haryono, President of SOBSI, chaired the Conference. He had been in Tanah Merah and was an expatriate from Australia.¹¹ He had been in Mackay working in sugar mills for a couple of years after his release, then came to Brisbane to

investigate both the Mount Isa and Mungana allegations.⁵⁵ McCormack resigned his seat the following February.

1930: The ARU Executive Team Disbands

*O God! That bread should be so dear,
And flesh and blood so cheap. – Thomas Hood*⁵⁶

With the fall of the New York Stock Exchange the previous October, the ARU had to face reality. When Rymer pointed out to the Union that it could no longer finance its present staff,⁵⁷ he did not anticipate being one of those who would be removed.

As editor of *The Advocate*, and President of the Union, he carried the twin responsibilities of, firstly, ensuring any letters and articles published would 'not be detrimental to the discipline of the Union' and, secondly, keeping 'the paper free of libellous publications'.⁵⁸

On a few occasions he had refused to publish articles and letters sent by the Central District Committee (Rockhampton), who subsequently hatched a plan to replace Rymer with one of their number.⁵⁹

Members of the Toowoomba Sub-branch of the Union, reflecting sentiment across the rank and file, were

so incensed at being robbed of 'one of its greatest factors for militancy' and causing 'severence of a splendid combination of State Officials [diminishing] the fighting capacity, and generally [weakening] the character of the Union', they submitted a full page article in *The Advocate*.⁶⁰ They implied a pact had been made between the Central District Committee and Comrade Guilfoyle (Warwick): if Guilfoyle voted with them to have Rymer removed, they would back his claim for expenses. Every motion that day was carried 7-6, and Guilfoyle's expenses were passed for payment.

However, the Central District Committee did not achieve its goal. Seeing the writing on the wall, Moroney took on the editorship of *The Advocate* himself and appointed Mick O'Brien (four years chairman of the SEDC) as honorary State President. Rymer was now free to attend the Royal Commission at the Land Court in Brisbane.⁶¹

District organisers, including O'Leary, were given three months' notice of termination of agreement between themselves and the Union, which was to be divided into three districts.⁶² O'Leary was offered the choice of standing for the position of State Organiser,⁶³ but his health

McCormack, blinded by his hatred of ARU officials, had been thwarted in his attempt to isolate the Union.⁴⁹

Rymer had a field day as editor of *The Advocate*, reporting on 'McCormack and his Scabinet Henchmen'⁵⁰ and 'More about Mungana: Definite Charges Made in Parliament.'

1928: The Depression Starts to Bite

The effects of decline in the global economy began to impact on the ARU. Membership decreased, and the Union was forced to close district offices. District secretaries, now relieved of routine office work, were redesignated 'organisers' and, issued with flat-tank AJS motorbikes bearing a metal ARU badge on the mudguard, told to work on the road.⁵¹

O'Leary's health deteriorated further as he rode around south-east Queensland fulfilling his role. But life went on, and with the concentrated efforts of its organisers, membership in the ARU began to rise again.

At the 'annual guzzle' on the Saturday night before Labour Day in May, the usual speeches were made and the usual toasts drunk. The singing of *The Red Flag* was led by O'Leary, but 'on this occasion the Parliamentarians were not invited and were absent.'⁵²

1929: End of the Road for McCormack

On 17 May 1929, the McCormack Government suffered an overwhelming defeat at the polls. O'Leary, his loyalties divided, had campaigned hard for the candidate from his Annerley Branch while at the same time joining with Rymer in keeping the Chillagoe-Mungana issue in the pages of *The Advocate*.

The betrayal of the workers by a Labor Government in the 1927 strike and lockout was still fresh in the minds of the Queensland workers, and the ALP lost 16 seats. McCormack resigned leadership of the Party and was succeeded by Forgan Smith, who continued to frustrate the ARU's efforts to improve the lot of its members.⁵³

October was not a good month for McCormack and Theodore. For the first time, there emerged 'strong suspicion of corrupt dealings in Mount Isa shares, not only upon McCormack but upon the mighty Theodore, then deputy leader of the federal Labour party.'⁵⁴

Upon hearing court evidence from the bankruptcy case of Fred Reid (lessee from whom the government purchased the Mungana mines in 1922) that McCormack in fact held a half interest in Mungana Mines Ltd, Premier Moore gave notice of intention of a Royal Commission to

work on communications for the Dutch government-in-exile at Wacol, thus becoming aware of developments and future plans of the Dutch government. He was prominent in the leadership of the Indonesian Independence Committee and a leading member of the illegal, highly secret Indonesian Communist Party, of which little was known by anyone in Australia. He returned to Indonesia with the Dutch, to Hollandia in West Irian and then Java.¹²

After the Congress, Ted and Mick were invited to have tea with Prime Minister Hatta who had been in Tanah Merah in earlier times. Speaking in perfect English, he discussed with them the Australian political situation. They were also entertained by Sarafudden, Minister for Defence, and Sediadit, Minister for Railways. The latter was a Communist who, during the early part of the war as a student at a Dutch University had participated in the resistance movement against Hitler. Both Sarafudden and Sediadit had attended the SOBSI Congress and were interested in developing relations with Australia. They recognised the important role that Australian trade unionists could play in assisting their country's development. They hoped that under the influence of the trade unions the Australian government would be persuaded to recognise Indonesian independence.¹³ With this in mind, Haryono asked the Australian delegates to advise Australian trade un-

ionists to continue the ban on Dutch shipping. In a letter to Australian trade unions he described the Australian unions' boycott of the Dutch as 'a deed of historic importance and an example to the world'.¹⁴ Haryono was later killed by the Sukarno Government troops at Madiun in 1948 when the Left forces were crushed.¹⁵

Slamet, the Indonesian Independence Committee and the Visit of Dr Oesman Sastroamidjojo¹⁶

Slamet, a member of the Indonesian Independence Committee in Brisbane, has already been mentioned. That committee worked closely with the trade union movement here and I had the opportunity to meet him as I worked for some years in the WWF in Brisbane. Slamet, like Prowito, was a teacher who had been in Tanah Merah. After my air force husband was killed in a wartime bombing raid over Belgium, I married Mick Healy and we set up house in Moorooka. Slamet often visited us there for friendly discussions.

On one occasion he accompanied Dr Oesman Sastroamidjojo, of the Republic's Foreign Ministry, the first Indonesian Ambassador to Australia, when he visited us in our home to discuss the Indonesian trust ac-

count funds in which a considerable sum of money had accrued. The Indonesian seamen who were in Brisbane were unable to take with them the money they had earned in Australia because of currency export regulations. They left this money in a Trust Fund in a Commonwealth Bank account under the aegis of the TLC with Harry Harvey, President, Frank O'Brien, Treasurer and the Secretary Mick Healy as the official trustees. A sum of about £32,000 was accumulated in this fund and the interest was paid to the account of the Indonesian Independence Committee (by agreement with all

depositors) to enable the work of this committee to continue.

Dr Oesman was anxious to have control of the funds transferred to the Sukarno government and was urging immediate action on these lines. But Slamet and the Indonesian Independence Committee secretly advised against this procedure at the time. The money was finally paid over, the last payment being made in the 1950s, but not until strict arrangements had been made with the Commonwealth Bank and the Indonesian government for its final distribution. They took full



Mick Healy, then Queensland Trades and Labour Council Secretary, receiving presentations from Slamet (centre) and Bondan (right) as a token of gratitude for the help given by Queensland trade unions to the cause of Indonesian independence. (Molly, Bondan's wife, in background).

Photo: *Maritime Worker* June/July 1969 and Connie Healy, personal collection.



Jack O'Leary on his AJS motorbike.

Photo: Dale Lorna Jacobsen, personal collection.

entire railway service – all 18,874 of them.⁴⁷

At 1.10 pm on 3 September, every Queensland railway worker, from station staff to the keepers of the manned railway gates, received an urgent telegram from the Commissioner for Railways:

It is necessary to dispense with the services of all employees and this is an intimation to each employee that his or her services are dispensed with as from noon on Saturday 3rd September 1927.⁴⁸

Once again Paterson lent his support to the railwaymen, encouraging them to fight for their beliefs. He travelled from Brisbane to Townsville addressing strike meetings; O'Leary travelled throughout his South-eastern District doing likewise.

Finally, the court gave the AWU (which had initiated the strike over four months before) 24 hours in which to accept the terms offered or face deregistration. All workers were reinstated without victimisation, although they were compelled to work alongside scabs.

navvy and fettler camp, goods yard, running shed, shunting yard and railway workshop in south-east Queensland. He heard their grievances, collected their union dues, and answered their questions about the Union's Executive. Slowly but surely he gained their confidence and laid to rest the dissension caused by Hayes.⁴⁴

However, due to these long absences, his family life and his health began to suffer. On several occasions he was forced to interrupt his journeys because of bad doses of the 'flu. Two years were to pass before his suspicions were confirmed: he had contracted tuberculosis, largely as a result of spending 26 hours in the icy waters of the English Channel when his transport ship *Boravia* was torpedoed in 1917.⁴⁵

The South Johnstone Strike and Railway Lock-out of 1927

After God had made the rattlesnake, the toad and the vampire, he had some awful substance left with which he made a 'Scab'. – Jack London⁴⁶

On 29 April 1927, when ownership of the South Johnstone sugar mill was transferred to the South Johnstone Sugar Milling Association Ltd to facilitate the shift from state own-

ership to co-operative agriculture, the entire mill staff was paid off and only 103 men re-employed. Members of the AWU walked out, demanding preference for those who had worked during the previous milling season. On 5 July, an unknown assailant fatally shot Jack Hynes, a picket on duty at the mill. No one was ever charged over his shooting.

The strike snowballed when strikers refused to return to work alongside scab labour. Then, on 24 July, the Innisfail Trades and Labour Council declared the mill, its suppliers and its sugar 'black'. Reluctantly, the ARU was drawn into the dispute when railwaymen who refused to haul 'black' sugar were suspended, along with those who refused to take their place.

When McCormack returned from overseas on 23 August, he assessed the situation and assumed personal control of the Railway Department on Monday 29 August, ignoring the existence of the unions and dictating directly to the railwaymen.

Preparing to settle old scores, McCormack ordered the dismissal of all ARU workers. However, as the Railway Department did not keep records of union membership, he was unable to identify which workers belonged to the ARU. When it was pointed out that he could not legally single out any particular union, he locked out the



Mick Healy bids farewell to Slamet at a function at Trades Hall, Edward St, Brisbane, on 24 October 1947.

Photo: Connie Healy, personal collection.

responsibility for the payment of the remittances to their rightful owners or, if deceased, to their relatives.

A Last Farewell

After the other Indonesians had left Brisbane, Slamet and another Indonesian named Bondan and Molly, his Australian wife, stayed behind to finalise matters. Bondan was also a member of the Indonesian Independence Committee in Australia.

A farewell function was held in the Trades Hall on 24 October 1947 and Mick, as TLC Secretary, said good-

bye to Slamet and Bondan. They left Brisbane shortly after by plane. Two photos commemorate the farewell occasion.¹⁷

Slamet later became Chairman of a District Committee of the Communist Party in Indonesia and then a Member of Parliament. He wrote to us once from Indonesia saying he had married and had a small child. It was Slamet who told us of Prowito's death. He appealed to us for help with warm clothing for his family and we sent a parcel to him. He died later in the massacres which followed the September 30 Movement of 1965 in which it has been estimated that from half to one million people were murdered.¹⁸

On my bookcase stands a stylised wood carving of an Indonesian man given to us by Slamet. It is a constant reminder to me of our very fine Indonesian friends. But sadly it also recalls the terrible fate that many great fighters for the freedom of their country from Dutch colonial rule later sustained at the hands of their own people and the Suharto regime which had ousted the Sukarno Republican government.

Indonesian Republic Recognised

Although Australia, the UK and the US had given *de facto* recognition to the Republic, the ban imposed on Dutch shipping on 24 September 1945 was not lifted until 26 May



Slamet's wood carving, given to Mick and Connie on his last visit to them before he returned to Indonesia in 1947.

1948. The decision to lift the ban was made at an ACTU Conference of Federal Transport and waterside unions in Melbourne, which Mick Healy attended. It was temporarily reimposed but finally lifted by a decision of the WWF's Federal Council in November 1949.¹⁹ The sovereignty of the Indonesian Republican government was only finally recognised by the Dutch government in The Hague on 27 December 1949,

after protracted negotiations instigated by the Australian government on 30 July 1947 in the Security Council of the United Nations.²⁰

Whilst the bans were initiated by Communist-led unions, there was widespread sympathy and support for the Indonesians throughout Australia. Opposition leader Menzies and the press denounced the boycott and claimed that the union movement was attempting to dictate foreign policy. The *Worker* newspaper claimed that Communists were distorting the situation to 'suit their revolutionary programme'. This attitude was supported by an element in the union movement itself, such as the Bundaberg TLC. And under the right-wing leadership of Secretary C. G. Fallon, the Australian Workers' Union called for an enquiry into funds raised for Indonesians in Australia.²¹

But these were minority views. Many Australians remembered that, as Japanese prisoners of war, they had worked alongside Indonesian forced labour, suffering the same hardships.²² In Australia, friendships sprang up between Australians and Indonesians in many small towns. The story of Indonesian friendship with Casino townspeople has been told on ABC Radio. In Mackay, Les Crofton, a retired official of the Rail, Tram and Bus Union, whose father was a railway worker, remembers as a child attending many social gatherings

1927: All Men are Born Equal - But Some Descend to Parliament³⁹

Theodore, in all probability using the influence of John Wren, 'the sporting tycoon and dubious Labor patron ... who employed his considerable influence in the labour movement against the left',⁴⁰ became the member for the safe Sydney Labor seat of Dalley. (It was to be declared by a Royal Commissioner that the sitting member had been enticed with a bribe of several thousand pounds to resign the seat in Theodore's favour⁴¹).

O'Leary's 16-year dream of representing his fellow workers as a union official was finally realised. Also, after much consideration, he decided to remain Annerley Branch Secretary of the ALP. He still felt he could make a difference, and wanted to know of any decisions from within.

He wrote lengthy articles and letters for *The Advocate* which was widely read by all workers, not just railwaymen, ensuring the deeds of McCormack remained in the workers' consciousness:

Again the workers of Queensland tasted the fruits of disappointment from a Labour (?) Premier with a middle class outlook, when he prevented members of the Building Trades Group from receiving sustenance which they

enjoyed prior to the 'Lock Out' [to determine a forty-hour week] ...

They were advised ... to go and scab on the members of their union. This they refused to do, and their sustenance was stopped.⁴²

O'Leary also used the journal to reinforce his opinion of how McCormack had used those of the working class:

The workers took Mr. McCormack from among themselves, and placed him in Parliament. He has since ridden on their backs to opulence. When the workers asked him for bread, he gave them a stone. He will soon be mixing with those who caused his friend Theodore to sell out, and in whose interest he (McCormack) is now legislating ...

We of the working class will ever remember Premier McCormack, and the future history of Queensland will show him as a political trickster, egoist, and a traitor to his class.⁴³

As well as representing workers in inquiries and appeals, O'Leary spent weeks away from home conducting gang-to-gang organising trips. He travelled eight miles a day (mostly on foot) to cover the 200 miles necessary to establish personal contact with each railway worker in every railway station, refreshment room,

Hayes advertised in *The Daily Standard* for all rank and file of the ARU to attend a special meeting at the Stadium on Sunday 21 March. Three hundred and fifty members attended, and the position of secretary for the South-eastern District was declared 'black' until such times as Hayes was reinstated. O'Leary spoke against the motion, trying to inform the railwaymen that they were being duped by Hayes, and that the Executive of their Union was worthy of their support, but he was jeered from the meeting.

An ARU man, Ted Foley, took on the 'black' secretaryship for a month, then Rymer convinced O'Leary to take over until the situation was resolved at a special conference to be held in July in Townsville. And so my grandfather took three months' leave of absence from the Woolloongabba Goods Yards and moved into Trades Hall where he would remain, after being officially elected to the position by the rank and file, until 1930.

Hayes sent pamphlets to various craft unions in Queensland with the object of breaking the ARU. O'Leary questioned who was financing the 440 pounds required to produce and distribute these leaflets.³⁵ Eventually Hayes gave up and moved to the railways section of the AWU,³⁶ taking with him those who still questioned the actions of the Executive of the ARU.

The ARU disaffiliated with the ALP, a split which

was not, as might first appear, an instance of division over ideological issues, even though the protagonists were ideologically in conflict. It was, in fact, an instance of cynical exploitation of an ideological issue for narrow sectional and personal advantage, particularly on the part of McCormack ... The result of forcing the militants from the Labor party was the creation of a group of unionists, no longer bound by ALP rules, intent on over-throwing the McCormack government.³⁷

But if McCormack and Theodore thought that ridding the Party of the ARU meant their troubles were over, they were sadly mistaken. In late July the Lady Jane and Girofla mines had to be abandoned through lack of ore to supply the Chillagoe Smelters; McCormack's interest (388 shares) was revealed, as was the existence of faked balance sheets that hid a loss to the government of nearly 1,000,000 pounds at Chillagoe. The new Auditor-general, G.L. Beal, was authorised to investigate charges relating to Mungana and Moore (Leader of the Opposition) called for a Royal Commission to be immediately held into the whole affair.³⁸ Rymer spread the word via *The Advocate*.



Central Committee of Indonesian Independence Committee holding banner of farewell to Australia, prior to their return to Indonesia in 1947. Bondan and Slamet front row, far right.

Photo: Connie Healy, personal collection.

where Indonesians were present. A function hosted by the Indonesians who had provided what he described as 'sumptuous food' led to the comment by his mother Ivy that 'they must have deprived themselves to have put on such a wonderful spread'.²³ It has been said that 'the bans gained more public support than any other communist political initiative ever had'.²⁴

The political influence of the Dutch shipping bans, which had commenced in Brisbane, was far-

reaching. It resulted in actions of international solidarity by trade unionists worldwide. The American Longshoremen's Union (West Coast), the New Zealand Federation of Labour, the Canadian Longshoremen's Union and workers in more than a dozen countries refused to load Dutch ships or give them berthing facilities. The old colonial order that had operated in Indonesia was successfully challenged. Combined with the diplomacy of the major powers, an Indonesian Republic was finally established.

Endnotes

1. Margo Beasley, *Wharfies: The History of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia*, Halstead Press in association with Australian National Maritime Museum, Sydney, 1996, p. 128, quoting from the Minutes of the Federal Council Waterside Workers' Federation Minutes, 24 July 1947.

2. The 559 vessels included 36 Dutch merchant ships, passenger liners and troopships, two tankers and other oil industry craft, and 450 power and dumb barges, lighters and surf landing craft. Nine corvettes, two submarines and seven submarine chasers, three Royal Australian Navy vessels and two British troopships, as well as aircraft and a vast land transport fleet, were also caught up in the ban. See Beasley, *Wharfies*...., pp. 129-130.

3. Gerald Peel, *Hands Off Indonesia*, Current Book Distributors, Sydney, circa 1945, p. 6 (Noel Butlin Archive Centre, ANU). Indonesia was traditionally a country very rich in natural resources. According to the author, at this time it provided 92% of the world's pepper, 91% of the world's cinchona, used for making quinine, 80% of the world's bauxite, 77% of the world's kapok and 40% of the world's rubber. It also provided very large quantities of total world requirements of tea, cocoa products, tin, tow fibres, sugar and oil.

4. Bernard Dahm (trans P.S. Falla), *History of Indonesia in the Twentieth Century*, Pall Mall Press, London, 1971, p. 59 and Rex Mortimer, 'The Place of Communism', in E. McKay (ed.), *Studies in Indonesian History*, Pitman, Carlton, Vic., 1976, pp. 180-201 at p.181.

5. Peel, *Hands Off Indonesia*, p. 8.

6. Malcolm Caldwell and Ernst Utrecht, *Indonesia: An Alternative History*, Alternative Publishing Co-operative Lim-

ited, Sydney, 1979, p. 56.

7. The story of this escape has been told in a number of publications. See Rupert Lockwood, *Black Armada*, Australasian Book Society, Sydney, 1975, pp. 18-19.

8. *Ibid*, pp. 144, 146.

9. Information from a talk given by Mick Healy at a function organised by Brisbane International Socialists to commemorate the boycott of Dutch Shipping on 7 August 1983 (in author's possession).

10. Tom Critchley, 'Preface', in M. O'Hare and A. Reid, *Australia and Indonesia's Struggle for Independence*, Gramedia Pustaka, Utama, Jakarta, 1995, p. xiii.

11. Lockwood, *Black Armada*, p. 141.

12. Information supplied by Mick Healy in a letter dated 9 July 1975 to Rupert Lockwood (in author's possession).

13. Information in a letter dated 9 July 1975 from Mick Healy to Rupert Lockwood (in author's possession).

14. Lockwood, *Black Armada*, pp. 141, 285.

15. Lockwood, *Black Armada*, p. 141.

16. Dr Oesman Sastromidjojo was sent to Australia in June 1947.

17. A photo published in June/July 1969 in the *Maritime Worker*, the national newspaper of the Waterside Workers' Federation, depicted presentations by two leaders of the Indonesian community in Australia (Slamet and Bondan) to Mick Healy as a token of gratitude for the help rendered by the trade unions in Queensland to the cause of Indonesian independence. The second photo shows Mick saying farewell to Slamet.

18. Caldwell and Utrecht, *Indonesia: An Alternative History*...., p. 133. In an endnote the authors state that the number of victims killed without trial 'will presumably always remain unknown'. It has been estimated that up to one million people were massacred. See also R.

the altered minutes, Hayes, most probably at the suggestion of the ALP QCE, went to *The Daily Standard*. The *Standard* published an article alleging that the two ARU delegates had been instructed to sign the pledge unconditionally, and when they had been expelled from the Convention, had altered the minutes to justify their conduct.³⁰

The charge of alteration of minutes is a very serious one, and the rank and file of the ARU were justifiably angry when they read the article. Then, in mid February, opposition frontbencher for Sandgate, H.E. Sizer, reported rumours about Labor politicians being implicated in malpractice at Chillagoe. Without any evidence upon which to base the claim, Rymer headlined the February edition of *The Advocate*: 'McCormack Must Go!', implying that the Premier had improperly influenced the government in the purchase of the Mungana mines.³¹

And so ensued a most vitriolic exchange between *The Advocate* and *The Daily Standard*, now under the editorship of Robertson, who

detested such outspoken critics as Rymer, president of the Australian Railways Union, Moroney, secretary A.R.U ... [and] shedding all his revolutionary ideas, became the hater of militant trade unionism and a servile sycophant to the Labour politicians.³²

Watch Your Back!

It wasn't until March that the full extent of the conspiracy against the ARU was revealed. Rymer asked the union's council to hear a statement by partners of Swift Printers, Hardcastle and Cook, who would give 'evidence of attempted conspiracy by a certain officer of this Union.'³³

Waller, manager of Lippincott & Co., proprietors of the *Mirror* newspaper, had approached Hardcastle and Cook demanding they print an article headed 'Red Rymer' on the front page. According to Hardcastle, Waller had said:

We must print this, as we will get a big coup. We will have to go and see McCormack on Friday [with the galley proofs]. This means a lot of money to us to have this article published, in fact, it means 100 pounds a week for a number of articles.

He said he had inside information from a Mr Hayes re ARU matters.

In a few days the pot, heated by daily reports in the newspapers, boiled over. At the March State Council meeting, Hayes was called upon to show cause why he should not be dismissed for misconduct in making disclosures in the press against the instructions of the SEDC, and conspiracy. The State Council considered he had forfeited their confidence.³⁴

to Dr Lewis Nott (Nationalist) by 268 votes.²⁶

Ridding the ALP of the militant ARU became a priority for McCormack, who was heard to declare during the lead up to the state elections: 'Damn the elections, let us deal with the Communists!'²⁷

As previously stated, much has been written about the ARU Executive's refusal to sign the anti-communist pledge; hence, it will only be addressed in summary form here.

1926: J.W. Hayes and the ARU Minutes

In my opinion, Jack W. Hayes, Secretary/Organiser for the South-eastern District of the ARU, was used as a pawn in McCormack's game. Hayes had been a respected union member for many years, and the high regard in which the rank and file held him, even after he almost succeeded in wrecking the Union, shows that even the most dedicated men are open to corruption.

During the ARU State Council meeting in January 1926, the signing or otherwise of the anti-communist pledge by delegates to the forthcoming Labor-in-Politics Convention was hotly debated. Not to sign would disenfranchise 11,000 railway workers, but to sign would compromise the delegates' principles. Ultimately, the following resolution was

put by Comrade McLary and passed.²⁸

That the pledge be attached to the credentials of all A.R.U. delegates and that they sign under protest, subject to ratification or otherwise.

In his haste to post out the minutes of the meeting before leaving for the Southport Convention, Union State Secretary Tim Moroney made an unfortunate error in dictation, omitting the all-important words 'under protest'. He and Union President Rymer then set off for Southport each armed with a pledge overtyped with the statement:

The Q.C.E. has no authority under the Rules of the A.L.P. (State of Queensland) to demand this pledge. It is therefore signed under the protest of and on instructions of the State Council of the A.R.U.²⁹

The credentials committee would not accept their overtyped pledges and the two delegates were barred from attending the Convention.

Upon returning to Brisbane, Moroney realised his error in dictation of the minutes of the State Council meeting and issued an amended version. This was the opportunity the reactive QCE of the ALP had been waiting for.

Rather than query Moroney about

Cribb (ed.), *The Indonesian Killings 1965-1966: Studies from Java and Bali*, Centre for Asian Studies, Monash University, Clayton, Vic., 1990, p. 5, quoting a CIA report.

19. R.A. Gollan, *Revolutionaries and Reformists: Communism and the Australian Labour Movement 1920-1955*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1985, p. 238.

20. Information from discussion between the author and Mick Healy.

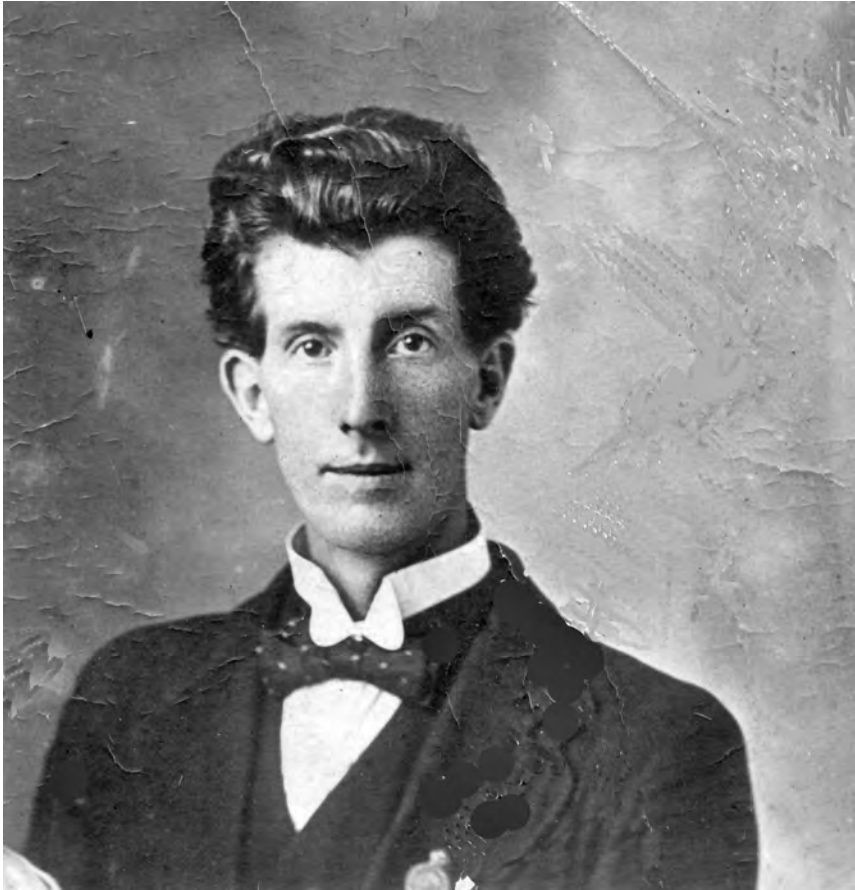
21. *Worker*, 29 October 1945, p. 1; 5 November 1945, pp. 1 and 4; 3 December 1945, p. 1; 3 December 1945, p. 4 (Editorial); 27 January 1946, p. 1.

22. O'Hare and Reid, *Australia and Indonesia's Struggle...*, p. 6. Six thousand Australian prisoners-of-war in Indonesia and 15,000 in Singapore were forced by the Japanese to work in building airfields and installations alongside Indonesians. About 5,000 Australian prisoners laboured on the notorious Burma-Thailand railway with more than 30,000 Indonesians who were sent there as 'volunteer labourers'.

23. Author's conversation with Les Crofton.

24. Beasley, *Wharfies...*, p. 130.

* * * * *



Jack O'Leary.

Photo: Dale Lorna Jacobsen, personal collection.

singing *The Internationale* at the top of her lungs in a tram on the way to a strike meeting at the Stadium in Brisbane. This event illustrates the nature of the O'Leary household: firstly for a young wife and child to be attending a strike meeting, and secondly for a three-year-old to know all the words of the 'workers' anthem'.

Mother remembers how, night after night at dinner, her father thumped the table saying: 'We'll bring the men out!' And that is exactly what happened at midnight on 27 August 1925. Four days later, 5,000 strikers joined my mother at the Brisbane Stadium to hear O'Leary, as a member of the strike committee, define the points at issue:

- (1) To regain five shillings that had been stripped from their wages in 1922 by the Arbitration Court, at the behest of Premier Theodore.
- (2) The right to hold stop-work meetings.²²

The pro-labour paper, *The Daily Standard*, covered the strike each day, publishing O'Leary's address in full. At this stage, the paper reported favourably on the progress of the direct action chosen by the strikers, who were compelled to turn their backs on the Arbitration Court to achieve their goals. This favourable press was a far cry from the attitude of the paper's editor just one year later.

O'Leary addressed strike meetings at Wickham Terrace and at Roma Street. He also struck up a friendship with a kindred spirit, Fred Paterson, who travelled throughout Queensland encouraging the strikers.

Politically, the Labor Party was embarrassed by the railway workers' victory in the eight-day strike. By October that year, McCormack had replaced Gillies as Premier, and the Arbitration Court was reconstituted as a Board of Trade and Arbitration, with two of the three appointees being Gillies and William Dunstan, the former AWU Secretary.²³

When O'Leary stood for preselection for the state seat of Logan²⁴ in October, Joe Collings lodged an objection on the grounds that O'Leary had succeeded in getting a branch of the ALP to rebel against the QCE. Collings wrote to the QCE stating:

He is an A.R.U. member and has always been definitely Communist in his attitude ... I ask that he be expelled when Annerley Branch is being dealt with.²⁵

The ARU in Queensland reached an all-time peak in influence and membership (11,000) in the months following the strike. The Union directly affected the outcome of Theodore's bid for the seat of Herbert in the November 1925 federal elections by encouraging an informal vote amongst its members. Theodore lost

methods in any way opposed to the Australian Labor Party.¹⁵

Theodore, who had just won preselection for the federal seat of Herbert, retired from the premiership, which made way for his mate 'Mac' to take over the reins. However, the plan backfired when McCormack lost the leadership ballot by one vote to William Gillies.

As Ernie Lane observed: 'the notorious anti-Communist pledge ... was not designed to eliminate Communists from the Party ... but ... was a very effective weapon to either drive militants out of the Labour Party or compel them to bow the knee to Baal and restrain their ardour.'¹⁶

Angry at the directive from their QCE, the Brisbane branch of the ALP called a meeting on 1 April¹⁷ and overwhelmingly voted for the following motion:

That we refer the letter demanding the expulsion of Communists to the next state A.L.P. Convention. That in the interests of the united working-class Front, as laid down at the June 1922 Congress of Trade Unions in Melbourne, this branch takes no action in expelling the Communists as instructed by the Q.C.E.¹⁸

O'Leary spoke for the motion at that and subsequent meetings called by the ALP and the QRU rank and file.¹⁹

QRU – South-eastern District

On 12 June 1925, as a result of the amalgamation of the Brisbane and Maryborough districts of the QRU, the South-eastern District Committee (SEDC) held its inaugural meeting in Trades Hall.²⁰

O'Leary, Secretary of the South Brisbane Sub-branch, was unanimously elected as their representative to stand on the committee. Just over two weeks later, fulfilling an agreement made in March 1922 at a cost of 40,000 pounds, the Queensland Government made the final payment to Mungana Mines Ltd for the purchase of Lady Jane and Girofla mines.²¹ These two events were to impact heavily on the executives of the QRU and the ALP, and on O'Leary.

In August, Joseph Silver Collings, State Organiser of the ALP, counted returns of signed pledges lodged by Queensland state branches. Less than a third had responded to the directive, and three branches had refused to comply. One, persuaded by its Secretary O'Leary, was the Annerley branch.

The 1925 Railway Strike

As far back as I can remember, my mother has told the story of how, when she was three years old, she embarrassed my grandmother by

The ALP and the ARU: How Personal Vendettas can Bring Down a Government

Dale Lorna Jacobsen¹

Introduction

Jack O'Leary was an organiser for the Australian Railways Union (ARU) from 1925 to 1930; he was also my grandfather. I never met him - he was killed in 1936 when my mother was just twelve - but I am proud to say I inherited his genes.

Jack arrived in Australia in 1911 a confirmed unionist; his father was a member of the National Amalgamated Labourers' Union in Wales. A reputation as a perpetual shop steward followed Jack from the coalmines of Wales and the merchant navy to his new life as a navy on the Mary Valley Line out from Gympie in south-east Queensland.

Upon arrival in Australia, Jack joined the Queensland United Railway Employees' Association (QUREA²), and then the Australian Labor³ Party (ALP) (Queensland Branch), whose socialistic beliefs mirrored his own. In an industrialised society that had forfeited the tribal way of life, the Labor Party

had assumed the role of protector of its people: the health and welfare of the whole family mattered, not simply the productive capabilities of the wage earner. Jack was elected Secretary of the Annerley Branch of the ALP in 1925.⁴

Some years ago, I decided to research my grandfather's union life. At the Rail Tram and Bus Union (RTBU) offices in Brisbane, thanks to the generosity of then Secretary Les Crofton, I pored over the dusty, crumbling pages of the Union's *The Advocate* journals from 1921 to 1930, as well as State Council and District Committee Minute Books. I pieced together the saga of the long-standing feud between the ALP and the ARU in Queensland. Integral to this story is my grandfather's move in 1926 from the Woolloongabba⁵ Goods Yards to Trades Hall, as an organiser for the ARU.

The conflict between the party and the Union grew as the ALP drifted



from its socialist objectives to become, in the opinion of journalist, social commentator and rebel Ernie Lane: 'a service catspaw of capitalist finance and vested interests.'⁶ Winning elections became all-important to the ALP. Consequently, fearing the electors' reaction to the communist bogey being promulgated by the conservative press in the wake of the Russian Revolution, the Queensland Central Executive (QCE) was keen to shed its socialist image.

Much has been written of the conflict between the ALP and the ARU, and I do not wish to go over old ground. My intention is to marry the family anecdotes to the official union and historical records from 1925 to the early 1930s and to present them as they affected my grandfather.

1925: One Big Union (OBU) and 'The Pledge'

By 1925, O'Leary, through working first on the Mary Valley Line in south-east Queensland, then as a shedman, labourer, wagonbuilder, boilermaker and fitter in workshops at Ipswich, Rockhampton, Warwick and Woolloongabba⁷ had acquired the general knowledge necessary to represent fellow workers at enquiries and Appeal Courts.⁸ He was also branch correspondent for *The Advocate*, the monthly journal of the ARU. Upon settling in Brisbane,

O'Leary became a close friend of George Rymer, President of the Union and editor of *The Advocate*, who regularly visited the O'Leary household on a social basis; the conversation always turned to union business.⁹

The ARU was widely acknowledged to be among the most militant of the industrial unions in the 1920s. Its Executive spearheaded the move for the formation of one big industrial union (OBU). This umbrella union would gather into one organisation all workers in a given industry, irrespective of the tools with which they worked, replacing the existing craft unions that formed an organisation around the workers' tools of trade.¹⁰ OBU advocates believed 'the merger of existing unions into OBU [would carry] sufficient weight and cohesion to impose its will not only on employers, but also on politicians and industrial courts.'¹¹

This push for an all-grades industrial union inflamed the animosity between Rymer and the Queensland Premier, Edward G. Theodore. Theodore sensed a threat to the existence of the Australian Workers Union (AWU), which planned to amalgamate small unions into a confederation of semi-independent industry groups that still retained their craft characteristics.¹²

Taking advantage of a resolution carried at the 1924 ALP Federal Conference, Theodore and William

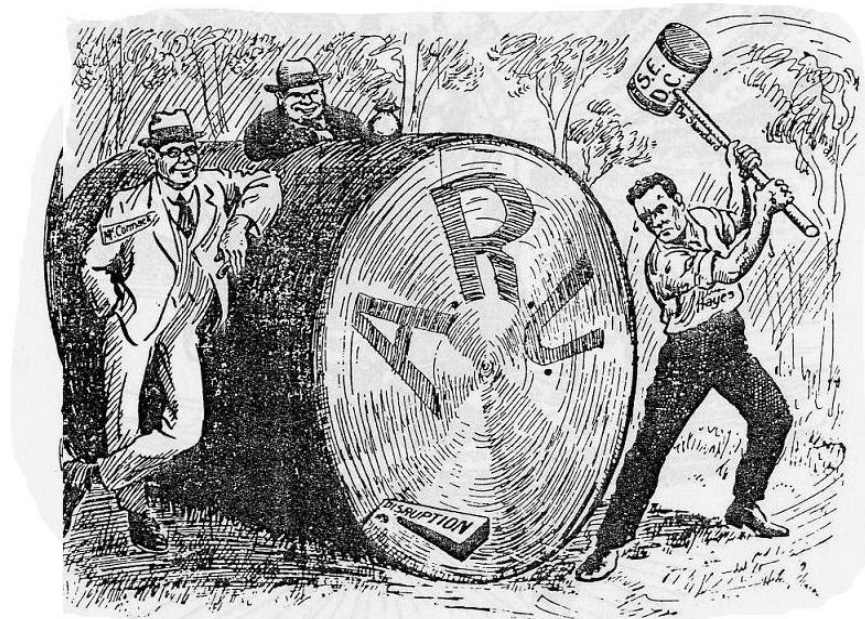
McCormack (Secretary for Public Lands¹³), founders of the AWU in Queensland, moved a motion at the February meeting of the QCE that the following pledge be drawn up and circularised to all branches within the state with the instruction that all ALP members sign by 31 July 1925:¹⁴

I hereby pledge myself to the Principles of the Australian Labor Party's State, Federal, and

Local Government Platforms, and to any alteration thereto made by a duly constituted Labor Convention. I also pledge myself to do everything in my power to further the objects of the Party as set forth in its Constitution and General Rules.

I hereby declare that I am not a member of a Communist Organisation or Party, or of any political party having objects and

THE MASTER'S WORK



Speaking at the Annerley Branch of the A.L.P. recently, Premier McCormack is reported to have said in reply to mention of the A.R.U., that : -

"The Government has nothing to fear from the A.R.U. now, as Hayes will fix them."

From *The Advocate* (1926), reproduced in Anne Smith, 'Georger Rymer and Labour Politics: 1917-1930', unpublished honours thesis, James Cook University, 1981.