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PAPERS IN LABOUR HISTORY

NO. 6

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Perth Branch

Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

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Papers in Labour History seeks to publish material of a serious nature about the history of work and historical development of the Labour Movement, with particular emphasis on Western Australia. It is intended to carry a balance of contributions from students and veterans of the Labour Movement. Naturally this raises controversial issues and no apology is made for the fact that few readers will be able to agree with all the views expressed here. While the editors have made suggestions regarding each of the contributions these have been of a stylistic nature and have not been intended in any way to interfere with the expression of the views of the authors.

This issue of *Papers in Labour History* begins with an article by Andrew Gill on the Parkhurst apprentices transported to Western Australia in the 1840's. Andrew is a freelance researcher on Western Australian history with a long-standing interest in the questions of crime and punishment. We begin a new three part series "Rosa Townsend's Story", (as told to Stuart Reid). Rosa was for many years an organiser with the Hotel and Club Caterers Union (later the Liquor and Allied Trades Union) and this the first part deals with her early life and her work. Then Jan Gothard takes us back to the nineteenth century to examine that much neglected historical subject, the domestic servant. Jan lectures on Australian History at Murdoch University and her research interests lie mainly in women's immigration and work. Our second interview in this issue is with Christine Evans, the T.L.C.'s Musician in Residence. She talks with Charlie Fox about herself, her work, the relationship between artists and trade unions and the history of working-class music, art and literature. Our fifth article is a transcript of an address by the former State President of the A.M.W.U., and Vice President of the T.L.C. Harold Peden to a meeting of the Perth branch of the Society for the Study of Labour History. Harold discussed the struggle over wages and overtime and the character of the union in the metal trades in the 1950's and 1960's. This issue concludes with the third and final part of Gil Barr's fascinating story in which he describes his years as State Secretary of the A.W.U. We wish to thank Gil for permission to use his reminiscences.

It is sometimes difficult to find enough articles for a journal such as *Papers in Labour History*. The Editors wish to urge anybody who would like to write an article of reminiscence in print about their experiences in the labour movement or the workplace to do so and send their contributions to the editors. As usual we would be very interested to receive feedback from the readers of the pieces we have published. We also wish to draw readers' attention to the list of sponsors, whose names appear on the inside of the front cover and we thank them for their continued support.

Forced Labour for the West: Parkhurst 'Apprentices' in Western Australia, 1842-1852.

Andrew Gill*

Between 1842 and 1849, 234 male juvenile convicts, aged 10 to 20 (Table 1) were despatched to the 'free' colony of Western Australia. Once in the colony, they were pardoned on two conditions: that they were apprenticed to local employers, and that they did not return to the country in which they were convicted during the term of their sentence.¹

Despite repeated references to them as 'lads', 'boys', 'youths' or 'juvenile immigrants', they may still be legitimately regarded as convicts: they had all been convicted in British courts and sentenced to terms of 'Transportation beyond the seas'. They were just as much convicts as any of the thousands of men, women and children sent to New South Wales or to Van Dieman's Land; they were just as much 'unwilling emigrants' as any of the 9,600 odd convicts sent to Western Australia after June 1850.²

Using this definition, I argue that the first phase of convict labour, of 'forced labour'³ as at least one contemporary termed it, began, not in 1850, but in 1842. This interpretation in no way diminishes the importance of 1850. The 'convict agitation' taking place in the late 1840s was aimed at establishing Western Australia as a penal colony - a legal condition in which the colony would become a formal extension of the British penal system, and for which the British government would assume some degree of financial responsibility.⁴

In this paper I wish to provide an overview of the 'apprenticeship system' applied to the Parkhurst convicts between 1842 and late 1851. The first section deals with the legal structure of apprenticeship and the ideas of the Guardians appointed to supervise the apprentices. The second section looks very briefly at the masters who employed the apprentices, and the third section looks at the health, work and discontents of the apprentices themselves.

PARDONS AND GUARDIANS

The framework of the apprenticeship system was laid down in a list of 'suggestions' made by members of the Parkhurst prison Visitors committee in March 1842.⁵ The Visitors were penal bureaucrats, appointed by the home office to advise it on the management of the prison, and on the disposal of its convicts. Four Visitors were responsible for drawing up the 'suggestions': William Crawford, G.G. Perry, Joshua (later Sir Joshua) Jebb and J.P. Kay-Shuttleworth (later Sir J.P. Kay-Shuttleworth Bt.).

* Andrew Gill is a freelance historian and researcher.

The most important of the suggestions were: that the indentures should be for a minimum of 2 years and a maximum of 5 years; that a graduated annual 'allowance' should be paid to each apprentice. At least half of the 'allowance' was to be placed in a savings bank and repaid to the apprentice at the end of his indentures. Any punishments to be inflicted on the apprentices were to be specified in the indenture. Any case of alleged misbehaviour should be taken to the local magistrate for judgement; no master should be allowed to apply corporal punishment to his apprentice. The colonial government should appoint a 'competent person' to act as a Guardian. The Guardian should visit the apprentice three times a year, write a bi-annual report on their treatment, and an annual report on the 'system'. The Guardian would be responsible for finding work for the apprentices, and for supervising any who were out of work. To facilitate the Guardian's visits, the apprentices were to be indentured to employers living as near as possible to the 'seat of government'. The masters should be required to be responsible for the moral and religious welfare of their apprentices. Apprentices should be exempt, as far as possible, from labour on Sundays, and they should attend divine service. The master should also be made responsible for maintaining the apprentice during any illness, to provide medical care, and should the apprentice die, be responsible for his funeral.

The colonial office added three important conditions.⁶ The powers of the Guardian and the conditions of the indenture should be specified in an ordinance to be passed by the colonial legislature. No 'unavoidable expense' incurred in the administration of the apprentices should be borne by the colony. The Guardian's salary, and the cost of maintaining the apprentices prior to employment, or between employers should be paid entirely by the British government. And most importantly, the pardon to be received by the convict should be effective and absolute once the indenture was signed. The act of signing would convert a juvenile felon into an ordinary citizen who was to be subject only to the ordinary laws applying to apprentices already in the colony. On no account should the original sentence of Transportation be 'revived'.

These 'suggestions' arrived with the first 18 Parkhurst convicts in August 1842. Most of them were embodied in an ordinance passed by the Legislative Council (6 Vict. no. 8), in the text of the indenture attached to the ordinance, and in the written instructions⁷ from Governor Hutt to the first Guardian, John Schoales.

By the end of November 1842, Schoales had found work for all the convicts and had set the rate of 'allowance' which they were to receive. (See Table 3). The whole of the allowance was to be paid to the Guardian and deposited in the Western Australian Bank; the apprentice would officially see no money of his own until the end of his indentures.

The colonial office and the Parkhurst Visitors approved the 'system' adopted by Schoales, with one exception. The first clause of 6 Vict no. 8 required that the identity of the apprentices, referred to in the ordinance as 'Government Juvenile Immigrants', should be established by the publication of their names in the *W.A. Government Gazette*. The Visitors protested that this requirement attached an undesirable stigma to the apprentices. The home office and colonial office agreed, and ordered Hutt to remove the clause. The W.A. Legislative Council complied, passing an amending ordinance, 7 Vict no. 11, in 1844.⁸

The Visitors were also mildly concerned that the 5 year indentures fixed for most of the Ship, Simon Taylor convicts (Table 4) were too long. In mid 1843, just as the Ship, Shepherd was about to depart, a directive was drafted instructing the Governor to set the indentures so that they expired when the apprentice reached the age of 18. This directive did not reach the colony until February 1844, by which time, most of the Shepherd convicts had also been indentured for five years.⁹

John Schoales quickly assembled a number of excuses for not altering the indentures.¹⁰ He claimed that since there was no way to tell how old the convicts were when they were indentured, there was also no way to say when they would be 18. If the indentures of the Shepherd convicts were shortened, this would create discontent among the older apprentices on the Simon Taylor. The length of the indenture could only be altered with the consent of the apprentice's master, and generally they would be unwilling to take an apprentice for a term shorter than five years. Finally, Schoales argued that it was essential to exercise the longest possible control over all the apprentices:

"...in Colonies where temptation to a relapse into crime is so very strong through the prevalence of drinking among the lower orders and the inefficiency of Police, (that) the longer these lads are kept out of temptation's way, and under the rigid inspection of Guardian & Master the better will be the chance of a permanent reform."

These excuses satisfied the home office and the Visitors. The original indentures of the Simon Taylor and the Shepherd convicts were allowed to stand, and no clear instruction was given concerning the length of the indentures of future apprentices.¹¹

These were the only cases of direct intervention by the British government in the apprenticeship system between 1842 and the decision to end apprenticeship which was taken in early 1850. The Guardians were allowed a very wide discretion in the way they administered the 'system'. John Schoales and his successor Frederick Wittenoom each made variations to the details of the original 'system' set forth in 1842. The length of the indentures imposed on the convicts was reduced (Table 4). While initially, some apprentices were indentured in

'trades', this became less frequent; most apprentices served out their indentures as farm servants or shepherds, and they were sent further and further away from Perth. By the end of 1849, the 150 odd apprentices were scattered over a radius of 100 miles from Perth, from Moore river in the north, to Busselton in the south, and eastwards to Nalyarring (about 10 miles north of the present town of Kellerberrin).¹² In 1845, Schoales allowed the masters to pay part of the annual 'allowance' in livestock, rather than in cash.¹³ In late 1847, some apprentices whose original sentence had expired - mostly those on the Shepherd - were allowed to 'work for themselves' - that is, to bargain for full adult wages.¹⁴ The Guardian continued to hold their indentures as a security for their good behaviour, and the 'allowance' which had already been collected was only repaid to them when the original indentures had expired. Frederick Wittenoom conceded that the apprentice should be allowed to receive a part of the 'allowance' during the indenture - to prevent petty pilfering, and to prevent a large lump sum being paid to him at the end of the indenture which might enable him to leave the colony. Wittenoom also used the withholding of the allowance during the indenture as a means to punish misbehaviour by the apprentice.¹⁵ In March 1849, Wittenoom and Governor Fitzgerald reduced the rate of the annual 'allowance' due to the apprentices.¹⁶ But this reduction applied only to the convicts who arrived on the Mary in October 1849.

The first Guardian, John Schoales, was cautious about the likelihood of being able to complete the 'reformation' of the convicts sent out from Parkhurst. In 1845, he wrote:

"Too much must not be demanded or expected. It is not in the power of men to work the thorough reformation of his fellow Mortal. It is the Almighty alone who can touch and subdue the heart. Man may compel the suppression of open displays of Sin and Vice, even though the disposition to offend remains. But there his power stops... he may teach, may indicate, but he cannot command.

Even so, every effort to restore an individual to a useful place in society was worth the effort:

"... shall it be said it is nothing to restore to Social order those who otherwise had been outcasts? If the petty thief or bold burglar are converted into sober and orderly citizens - even though the heart be unchanged, has nothing been done? Surely it is much to rescue the mind at an age when it is most susceptible of impressions of good or evil... much to teach him who otherwise would have preyed upon the Public, an honest means of earning his own bread, and at the same time offer him a field where he may exercise these means."

These cautious views were repeated by Frederick Wittenoom.¹⁷

Both Guardians accepted that some apprentices would reject their efforts to restore them to the 'social order'; both men argued that they should have greater powers to punish the small number of apprentices whom they termed 'incurable'. Specifically, they requested the

power to deport 'incorrigibles' to Van Dieman's Land to serve out their original sentence of transportation. When the Parkhurst Visitors and the colonial office rejected these applications, ¹⁸they improvised: some 'incorrigibles' were sent to Rottneest prison to be supervised by the irascible superintendent Henry Vincent; others were sent to be part of the crew of the Champion, the colonial schooner.¹⁹

Both Guardians were well aware of the need to be cautious in intervening in disputes between masters and apprentices; they preferred to leave such disputes to be settled by the local magistrate. At the same time, they were both prepared to defend apprentices, in court if necessary. Schoales organised the unsuccessful defence of John Gavin, charged with murder; Wittenoom defended successfully apprentices at the Quarter Sessions and argued for the release from imprisonment of some of those who were being punished for misbehaviour.²⁰

Wittenoom continued much of the 'system' bequeathed to him by Schoales. But his views also expressed the influence of his own experience of growing up in Western Australia. He had seen for himself how the colony had emerged from the chaotic, hungry years of the early 1830s into a recognisably stable, orderly and thoroughly hierarchical society. He knew that the prices of 'necessaries' and even some imported luxuries had fallen since the 1830s, and at the same time that some wages, for shepherds and tradesmen, had risen. He believed that Western Australia was a society in which any person who established a 'character' for 'steadiness' and honesty could obtain regular work, and thus a modest share in the colony's progress. He applied this optimistic view to the apprentices:

"An opportunity is offered them here of retrieving their character.. here there is the sure and cheering prospect which every man has in a new and rising colony, of being able to earn an honest livelihood."²¹

The restrictions and the low 'allowance' involved in a short indenture were a small price to pay for access to the future rewards available in the colony. Ideally, he wanted the apprentice to serve out his entire indenture with a single master. He lectured more than one apprentice on the evils of wanting to change his master: "To be continually changing is a sure sign of a vagabond disposition and at the end of his time such a lad has neither character, nor settled habits of industry."²² As we shall see in the concluding part of this paper, the apprentices were often not impressed with such arguments.

THE MASTERS

Altogether some 234 individuals²³ employed one or more apprentices between August 1842 and March 1852. 80% of this number employed only one or two apprentices over the whole ten years. This large group was split almost evenly between the Guardianship of John Schoales, 1842-1847, and of Frederick Wittenoom, 1847-1852.

1 master employed 10 apprentices (E.P. Barrett-Lennard)

1 master employed 8 apprentices (Thomas or Edward or Richard Middleton or all three?)

5 masters employed 6 apprentices.

7 masters employed 5 apprentices.

10 masters employed 4 apprentices.

17 masters employed 3 apprentices.

194 masters employed 1 or 2 apprentices.

234

All these masters were private individuals, or part of 'family units'. In addition, three men, Daniel Scott and James Harding (both Fremantle Harbour masters) and Lt. Frank Helpman R.N., commander of the colonial schooner Champion, 'employed' or supervised some 20 apprentices on behalf of the colonial government.²⁴

Because most Parkhurst apprentices, and especially those arriving in 1848 or 1849, worked as 'farm servants' or 'shepherds' (Table 6), we can safely assume that a large majority of their masters were farmers or pastoralists of some degree. But within this very substantial group, there was a wide variety of social standing; it was certainly not a homogeneous group, nor was it dominated, in numerical terms at least, by those men known in orthodox Western Australian history as 'big' landowners/occupiers. During the 1840s the largest landowners/occupiers were probably still Thomas Peel Sr., Sir James Stirling, Edward Hammersley and William Tanner. But Stirling, Hammersley and Tanner were all out of the colony for most or all of the apprenticeship period (1842-1852) and Thomas Peel Sr. took only one apprentice.²⁵ Several other well known names - the Molloys, the Bussells in the south, John Hassell in the south-west, J.S. Roe and Peter Broun in the upper Swan area are conspicuous by their absence from the list of masters.

Yet there were certainly some men who could claim to be old settlers, who had received large land grants in the early 1830s and who did employ apprentices. W.L. Brockman (6), E.P. Barrett-Lennard (10), George Fletcher Moore (2) and his brother, Samuel, (2), the Burges brothers (Lockier, Samuel and William) (6) and the Middleton family (a total of 8).

But the vast majority of this farmer/pastoralist group came from much less exalted backgrounds. Some were tenants - John and George Pollard - renting from F.C. Singleton near Pinjarra or James Lockyer, renting a sheep run from T.R.C. Walter near Northam.²⁶ Some others had arrived in the colony as labourers, but had prospered sufficiently to be able to employ apprentices. George Syred arrived in the early 1830s. By 1847, he had a share in a wayside inn at Baylup, near Toodyay, and was able to employ six apprentices as farm servants. John Dewar also arrived as an indentured servant. By the late 1840s, he was farming to the north of Toodyay and employing five apprentices.²⁷ On the coast between

Mandurah in the north and Busselton in the south, there was a substantial group of 'small' farmers who employed some 28 apprentices between them. Some of these men were survivors of the 'Australind' experiment; most employed one or two apprentices. The largest member of this group was the Clifton family - Marshall Waller, William Pearce and Robert William - who took six apprentices between them.²⁸

In numerical terms, the 'big' landowners were outnumbered by lesser mortals, but did they still receive a disproportionately large amount of this 'assigned labour' - for apprentice labour was 'assigned' in all but name?²⁹ The answer is that they did not: Barrett-Lennard took 10 apprentices, W.L. Brockman took six, the Middletons took eight, Joseph Hardey and John Wall Hardey took two each, but these were spread over 10 years. For these men and perhaps others, like George and Samuel Moore, their apprentices were simply one or two additional servants among an already moderately large adult workforce, on reasonably well established farms.³⁰ It could scarcely be said of these men that they ever depended on the apprentices as a major part of their labour force.

PHYSIQUE & STRENGTH

Soon after their arrival, Schoales described 10 out of the 18 convicts on the Simon Taylor as 'small' (in one case 'very small'), one as 'not very strong', and five as 'stoutish'.³¹ The context of these descriptions is important. Schoales was concerned to find employers as quickly as possible for the convicts in order to put their pardons into effect. To do this he had to ensure that the 'allowance' stipulated by the Visitors was set at a low rate. To make sure that this in turn was done by Governor Hutt, Schoales stressed the lack of size, strength and skill possessed by the convicts. Once he had achieved his aim, he paid very little attention to the apprentices' physique and had very little trouble in finding them masters.

For the convicts on the Shepherd, Schoales was far more concerned with their background in England and at Parkhurst, than in their size. Nonetheless, he singled out four of the 28 convicts as 'small'. He was particularly concerned with Denis Regan and William Beale, referring to them as:

"... babes more fit for the nursery than for the hard and ever recurring struggle for existence that we battle with in a Colony. To send infants like Regan and Beale is a folly (,) it is worse than useless."

Both apprentices were transferred several times because their prospective employers allegedly found them to be too small or weak to do the work expected of them.³² F.C. Singleton claimed that Beale had barely been able to carry half a bucket of water.³³ Perhaps it was this reference in company with Schoales' comments on the Simon Taylor convicts, which underly

Pamela Statham's remark that "... many (apprentices) were weak, sickly and unable to perform even simple tasks."³⁴

After the Shepherd Schoales seems to have dropped his concern with the physical size of the convicts. He commended the Halifax and Cumberland convicts, and with good reason. Thomas Hesketh (Halifax) became an expert 'headsman' on a whaler.³⁵ The four juvenile convicts from Millbank, arriving on the Cumberland, whose heights were recorded at that prison were close to the average for their ages:

Richard Boulton	5' 6"	aged 17	PCOM 2/22	p.51
Charles Graham	5' 3"	aged 17	PCOM 2/22	p.253
John Green	5' 2 ³ / ₄ "	aged 17	PCOM 2/22	p.246
John Payne	5' 0"	aged 17	PCOM 2/23	p.27

Wittenoom seems to have been generally untroubled by the physique of the 154 convicts on the Orient, the Ameer and the Mary. He named only three apprentices as 'weak', and he complained vaguely that 'a few' of the Mary convicts were 'wanting in physical strength'. At the same time he had no difficulty in sending four of the 'stoutest' to load timber on to the Mary at Bunbury.³⁶ He also sent 10 apprentices to be 'pulling hands' in the pilot boats located at Rottneest and Fremantle. Like the post of 'headsman' on a whaler, this was scarcely work for 'undersized boys'.

Between them, Schoales and Wittenoom referred specifically to 19 out of the 234 apprentices as 'weak' or 'small'. Out of these 19, 15 arrived on the Simon Taylor and the Shepherd. A fair generalisation might be that the convicts on the first two vessels included a higher proportion of those of small stature. They had suffered longer periods on the meagre Parkhurst diet (Table 2) than the later arrivals. They had been sent to Parkhurst before the Home office directive that convicts selected at Millbank to go to Parkhurst should be: at least 4' 6" in height, at least 14 years old, and to be physically capable of earning a living in the colonies. While the records of Millbank make it clear that this minimum height was not always observed,³⁷ the directive does suggest that the proportion of convicts who were short in height would be less on the last three vessels. Judged on the question of height alone, Statham's assertion scarcely seems justified.

DEATH, INJURY & SICKNESS

Among the 234 apprentices supervised by Schoales and Wittenoom, three died during their indentures (aside from John Gavin hanged for murder in 1844). Richard Andrews died when the cart he was driving overturned and crushed him. Frederick Davis died in the colonial hospital in late 1848, from consumption. Henry Blake died in May 1850, from 'typhus fever'.³⁸

At least three apprentices suffered serious injuries during their indentures. Thomas Phillips' right arm was 'shockingly fractured and lacerated' in April 1845 in an accident involving a threshing machine. For over a year, he was confined to the colonial hospital while the colonial surgeon removed pieces of straw and shattered bone from his arm. When he was finally sent back to work, his wrist was still 'crippled' and he had only limited use of his right hand. George Brixie suffered a badly broken leg in May 1845. A year after the accident, his leg still had five 'holes' - probably abscesses - in it and he was unable to do anything but very light work. In his first summer in the colony, Henry Walls contracted several ulcers on both his legs. The colonial surgeon considered that it was unlikely that the ulcers would ever heal permanently in Western Australia's dry climate. The colonial office predictably vetoed Schoales' request that Walls should be sent back to Parkhurst. Eventually, the ulcers did heal and Walls was able to resume work as a shoemaker.³⁹ Several other apprentices suffered from significant disabilities or sickness during their indentures. (Table 5).

At the end of this very brief survey of health and sickness, we are now in a better position to judge the rough proportion of apprentices who were fit and able to work. Taken at face value, we have seen that there were perhaps 19 apprentices who might have been 'small' or 'weak' - according to the judgements of the Guardians or masters, a further seven who were specifically mentioned as 'weak-minded' or allegedly 'insane' and another 17 mentioned in various sources as having endured a sickness or injury during their indentures. This gives a total of 43, or about 18% of the apprentices.

In practise, I suggest that this figure is an over-estimate. Being 'small' did not prevent most of the Simon Taylor convicts from either being apprenticed or from working out their indentures successfully and even earning the praise of their masters and the Guardians. Only three apprentices, Brixie, Phillips and Walls, suffered a serious injury which required prolonged treatment in hospital; and in only three cases, Edward Robinson, Thomas Berry and William Frankleton, was alleged insanity the cause of disruption to the usual pattern of work within the apprenticeship system. The apprentices who are listed in Table 5 who were deaf or partially sighted or who suffered from other disabilities, still worked and even with these disabilities earned the praise of their masters. On these grounds, the figure for those who were seriously impaired in their efforts to work is, I suggest, probably closer to 20 - a modest 8% - rather than 43 or 18%. This in turn casts more doubt on Statham's assertion quoted earlier in this section. I suggest that over 80% of the apprentices were fit and able to make a positive contribution to the colonial economy.

TRADES

Of all the sections of Western Australia's workforce, the category of 'tradesmen' was probably the smallest and the most vulnerable to fluctuations in demand. Those trades involved in building - carpenter, mason or bricklayer - depended on a continuing demand for housing either from a steady flow of tolerably wealthy immigrants, or from colonists prepared to invest in urban housing. These trades did enjoy a modest 'boom' between 1839 and 1842, but they also suffered from the depression which followed from roughly 1843 to 1845. Even less secure were those involved in clothing - shoemakers and tailors. They faced competition from imported clothes and shoes, and from those who preferred to 'mend' than to buy new clothes. Possibly two of the more secure areas were those for tradesmen connected to work on farms - as wheelwrights, coopers, blacksmiths and rough carpenters, or as retailers of food, butchers and bakers.

The Parkhurst Visitors were no doubt blissfully unaware that this situation existed in Western Australia when they made their 'suggestions' that Parkhurst convicts should be indentured 'as far as possible' in the 'trades' which they had supposedly 'learnt' in the prison. Schoales quickly recognised that in Western Australia this was indeed a hopeless task - there was no possibility of apprenticing 18 'Tailors' - as the Simon Taylor convicts were described⁴⁰ - in that trade. Schoales aimed instead to simply find 'trades' of any sort for the apprentices.

He had mixed success. He found that the tradespeople of Perth and Fremantle were reluctant to take an apprentice without receiving a premium.⁴¹ They were also accustomed to taking colonial children simply in return for board, food and clothing, and without any payment of 'cash' during the indenture.

By offering the longest possible indenture - five years - and a very low rate of annual 'allowance', Schoales managed to place nine out of the 18 Simon Taylor convicts in 'Trades': two butchers, two bakers, two carpenters, one harness-maker and a solitary tailor. Two carpenters, two butchers and one baker served out their indentures in their respective 'trades'. Three of them stayed with one master/mistress for the entire time. Joshua Harwood changed his master but stayed with the same trade. John Morrell was transferred no less than four times, serving variously as a carpenter, a wheelwright, a smith and a blacksmith. On two occasions the transfer was made because the master's business was slack. All the other apprentices who began in 'trades' were moved to other occupations.⁴²

By the time the Shepherd convicts left Parkhurst in 1843, the prison had begun to broaden its workbase. On the Shepherd, nine convicts could claim to have a second 'trade': cooper (1),

bricklayers (3), sawyers (2) and carpenters (3). The remainder were either 'tailors' or 'shoemakers'.⁴³ Unfortunately, few of them were to have the chance to use these extra 'skills' in the colony. Between August 1842 and the arrival of the Shepherd in October 1843, Western Australia's economy had begun to slide into depression. At the end of 1844, Schoales reported that the colony had been in depression for the previous 15 months, and he advised that no further convicts should be sent out till the end of 1846.⁴⁴ Against this background, it is not surprising that Schoales had some difficulty in finding 'trades' for the Shepherd convicts.

Only six out of the 28 Shepherd convicts served any part of their indenture in a 'trade': three as shoemakers, one each as a wheelwright, a bricklayer and a cooper. Only one - Richard Andrews, the bricklayer, served more than two years consecutively and he died tragically when his cart overturned. All the others were transferred to another occupation, usually 'farm servant'.⁴⁵

In 1845, a new barrier appeared. During that year, Schoales had conducted a survey on the working of the apprenticeship system amongst the existing employers. He learnt that the masters were generally opposed to any apprentices being placed in trades, or being allowed to stay in towns at any time. These opinions came most forcefully from rural employers and members of the York Agricultural Society.⁴⁶ Schoales, recognising their influence, bowed to them. As a result, none of the 16 Cumberland convicts served in a trade;⁴⁷ all of them worked either as domestic servants, farm servants or shepherds. When Wittenoom became Guardian, he too gave preference to rural masters.⁴⁸ The last three vessels, the Orient, the Ameer, and the Mary, carried out 154 convicts, but only 18 of them served any part of their indentures in a 'trade'.⁴⁹

FARM SERVANTS

As table six shows, a very large majority of Parkhurst apprentices, particularly those who arrived in 1848 and 1849, served all or part of their indentures under the designation 'farm servant'. 'Farm servant' was a thoroughly vague term. In some cases, it clearly over-lapped with 'domestic service' - fetching water and wood - and occasionally it involved periods of more specialised labour. Richard Murray - described as a 'farm servant' - was employed by his master, Thomas Brown, to plaster the walls of a new house.⁵⁰

For most Parkhurst apprentices, agricultural labour on a regular year round, daily basis was probably a new experience. About 40% of the apprentices are credited in the Parkhurst prison register with a specific occupation, but only one apprentice - a solitary 'ploughboy' - was clearly connected to agriculture. The remaining 60% were described either as 'labourer', or their 'trade or calling' was given as 'No trade', 'None', or simply left a blank space in the

register. 98 out of the 154 apprentices (63%) arriving on the last three vessels, in 1848 and 1849, fall into this large and ill-defined category.⁵¹

It is an accepted, indeed largely unchallenged, orthodoxy that in the nineteenth century juvenile delinquents came from larger towns or cities, or from the 'industrial' areas of Britain. Broadly, this seems to have been true for the Parkhurst apprentices. Just over one third of them had been convicted in a London court. A further 20% were convicted either in the industrial areas of the north-west - Liverpool, Manchester, Salford - or in the west midlands - Warwick, Stafford and Birmingham. Using Deane & Cole's classification of English counties, it seems that 60% of the apprentices would have come from those counties (including London) whose 'economic base' was either 'industrial' or 'commercial'.⁵² The two to four years which the apprentices had spent as convicts in Parkhurst had done little to alter this general lack of 'farm experience'. It was not until November 1849 - well after the Mary had left England with what was to be the last batch of apprentices - that agricultural labour became a central part of the prison discipline at Parkhurst.⁵³

In spite of this lack of experience, and their considerable disappointment at not being able to use the meagre 'skills' from the 'trade' which they had been forced to learn in the prison, many of the apprentices/farm servants served their masters well. Generally, the convicts on the first four vessels changed their masters more frequently than those who arrived on the last three vessels. This is scarcely surprising, since they faced longer indentures - either four or five years (Table 4). Even so, there were some 10 apprentices who won the praise of both their masters and the Guardians for their work as 'farm servants'. At the end of five years as a farm servant to Samuel Moore, Henry Towton was described as:

"Well versed in all farming operations, and bears a good character. On his discharge, several settlers, as well as his late master, were anxious to engage him..."⁵⁴

On the Orient, out of 51 apprentices, 10 served out their indentures with a single master as a farm servant; a further 11 served out their time in the same category with one or two transfers. On the Ameer, 13 served one master; a further nine served one, two or three masters as farm servants. On the Mary, 15 apprentices served one master satisfactorily as a farm servant, another four served one or two masters. About six of the Mary apprentices served without any trouble until the last 12 or 6 months of their two year indentures, and then absconded. A fair generalisation, based on the observations and judgements of the Guardians and the masters, might be that on each of the last three vessels, between one third and one half of the apprentices worked 'satisfactorily' as 'farm servants'.⁵⁵

SHEPHERDS

From about mid 1845 - at a time when the colonial economy was still recovering from depression, and when there was substantial emigration from the colony a number of apprentices 'graduated' from 'farm servant' to 'shepherd'.⁵⁶ About 28 out of the 80 apprentices (35%) on the first four vessels 'graduated' to shepherding. Despite their urban background and their lack of training at Parkhurst, most of them adapted well to their new task. Within 12 months of arriving in the colony, Terence McGrath - an ex-tailor from London, aged 17 - was in charge of 800 sheep for Robert Burgh. Richard Boulton - a needle maker from Worcester - supervised 1000 sheep for John Sewell Sr.. Only four of these early shepherds were specifically named as incompetent or negligent in the care of sheep.⁵⁷

About 32 of the 154 apprentices (20%) on the last three vessels served all or part of their indentures as shepherds. Here, the results were more varied. From the Orient, 17 apprentices served as shepherds, but only seven seem to have given consistently good service. Some reverted to farm servant after only a brief spell; others improved after changing their master.

By the time the Ameer and the Mary arrived, the demand for apprentices as shepherds had fallen, probably because many of the colony's flock owners, especially in the York-Toodyay district, were now employing ex-apprentices to tend their sheep.⁵⁸ Roughly half of the 15 shepherds on the Ameer and the Mary gave consistently good service. 12 out of these 32 'later' shepherds were transferred, fined or otherwise punished for neglecting their master's sheep.

The shepherds from Parkhurst were probably its greatest 'success' in Western Australia: well over two-thirds of them gave good service and thereby gained a powerful body of supporters for the apprentice-ship system as a whole.

PUNISHMENT

Clause 8 of the ordinance 6 Vict no. 8 specified the penalties for misbehaviour by an apprentice. For a first conviction for any 'misdemeanour, misconduct or ill-behaviour' an apprentice was liable to a maximum of three months imprisonment and a fine of all or part of his annual 'allowance'. For a second or subsequent offence, in addition to the fine and imprisonment, he might suffer a maximum of 36 lashes. Any time spent in gaol as a result of a sentence under this clause was to be added to the term of his indentures. Using the Guardians' account and the Tabular returns, we can gain some approximate idea of how these official penalties were applied.⁵⁹ Over the 10 years from August 1842 to March 1852, 50 individual apprentices (21%) were either fined or had deductions made from their 'allowances' to cover

court costs, stock losses or damage to property. 46 individual apprentices (19%) were gaoled for up to three months under section 8. At least 11 apprentices were whipped, also under section 8. These punishments overlapped with one another. An apprentice gaoled for absconding would often have a deduction made for the cost of sending out a constable in pursuit of him. Those who were flogged might have a deduction made to pay the flatellator. Taken as distinct individuals, a total of 79 apprentices (33%) were fined or gaoled or flogged by order of the Magistrates in Petty sessions.

In addition to these official punishments, both guardians were conscious of the need to allow the masters some latitude in how they punished their apprentices. Despite the 'suggestion' of the Visitors, they both allowed masters to use corporal punishment. Thus Schoales recorded that Stephen Parker had flogged Henry Walton for theft and pilfering: Wittenoom reported that E.P. Barrett-Lennard had flogged Joseph Lowe for impertinence.⁶⁰ Wittenoom preferred that masters should apply 'paternal punishment' to young apprentices rather than send them to goal. Schoales himself applied corporal punishment to apprentices for absconding or for petty theft.⁶¹

PATTERNS OF CONFLICT

Whether they worked as tradesmen, on farms as shepherds, sailed or rowed in the pilot boat, apprentices were expected to be obedient, deferential, honest and industrious. For those who obeyed these requirements, there was a chance to build a stable relationship with their employer, to establish what Wittenoom referred to as 'character' and to acquire some confidence about their future lives when their indentures expired. When Terence McGrath wrote to the Governor of Parkhurst in December 1846, he had a reasonably clear idea of his future. He expected to earn £30 a year, he had some sheep of his own, and he was putting his background as a tailor (his pre) Parkhurst occupation) to good use, speculating on how the skins of local animals might be made into a financial return. His master, Robert Burgh, wrote warmly in praise of his apprentice.⁶²

McGrath's situation was not unique. Robert Habgood, a farmer-merchant, wrote of John Boulton, an apprentice who had lost the sight of one eye: "... I must say I could not wish for a better boy, he is willing (,) civil and well-spoken, and I would not exchange him for any boy I know in the Colony."⁶³ William Chifney a companion of Terence McGrath, drew high praise from Henry Burgh:

"He reads and writes, and keeps the common farm books regulating the supplies to the sheep stations, and makes a trustworthy servant whom I should find it very difficult to replace."⁶⁴

But just as following the rules and orders of their masters and mistresses brought praise, so deviating from them brought punishment. John Schoales spelled out the sort of behaviour expected from an apprentice in a letter to John Tyne - an 'incorrigible' - who had been sent out to John Henry Monger in the winter of 1844:

"John Tyne, I am sorry to hear that all the correction you have had seems to be of no use to you. You still appear to be as idle and insolent as ever. Now I tell you in writing some plain rules for your conduct....

1. Your duty requires you to rise early. 4 o'clock is not too early. So let me have no grumbling about this.
2. When told to do a thing, do it at once. You have no business to talk or argue in the matter.
3. When asked a plain question give a plain answer. I know you to be very free with your tongue, therefore let me hear nothing about you chattering with Mr Monger or any member of his family or people in the way you used to do in my house.
4. What you are told to do by any of Mr Monger's people or family you must consider as much a command as if he or I told you and must be obeyed...

You had better not throw away this chance."⁶⁵

Most of the apprentices fell between the extremes represented by McGrath, Chifney, Dixon and Bolt on the one hand and John Tyne and the other 'incorrigibles' on the other. Reports of this large majority varied greatly from one year to the next, by the work they did and by the master they served. There was certainly no simple dividing line between a 'bad' and a 'good' apprentice, or between those who were simply 'difficult' and those who were dubbed 'incorrigible'. Several apprentices shared at least one of John Tyne's alleged failings - of being too free with their tongue. At least 11 apprentices were transferred to another master on the grounds of insolence; another five served up to three months gaol for the same offence. Yet insolence did not necessarily indicate the apprentice was unwilling to work: Richard Murray had gained good reports during the first few years of his indentures, but in 1847, he was transferred to another master:

"An impertinent answer obtained for him rather a severe thrashing from his former master Mr Middleton; he was therefore, at the request of all parties, removed. A good lad to work, and no reason to suspect his honesty, but he is much too free with his tongue."⁶⁶

Much depended on the tolerance of the master or mistress. Robert Strickland served out a five year apprenticeship to Mary Oakley, as a baker. During this time he was fined £1 for 'wilful mischief' and 'impertinence', flogged once for 'bad language' and one more for 'gross indecency'. Schoales once reported him as a 'bold, bad, hardened lad...' Yet Mary Oakley was still willing to describe him in these terms: "I cannot say that the boy is free from faults...

I am sure he has not so many as most of the Colonial boys."⁶⁷ When his indentures expired, Mary Oakley was still anxious to re-employ him.

Not all masters were so tolerant. William Tomlinson, who was deaf, was sent out to work for Samuel Burges. After about 18 months, Tomlinson was sent out to be a shepherd - an occupation requiring at least reasonable hearing in order to keep track of the bells which indicated the movement of the sheep. Schoales acknowledged this was a problem, but he made no effort to change Tomlinson's master or his occupation. In March 1849, there was a violent clash between master and apprentice. Tomlinson walked the 60 miles from York to Perth to complain that Samuel Burges had beaten him and 'threatened to knock his brains out'. Tomlinson probably anticipated a counter-charge by Burges, for he wanted his own complaint heard in Perth rather than at York, where William Burges, Samuel's brother, was a magistrate. Wittenoom sent Tomlinson back to York, where he was promptly gaoled for allegedly 'striking his master'.⁶⁸

Schoales and Hutt had ignored the 'suggestion' by the Parkhurst Visitors that the rate of clothing and food due to an apprentice should be stated in the indenture. Schoales trusted the master's judgement as to what constituted 'sufficient' food; and he made it plain that the masters should maintain the stock of the apprentice's clothes at the level and quality which existed when the apprentice was sent out to work.⁶⁹ More than one master was reminded of this unwritten obligation.

Disputes over food, clothes and bedding probably increased with the number of apprentices in the colony. In March 1849, Wittenoom cut the 'allowance' rate (Table 3) and at the same time issued an official scale of rations, clothing and bedding to be provided to each apprentice.⁷⁰ He hoped that enforcing a minimum standards would compensate for the cut in the 'allowance' rate. But such a plan depended on the capacity, and the willingness of a master to observe such conditions. In April 1851, James Williams absconded from his master, Ephraim Clarke, and complained that he had not been provided with adequate clothing, and had not eaten any meat for a month. Under questioning by Wittenoom, he admitted that the other members of Clarke's family - a wife and 7 children - fared no better than he had done.⁷¹

Disputes over food, clothing and demeanour were generally fought out on a one to one basis between the apprentices and their masters. Yet occasionally the apprentices did join forces to protest at what they considered injustice. The Shepherd convicts protested over the level of food they had received during the voyage to the colony. Robert Lewer and Thomas Hamblett who were pulling hands in one of the pilot boats complained of the inadequacy of their meat ration.⁷² When the colonial surgeon complained that some sick apprentices were not working

hard enough, they replied that they were quite willing to work, but not without resting periodically. Schoales supported their case and took the colonial secretary to see just how seriously handicapped they were by their injuries.⁷³

But the widest dispute which affected the biggest number of apprentices - from the 'incorrigibles' through to those named as 'excellent' in the Guardians' returns - was over the issue of the restrictions embodied in the apprenticeship system. The system required them to work for a master selected by the Guardian, in places and at tasks which were not of their own choice. For up to 5 years, they would see no money of their own and be dependent on what their masters chose to give them for clothes, food and shelter. They would be paid one rate of 'allowance' no matter what the 'occupation' they were put in - be it shoemaker, tailor, farm servant, domestic or shepherd.⁷⁴ Even in the last year of their indenture, they would work at a rate which was barely one tenth of the wage often paid to an adult worker for the same task.⁷⁵ If they had any hopes of following the 'trade' at which they had worked in England, they were disappointed. Two apprentices arriving on the Orient had wanted to be brass moulders - the same trade as their fathers and grandfathers; they were despatched to be farm servants.⁷⁶ Very few apprentices served out a full 5 year indenture in a 'trade'.

The appointment of a Guardian was no consolation. The first one was a broken down Irish lawyer - a declining 'gentleman' with a fondness for drink; and the second was a parson's brat!⁷⁷ They were no different to the petty officials who had directed their lives in England: gaolers, chaplains, poor law beadles and the hated constables who 'moved them on'. The words of Eric Hobsbawm seem highly apposite to describe the Guardians:

"Clean hands and white collar put him, however symbolically, on the side of the rich. He normally carried with him the magic of public authority. Before him men and women had to queue for the documents which registered their lives; he waved them on or held them back; he told them what they could not do."⁷⁸

The early apprentices who were sent out into the bush rarely saw their 'Guardian'. It was small wonder that Schoales found they regarded him, not as he somewhat naively hoped, their best friend, but with suspicion.⁷⁹ The hanging of John Gavin did not help matters. At the end of 1844, Governor Hutt reported that some had been mocked and taunted, and many if not most had reported their firm intention to return to England at the end of their apprenticeship.⁸⁰

In March 1845, five apprentices petitioned Governor Hutt to release them from their indentures on the grounds of the time they had spent in Parkhurst and their good behaviour in the colony. Hutt replied that:

"... their apprenticeship in this country forms no part of their punishment but is intended as a lenient commutation thereof and further that the Act of Council does

not give the Governor the power of interfering in any way to alter the terms of the Indentures."⁸¹

This reply did not impress the apprentices. They had all expected to gain their full liberty when their sentences expired. Most of them were serving 7 year sentences passed in 1837, 1838, 1839 or 1840, and thus expected release in 1845 or 1846; yet they found they were forced to wait until 1847 or 1848. Schoales was acute enough to realise that the level of discontent was widespread - it was no longer confined to those who could be dismissed as 'incurable'; it included precisely those apprentices who were in the eyes of their masters good workers, and who were fully able to appreciate the value of their labour in the colonial economy.⁸² Schoales responded to their demands by proposing the experiment of allowing two apprentices to 'work for themselves'. But this device was not widely used until late 1847 and its main beneficiaries were the Shepherd apprentices.⁸³ And even here there were problems. The tight-fisted Burges brothers refused to release their apprentice. Eventually, Governor Irwin arranged a compromise: the apprentice would be paid £1 per month and find his own clothes.⁸⁴

The convicts on the last five vessels had served shorter terms in Parkhurst, and thus technically had more time left to serve when they reached the colony; and about 17% of them were serving sentences of 10 years or more.⁸⁵ The injustice which had applied to those on the Simon Taylor and the Shepherd did not apply directly to them. However they had their own, deeply felt, grievance: that during their indentures, they reached their 'majority' - the age of 21 - the age at which in English law, an indenture of apprenticeship could be terminated by the apprentice.⁸⁶ Richard Murray wrote back to England to obtain his birth certificate to prove to a disbelieving Guardian that he was indeed 21. Even with this proof, Wittenoom refused to release him, ruling that the only age the apprentices officially had was that given to them by Parkhurst prison.⁸⁷ Once again the sour taste of an English gaol had followed them to the colonies. But these efforts did have some effect. Irwin ruled that apprentices arriving on the Orient should not serve an apprenticeship which exceeded the age of 21.⁸⁸ The indentures for the Orient, Ameer and Mary were shortened to 3 or 2 years. Yet even this short term, left some apprentices dissatisfied since they had expected to be released as 'exiles' on the same terms as those Parkhurst convicts who had been sent to Port Philip.⁸⁹

By the end of 1849, Wittenoom was revising his earlier, mildly optimistic view of the apprenticeship system. He requested that no more convicts should be sent out for 2 years, and he gave a gloomy list of the delinquencies committed in 1849: apprentices who had been fined, gaoled, 'returned' as unsatisfactory, or who were awaiting trial.⁹⁰ It was left to Governor Fitzgerald to recognise the root cause of at least some of the apprentices' behaviour:

"It is hardly to be expected that, apprentices arriving at the age of 18 or 19, should work either cheerfully or willingly at such small wages as they receive, especially

when they see lads not older or stronger than themselves, in many instances getting from £20 to £25 a year, while they as apprentices are getting £3 or £4."

Fitzgerald then joined the Guardian in asking the Colonial Office to end the despatch of Parkhurst convicts who were to be pardoned by apprenticeship⁹¹ and in early 1850 it was. In future Parkhurst convicts sent to Western Australia were to be sent on ticket of leave.⁹²

CONCLUSION

In this paper I have attempted to give an overview of the three sections of the apprenticeship system. Several questions deserve further attention - why and how the apprentices came to be sent to Western Australia in the first place, and how the apprentices became involved in the debates on 'forced labour' in the late 1840s. In the meantime some conclusions can be offered:

Such sources as are available do not support the conclusion that the Parkhurst apprentices were, in any great proportion, weak, sickly or delinquent during their indentures. They were not a burden to the colony either in terms of their health or their behaviour. They spent their indentures at work - not in hospital or in gaol. The crude stereotypes of 'helpless waifs' or 'artful dodgers' cannot be said to apply to the bulk of the apprentices. They showed equally that they were not prepared to suffer injustice, and the modest pressure which they applied to the Guardians helped to bring the system to an end.

The 234 Masters who employed an apprentice were drawn from a cross section of colonial society. They were not exclusively the 'big' landowners/occupiers. Most Masters were not members of either the York Agricultural Society or the Western Australian Agricultural Society.

The Guardians were in some ways the key to the entire system. They proved able to balance the demands of the apprentices and of the masters. Their cautiously optimistic reports were accepted by the colonial office. For the first time in its existence, Western Australia was depicted in a positive way, rather than as a costly, ill-managed failure. This point was to be of critical importance when the British government began to fix the terms and conditions on which the colony would become a penal colony.

ENDNOTES

- 1 The figure 234 includes 4 juvenile convicts from Millbank who arrived on the Cumberland and who were apprenticed on the same terms as those from Parkhurst.
- 2 The alternative, conventional, definition is that a convict is a prisoner who is sent to a pre-existing penal colony.
- 3 The phrase 'forced labour' recurs frequently during the debate on convict labour and on the merits of declaring Western Australia a penal colony. See: 'convict labour letter II' *Inquirer* 19/4/1847; 'convict labour letter III' *Inquirer* 26/5/1847; 'convict labour' (letter to editor) *Inquirer* 2/6/1847; and 'The convict question' (letter to editor) *Inquirer* 23/6/1847.
- 4 There is, I suggest, a difference between a society employing a very modest amount of 'convict labour', and one which is a penal colony - a society in which a large percentage, if not a majority of the working population is deliberately placed under laws which deprive them of their civil rights.
- 5 British Parliamentary papers (BPP) 1843 vol. XLII (158) pp.78-81.
- 6 *Ibid* pp. 81-82.
- 7 The Simon Taylor arrived on 20 August 1842; 6 Vict no. 8 completed its passage through the Legislative council on 10 September 1842, and Schoales was appointed Guardian on 12 September 1842. Hutt's instructions can be found in: Colonial Office (C.O.) 18/32 pp. 261-264, encl. with Hutt to Stanley 17/9/1842.
- 8 C.O. 18/36 p. 30 Parkhurst Visitors to Home office 9/6/1843.
- 9 C.O. 18/37 p. 109, Hutt to Stanley 16/2/1844.
- 10 C.O. 18/37 pp. 122-126, Schoales to Hutt 24/1/1844.
- 11 C.O. 18/37 pp. 118, Stanley to Hutt 1/8/1844.
- 12 C.O. 18/53 pp. 64-79, Wittenoom to Fitzgerald 1/1/1850.
- 13 *Perth Gazette* 28/6/1845.
- 14 W.A. archives acc. 489/6 F.D. Wittenoom Letterbook 1847-1852 (hereafter Wittenoom LB) Wittenoom to col. sec. 20/7/1847 plus a series of letters to Shepherd apprentices dated 16/10/1847 to 3/11/1847.
- 15 Wittenoom LB report on July to December 1847 dated 5/1/1848.
- 16 *Inquirer* 14/3/1849.
- 17 C.O. 18/39 pp. 18-33, Schoales to Hutt 1/1/1845; Wittenoom LB report on July-Dec. 1847, dated 5/1/1848.
- 18 C.O. 18/34 pp. 325-330, Schoales to Hutt 1/1/1845; C.O. 18/35 Schoales to Hutt 7/12/1843. Refusal by Visitors: C.O. 18/38 p. 7 Parkhurst Visitors to Home office 9/4/1844; C.O. 397/7 p. 174, Stanley to Hutt 14/5/1844.
- 19 Under clause 5 of 4 & 5 Vict no. 21 (1841), the colonial governor could order any European prisoner to be sent to Rottneest to serve his/her sentence. For Henry Vincent, see J.E. Thomas, A. Stewart *Imprisonment in Western Australia*, Perth 1979 pp. 126-132. The 'incurable' apprentices sent on board the *Champion* were: James Nimmo Tabular Returns (TR) 3-7; John Norton TR 7-8; John Tyne TR 10-11; Allen Knight TR 7-12.

²⁰ Schoales defence of John Gavin: Inquirer 10/4/1844. Wittenoom defended Joseph Lowe at the October 1850 Quarter Sessions - (Inquirer supplement 9/10/1850). He also intervened on behalf of George Brixie, John Sedgley and John Thomas: Wittenoom LB letters dated 31/5/1848, 18/12/1849 and 21/5/1851 respectively.

²¹ Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to col. sec. 1/7/1847.

²² Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to James Leech 28/9/1849.

²³ The names of the masters are derived from: 1) the Tabular Returns of the Guardians (see Note on Sources), 2) the accounts of the masters payment of the 'allowance' appearing in John Schoales' letterbook 1842-1847 (W.A. archives acc. 47/1) and Wittenoom's Letterbook and 3) Wittenoom's Account book 1847-1852 (W.A. archives acc. 489/4)

There are two problems with these numbers. The first is the definition of who is a 'Master': someone who actually paid the 'allowance' or someone who was simply 'responsible' for the apprentice, without necessarily paying any 'allowance' for his services? I have tended to the second definition which includes those masters who took an apprentice 'on trial', rejected him and sent him back to the Guardian without paying any 'allowance'. Secondly, there is the difficulty of knowing what is an employing unit within the colonial economy - an individual, a family group or a partnership? Thus 'T', 'E' and 'R' Middleton all employed an apprentice, but are they individuals or part of a family group, are they to be counted as three employers or one? And there may be changes in the relationship over the 10 years: the Burges brothers were in partnership until October 1850 - clearly they were one unit, but after 1850 do they then become 3 units again? The number I have arrived at reflects both the widest number of 'Masters' and at the same time acknowledges the possibility of employers being other than individuals.

²⁴ In addition to the 'incorrigibles' sent to the Champion (see note 19 above) there were: John Kent TR14; William Smith TR 10 and Daniel Toal TR 14-15. Those who rowed in the pilot boats were: James Bradley TR 12-18; Henry Blake TR 12-16; Samuel Law TR 16; George Catley TR 15-16; Robert Mills TR 14-18; Lawrence Macklin TR 15-18; Alfred Gorman TR 15-18; John Medcalf TR 17-18; Robert Lewer TR 17-18; Thomas Hamblett TR 18.

²⁵ Stirling left in 1838; Hammersley left in 1843 and returned in 1850; Tanner left in 1844 and died in 1845 without returning.

²⁶ Pollard: Colonial secretary's inward correspondence (CSOR) 1844 vol. 132 p.3, F.C.Singleton to col. sec. 24/2/1844; Lockyer: Schoales LB, Schoales to actg. col. sec. 8/9/1846.

²⁷ I intend to deposit a register giving a full list of the Masters and the apprentices whom they employed in the Battye Library.

²⁸ This group included the following: John Allnut, William Beecham, T.F. Bedingfield, Ephraim Clarke, M.W. Clifton, R. Clifton and W.P. Clifton, James Coppin, Elijah Dawson, Keron Doolan, J (or D?) Earnshaw, G. Eliot, B. Elmes, John Fairbairn, H.T. Ker, William Forrest, John Gibson, George Guerrier, J.B. Locke Sr., B. Piggott, John Scott, Robert Scott, J.W. Sillifant.

²⁹ In 1839, Governon Gipps was asked if employers in New South Wales would accept 'juvenile offenders' who had been 'reformed' in a 'Penitentiary' as apprentices. Gipps replied that the apprenticeship of juvenile

convicts had been going on for some time. But what, he asked, is the difference between 'assigning' an adult convict to a master, and arranging the apprenticeship of a juvenile one? Historical Records of Australia series I vol. XIX pp. 423-424, Gipps to Glenelg 29/5/1839.

30 G.F. Moore's workforce in mid 1848 consisted of: 2 chinese, 5 aborigines and 6 Europeans plus 1 adult domestic servant, see W.A. Archives acc. 263A G.F. Moore's diary entries for 27/6/1848 and 3/8/1848.

31 CSOR 1842 vol. 107 pp. 158-162, Schoales to Hutt 15/9/1842

Note that 2 of the apprentices are not included in this list.

32 'small': William Beale TR 3-6; Denis Regan TR 3-7; George Clayton TR 4; Henry Leighton: CSOR 1845 vol. 141 pp. 25-30, Schoales to col. sec. 28/3/1845. 'babes': Schoales LB Schoales to Hutt June 1845.

33 Schoales LB copy of letter from Singleton to Schoales 23/4/1844. It is worth remembering in this age of plastics and aluminium that buckets in the 1840s were often no more than small barrels cut in half - barrels made from heavy wood and iron hoops, see B.J. Hammond, *Western Pioneers. The battle well fought* (ed. O.K. Batty) Perth 1936 p.38.

34 P. Statham, 'Why convicts II: the decision to introduce convicts to Swan River', *Studies in Western Australian History* IV 1981 p. 17 fn. 4.

35 Halifax: Schoales LB, Schoales to Hutt 13/12/1844; Cumberland: C.O. 18/42 p.13, Schoales to Clarke 4/2/1846; Hasketh: TR 5-11.

36 'weak': Charles Whittaker: CSOR 1848 vol. 169 pp.119 John Sewell Jr. to col. sec. 7/7/1848; John Howe: TR 1-15; Robert Leslie: TR 15. Comment on the Mary convicts: CSOR 1849 vol. 192 pp. 149-151, Wittenoom to col. sec. 5/11/1849; loading timber: Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to Capt. Hodge 7/11/1849.

37 For the context of the directive see Home Office file (H.O.) 45/963, minute by S.M. Phillips 22/10/1845 and BPP 1847 vol. VII (447) question 120 and 1852 vol. VII (515) question 1872. The Millbank convict prison registers PCOM 2/21-23, show that convicts of less than 4'6" in height were still being sent to Parkhurst after this directive was issued.

38 Richard Andrews: TR10; Frederick Davis TR 13; Henry Blake TR 16.

39 Thomas Phillips TR 5-13; E.J.P. Joske, Health & Community. A Study of community welfare in Western Australia 1829-1833 M.A. Thesis University of W.A. 1973 appendix VIII; George Brixie (or Brixey) TR 5-13; Schoales LB Schoales to col. sec. 21/4/1846; Henry Walls TR 3-12, C.O. 18/40 pp. 188-89 J.S. Harris to Schoales 10/9/1845 and Schoales to Hutt 20/9/1845 encl. with Hutt to Stanley 22/10/1845; C.O. 18/40 p.190 Gladstone to Clarke 15/5/1846; Wittenoom LB Wittenoom to Wells 26/9/1850.

40 Inquirer 24/8/1842.

41 C.O. 18/39 p. 25 Schoales to Hutt 1/1/1845. The Visitors' 'suggestions' contained no reference to the payment of a 'premium'. J.P. Kay-Shuttleworth's experience with parish apprenticeship during his term as an assistant poor law commissioner had lead him to oppose premiums for prish apprentices. See B.C. Bloomfield (ed.) *Autobiography of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth*, Education Libraries Bulletin Supplement No. 7 London 1964 pp. 34-35. It was probably Kay-Shuttleworth's influence on this point which prevented the inclusion of any provision for a 'premium' for Parkhurst apprentices.

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- 42 For the careers of the Simon Taylor apprentices see TR 1-11.
- 43 CSOR vol. 141 p.1 List of the Shepherd convicts with their respective prison 'trades' dated 26/9/1845.
- 44 C.O. 18/39 pp. 18-33, Schoales to Hutt 1/1/1845.
- 45 For careers of the Shepherd apprentices, see TR 3-10.
- 46 H.O. 45/619. This file, which is located at the P.R.O., Kew, contains the text of the replies made by the apprentices' masters to a circular questionnaire sent out by Schoales in April 1845.
- 47 For careers of the Halifax apprentices see TR 5-13 and the Cumberland apprentices, see TR 8-16.
- 48 Inquirer 14/3/1849.
- 49 For the Orient, see TR 12-18, for the Ameer, see TR 14-18 and for the Mary, see TR 15-18. Note that the entries on return no. 15 for the Mary convicts are simply the often hostile remarks of the Superintendent on their behaviour during the voyage.
- 50 T. Brown to W. Bussey 2/3/1845 reprinted in P. Cowan (ed.) *A Faithful picture - the letters of Eliza & Thomas Brown at York in the Swan River Colony 1841-1852*, Fremantle 1977 pp.57-59.
- 51 Entries in the Parkhurst prison register, Home.Office (H.O.) 24/15.
- 52 Entries in the Parkhurst prison register, H.O. 24/15; P.Deane W.A.Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688-1959* 2nd ed. Cambridge, 1969 p.103.
- 53 BPP 1845 vol. XXV (667) p.7 (Report on Parkhurst prison for 1844) From 1839 to 1849, reports all gave the average number of convicts in each occupation within the prison.
- 54 Henry Towton, TR 11.
- 55 Previous judgements about the apprentices have been made on the basis of the Guardians' remarks in perhaps one or two of the Tabular returns. The entries in the *Dictionary of Western Australians vol. 1 Early Settlers 1829-1850* (comp. P.Statham) Perth, 1979 rely on perhaps one reference out of a possible ten. My aim has been to make use of all the returns and to judge the apprentices by the work they were required to do - of which farm servants, shepherds and 'trades' are only three categories. I appreciate that I am still dependent on the subjective judgements of the Guardians who were, as petty bureaucrats, intent on showing the worth of the system - the apprentices who behaved well - and yet that it still needed their presence to deal with those apprentices who did not behave well.
- 56 P. Statham, 'Swan River colony 1829-1850', in C.T. Stannage (ed.) *A New History of Western Australia*, Perth 1981 p.204.
- 57 Terence McGrath: H.O. 24/15 p.16, TR 10; Richard Boulton PCOM 2/22 p.51, TR14.
- 58 Inquirer 8/8/1849 - letter from William Burges.
- 59 This account focuses on the punishment of the apprentices, but it should be appreciated that clause XI of the same ordinance made a master liable to make a 'pecuniary compensation' of not more than £5 for any 'mususage' of his apprentice and at least one apprentice made use of this clause: John Cockrane was awarded 10/- 'compensation' for an angry beating delivered by his master G.J.Webb. see W.A. Archives AN 17 acc. 748 Albany court house records. Information and complaint of J. Cockrane 9/7/1849. For sources on 'official' punishments see Table 8.

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- 60 Henry Walton TR 8; Joseph Lowe TR 13.
- 61 Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to J. Sewell Jr. 22/11/1848. Schoales LB Schoales to col. sec. 8/7/1846.
- 62 McGrath's letter appears in the Parkhurst annual report for 1849: BPP 1850 vol. XXIX (1202) p.29. Robert Burgh's opinion is in H.O. 45/619 reply no. 26.
- 63 H.O. 45/619, R. Habgood, reply no.4.
- 64 H.O. 45/619, T. Hester reply no. 65, Henry Burgh reply no.25.
- 65 Schoales LB, Schoales to J. Tyne 20/7/1844.
- 66 Richard Murray, TR 11.
- 67 Robert Strickland: TR 3, 4 & 6; Wittenoom Account book, H.O. 45/619, M. Okley reply no.2.
- 68 William Tomlinson: TR 8-16; Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to S.E. Burges 3/3/1849.
- 69 Schoales LB, Schoales to Hutt 17/2/1844.
- 70 Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to col. sec. 2/3/1849.
- 71 Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to E. Clarke 22/5/1851.
- 72 The Shepherd protest: CSOR 1843 vol. 141 p. 3: "Sir All the boys have not got enough to eat and that has been the cause of all the thieving..." The protest was an expression of support for four convicts who had been caught stealing from the ship's store. Lewer & Hamblett: Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to col. sec. 19/5/1851.
- 73 The apprentices were Henry Walls and George Brixie. Schoales LB Schoales to col. sec. 21/4/1846.
- 74 This was certainly so on land. Some of the apprentices who served on the Champion or in the pilot boats were paid at higher rates than the 'normal' allowance.
- 75 Compare the apprentices' 'allowance' with the wage levels given by P. Statham in her thesis: The economic development of the Swan River colony 1829-1850, Ph.D. University of W.A. 1980 appendix 5.3 wages 1837-1850.
- 76 Wittenoom LB, Wittenoom to E. Larkin 23/1/1850. Wittenoom was attempting to coax Larkin into refraining from unreasonable demands.
- 77 W.A. archives acc. 648A/2 Gerald de Courcy Lefroy's diary, entry for 24 April 1847; F.D.Wittenoom was the 3rd son of the Rev. J.B. Wittenoom, the salaried and highly Anglican, colonial chaplain.
- 78 E.J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution*, New York 1962 p.231.
- 79 Schoales LB p.60. This expression is part of a personal memoir which Schoales wrote shortly after the hanging of John Gavin. The words reflect in part some of the mental anguish which the even had caused the Guardian.
- 80 C.O. 18/39 p.15 Hutt to Stanley 14/1/1845.
- 81 The text of the petition with the names of the apprentices has been reproduced in L. Layman, J. Goddard, *ORGANISE: A visual record of the Labour Movement in Western Australia*. Trades & Labour Council of W.A., Perth 1988 pp. 143, 146. Hutt's reply: Colonial Secretary's outwards correspondence) CSOF vol. 19 letter 224, Hutt to Schoales 25/4/1845.
- 82 CSOR 1845 vol. 141 pp.51-54, Schoales to col. sec. 21/4/1845. See entries for J. Murphy TR 7, R. Strickland TR 10 and He. Wilson TR 8.

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- 83 Wittenoom LB, letters to Shepherd apprentices 16/10/1847 to 3/11/1847.
- 84 See entry for James Peake TR 11; CSOF vol. 23 letter 608, col. sec. to Guardian 27/7/1847.
- 85 Table 2; H.O. 24/15.
- 86 Justice of the Peace and Local Government officer 3 April 1841 p.198.
- 87 CSOF vol. 24 letter 1061, col. sec. to Guardian 13/12/1847; Wittenoom LB, letters to Richard Boulton 27/11/1847, to col. sec. 10/12/1847 and Edwin Powell 21/12/1847.
- 88 Wittenoom LB, report on July-Dec. 1847 dated 5/1/1848.
- 89 CSOR 1849 vol. 192 pp.136-137, Wittenoom to col. sec 27/6/1849.
- 90 C.O. 18/53 pp.. 64-79, Wittenoom to Fitzgerald 1/1/1850.
- 91 C.O. 18/53 pp. 59-64, Fitzgerald to Grey 9/1/1850.
- 92 Conversion to Ticket of Leave: C.O. 18/45 pp. 143-144, Jebb to Home Office 8/11/1849; Earl Grey: C.O. 18/53 pp.64. Minute by Earl Grey on despatch from Fitzgerald of 1/1/1850.

**TABLE 1: Parkhurst convicts sent to Western Australia,
1842-1849: Estimated age at discharge from
Parkhurst.**

Estimated Age	ST	SH	H	CU	O	A	M	Total	%
10					1			1	} 3.0
11		3						3	
12		1		1	1			3	
13	4	12			6	1		23	9.8
14	2	4	4		4		1	15	6.4
15	4	5	6	2	9	2	2	30	12.8
16	4	3	8	5	12	5	9	46	19.7
17	2			4	8	19	8	41	17.5
18	1			3	6	18	21	49	21.0
19	1			1	3	5	9	19	8.2
20							2	2	0.8
Not found					1		1	2	0.8
Total	18	28	18	16	51	50	53	234	100.0

source: Parkhurst Prison Register: H.O. 24/15

**TABLE 2: Parkhurst convicts sent to Western Australia,
1842-1849: Time spent in Parkhurst.**

Time in Parkhurst	ST	SH	H	CU	O	A	M	Total	%
under 2 years.	1	6	-	4	2			13	5.5
2 to 2 ¹ / ₂ years	1	2	-	5	21	27	51	107	45.8
2 ¹ / ₂ to 3 years	7	13	9	1	20	22	1	73	31.2
over 3 years	9	7	9	6	7	1	-	39	16.7
not found					1		1	2	0.8
Total	18	28	18	16	51	50	53	234	100.0
Average time in Parkhurst in months	35.3		36.0		31.1		25.4		
		30.6		29.6		30.0			

source: Parkhurst Prison Register: H.O. 24/15

Key to vessels:

ST = Simon Taylor, arrived August 1842
 SH = Shepherd, arrived October 1843
 H = Halifax, arrived December 1844
 C = Cumberland, arrived January 1846
 O = Orient, arrived March 1848
 A = Ameer, arrived February 1849
 M = Mary, arrived October 1849

TABLE 3: "Allowance" to Parkhurst convicts: 1842-1852**A. Convicts arriving on the Simon Taylor, Shepherd, Halifax, Cumberland, Orient and Ameer.**

1st year of indenture	£3
2nd "	£3-10-0
3rd "	£4
4th "	£4-10-0
5th "	£5

source:

C.O. 18/32 pp. 262-264, encl. with Hutt to Stanley 17/9/1842; *Perth Gazette* 4/3/1843.**B. Convicts arriving on the Mary - October 1849.**

1st year of indenture	£2
2nd "	£2-10-0
3rd "	£3
4th "	£3-10-0
5th "	£4

source:

Perth Gazette 17/3/1849**TABLE 4: Parkhurst Apprentices: Length of Indentures. 1842-1851.**

Vessel arrived on:	ST	SH	H	CU	O	A	M	Total	%
length of indenture:									
2 years						1	53	54	23.1
2 1/2 years					1	1		2	0.8
2 3/4 years		1			2			3	1.2
3 years	3			1	38	46		88	38.0
3 1/2 years			2	1	10			13	5.5
4 years		2	16	14				32	13.6
5 years	15	25						40	17.0
uncertain						2		2	0.8
Total	18	28	18	16	51	50	53	234	100.0

Source: Bi-annual returns of the Guardians of Government Juvenile Immigrants, 1842-1851

TABLE 5: PARKHURST APPRENTICES: SICKNESS AND DISABILITIES DURING INDENTURES.

VESSEL	APPRENTICE	DISABILITY	SOURCE
Simon Taylor	George Doughty	weak eyesight	Schoales L.B. 3/1/1846
Simon Taylor	Samuel Taylor	'of weak intellect'	T.R. no. 11
Shepherd	James Croal	scrotal hernia	T.R. no.4
Shepherd	Thos. Newman	hernia	T.R. no.9
Shepherd	Edward Robinson	bowel & bladder disorder	T.R. nos. 3-12
Shepherd	John Kirk	fever contracted in York gaol	Wittenoom L.B. 14/7/1848
Shepherd	John Bolt	severe ophthalmia - one eye removed	C.O. 18/39 pp. 18-33.
Shepherd	Allan Knight	gonorrhoea	CSOR 1847 vol.160, p. 62
Halifax	John Howell	weakness and destitution	E.J.P. Joske, thesis, p. 347
Halifax	John Malpas	in hospital with fever	CSOF vol. 22 1846 p. 195
Halifax	George Woods	deaf	T.R. nos. 7-8
Halifax	Henry Walton	rheumatism	T.R. no. 6
Cumberland	William Tomlinson	deaf	T.R. nos. 8, 13.
Orient	Frank Hussey	gonorrhoea, sores on feet	Wittenoom L.B. 29/8/1848
Orient	Charles Laws	malformed feet and ankles	T.R. no. 13
Orient	John Sedgley	sight of left eye defective	PCOM 2/22 p.177
Ameer	John Cockrane	weak eyesight, venereal disease	Wittenoom L.B. 1/3/1849
Ameer	John Howe	St. Vitus Dance (= chorea?)	T.R. nos. 15-17
Ameer	James Berry	half-witted	T.R. no. 15
Ameer	Henry Dixon	weak intellect	T.R. no. 15
Ameer	Thomas Berry	'violently insane' threatened his master with a knife	T.R. nos. 15-18
Mary	John Byrne	deaf and weak-minded	T.R. nos. 15
Mary	Joseph Dyke	sores on legs	T.R. no. 16
Mary	William Frankleton	'half-witted'	T.R. no. 16, 17

TABLE 6: OCCUPATIONS OF PARKHURST APPRENTICES
IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA 1842-1850.

Return No.	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17
Date of Return	Dec 1842	Dec 1843	Dec 1844	Dec 1845	Dec 1846	Dec 1847	Dec 1848	Dec 1849	Dec 1850
Occupation									
Butcher	2	3	3	2	1	1			
Baker	2	1	2	1	1	1			
Miller							1	1	1
Miller's boy					1				
Carpenter	2	2	1	1	1	1	1		
Cooper		1							
Saw miller		1							
Sawyer									2
Mason							1	1	1
Bricklayer		1	1	2	2	1	1		
Boatbuilder								1	1
Smith				1					
Blacksmith						1	1		
Wheelwright		1	1						
Tailor	1						1		
Shoemaker	1	1		1	2	2	1	1	
Woolstapler			1						
Wharehouse lad			1	1					
Carter							1	1	1
Boatman								1	1
Sailor 'at sea }		2	1		3	4		6	6
Seaman }									
Mariner }									
General work }									
General Svt. }	1				1			1	
Servant }									
Domestic Servt.		10	11	8	14	6	9	9	6
Farm lad }									
'farm' }	9	21	35	28	25	37	59	109	
101									
Shepherd				8	15	15	21	12	18

source: Bi-annual returns of the Guardians of Government Juvenile Immigrants, 1842-1851.

Rosa Townsend's Story

Part 1*

Reid: Could you start out by just letting us know where and when you born?

Townsend: I was born in Manchester, England in 1917 and migrated to Australia when I was about 5 years old.

Reid: Do you have any recollections of England at all?

Townsend: No, the only thing I remember was coming out on the boat, you know, being on a ship and we arrived in Albany and my father was very thrilled. He came out under the group settlement scheme. Then we were taken to Fremantle by train and were put in the immigration hostel, as it was known then, a whole train load full of 'Pommies'. The place hadn't been open since 1918 and it was all musty and all that sort of thing and my father said 'my wife and daughter aren't going to stay here' so he booked us into a hotel. Then I think he went down to Busselton or 17 miles out of Busselton to the virgin bush where he, with the help of others, erected a tin shanty and then sent for my mother and myself. There were twelve families in the group. Our group was known as 87 group. In Australia my mum got me correspondence lessons while she was helping Dad plough the land. She cried, of course, when she arrived there to see just a tin shanty with no floor boards, no windows, just hessian walls - hessian hung up inside of the place. She helped Dad clear the land and they were so busy they got me these correspondence lessons. My mother didn't understand them because it was all so new to her and she used to leave me doing pot hooks and sums and learning the alphabet. I was taught to ride a little pony my father bought me, by a woman at 124 group. She knew how to ride a horse so she taught me how to ride properly. As soon as my mother's back was turned, I used to jump on my horse and take off until such time as my father said I was becoming like a wild Indian. I was just riding around on horses and swearing like a trooper, being with all the workmen and telling dirty yarns, that's all I knew. So I was singing dirty ditties because we had a lot of sleeper cutters, Italian and Australian sleeper cutters, all these young fellows about twenty-twentyfive, you know, young blokes and they thought this little blond girl was a toy and they taught me all these dreadful ditties. I can still remember some of them. Then they sold the horse and put me in the convent, boarding school. I was about seven and a half then and they took me because my father way back was a Catholic and they thought that'd be a good idea and they made me a Catholic in three months. I was baptized, did my first confession and first communion.

From then on they built group houses out of green timber which you could see through. Eventually Mum applied to have the telephone and they said, yes, she could be the postmistress for the local people that were there, 12 families, and they said that was great. They gave her

*Rosa Townsend was for many years an organiser with the Hotel and Club Caterers Union (later the Liquor and Allied Trades Union). She retired in 1979.

This is the first part of the transcript of an interview conducted by Stuart Reid as part of the T.L.C. Oral History Project. The next part will be carried in the next issue of *Papers in Labour History*.

26/- per year for minding the phone, and that was good because I could ring Mum from the Convent during term, I was very homesick. There were no nursing facilities in the district. Women were having babies, leaving it too late after the first mistake. One lady left it too late and Mum brought the child into the world and looked after the mother. She was on a farm, same sort of settlement as us, about four miles away, and Mum brought this baby into the world and the others later found that Mum was a very good midwife. She brought 12 babies into the world at that time. And my Dad's health broke and so did his pocket. We were broke. We made all the mistakes that have probably ever been recorded. We bought a horse for 60 pound and waited till the grass just was showing. When the grass was showing they put it on to pasture and it got sanded and died. We didn't know anything about farming so they bought a cow to give us milk and Dad thought he only had to take as much as we needed and of course it got milk fever and died. Eventually we walked off the farm. I don't know how many years he was there. I was about 11, so it was about 4 years. He had a spinal injury and was in Busselton Hospital and they treated him there for rheumatics. In later years, they found out it was a spinal injury. My mother went to work at the Vasse Hotel at Busselton to pay off our debt, because we owed grocers and butchers and everyone. Then Dad got a lot better from the rest and was offered a job in General Motors in Mosman Park in Perth as an engineer, putting in the new plant for spray painting. The depression of course was raging then and he got the sack because they closed the works down. Then his last job he worked at putting in the plant at the sugar refinery at North Fremantle and he collapsed. From then on he used to walk with two sticks, he just couldn't walk properly.

We used to work on the elections, we used to work for John Curtin. In those days he was the member for Fremantle. My father had a little chair that he used to sit on at the street corner and give me pamphlets to run up and down the street and put in letter boxes, I can remember that very well. And I got a job - I had to leave school at 14 because we had no money, we were getting the dole of course. It was 7/- a week for Mum, Dad and me. I think it cut out for me at 14 so I had to get a job. I got a job in Peppermint Grove for people called Sharlands and I worked there for about a year or more for 7/6 a week. I'd start at 7 in the morning, walk about a mile and a half each way from where we lived and I'd finish at 7.30 at night. I'd get a half day off if they were going out on a Sunday for tea, that's the only time I had off. It was 7 days a week. And mum heard that there was a milk bar starting up in Fremantle and I applied for a job in the milk bar and I got it, so I gave notice to my employer in Peppermint Grove. She was very offended that I was going to leave and she offered to give me another 2/6 a week if I'd stay. But the milk bar job was going to pay 15/- and that was double the money. So I went there to work and caught the train every day to Fremantle from Mosmans and I got on the train and I'd work from 8 o'clock in the morning till 9.30 at night and if I was lucky I got a break for tea. I don't remember having a lunch break. Then the first week the girls got their pay and they were counting out what they were going to do with it (there were four or five other girls there) and I didn't get paid. I went home and I told my mother I didn't get paid. She said, "Oh that's all right, they perhaps pay fortnightly," and I said, "Yes." So I said, "That'll be good."

So when the second week came, I still didn't get paid and Mrs. Rafael the owner sacked me. She said, "How dare I ask her for money, she was not a cheat and I could go now, I wasn't any good anyway." Of course I cried and went home to my mother.

She said, "Oh this is it, we'll go to Miss Shelley."

I said, "Who's she?"

She said, "She's the Union secretary, she'll fix her up" - and she did.

We went to Perth and Miss Shelley said, "Oh I know this woman, we'll go down and see her". So we caught the train and went in to see Mrs. Rafael and she went white when she saw Mrs. Shelley.

She said, "Oh I know this girl, she was no good".

Miss Shelley said, "Oh perhaps she wasn't but you owe her two weeks pay."

Then she said the uniform which she had to supply, which was a white uniform with green buttons, she must pay for that and Miss Shelley turned to me and said, "How much did that cost?" I didn't know how much it cost, I think I'd had it given to me and she said "oh 5 pounds wasn't it.?"

I said it wasn't and I was shaking, and she said, "Yes, two week's wages and 5 pounds for the uniform and shoes, that's 5 pounds for that and two weeks wages".

I had never seen so much money in my life you know. And Mrs Rafael, she got out a cheque book, "Alright Miss Shelley", you know she was really frightened of her.

She said, "Don't put it on a cheque, we want it in cash, the girl wants it in her hand." So we came away quite wealthy.

And to finish up, she said, "Do you want a job? Of course you do. Well go up to Boans and see a Miss York, she's very good, she'll give you a job clearing tables." So I did. I went up the next day and saw Miss York and she said, "I have only got part time work, four hours a day, but you'll get 15/- a week." I was there for about 12 months.

In the meantime the mortgagee had foreclosed on our house. We owed 30 pound on it. We didn't have 30 pounds and he foreclosed on it. We had to get out and we got a little house in Leederville, Alfred Street Leederville, and we were paying 12/6, I think my mother said, a week. We'd sold bits and pieces of furniture and things like that but we couldn't raise this 30 pounds. Anyhow, I was wandering around one lunch hour and I was finding out my way around Perth I think, and I saw the theatres. There was the theatre known as the Prince of Wales Theatre. It's bulldozed down now. And I thought I would like a job like that, that's nice sitting there doing nothing. So I walked into the Manager's office, knocked on the door. I suppose he thought cheeky young devil.

I said, "Are there any jobs?"

He said, "Not at the moment. You're very young."

I said, "Oh but I need a job."

But he said, "You've got a uniform on, you're working."

And I said, "Yes but we're very poor, I need some extra money. My mother's working hard too, she's washing and ironing for people for 5/- a day and we just haven't got enough money to pay our rent and things." I said I needed the job badly - really cried poor.

So he said, "Well there's a job if a uniform will fit you. We've just had a little girl leave and she's only little like you, if her uniform will fit you you can start on Friday night." I asked how much pay and he said "4/9d and if you're good at ushering, you can start on Saturday, you can work Friday and Saturday nights."

I said, "Oh that's good." So that's what I did.

I was there for some time, I don't know how long, and he asked me if I was doing two jobs.

He said, "Well would you like to do a relieving job? Hoyts have got about 5 theatres here and all the girls are due to go on holidays at different times and you can relieve them. You'll get taught the box office and the cash desk."

And I said, "Oh I'd love that".

He said, "You can give your notice at Boans and come and work for Hoyts." So I did. I got a big farewell at Boans. They gave me a farewell and I went to work at the theatre and I stayed there. Then a full time job came up at the Ambassadors Theatre which he gave me and I was there till I was married in 1942. I left just prior to that to go over east with my mother.

Reid: Before you got married you went over east. What brought that about?

Townsend: Oh mainly my mother wanted to go to Melbourne to get me out of the way of the husband I later had. I was going with a chap - a policeman - she wanted to break it up. She wanted to go east and we went over to Melbourne in 1940 and the trains stopped (I think it was '40, it might have been later than '40). The trains were stopped because of the war and we were grounded there for 5 months. I walked into the Capital Theatre Melbourne and got a job straight away because of the manpower situation. Fellows that were the ushers were all being manpowered into the army or being called up into the army, so I got a job straight away and I worked there for five months. I came home after five months when the trains started running again and married the man who was to be my husband straight away. My mother stayed in Melbourne and worked. She came back a year later after I was married. I just sent her a wire that I was married yesterday. Cruel thing to do. Of course in those days you weren't allowed to be married to a policeman and work, so I had to leave work and that was in July 1942. I remained married until 1962. Five years after I was married, or four and a half years actually, I had my son, my first and only boy and I stayed with my husband until 1962 and ran away. My son was, I think, 16 then. You didn't have any rights if you walked out of your home, you just gave up all rights to any money or anything else, although I'd worked for my husband for some time. He was in the car business then. I worked for him some time and I didn't have any money of my own and I just walked out and I had to get a court order to get my clothes out of the house. I had no claim on the house at all. So I stayed with friends and found several part time jobs during that time. Then I got a job at the cafeteria at - it was then Foy and Gibson which was later David Jones. I was there almost a year working there altogether. The girls were always complaining about the conditions they were working under and not getting their proper breaks and I said, "Well why don't you go to a union meeting".

And they said, "Oh nobody goes to union meetings."

And I said, "Well I've joined the union and you're all in the union." It was the Hotel, Club,

Caterers' Union in those days, Miss Shelley was the secretary. I said "I joined the union as soon as I started work, why don't we go to a meeting?" So we went to the meeting on the Wednesday night and on the agenda for the meeting was a vacancy for an organizer. The girls quite enjoyed it.

The next day they asked me, "Why don't you apply for the vacancy as an organizer?"

I said, "Aw I don't know anything about unions."

They said, "Well, you know, you're interested enough to go to meetings, why don't you?"

So I said "Oh okay." So I applied - put in an application to be an organizer. In those days you had to go to a general meeting and be voted in by the floor of the meeting and I rounded the girls up and said you've talked me in to this, you'd better come and vote for me, which they did. We stacked the meeting and Miss Shelley had stacked it too because she wanted her niece to be the organizer, her organizer, but I won by 28 votes.

Reid: What else did you do to ensure that you got properly nominated and go in there?

Townsend: Oh well, I just nominated. I just nominated myself. Then we had to front up to the meeting and give a ten minute speech. I'd never spoken at a public assembly at all and I got up and Miss Shelley had arranged to have a stooge, I suppose you'd call him, in the meeting to question me and he really gave me a bad time because he spoke for ten minutes. And I told the gathering that I didn't know anything about unions but I was willing to learn and I would organize and I would work for the benefit of my members if I was lucky enough to get the job. And he stood up and said, "What do you know about unions?" And I said, "I've already stated I know nothing but I'm willing to learn." He asked, "What made you apply?" I said, "Just that I was interested and interested in the welfare of my members or the members of the union and I thought I could do a good job." I was quite proud of that little act because I was voted in much to Miss Shelley's disgust. She didn't like me very much at all and for about three months she gave me a hard time. After that we became very firm friends. She was very much to be admired, she did a wonderful job. By that stage, she was pretty old. She would never admit to her age. She died a couple of years ago and someone said she was 97 when she died. She'd been voted out of the union - not my doing. I fought very hard against that. A chap who had a lot of publicity at the time, a chap named Yakich opposed her and he won by eleven votes at an election. No one had opposed her prior to that time. She was pretty broken-hearted but we didn't want that fellow in either because he was nominated by the DLP and we found this out. He was really helped by some of the other bigger unions. It was really a DLP takeover of the union and we fought it very hard.

Reid: Do you know when that would have been?

Townsend: That was in 1968. Tony, my son, was in Vietnam in '67-68, early '67-68, when this battle was going on with the takeover of the union. There were big court cases. We locked the office door at one stage - locked him out of the office. Then Eugene Fry, the last secretary of the Liquor Trade Union, as it is known now, he fought to get very hard to get rid

of this Yakich. I'm wandering a bit here but Shelley was secretary for 47 years and she hadn't been opposed. When this fellow, Michael Yakich, opposed her, we worked hard to get her re-elected but she lost and we found afterwards he had signed books and books of receipts of friends who weren't even members of the union. Anyhow we went to the courts about it and they upheld his election and then we had a battle on our hands. We locked the door against him. But first, going back, he sacked Fry and me the first week he was there. He just came into the office and he gave Eugene Fry and me an envelope and said you're finished - you're sacked. The union was broke, absolutely broke. We owed the TLC money for affiliation fees. We owed the ALP money. We owed a years rent. It was very badly run moneywise. We had no money - the fees were too small. The members paid \$1.30 a quarter. Well before 1966 it was 13/- a quarter and we had one office girl, Miss Shelley and myself and then we got Eugene Fry as an organiser. Male organizers used to do all the South West land division (we didn't cover up north at all) and he took a bit of the work from me like the Rockingham and Mandurah areas and Fremantle because things were growing, more hotels were being built, more coffee shops, etc., etc. And then we fought Yakich for months and months. We had a court case that lasted about ten days in the Supreme Court which cost us a great deal of money. We had to have QC's and everything else. We had no money to pay them but we hoped that we'd get some - God knows where from. Anyhow we beat him in the courts. We locked him out first of all and we beat him - we had a big meeting at the Trades Hall, Perth, and we had it packed. Fry and I, of course, were without pay for ten weeks and we worked on this campaign. We got permission, or I did, because I knew a lot of the cafeterias, to go in and address the members and get them to the meeting. We did this and we worked very hard. Yakich got court orders to stop us going and notified all the employers to stop us going in. We were illegally having meetings and all this sort of thing but we finally found out and we got him on a five point resolution about how he was wrongly elected. I forget all the points now but they were very good - in fact the judge in the court wanted to know who framed that resolution. We couldn't tell him, it was a secret. It's still a secret, but we had it framed by somebody that knew what he was doing and it held up in court and Yakich was put out of office. Then a chap named Skidmore took over temporarily. He was the Bakers and Pastry Cooks' secretary. Then Fry was appointed by a meeting. They wanted me too but I had had very little education and I was getting older and I thought, no, it wouldn't be right for me to take over as secretary of the union because I'm not knowledgeable enough to do that, I was just a worker and that was it. So Fry took the secretaryship on and then he ran it very well. He did a very good job.

We were never amalgamated in the days of Shelley. We were never amalgamated with the Barmaids and Barmans' Union because they had their own little group, they were a separate identity altogether but we did have the Barmaids and Barmans' in the clubs, licensed clubs, bowling clubs, all the clubs. Eventually Fry met with the Barmaids and Barmans' Union and they finally amalgamated. When we'd amalgamated with them we tried to amalgamate with the Brewery Union but they wouldn't be in it - they were on their own. Then we amalgamated with all the other States as the Liquor Trades Union and we got a wider coverage, got more

members, got more money, and put up our fees. I was there until 1978, maybe the beginning of '79. I was voted in for four years. We had elections - proper elections two to four years for organisers as well, and I was always voted back in. I was voted in but I left two or three years before my term was up because it got a little bit much. It got hard work. I didn't like a lot of things that were going on - I still don't. There were too many deals being done and I thought this is my union, and I left, I resigned.

Reid: When you first went to work with Miss Shelley in the union did it have a wide coverage and were a lot of the people in the industry in the union?

Townsend: Not a lot. There were a lot - the ones that you could cover - there were a lot. It was all hand collection, there was no payroll deduction, and it was physically, absolutely physically impossible to get to every place. It was catch as catch can - get the money where you could because that's what we needed to run the union, and there was very little policing of the awards. You didn't just have time. It was only in later years that you had time to look at wages books and things like that, because you just used to go into workplaces and say, "Sign here". There were no sort of application forms to join the union. It was very disorganised. I think I was the worst disorganiser of the lot. It was just running around getting money and listening to their complaints, being sort of a *'Dorothy Dix'* more than anything, listening to complaints. Not that you could do very much because Shelley was too tired, she was too old to do a lot. You'd take in complaints to Miss Shelley in those days and she'd say, "Oh yes, put it aside, we'll talk about that later". She never followed them up because she was too old, she was too tired. It got physically impossible to cover those things - there was such a lot going on that you couldn't. That used to get me down an awful lot. You couldn't police the awards. There were seven awards and they were so out of date, they should've been updated. It was dreadful situation.

Reid: What were the problems that the members would come out with?

Townsend: Underpayment! Everybody was being underpaid - holiday pay, long service leave. You know a girl would be there ten years, be there eleven years and they'd sack her for no reason at all. There was no comeback. They just didn't want to pay the long service leave. They'd put them off just before their holidays and not give them their holiday pay or penalty rates. I remember Shelley once saying to a fellow down in Barrack Street, she said, "Oh you're not paying this girl, she's working Sundays and Saturdays, where's the penalty rates?" He said "I give her cake - I give her cake to take home" - you know - "I give her the cake to take home."

Shelley says, "You don't pay them in bloody cake, you pay them in money and they can buy their own cakes. You don't pay them in stale cakes." This was happening all the time. Or their days off. Employers would say, "Oh yes, you work and you can have a day next month, we're busy this month, you can have a day or you can put it on to your holidays." When holidays came they forgot their days off. Dreadful things were going on.

Demarcation was another thing. I remember going into the Naval Base Hotel. A cook had phoned me and said she was cooking there and she wasn't getting the cook's wages and so I went down there. Of course you wouldn't let them know you'd had a complaint because the workers would get the sack straight away. I went and looked at his time and wages book and I said, "Where's your cook?"

"Oh my wife does it," he said.

I said, "Oh does she, well there's no cook listed down here."

"Oh no, my wife does the cooking and she's not on the books."

I said, "Okay." So I went off in the car, went around the block and came back, and came back through the kitchen. I went like that to this lass, indicating to her not to recognise me. I didn't want her to say, 'Oh hello, how are you'. I went in and they said, "Who are you?"

I said, "I'm from the union." This little lass did a sly smile, and I said, "Who's the cook here?"

She said, "I do the cooking."

I said, "Are you paid the cook's wages?"

"I don't know what I get," she said. Frightened, of course.

And I said, "Oh well I've looked at the books and there's no cook listed. Does Mrs. (I forget her name now) the licensee's wife do the cooking?"

"Oh no, she doesn't do the cooking."

"Oh, how long have you been cooking?"

She said, "The last twelve months."

I said, "Why didn't you come to the union?"

"Oh no, I don't go to the union." We had it teed up.

So I said to the licensee, "You owe twelve months cook's wages." So he sacked her.

When I went back to the office she rang me - she said, "Thanks very much, you got me the sack." So we had him in court. I took him to court. We got him over in the box and we had her reinstated. She didn't want to go back. This happens with your members.

She said, "No I don't want to go back."

And I said, "You've got to go back. If you go back, you get your back pay, your cook's pay, if you stay two days, give him your notice and you can get another job. I can get you another job because you're a good cook."

I said to him, "You're a damn fool because she's a good cook, very good, and you've lost a very good cook but only through your lousiness." He had a court order that he had to pay her the full back wages and she went back, I think she stayed a couple of weeks and left and then he begged her to stay but he'd already been hurt by the pocket and he'd got over it. That sort of thing went on all the time. There wasn't only just one instance, there were dozens of them.

Reid: Were there many of those that you could be successful dealing with?

Townsend: Oh yes, yes. I had quite a few. There was a few things with barmaids, with stewardesses I should say. We didn't have barmaids but we had stewardesses and bosses used to work our stewardesses in the bar which is a vastly different pay. The barmaids in their

award weren't allowed to go and clear the tables, so the stewardess used to clear the tables, get a lesser pay, and then they'd get them behind the bar for lesser pay. I used to go in and say, "That girl's a stewardess - where is she on your books as a barmaid?" And it was quite a few dollars, or pounds in those days, more by being in the bar. Then we had this green pay. I used to police that a lot because we had one chap at the Booragoon Hotel. They were allowed in the Barmaids and Barmans' Union to have what they call green pay for six weeks while they were teaching them in the bar, which was three-quarters of the usual pay or something like that. And they'd have the green pay for so long and as soon as they were on the full pay, you know they'd sack them all, start a whole lot more on the green pay and he was getting half pay or three quarter pay labour all the time. I policed that an awful lot. Those sort of things were going on all the time. There were lots of things and some of your members sometimes are to blame because they do silly things. Many of them did not know the rules and things like that, did not know their award. I had a lass at the Criterion Hotel who said her hands were terribly sore and she had to use very strong detergent doing the men's toilets. I said, "You're not allowed to do the men's toilets, the yardman does the men's toilets, you do the ladies toilets. It's not in the award, you can't do the men's toilets."

She said, "He tells me to do it, the boss."

So I thought I can't go to him and say she's complained because she'll get the sack. So I went in and I said to the boss, "Licensee, I just saw one of your housemaids coming out of the men's toilets with a bucket."

And he said, "Mmm you probably did."

And I said, "Well you know that she's not allowed to do that." I pulled out the section of the award and showed him.

"Oh", he said, "She asked me if could she do them. I give her five pound more a week in her hand."

So I went to her and I said, "You didn't tell me that, you didn't tell me the right story."

He said, "But she wont do it again, if it's against the award it's against the award. No worries. I'll take it off her but she wont get the five pound." I looked for her after that and didn't find her. When I went in later to pick up the fees she says, "Oh no, I'm not joining the union anymore - you took five pound a week from me for doing the men's toilets." Well she was dead against the unions.

Then we had the preference clause in those days which wasn't policed. If they wouldn't join the union, you just issued them with a preference clause, they had to pay the union or the courts the equivalent of the union fees and then they got no coverage from the union. You'd explain this to them. This is the preference clause. "Alright, you don't believe in unions you don't join but you've got to pay yearly the amount you would the pay to the union into the Industrial Court." I think I had three in the whole time I was with the union say, "Alright I'd rather do that, I don't believe in unions." "Okay, but you don't get any coverage, you don't get any help from the union." I didn't like serving them. I used to talk to them. When we had the canteens I'd get the girls to dob their mates in. "She's not in the union, that one behind the counter over there, she's not in the union."

So I'd go up and say, "Are you in the union dear?"

"No, I'm not going to join".

I'd say, "Oh, well come and have a talk."

"Oh I don't want to talk to you, I don't want to be in the union."

I'd say, "Alright don't be in the union, don't accept all the things the union has got you. Don't accept your three weeks holiday. Don't accept your holiday pay. Don't accept your overtime rates. Don't accept your long service leave. Don't accept compensation entitlement."

"Oh but the Government gives me that", they'd say.

I said, "No, no. The Commission gives it to you if you're a member of the union." And then I'd say, "All your mates, there's ten girls here, they're all paying union for your coverage so you can get your penalty rates, so you can get your holidays, your long service leave pro rata."

I said, "It's pretty lousy. Any rate these girls, they're going to ostracise you. You've got to be a member." And mainly I talked them into it. I had one at Coles, a couple at Coles, you know, big cafeteria, 70 or 80 people and the girls said to me, "Well if she won't join we're not going to join." And so it snowballs. "We're not going to be in it if she's not in it. Why should we pay?" That's all they worry about, the paying of the money. They don't look at the benefits.

There were thousands of cases. We had a big one at the Orbit Inn - they sacked a girl. That was when the Orbit Inn at the Airport first started. They sacked a girl, they said she was fiddling the till. The other girls there said she wasn't and they struck. There was one very good lass there, she blew the whistle. She stopped in the middle of a Sunday afternoon session. Called them all out and they went out. They were out for twenty four hours. Jim Coleman was the Trades and Labor Council secretary. He called the Commission, and we got him involved and we got better conditions out there than they'd ever had in their life. We got their shoe allowance, because they had to wear particular shoes; we got their clothes allowance built up; we got it that management had to come to us before they sacked a girl for any reason. I used to go out there on a Sunday night just as the session was dying down and collect dues - hand collect. This lass had a whistle up on her bar, and I'd say, "How are things going?" She said, "Everytime they do anything wrong I look at that whistle." She said, "They know". She was marvellous, there should have been dozens like her. She said "I look at that whistle and say to the boss - 'I'll blow the whistle', right at the crucial time of course."

Reid: Were there many or any other disputes that lead to stoppages or strikes?

Townsend: No, we were in a very unfortunate position with our union really, because our members weren't strong. There wasn't any strikes, only those little disputes. But there was that fuel and energy bill, we wanted ours to go out. We marched, we got a lot out but the Shops' let us down. Because the Shop Assistants Union was so weak there was no point in our girls stopping. The bosses would just take the shops assistants and put them in the cafeterias. Some of my very keen girls, very loyal I suppose to me, loyal to the union movement, they stopped. We did read the riot act if in the aftermath any got the sack. I think one time, it was only a year before I left, most of the hotels went out. I think it was over that 54B thing. I think a lot of the hotels stopped, not all of them, but the cafeterias, no. Little

cafés, mostly part time casuals, working three hours, then they finish and they're not interested. They're very hard to get motivated to stick up for anything.

Reid: When you started with the union, it's financial position was that pretty bad at the time?

Townsend: Oh it was bad. Fry and I, both of us later on donated our pay back to the union because we were without pay for ten weeks running. When Shelley and I were there, before Fry came into it, you'd go weeks without pay. I remember one Christmas Eve Shelley came up to me in a taxi and gave me my pay and said, "It's Christmas time". My son was in Vietnam, he got called up to go into Vietnam when he was 19 and he went in '67 - he was away till '69. Our pay was so paltry compared to what other union people's pay was - our conditions were bad - our holiday pay - well I didn't have any annual holidays for six years. I think I was sick once and I had some time off but there wasn't anyone to relieve us. There wasn't any money for holiday pay, then Fry, when he came into the union, of course he put the fees up and there was a big scream about that. Miss Shelley always thought she couldn't put the fees up. Fry was running it on the principle, "What your members get - you get" and the pay was so poor, it was terribly poor. Other organizers used to say, "Oh what are you working for that for?" It was a mere pittance to what other union organiser's got.

But I had a lovely time. I mean, I enjoyed myself. I did it mainly because of dedication to the union movement. I'm not praising myself up by saying this. I just wanted better conditions for the people, for the girls, because they're not union minded. They're not like a workshop where you're all working. You know, they're all fragmented, they're all over the place, and as I say they're mainly working to get a fridge or to get another car, or to help out in the home, and to get them motivated for any action would be impossible.

Protecting Labour: Carrie Hall and the Master and Servants Act

Janice Gothard*

On 21 April 1891, a domestic servant named Carrie Hall appeared before two Perth magistrates charged under the Master and Servants Act with deserting her master's service. Her 'master' or employer was Richard Septimus Haynes - lawyer, Perth City Councillor, political radical and co-founder with John Horgan of Western Australia's Eight Hours Association.¹ Haynes had taken Hall and a fellow servant, Kate Brown, before the Perth Police Court on similar charges; but whereas Kate Brown was discharged with a caution, Hall received a fine or one month in Fremantle Gaol in default. The wages which Haynes had offered Hall were £2 a month; the fine was £4. Hall had been in the colony for a matter of days, having arrived, like Brown, as an assisted immigrant on board the *Gulf of Martaban* earlier that month. She was quite unable to meet the fine, as was evident from her circumstances as a newly arrived single female immigrant, and the magistrates' ruling effectively amounted to a term of imprisonment.²

The Carrie Hall case led to a flutter of correspondence in the pages of the *West Australian*, with local residents eager to have their say and with Haynes, the Act itself, and the people who implemented it thoroughly savaged. Just nine months later, the Western Australian Master and Servants Act was rewritten to bring it into line with the less coercive acts already in place in the other colonies. The new Act at last transformed the breach of contract between employer and employee into a civil disagreement. Frank Crowley pointed out that it 'was designed to place the master and the servant on a footing of absolute equality'. In fact this was not the intention behind the new Act because it still permitted the imprisonment of male employees and, as Crowley himself indicated, workers were much less likely to be able to pay their fines than were their masters.³ Nonetheless the Act represented a significant advance on earlier regulations.

Most of the amendments introduced in the new Act of 1892 had been foreshadowed in a Bill presented to the House in 1884 but were thrown out on that occasion. However one significant advance on the 1884 proposal was the incorporation of a clause abolishing the imprisonment of women under the Act. In moving this amendment before the Assembly, M.F.A. Canning of East Perth argued that imprisoning women and girls was unduly severe and would result quite simply in the Act becoming inoperative for women workers, since magistrates would refuse to inflict such a penalty. Since 1840, the possibility of imprisonment

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of women had been gradually written out of the Master and Servants Acts of the other colonies, with Western Australia the last colony to do so.⁴ Canning argued, however, that regardless of the English law on which the Western Australian legislation was modelled, social matters made outlawing the imprisonment for women for breach of their employment contract imperative.

The circumstances of this colony, and indeed of Australia, are very different from those of the mother country. There they have, I believe, something considerably over a million more women than there are men; here we know the preponderance is quite the other way. Again, without taking a sentimental view but a practical view of the matter, we know very well that if a magistrate awarded a punishment of imprisonment to any girl or woman for a breach of contract, it would not be carried out. We know that perfectly well.⁵

If he was aware of the Hall case, Canning was not acknowledging that the prospect of imprisonment had been used as a very real punishment so recently.

The Carrie Hall case and the subsequent amendment of the Act have significance which goes beyond an illustration of the outdated legislation used in Western Australia into the 1890s to enforce the discipline of master over servant. Canning's argument for the abolition of imprisonment of women under the Act dealt with the issue of the colonial sex ratio and suggested that in terms of chivalry alone the protective instincts of a male bench and the predominantly male community would preclude imprisonment. Appeals to masculine chivalry were no basis for satisfactory employer/employee relations and, as the Hall case showed, Canning was mistaken in his assumption about magisterial chivalry; but, in fact, chivalry on the part of the general public had prevented Hall's imprisonment. One correspondent to the *West Australian*, 'Indignant', described the process:

Fortunately a number of people were in Court, and these evinced their sympathy practically by subscribing the amount of the fine and within five minutes of her removal to the cell the unfortunate victim to an antiquated and barbarous law was released. As an instance of the popular opinion respecting the working of the Masters and Servants' Act, I may mention that in several hotels and business houses subscription lists were opened and freely contributed to. Two instances I can mention, viz.: The Australian Hotel, where when the report was read out nearly £2 was raised in a few minutes; and the Sydney Coffee Palace, where six persons alone subscribed 30s, at the tea table.⁶

Beyond the issue of male chivalry and the need to protect the weaker sex, however, was another theme, not recognised by the immediate protagonists in the Carrie Hall case but nonetheless fundamental to the whole issue of the conditions of female workers in the colony: the need to protect the sought-after and scarce supply of female domestic servants. The intention in this article is to examine the Western Australian government's efforts to introduce a reliable supply of single female domestics, focusing in particular on the programme adopted in

the 1890s, and to show the lengths to which the government would go to maintain this by improving the conditions of reception and employment for the single immigrant women who largely comprised the colony's domestic servants. This was not paternalism or benevolence on the government's part but was simply a pragmatic response to the demands of one woman in Britain, Mrs Ellen Joyce, who directed single women domestics to the colony at the government's request but had the power to direct them elsewhere. In examining the Carrie Hall case, it will become evident that the government altered its actions and policies to adopt a more protective attitude to single women workers only where Mrs Joyce insisted. In other instances beyond Mrs Joyce's watchdog gaze, the government and its agencies were happy to allow and even to cooperate in the victimisation of a particularly vulnerable category of worker, the immigrant domestic, as the aftermath of the Carrie Hall case shows clearly.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, introducing a regular and reliable supply of labour had been a dominant concern of both the Western Australian colonial legislature and of private employers. Meeting the clamour for domestic servants to work in middle-class homes necessitated government intervention in the process of attracting female labour to the colony for, although Chinese labour bridged some of the gaps in the market for paid domestic labour, the primary and preferred source of domestic labour was single women. The method adopted by all the Australian colonies in the nineteenth century to meet the need for paid domestic labour was to establish extensive programmes of assisted immigration aimed at offering very cheap or free passages to single British women, preferable those with some experience as paid domestic servants. In all the colonies except Queensland, over the period 1850 to 1900, government schemes introduced larger numbers of single women than any other category of immigrant.⁷

Carrie Hall came out as a government-assisted immigrant under a scheme set up in 1888 to introduce a regular supply of domestic servants to the colony from Britain, as part of the colony's largest and most ordered female migration scheme that century. Aged between 16 and 30, the women were to be 'carefully selected both with regard to character (,) health and capabilities', and country women would have preference.⁸

This was not the colony's first attempt to introduce a reliable supply of paid domestic labour. Two other large government-controlled schemes had operated since 1850 in addition to a number of small private schemes managed by middle-class employers.⁹ In 1848, in tandem with the British government's introduction of male convicts to the colony, the Western Australian colonists agreed to accept British immigrants equal to the number of convicts introduced and most of these immigrants were single working women.¹⁰ When that scheme was wound up in the early 1870s, rising wages for domestic servants and petitions from

country residents calling for the introduction of coolie labour to meet this gap in the labour market induced the colonial legislature to set up further programmes to introduce single female domestic servants.¹¹ Under this scheme single women were selected in Britain at colonial expense by a range of British agents. The shipping firm Felgate and Co. selected single women in the late 1870s, and the colony's own Crown Agents in London and independent selection agents in Ireland selected them in the 1880s.¹² In addition to the selection of single women for free passage to the colony, the colonial legislature assisted the introduction of other forms of labour which were also in short supply. Nomination regulations were introduced in 1873 which enabled colonial residents to nominate healthy able-bodied workers and their families, belonging to occupations in demand in the colony, by depositing £4 for each adult.¹³ Single female domestic servants, often sisters or cousins of colonial residents, were a popular choice as nominees and also had the option of travelling free as selected immigrants.

Changing colonial fortunes from the late 1870s produced shifts in the government's assisted immigration policy and a withdrawal of assistance at times over the next decade but by the end of the 1880s the continuing high demand for an uninterrupted supply of female domestics could no longer be ignored. Assistance could not be reintroduced until colonial finances began to improve but when this occurred, meeting the demand for paid domestic labour took priority. In March 1889 the Board decided to send for 60 single domestic servants to augment the colony's supply under an arrangement which continued until the end of the century.

Most of the women despatched under the colony's new selection scheme were chosen through Mrs Ellen Joyce of the United British Women's Emigration Association (UBWEA), as it was then known. (The UBWEA later became the British Women's Emigration Association and will be referred to here as the BWEA.) The British government's Emigrants' Information Office recognised the BWEA as the chief British female emigration agency and other emigration societies also directed female emigrants through that channel. Mrs Joyce was the head of the Girls' Friendly Society (GFS) emigration department and she also drew on the resources of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, and the Young Women's Christian Association in selecting potential emigrants in Britain. Further, she had the blessing of the Anglican church through her work with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a British organisation which took an interest in protecting women in transit to the colonies.¹⁴

In entering into an arrangement with Mrs Joyce and the BWEA to select single women for domestic service in the colony the Western Australian colonial legislature tapped into the most reliable supply of prospective single female emigrants available in Britain. But they also took on Mrs Joyce's preconceptions about how the migration process should be implemented. In

her negotiations with the colonial government Mrs Joyce wielded a great deal of power, derived from her monopoly of the supply of domestic labour which the government and middle-class employers thought fundamental to the colony's wellbeing. Much of the remainder of this article will illustrate the extent of Mrs Joyce's power, and the measures the colonial government adopted, at her instigation, to protect its supply of domestic servants.

The foundation of the BWEA's work with female emigrants was their understanding of the need to protect single working-class women who had left the 'natural protection' of their families. The Association's scheme for 'protected emigration' was based on the principle of careful selection of emigrants, close protection on the passage out and adequate reception in the colony. Reception involved the provision of a safe immigrants' depot, control of the hiring process and some continuing care and interest in the immigrants once they entered employment in the colony. In providing protected emigration, Mrs Joyce and the BWEA worked closely with middle-class women in the colonies such as Mrs Parry, the wife of Bishop Parry, and Mrs Salter of the Girls Friendly Society, who provided 'that personal + individual interest in the young women which must always be woman's part of the work'.¹⁵ However, though the BWEA saw this local care as indispensable, it was still viewed as secondary to the government's responsibilities. Mrs Joyce regarded reception as part of the government's obligation towards the women introduced and those who had sent them, and a complement to careful selection and protection. Thus a satisfactory reception procedure became the lynchpin of the emigration process. Without it, Mrs Joyce refused to select domestic servants for the colony.

Through the 1890s immigration programme Mrs Joyce exercised tight and restrictive controls over the single women selected for free passage to the colony. Mrs Joyce and the BWEA believed that close policing of emigrant women was justified in fairness to the colonial authorities, since the colonies required and paid for migrant women with both domestic skills and with proven good character. The women's acceptance of Mrs Joyce's controls was a mark of their good character.¹⁶ In return Mrs Joyce argued that, since the women she despatched *were* of good character, they deserved the best protection the colony could offer. Hence she policed the activities of the colonial government as closely as she policed her selected emigrants.

From the arrival in 1889 of the first 85 women selected under the new scheme, on board the Nairnshire and the SS Wilcannia, Mrs Joyce asserted her authority on the implementation of the colony's female immigration programme.¹⁷ Depot facilities were inadequate, she said. The Reverend Canon Watkins had complained to the Board that the arrangements made for the care and proper supervision of the domestics at the Fremantle barracks where they were lodged

on arrival were unsuitable, and in Britain Mrs Joyce later heard reports of 'girls...allowed to go about the town or receive outsiders at the Depot'.¹⁸ At her request, Western Australia's governor Sir William Robinson undertook to have the colony's reception arrangements improved and a new depot established in Perth. Sir William also suggested to the Colonial Secretary that the matrons who supervised the women on board ship remain with them after they had been transferred to the depot, as much to continue their supervision as to deflect the suggestion that trouble only occurred once the immigrants were entirely in the hands of the colonial government.¹⁹ This simply duplicated Mrs Joyce's own stipulation.²⁰

Mrs Joyce also influenced the conditions of employment of domestics in Western Australia. In February 1891 she argued that new arrivals should not enter service in public houses straight out of the depot since only those 'used to the ways of the Country... [were] able to insist upon their self respect being preserved' in such jobs.²¹ This ruling had not previously prevailed in Western Australia and it took some time before it was fully effective. In December 1891, despite Mrs Joyce's wishes, the immigration agent William Dale recommended a female cook for Mrs Bell of the Railway Hotel in Katanning.²² The following year immigrant Martha Scammett was engaged by Mrs O'Connell of Fremantle, but was in fact passed on to work with Mrs Armstrong of Armitage's Hotel. Once this was realised, however, the immigration authorities told Maria that if she wished, she could return to the depot and a new post would be found for her.²³ Similarly in March 1894, Dale was forced to make 'private and confidential' enquiries concerning Mrs Connor, wife of the Member of Parliament for Wyndham, who had engaged Lilly Gardner off the Port Victor, as it was feared she intended taking Lilly back to Wyndham to work in Connor's hotel.²⁴ Fortunately the emigrant ship matron Mary Pittman Monk was able to mediate for the government in this delicate matter.²⁵ By this time, Mrs Joyce's desires had become commands.

Despite the regular supply of Mrs Joyce's single women, middle-class demand for domestics and interest in their immigration was unquenched and each advertisement of the imminent arrival of a further selection of domestics provoked a flood of applications, both to the government immigration authorities and to Mrs Salter of the Girls' Friendly Society. Regular requests came particularly from country residents asking that domestics be selected and forwarded to them by the immigration agent. Such a procedure was not generally possible, as domestics could be engaged only by personal application; but after the first rush of employers any remaining women might be despatched to the bush. Mrs J.E. Leary of Talbot House, York, offered 30/- per month to a general servant, 'one that has been used to the country preferred (sic)', but none of the four women remaining from the Port Phillip would accept the offer, and the immigration authorities did not insist.²⁶

Through Mrs Joyce's selection and her concern with imposing rigorous reception standards, the primary elements which characterised the BWEA's notion of 'protected emigration' were virtually established. Inevitably there were hiccoughs. In 1893 Alice Hamilton, a hospital nurse assistant from New Cross, London, arrived in the colony pregnant. Mrs Joyce was very grieved at the news, for Alice's references had been good, and she hoped that 'her after conduct may in time restore her to respect'.²⁷ Mrs Salter also provided Alice with some support.²⁸ The Gulf of Siam which reached the colony late in 1894 contained a number of women who, though selected in line with the usual strict procedures, turned out badly, according to Mrs Joyce and colonial authorities. Two sisters, the daughters of a dissenting minister and thus, Mrs Joyce concluded, 'unused to self discipline', had asserted their intention to enter domestic service but were found to be quite unfit for it and were also 'most insubordinate and offensive'.²⁹ Another woman, a young widow who had seemed respectable, turned out 'infamous and abandoned'.³⁰

Women the colonial authorities judged to be disreputable immediately on arrival very often settled down to official and colonial satisfaction and the government's ongoing commitment to Mrs Joyce's selection, the colonists' satisfaction evident in the lack of obvious complaint and the clamour to employ the domestics testify to the general success of the scheme. Following the problems with the Gulf of Siam in 1894, however, Mrs Joyce henceforth required all members of her Western Australian parties to sign a set of rules and agree to obey the shipboard matron and surgeon-supintendent absolutely.³¹ In other cases, the period at the emigrants' home where the emigrants assembled before embarking was sufficient to detect an undisciplined emigrant: thus Elizabeth Quinn was refused passage on the steamer Port Pirie, on Mrs Joyce's instruction, as a result of her 'disobedience' and 'insubordinate behaviour' at the Blackwall Home.³² Because of her vigilance in policing the behaviour and morality of her selection, the colonial authorities continued to express great satisfaction with the women Mrs Joyce despatched.

The strongest testament to Mrs Joyce's influence on the colonial government was her successful intervention in the Carrie Hall case, which came as the culmination of two years of her work to improve reception arrangements for single women arriving in the colony. The case provides evidence not simply of Mrs Joyce's all-pervading influence on conditions of domestic employment but also of the value which the colonial legislature placed on introducing a supply of carefully-selected domestic labour, and the extent to which the government could be pressed to modify its behaviour to retain it.

Anne Atkinson's work on Chinese migration to Western Australia has shown that this was not the first instance of government intervention to protect a valuable supply of immigrant labour.³³ In 1879, for example, Governor Ord had instructed resident magistrates to exercise

some clemency with Chinese immigrant labourers brought before them under the Master and Servants Act, to avoid jeopardising an important source of cheap labour.³⁴ Some of the colonists who expressed their outrage at the treatment Hall received clearly did so with an eye to the more lenient treatment supposedly dealt out to Chinese immigrants, probably as a response to Ord's directive. As one correspondent wrote,

This sentence differs somewhat in its magnitude from those which have been awarded in this colony to Chinamen for similar offences, but it is one of the glorious signs of our advanced civilization that we love the Mongolian, even better than we do the Caucasian, and, perhaps, in no surer way do we show it than in our dealings, through the law, with them...(T)o impose so harsh and rigorous a sentence upon a penniless, sick, young English girl for an offence for which more than one healthy Chinamen has got off scot free, merely upon promising to go back to his employment, is not calculated to convey a very high opinion of the colony, its law, or the latter's agents.³⁵

Once Mrs Joyce became aware of the Hall case, it was inevitable that she would create havoc; it was equally inevitable that the government, which had already acted so often to meet Mrs Joyce's demands, would respond to her demands again. Like the supply of Chinese labour, the supply of domestics had to be protected at any cost.

The colonial government did not advise Mrs Joyce of the Hall case but by May 1891 she had heard independently and wrote a letter of bitter protest to the crown agent in London, E.E. Blake.

There appears to have been no one to whom this young woman had a right to appeal or who was prepared to protect her. This is not what I understood by the promises of care being taken of these young women...

All I can say is that if respectable servants cannot withdraw themselves from a situation without rendering themselves liable to go to prison and undergo a months imprisonment I shall not feel inclined to recommend them to select Western Australia as their future home, unless the Masters and Servants' Acts is modified.³⁶

Mrs Joyce was particularly incensed at the use of imprisonment to punish women whom she had personally vetted as respectable. In her character reference Hall's previous employer had stated

I can give her an excellent character. She is very respectably connected and an upright truthful girl. She thoroughly understands her work and is quick and clean in dispensing it. She is good tempered and an excellent needlewoman. I could say more but probably this will suffice.³⁷

As Mrs Joyce pointed out to the colonial authorities, 'the amount of the fine is nothing compared with the degradation to a respectable servant of being sent to prison'.³⁸

In addition to Mrs Joyce's threat other agents in Britain also warned the colonial government of the ripples spreading from the case. A Perth report of the court proceedings described how the young woman was removed to the cells 'crying'; by the time the news reached Britain, a press account there described Hall 'weeping piteously' as she was led away.³⁹ As the crown agent E.E. Blake admonished the Board of Immigration,

the publication in this Country of this case will necessarily have a very deterrent effect upon the Emigration of further young women and ... unless some very satisfactory explanations can be given of the circumstances of C. Hall's case, ... all the best Women's Emigration Societies in this Country will decline to assist ... Emigration to the Colony.⁴⁰

Given Mrs Joyce's threat and the crown agent's warning, the immigration authorities established an inquiry into the Hall case in July 1891. In a lengthy document 'in explanation of the heavy sentence passed on Caroline Hall', presiding justice J.C.H. James argued that the minimum possible punishment was imposed, to operate as 'a punishment and a deterrent', and that the two justices had had no choice under the Master and Servants Act.⁴¹ James also claimed Hall was never in the cells, before or after conviction, and in fact was seen to smile with relief when her punishment was announced, as it was less severe than she had expected.⁴² Under attack, James defended the actions of the crown, but he himself agreed that the Masters and Servants Act was a hard one, one-sided in application since it gave servants no recourse in the event of wrongful dismissal, and inappropriate in dealing with the civil offence of breach of contract under a criminal statute.⁴³

If the presiding justices had had no choice, Hall's employer Richard Septimus Haynes had chosen to exact the utmost from the law. Correspondents in the press had already found Haynes guilty - of hypocrisy and political expediency. In response to the many letters in the press immediately after the trial attacking the decision of the Bench, Haynes had written

the evidence showed that an agreement for service existed between me and the defendant, not terminable before the expiration of two months, and that the rate of wages was £2 per month, and that the defendant had unlawfully broken that agreement. Now, sir, had I sent the girl away without lawful excuse, I would have had to forfeit a sum of £4 at least, and why, may I ask, if the defendant chose to break the agreement should she be treated in any milder manner than myself?⁴⁴

Respondents to Haynes' letter suggested he should have known the answer to his own question. One correspondent wrote that the incident

serves as a guage (sic) to his political consistency, for when he was before the electors last November, he promised the electors to strive for the abolition of the unequal conditions of the Master and Servants Act. Mr Haynes may expect, should he ever again seek the suffrage of the working men of Perth, to have some very awkward questions upon the subject put to him.⁴⁵

Another writer, attacked by Haynes for the use of a *nom-de-plume*, sarcastically retorted that the use of a name in press correspondence revealed nothing about a writer's identity. Haynes, declared the anonymous writer,

has always posed before the public as a friend of the working classes. He was, at one time,...a President of some labour club or association of working men. As a friend of the working man he was prepared, he said at the hustings last year, to advocate the legislative enactment of eight hours as a working day. In fact, Mr Haynes had come to be regarded, as I once heard him say he was, as "a real working man", in the truest sense of the phrase, and, therefore, I cannot believe that the writer of the letter signed "R.S. Haynes" in today's paper, justifying the harsh sentence passed on a penniless, sick young English girl, belonging to the working classes, is Mr R.S. Haynes, the friend of the working man, and who laboured hard for the working man's vote before he failed to get in for West Perth.⁴⁶

Haynes clearly emerged as the villain and his villainy did not stop there. The day following the trial, this 'friend of the working man' and one-time opponent of the Master and Servants Act wrote to the Colonial Secretary pointing out that under section 5 of the Act, the Immigration Board was liable to prosecution for 'harbouring' Carrie Hall, that is, allowing her to remain at the Immigration Depot after she had left Haynes' service.⁴⁷ The immigration depot was the home where all single female immigrants were sheltered after arrival and until they found an employment situation it was the only home they had in the colony.

On receiving this letter, after hasty consultation with the Attorney General the Chairman of the Immigration Board notified Haynes that Hall had been told to leave the depot and advised to return to Haynes' service.⁴⁸ Once again the Sydney Coffee Palace, where much of Hall's fine had been raised, intervened to rescue Hall. On 23 April proprietor John Musson wrote to the Board agreeing 'to take all risks and responsibility (sic) in reference to engaging Carrie Hall'.⁴⁹ Musson thus left himself open to prosecution by Haynes; but at least Carrie Hall had a place to sleep short of the Home of Mercy.

Following the Board's inquiry into the prosecution of Carrie Hall Mrs Joyce continued selecting domestics for Western Australia and shortly afterwards the Master and Servants Act was amended along the lines she had indicated, with the imprisonment of women and girls expressly prohibited. But there is little doubt that if she had been made aware of the government's role in evicting Hall from the immigrants' depot she would have refused to continue acting on their behalf. She selected domestic servants for Western Australia until the

end of the decade. Haynes became mayor of North Perth in 1896. Carrie Hall's subsequent history is less easy to trace but the repercussions of the affair which brought her brief fame spread far beyond the colony. Mrs Joyce had the last official word on the matter. In a letter to the Western Australian authorities in February 1892, she pointed out with some satisfaction: 'I think it is instructive to note that I could not get a single emigrant from Devonshire or Cornwall as (the) Carrie Hall case was much circulated amongst those parts'.⁵⁰

¹ R. Erickson (ed.), *Bicentennial Dictionary of Western Australia pre 1829-1888*, vol.II, D-J, p.1418; C.T. Stannage, *The People of Perth*, Perth 1979, p.197.

² *West Australian*, 22 April 1891.

³ F.K. Crowley, "Master and Servant in Western Australia 1851-1901", in *Journal and Proceedings of the Western Australian Historical Society*, vol. IV, part VI, p.20,25,26. This article gives a history of the Act from 1851 to 1901.

⁴ Michael Quinlan, "'Pre-arbitral" labour legislation in Australia and its implications for the introduction of compulsory arbitration', in S. Macintyre and R. Mitchell (eds.), *Foundations of Arbitration: The Origins and Effects of State Compulsory Arbitration 1890-1914*, Melbourne 1989, p.46, note 11.

⁵ *Western Australian Parliamentary Debates*, 3 February 1892, p.449.

⁶ *West Australian*, 22 April 1891.

⁷ Janice Gothard, "British Female Working-Class Migration to the Australian Colonies, 1860-1900", thesis-in-progress, Murdoch University.

⁸ Board of Immigration Minutes, 14 March 1889, 11 June 1889, Acc. 489/5, CSO, Battye Library (hereafter CSO).

⁹ See for example R. Erickson, *Old Toodyay and Newcastle*, Toodyay 1974, pp.110-113.

¹⁰ Merivale to Sir Frederick Rogers Bart., Memorandum, 19 February 1869, CO 386/77, Public Record Office, Kew, U.K.

¹¹ Report of the Select Committee on Immigration, *Western Australian Parliament. Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council* (hereafter *WA V&P of LC*), 1877, no.12, paper A4, p.174.

¹² Felgate and Co. to Colonial Secretary, 9 June 1876, Colonial Secretary to Felgate and Co., 2 October 1876, Immigration - Correspondence Relative to, *WA V & P of LC*, 1877, no.12; Felgate and Co. to Colonial Secretary, 1 September 1876, Acc. 36, 761/46, CSO; Immigration, *WA V & P of LC*, 1884, no.30, p.561, 563; Report of the Select Committee into Immigration, *WA V & P of LC*, 1882, no.A1, p.569.

¹³ *British Parliamentary Papers*, 1873, XVIII, 295, p.12-13.

¹⁴ See Gothard, *op.cit.*, for a discussion of the activities of the BWEA.

¹⁵ Ellen Joyce to Crown Agents, 23 May 1891, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.

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- 16 This was by no means a straight forward process. See Gothard, *op.cit.*, for a discussion of the reactions of immigrant women to this process of control.
- 17 Board of Immigration Minutes, 30 December 1889, Acc. 489/5, CSO.
- 18 *Ibid.*; Robinson to Colonial Secretary, 14 March 1891, Acc.553, Box 5, CSO.
- 19 *Ibid.*
- 20 Board of Immigration Minutes, 13 March 1891, Acc. 489/5, CSO.
- 21 Crown Agents to Secretary, Board of Immigration, 20 Feb. 1891; Joyce to Crown Agents, 23 May 1891; Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 22 Mrs Bell to Immigration Office, 9 December 1891, Note on file, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 23 CSO to caretaker, Immigration Depot, [n.d. 1892?], Acc.553, Box 4, CSO.
- 24 William Dale to John McKenna, 28 March 1894, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 25 John McKenna to William Dale, 28 March 1894, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 26 Mrs J.E. Leary to Undersecretary, CSO, 27 September 1893; T.M. McCarty to Undersecretary, CSO, 30 September 1893; Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 27 Mrs Joyce to Agent-general, 1 May 1893; UBWEA preliminary application form no. 5701; Acc. 553, Box 4, CSO.
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 Joyce to Sir Malcolm Fraser, Agent General, 11 Dec.1894, in K. Daniels and M. Murnane, *Uphill all the Way: A Documentary History of Women in Australia*, St. Lucia, 1980, p.222.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p.223.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p.222, 224.
- 32 Agent general to Colonial Secretary, 18 May 1894, Acc. 553, Box 1, CSO.
- 33 Anne Atkinson, "Chinese labour, capital and enterprise, 1847-1947", Thesis-in-progress, Murdoch University.
- 34 Acc. 527, 1264/1800, CSO, cited in *Ibid.*
- 35 *West Australian*, 22 April 1891.
- 36 Mrs Joyce to Crown Agents, 28 May 1891, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 37 Enclose in *ibid.*
- 38 Mrs Joyce to Crown Agents, 28 May 1891, Acc. 553, Box 5.
- 39 *West Australian*, 22 April 1891; British press clipping (n.p.; n.d.), Fawcett Library scrapbook, Fawcett Library, London.
- 40 E.E. Blake, Crown Agent, to Chairman, Board of Immigration, 4 June 1891, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 41 "Remarks in explanation of the heavy sentence passed on Caroline Hall", prepared by J.C.H. James, 8 July 1891, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.
- 42 *Ibid.*
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 *West Australian*, 24 April 1891.

45 *West Australian*, 27 April 1891.

46 *West Australian*, 25 April 1891.

47 5th section, 6 Vict. no.5; R.S. Haynes to Colonial Secretary, 22 April 1891, Acc. 553, Box 5.

48 Chairman, Board of Immigration, to R.S. Haynes, 24 April 1891, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO. See Quinlan, *op.cit.*, p.31, for a discussion of the provisions of the Master and Servants Act against "harbouring and enticement".

49 Note written by John Musson, Acc. 553, Box 5, CSO.

50 Ellen Joyce to Mr Shenton, 11 February 1892, Acc. 553, Box 4, item 2, CSO.

The Rhythms of Work. Music and Working Life

An Interview with Christine Evans†

Fox: Could you tell us something about your musical background?

Evans: I first got involved in Music at school. I went to the Community School at Fremantle. In 1979 I joined a group called the Wimmin's Circus which was a ten-piece women's performance group, based at the then Pram Factory in Melbourne, very much inspired by Circus Oz and instigated by the women from Circus Oz. I learnt mandolin at that stage to fit in with the circus band. I got very enthused about playing music. I think that experience made it clear to me that you can just get together with people and do things. And then in 1980 I met Linsey Pollak who is a multi-cultural musician and I got inspired to take up sax. I learnt a lot about Macedonian music then and Linsey and I worked together doing all sorts of music and comedy. It came from the idea of street performance and just having a go at things.

Fox: Was this back in Perth?

Evans: This was in Sydney. We went to Macedonia for about six weeks and learnt some more music there and busked a lot. Back in Sydney we played for weddings, Macedonian Easter and things like that. We started a brass band which played Macedonian music in the park at Newtown and lots of people came to dance and picnic. I worked with a group called Furious Chicken too. From the Wimmin's Circus onwards I was quite involved with the women's movement doing things that presented alternative pictures of what was possible. I really wanted to play music and perform and that seemed a way of putting those ideas into practice. So Furious Chicken was a three-piece feminist theatre and music and general silliness outfit. We came to Perth in 1982 and Linsey came over too. Furious Chicken worked together with Linsey and another musician called Phillip Griffin and made a group called Makedonski Bop and we also started a brass band called Tea Break that was all saxophones and percussion.

"Furious Chicken" continued for about three years. Then at this stage I started wanting to learn more about music, so I applied to Jazz School and spent two years in total culture shock and horror doing jazz saxophone at Mt. Lawley Conservatorium but I learnt about arranging for voice as well as for various jazz ensembles.

Fox: Did you come from a musical family?

Evans: Not directly. My nuclear family weren't musical, but my sister Gail is a musician and has worked in similar areas to me. A family of my cousins are all saxophonists and they have

†Christine Evans is Musician in Residence with the W.A. Trades and Labour Council. This an edited version of a recent interview with Charlie Fox, joint editor of *Papers in Labour History*.

a quartet called the Fairer Sax which is a women's classical saxophone quartet. And my great grandfather, as I found out recently, was a conductor of the Gympie Church choir in 1890.

Fox: Were you still playing around the place in Perth when you got involved with the Trades and Labour Council?

Evans: Yes, I was playing in a rock band at that stage called Jumping Chapaties. I formed a group called Hammer and Tongues which is an a capella group and worked with them up until January of this year.

Fox: Where does the Trades and Labour Council's interest in music come from?

Evans: They have been employing an Arts Officer for a number of years now. I think there is a general recognition within the Trade Union Movement, both from the grass roots up to the peak bodies that the Arts have a very important role to play both in representing working culture and in helping promote the aims of unionism, but not necessarily in a crass, elephantine way. Its a case of readdressing attitudes whereby culture is always seen as something classical and middle class and that actually isn't the case. For a number of years now its been T.L.C. policy to promote cultural activities for workers, so there is an Arts Office at the Trades and Labour Council whose job it is to implement these sort of programmes employing artists.

Fox: And you were saying earlier to me that this is an Australia wide thing. You've just been to a conference in Melbourne? What happened at that?

Evans: That's right. It was the National Art in Working Life Conference. It was something that was initiated by the Community Cultural Development Unit of the Australia Council, which is one of the more progressive bodies within the Australia Council. They first implemented the Art in Working Life programme, I think, in 1982. The idea of the Conference was to gather together artists who were involved in Art in Working Life programmes, and union officials and interested delegates to talk together about the future of the Art in Working Life programme, as a fundable entity from the Australia Council point of view but also about ways of gaining independence from government funding. And it was to exchange views and make recommendations that could be implemented by the Australia Council and the ACTU Arts and Creative Recreation Policy, and organisations.

Fox: Let's get back to Western Australia. How did you and the Trades and Labour Council get together?

Evans: My current residency was designed by Wendy Wise and Phillip Griffin. Wendy W. was the Arts Officer at the TLC before Ric McCracken took over. Phillip Griffin is a very accomplished musician with a background in classical and choral music. Wendy approached Phillip about the idea with one of the primary objectives being to develop a choir because that's

his background and skills. In 1989 Phil had worked on a three-month project to develop a choir for May Day which had been very successful and popular, so the impetus for the musician in resident project came partly out of that choir and the general feeling that it would be a good thing to keep going. They put in an application for funding but Phillip then went to England, so they were looking around for a replacement and Phillip recommended me. I didn't have experience working with Unions, but I do have an interest in women's issues and in cultural equity. So I was approached about it on his recommendation.

Fox: Is the choir the main part of your job? What else does it normally involve?

Evans: The choir has been a big focus and it's been very helpful to have a tangible project that you can show to people. Another main focus for me has been training; acquainting myself with what's involved in choral music and writing and arranging for choir, attending things like this conference. I am running another project at the moment which is taking up approximately half of my job, doing some writing and concerts with Macedonian women through the Food Preserver's and the Miscellaneous Worker Unions. As a result of inspiration I gained from a trip to the Eastern States to talk with other people working in the field, it became clear to me that it would be better to work with a partner on these projects. One of the hard things is slogging away by yourself – you feel like a fake, especially in a union context. So with this particular project I got some extra funding from the ACTU's, Developed Funds to employ a partner to go with me to places where Macedonian women work, which is particularly the lower paid places, to do some writing and make music.

Fox: How do you go about doing that?

Evans: We are working in conjunction with the Ethnic Music Centre on this project and we are offering a range of activities so we need to be flexible in our approach. So far, with the backup of the Food Preservers Union we approached two poultry processing factories and talked to the women there about the fact that we are interested in their music and in developing new music based on that traditional music and at first we were looked at as though we are Martians!

Fox: Why was that?

Evans: Well I think partly because the thought of Anglo-Australians being interested in that sort of music is still fairly foreign, it tends to be something that lives within the community and that's it; partly because work is a place where you go to pull the guts out of chickens and go home as quickly as you can. Then we said that we'd like to come and do a concert and continue talking about those ideas and see if there is any interest. They all said "great, come and entertain us, that'd be fantastic, we'd love it, we can't write music, we're not musicians, we're just workers". So we went in and did the concerts and the initial incomprehension developed into a wonderful response. I am re-evaluating what we are doing and why, as we go along too. It is becoming

clear to me that one of the things that's really important is to make that contact with the women and be able to give feedback to the unions about what things really are important. The unions are concerned about always being seen to have a heavy hand and not being able to get the idea across that they exist for the empowerment of their members. At the factories, just talking to people is really interesting. They sit down and some of them can't move their hands much over lunch and they spend most of their lunchtime rubbing their arms, because they have got burning feelings in their hands. It is a classic RSI high risk occupation, but they can't stop work.

We've done one concert at each place and because we've been to talk beforehand and have passed around introductory letters written in Macedonian there was a lot of expectation and we got a wonderful response. People loved us singing the traditional songs; they were also amazed at why Australians would want to do that. From that we got a lot more interest and enthusiasm to start talking about what we wanted to do and a couple of women in particular picked up on the idea and have said come around to our place and listen to some music and we can watch some videos and talk some more. We are now at that stage and we are hoping to write some Macedonian-influenced songs ourselves and to play those back and see what response we get.

Our visits were very interesting. At one of the factories the Manager said "All right then, I suppose you can come in" and he let the women off early – There's maybe 30 Macedonian women there and he got them to go and sit in the canteen. He took us up the stairs and we walked into the room and stood about 10 yards away from where the women were all sitting and they were just staring at us, because they had no idea why they had been pulled out of work. He said "Well, there they are, do what you want" and he walked out. He didn't say "Hello, this is Rosa, this is Christine and Maria and they want to do some things and they have asked me whether we could have some time for you to talk to us". He just stood there 10 yards away. He didn't quite point with his finger as though it were a cattle yard, but that was it. So Maria and I were standing there with 30 women staring at us; they had no idea what was going on. We gulped and walked over and said "Hello, we are so and so and we are interested in doing this and that. They were very friendly and they were very pleased to be off work a bit early, but it really rammed home the fact that they've got no power over their lives in work. The boss says "Knock off work 15 minutes early, there's some people to talk to you" and they do and that's it. It's staggering. With the music we develop out of this programme we want to do some concerts involving the women as well, and Hammer and Tongues do some of the Macedonian music. The idea is to be able to work with them as an on-going group when we do this material. In Melbourne the most successful groups were the ones where there is a group of musicians who, in their own worklife, could keep something going because, otherwise, these projects tend to be short term and token and they stop when the money runs out. I was trying to think of ways of that not being the case.

Fox: Can you tell me about the choir? Who is in it? Where they come from?

Evans: The membership's changed quite a bit since May Day this year. The initial idea was to work together towards another May Day concert and then it was open as to whether the choir would go on. There was a lot of enthusiasm and so we did.

We've got three people from the Trades and Labour Council. We've got a cook, childcare workers, teachers, nurses' union people, CSA, MOA, a few African people, a writer, some students, some unemployed workers. It ranges in size from about 17-25 people and the African people tend to come in where we are doing an ANC oriented job which has been a link that I've tried to develop with the choir.

Fox: What kind of material are you using?

Evans: We do a real range. We do a few traditional workers songs like the "Boss's Darling" which is one by Jean Harton that comes from the 40's; that's an American song. We do some songs that are written by local songwriters. I'm very keen to promote local and original material because I think, well, why just do the same old songs, it should be about us here now as well as the past. So we do "Rocks to Japan" which is a song that was written for a previous Art in Working Life programme up in the Pilbara. We do "Song of the Brave" by a local songwriter here about the women of El Salvador. We do some African songs, we do Nkosi Sikeleli Africa which is the ANC adopted anthem and another song called Hulumere Senzeni. That song comes from a record of South African Trade Union choirs. Huge numbers of the workplaces in South Africa have their own choir. Glen Mashinini has been helping me on developing the African material. He works with the African cultural group and is also an ANC support group member – he came out from Soweto with his mum when he was a kid. We are both very keen to help the choir develop African material and work as a solidarity choir with the ANC on appropriate events. I'm interested in this for several reasons; partly because the music is great and it is exciting for everyone in the choir, partly because politically I support the ANC, and partly because I think they have a very inspiring model of the relationship between culture and political change. That's something that I think the Trade Union Movement can learn a lot from; that they actually have cultural officers and that there isn't the sort of chasm between their perceived view of culture, their view of work and the rest of life. Glenn introduced me to ANC people in Sydney and wrote to COSATU (which is the South African Trade Union umbrella organisation) and is trying to get some choir material sent over. He got me the record of South African Trade Union Choirs.

Fox: That chasm that you talk about between - culture and working life, does it exist in Australia? If it does, why do you think it exists?

Evans: There is a strong working-class tradition of songs and various art forms in Australia. There are a number of reasons why that hasn't been valued or seen or promoted much within the dominant culture. One reason is that songs that are specific to a group or that arise out of

particular events don't necessarily get recorded or written down; they're part of that living culture and they tend to just disappear. Another reason is to do with notions of work. I suppose it's that concept of alienated labour, that you go to work and work is supposed to have nothing to do with your real life. In a way work buys time for the things that make life worthwhile, which is very sad because the cultural activities that do go on and are part of people's lives are not seen to be appropriate to the workplace.

Fox: Do you remember that concert you put on for the Labour History Society? Somebody suggested afterwards that you were, in fact, gentrifying the Labor Movement.

Evans: Yes, I found that the most astonishing remark.

Fox: I wonder what s/he meant?

Evans: I did think about that quite a lot and I came to the conclusion that it came from a very narrow view of what working class culture is, firstly that it is all blokes in boots and singlets doing manual work and that's the Union Movement, and secondly that music and art is seen as the province of the middle class. Therefore it's gentrifying the Labor Movement to include those things. I thought was a really false notion because music has always existed right through society and what's now called classical music has folk and village roots. It's only when the village musicians were patronised/paid to compose music for the aristocracy that it became more formal. It was a bizarre comment. What do you think about it?

Fox: I thought it was very strange too because there is a very old tradition of working music and it goes right back to antiquity.

Evans: I think another element in the question of why Art isn't seen to be a part of working life is the consumer society. Entertainment has become another commodity and the Arts are now something that people buy, rather than something that they create and feel belong to them.

Fox: Getting back to the choir, whereabouts does it sing and on what occasions?

Evans: We've done 16 performances since May. That's about 2 or 3 a month. We've sung at two events for May Day: one was the big cabaret that we were aiming towards, the May Day Cabaret at Fremantle Esplanade; we've sung at Forest Place for the May Day Rally; we sang at Deck Chair Theatre for the opening of the Ballad of Lois Ryan, which is written by Andrew Bovell from Melbourne and which was also the launch of the women's banner, a project undertaken by the Women's Committee – it is a beautiful banner; we sang at the Ran Dan Club benefit at the Actors Centre which was jointly organised by the Campaign Against Racial Exploitation and the ANC support group; the Society for the Study of Labour History do. And we reported to the TLC Council. We sang in the middle of the Council meeting. It was great. People loved it. That was one of my favourite moments. We sang for the Nicaraguan Fiesta,

another CARE benefit and we sang on the Jerry Gannon Show on the ABC. We sang for the Peace Rally at Forrest Place, another ANC show and for Literacy Week. The biggest number of people we have ever sung to was 4000 people for the CSA budget rally and that was at the Concert Hall. We have sung for Work Against Want; The Mt Lesueur Art Awards, Fremantle Gallery; and we went up to Toodyay Folk Festival and performed there too.

Fox: Do you sing on worksites?

Evans: Yes. We are very keen to. We had an engagement with the Construction, Mining and Energy Worker's Union but it rained, so they all went home, but we are hoping to do it again. Ric has suggested that we do shows for shiftworkers because they hardly ever get to hear anybody like us. But the problem with us doing worksite gigs is that most people in the choir work, so actually finding the time is hard. People can maybe scramble half an hour for lunch but I don't like to organise too many things at lunchtime.

Fox: What has the response been like?

Evans: From the choir members? It really has been fantastic. I think there is something very stirring about a lot of voices together. Also this relates to what we were talking about earlier, about how music can actually belong to the people who do it. It is such a powerful thing to see and hear because we get so accustomed to just receiving packaged entertainment that doesn't relate to our own life.

Fox: What are some of your favourites?

Evans: I like Rocks to Japan, although the choir groan because it is quite hard to sing. My favourites are the African music and the original songs, the African ones because they sound so beautiful and because of the way that they are harmonised. They obviously come out of a culture that sings.

Fox: What is Rocks to Japan about?

Evans: It's basically about the cycle whereby iron ore is dug up out of the Pilbara, exported to Japan and brought back as cars. That was written by Gail my sister. She was a member of a group called Object Five, which was a theatre group employed on a union project. They went up to the Pilbara and, in conjunction with the writer Alex Glasgow, researched a show called Permanent Days which was a very funny, effective look at union/employer relations up in the Pilbara. That was before all the horrible stuff began in Robe River, although it was pretty grim even then. And they wrote a lot of original music for their show and that's one of those songs. Another favourite is Song of the Brave, which was written by David Lee who now works for the T.L.C.

Fox: On the ACTU Art in the Working Life Conference programme cover, there is a very interesting cartoon with somebody on a tightrope between two poles, one entitled Unions and the other entitled Arts. Could you explain that?

Evans: Yes, that cartoon sums it up really. You often have that feeling of trying to balance between two opposite activities. While there are policies written by various ACTU and TLC Committees about how much the unions support the principles of Art in Working Life, that attitude doesn't necessarily percolate right through the levels of the movement. There's a lot of amazement and incomprehension, and there's a lot of notions about Art and its role within the union movement that are hard to overcome. The image of the union movement does tend to be masculine, that it's about industrial issues and getting your hands dirty with your mates and beer and that sort of stuff. There's a lot of romanticism around that image. The thing is that there are many white collar workers now who are union members and there are an increasing number of women in the workplace. Although I think there is a lot of interest and an "oh well, it can't do any harm" sort of view about Arts, I don't think there's much of a perception of how powerful it can be.

So that's the union side of the tightrope image and I suppose on the Arts side there's a perception that Art doesn't have much to do with work. There's a view if you're an artist it's because you are divinely inspired and you don't need to do things like earn money and you don't have to work at your art to be good at it like everyone else does with other work. I think that is one of the popular misconceptions of what Art is and it exists amongst artists too, because there is so little recognition that it's real work and that it's important. Artists themselves don't tend to see themselves as workers. We often feel apologetic and feel like freaks on the margins of society. We don't often think about getting paid for what we do or where what we do fits into the whole social fabric. There is a schism there, those are the two poles of the tightrope I think.

Fox: What sort of plans do you have for the rest of your time in this job?

Evans: I'd like to get the choir on the footing where it could be self perpetuating because my grant is going to run out eventually. I need to find ways of generating some income from the choir so that I or somebody else in my role can be paid to keep it going. The choir members don't get paid. We've started charging for gigs but at the moment that would be paying us \$5 or \$10 per person. It seems to be more sensible to put it into something like being able to make ourselves a banner or saving up towards a recording. But it's an amateur thing so it's unlikely that people will be getting paid for it.

Fox: What kinds of places would you have to sing in to make it self funding?

Evans: One thing I've been thinking about is the Arts Building Levy? This is an idea that was being talked about in the Art in Working Life conference, a 1% levy from the building developers,

because they have million dollar budgets for building projects. We would like to make a 1% levy to be put back into arts activities. We could get some of those to be interested in the choir, enough to pay for say four shows a year or music workshops on building sites. We've basically paid for the choir to keep going for quite a while so that's one sort of avenue. Another is that we charge a nominal fee per performance and store that up. Another is to get unions to contribute some money each per year to keep the choir running, which I think is a good idea because people tend to value things more if they have to pay for them. Also it's a tangible expression of support and they expect something back which means that we are tied into that structure more. I do think that union members and officials get very inspired when they see a tangible result of an art project. Once that happens they'll always want to have more of it. The choirs are similar in that sense to the new found interest in the old trade union banners.

Fox: I've got a couple of pamphlets up here of the new banners made in South Australia and the artists there said that when they were asked to make them they had their own ideas about design, but they went to the rank and file of the unions concerned and found out what they wanted. They had some trouble with unions who wanted to go back to the old 1880's and 1870's designs because they liked them so much and so you see in a lot of these new banners the combination of the two – an old banner inside a big new banner with representations of contemporary work and workers.

Evans: That's a beautiful example of that tightrope that we were talking about before. That was another aspect of it which was discussed quite a lot at the Art in Working Life conference. Artists get really pissed off with doing the same old things but that can be a very creative relationship too. Both parties are changed by that interaction I think.

Fox: If you were going to sing the old working songs from say the 18th-19th Century how would you do it?

Evans: It would depend. Some of them are very simple songs that don't have four-part arrangements, in which case they could be arranged. Phil Griffin did that with some of the songs like Bread and Roses and some of the Woody Guthrie songs and the Boss's Darling. At the moment we are doing the Internationálé and we are using an arrangement that already exists – an old fashioned one.

Fox: Do the songs appear out of nowhere from workplaces nowadays.

Evans: I really don't know because I haven't been going around to workplaces and finding that out. One of the things that we want to do with in the choir, is to do some songwriting workshops. If that goes well it can be extended into various workplaces by advertising song writing workshops in union journals promising that if they come up with a good song we'll do it in the choir.

Fox: How did the people in the choir find out about it?

Evans: It was advertised through memos to all unions through the TLC network for May Day and I've written articles for a few journals. We gave it a big plug at the TLC council meeting when we performed. But I think that in the main people have joined after they have seen us. I try to always say that people are welcome to join. And I harass everyone I know! People come for a while and then maybe they get busy and they have to leave, but the replacement rate seems to be slightly more than the leaving rate, so it seems to be quite an organic process.

Fox: Are you going to put out cassettes of your songs?

Evans: I hope that we will. It's a big project because what sounds alright in the performance, can sound out of tune and out of time when you record. There's a lot of different arguments about that and one is that it is great to capture the raw sound and the raw feel, but I really hear the mistakes and I want it to sound, if not totally professional, then at least as good as we can get it, but I know that will involve a lot of practice. And also it costs a lot of money to record. Then there are all those questions like at what level do you record and then what do you do with the tape? You can make a cheap tape quickly which is great because then you've got a record, but on the other hand if it then sounds pretty amateurish it can reinforce that notion that union music is all very well, but it's not of great artistic quality and something you'd like to listen to, whereas I think it can be.

Fox: What about the project that you are doing with the Macedonian women? Are you going to do a tape of that?

Evans: I hope so. I want to do a live recording of the concert. We are in the process of writing these songs at the moment and we are writing in English, because neither of us speak Macedonian, but we are hoping to get the women to translate for us or to get them to say "No, you shouldn't say that, you should say this" and then we'll say "Alright then, well how would you say that in Macedonian?" What I'd like to do, is to generate music that's bilingual and that incorporates both Macedonian and Western rhythms and melodies.

Fox: Why did the Food Preservers' Union and the Miscellaneous Workers' Union, particularly come up with the idea that you might do Macedonian songs?

Evans: They didn't! It was my idea and there were a couple of reasons for it. One was that I've got a background in Macedonian music. The other was I knew through that background and through knowing Macedonian people that there were a lot of Macedonian women who were in very oppressed work situations. I also knew that there was a very strong oral tradition of music that had no way of relating to mainstream Australian culture. It was knowing that those things existed that made it possible to make the approaches to those unions to say "What do you think

about this idea? Do you have Macedonian membership? If so would you be interested in doing this sort of project? Do you think they'd be interested?"

Fox: Could it be extended to other kinds of ethnic groups?

Evans: Very much so, it's just that it would be harder personally for me to do, so then you've got to go with the limits of the musicians too. But yes, Rita Menendez is a Mexican musician who has done some of these projects before and would be an ideal person to work with the many South American workers here. There's been a lot of Art in Working Life and music in Western Australia that is very exciting and worth finding out more about. Scott and Louisa Wise did a residency with the Timber Workers' Union here in W.A. and produced a cassette of timber worker's songs which are fabulous. They also collected hundreds of poems and stories. There's a lot more poetry than songs collected through various worksites. Rita Menendez and Brenda Connachie also have worked together with textile workers particularly and wrote some songs out of that residency. Roger Montgomery went up around the Pilbara and collected many songs and stories. There was a concert put on at the Concert Hall, of the music from those areas and that also employed many musicians including myself and my sister with the Object Five. Raffale Romero has also done some work in the Art in Working Life project.

There is a huge amount of material around. You get snowed under by how many songs, stories, poems and creativity there is out there. But music is such a hard thing to make a living out of particularly because so many ethnic musician's skills aren't recognised in Australia, so there are lots of very accomplished musicians working in other fields. Through the Macedonian women's project we've encountered many women who are accomplished singers and dancers and whose husbands or male relatives play various instruments in the bands that service the Macedonian Clubs. But, they work pulling the guts out of chickens. That's another thing I wanted to say too. At the Art in Working Life conference there was a fairly strong Aboriginal presence. Some of the people in the Northern Territory who didn't have an Art in Working Life programme came down, partly because they wanted to find what was going on, and partly because they wanted to hit people over the head by saying "Look, we've got this incredible tradition and we've got so much going on culturally and we want you to know that". That was very exciting, just to get some more idea about the fact that there's an incredible amount going on in Aboriginal music. The TLC now employs an Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Trevor Uink, who's a member of my choir, so we've been plotting together about how to make contact with the wealth of talent in Aboriginal music in W.A. The Abmusic organisation is co-ordinated by Leon Feehon, who also came to the Art in Working Life Conference. The three of us have been talking about doing some things together like a rock against racism concert, Trevor's job is to try and contact Aboriginal people and get them interested in belonging to unions and talk about what the unions can do, and also find out why Aborigines aren't heavily unionised, which are rather sad and shocking reasons. I

am hoping to meet some of the musicians from Abmusic to ask them if they're interested in their songs being arranged with the choir.

One idea that I am keen on is to promote a book of Trade Union Choir music, and I particularly want to focus on original music. I want to record the fact that there's this explosion of creativity of new songs being written and arranged for Trade Union choirs right across Australia. Libby Sayer in Queensland is writing and arranging songs and her choir members are too. There's a choir in Melbourne and there's one starting in Alice Springs; there's one starting in Tasmania; there's one in Newcastle, one in Coffs Harbour, one in Sydney. There is a wealth of new music that's coming up from the ground. I reckon it would be great. Also it would be a starter book for someone who wanted to get a choir going who didn't necessarily have the writing and arranging skills.

It's likely to be taken up by Trades Hall in Victoria, because next year is the centenary of the Labor Party and they want to do a book of music, so Sian Prior who's the Trainee Music Officer there suggested the idea, which I'd talked about when I was over there to them. That's great if there's an organisation that will actually take it up, that makes it so much easier to do.

As part of the start of my job I had two months fairly intensive training with Phillip Griffin in conducting and arranging for the choir and that's been a really important part of the job for me – the skills development aspect, and that's one of the things that musicians can think about, if they're interested in working in Art in Working Life, that there are the opportunities for skills development. That's another misconception that it's always lowest common denominator art but it isn't.

Just one thing that I get a little bit of feminist satisfaction from is that I reckon it looks really good to have a woman conducting a union choir because it does challenge those images of unions always being boofy blokes in workboots and singlets. And interestingly both the Brisbane choir and the Melbourne choir are directed by women.

Fox: Do people say this to you sometimes?

Evans: They don't dare – I'm too bossy! They do actually, yes. I have heard that comment.

Fox: How seriously do the unions take your project and the Art in Working Life project.

Evans: At the moment there seems to be a strong perception, at all levels within the union movement, that there is a need for change in the way that it operates, the way that it's structured, etc. Some of those changes have been imposed and the union movement is fighting to try to get back some control of the agenda; things like award restructuring, and multi skilling. There is a very urgent feeling that the union movement needs to change its image, and who it appeals to because union membership is declining so rapidly. Martin Ferguson, who's the President of the

ACTU, gave the opening speech at the Art in Working Life Conference. It was a bit evangelical but in essence he was saying that the movement does need to modernise and be more in tune with the needs of its members and there's an enormous number of white collar workers, in the entertainment industry, and the service industry, which are the biggest growing industries now, who aren't unionised and who wouldn't even think that they had a relationship with the union movement. Women's membership is also very low and young people's membership is very low. So those are the areas that are seen to need developing. There is a perception now that the Arts are one of the best means of communicating with these groups. Perhaps Arts is one way that can take a shortcut across all the layers of committee and protocol and routine to make a direct connection with people's lives because it's a two-way communication. I think that we are in an exciting time in terms of the relationship between the Arts and the union movement, both artists and union officials – and of course a lot of people are both – are really changing their perception of themselves their work and what our future together is.

Unions, Overtime and Wage Struggle. The Metal Trades in Western Australia in the 1950's and 1960's

Harold Peden*

Well my friends and comrades, I suppose the title for this discussion really should have been the wage struggle in the metal trades, because wage struggle in general of course covers a whole wide range of events. In any case a discussion on such a period doesn't even do justice to the wages struggle in the metal trades. Nevertheless there was one period of history I believe that was a crucial point, a turning point for the working class of Western Australia and particularly those in the metal trades. That was heralded by the fact that in December 1952, the first spade of earth was turned over on the shore of Cockburn Sound, the site next to Case Point, which initiated the beginning of the construction of A.P.R.L. Oil Refinery which came on stream in March 1955. A.P.R.L. by the way stands for Australian Petroleum Refinery Limited now more commonly known as B.P. Where B.P. went they had a set of letters to signify the fact that they were in attendance at a particular place. For example A.P.R.L. also stood for African Petroleum Refinery and so on. Any way that spade of earth heralded the start of the Kwinana Strip. I emphasise the Kwinana Strip because it became quite important in the discussions then and in later days. This was welcomed by all in Western Australia or almost all, including the trade unions and the trade union activists thought it would more or less be a junior Wollongong and we clapped our hands that we were going to find industrial strength at last. There was little thought in those days, of course, of environmental and clean air problems. They weren't even thought of. The 40 million pounds that was allocated for the building of the B.P. Refinery equalled all previous private industrial investment in Western Australia, leaving aside agricultural, commercial interests and so on. But as far as actual manufacturing was concerned that equalled all that had been spent beforehand. So that gives an indication of the size and the content of this event situated on our shores down there.

The initial construction of the Refinery was followed by numerous extensions over a long period of time. Also around about that time and following on from that period was the AIS/BHP steel mill which has had several extensions and is now closed, the ALCOA refinery at Kwinana, the alumina refinery with its many extensions, the nickel refinery, the SEC power house, cement works and so on. Also outside the Kwinana Strip was the ALCOA Refinery at Pinjarra and Wagerup.

In a later period was the Worsley Refinery, loading facilities for ALCOA at Bunbury, Worsley alumina, Mineral Sands development, woodchip and, of course, the great expansion of the North-West iron ore and salt developments. All these developments fostered great growth in steel fabrication and engineering shops, expansion that was never dreamed of in previous years. Not only did the traditional workshops of that calibre expand but there came in new companies that hadn't been in Western Australia before and all this great expansion sat on top of what was previous work, the bread and butter work, work for coal mines, gold mines, the

*This is a transcript of an address (with questions) by Harold Peden, former State President of the Amalgamated Metal Workers Union and Vice President of the W.A. Trades and Labour Council to the Perth Branch, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History at its Annual General Meeting, August 1990.

building industry and government contracts. Some idea of that expansion was reflected in part by just taking an example of the change of one Welshpool fabrication shop, Forward Downs. When I worked there in 1952-53 it had one bay. By 1970 they had four bays, each of them twice the size of the previous one, so you can say in round terms, the company increased about eight times and they weren't alone in that.

However to get the real atmosphere of such a period it's necessary to go back further again, back to 1952. In 1952 was the Metal Trades strike, a strike for higher margins and a very long strike indeed. It was a long strike for any part of Australia or any part of the world, and it was certainly a long strike in the agrarian, commercial situation of Western Australia. Some of the workers were out on strike for nearly six months and in fact they went back with nothing. Of course as smart boys in the trade union movement, militants and so on, we said "ah yes, we got something out of it, we got experience" and that's true but, by Jesus, we paid for it, we paid for it in the years after the '52 strike. What happened was that real genuine sincere militants were saying "never again, for those efforts that we put in, the losses that were incurred in wages and for what - there must be another way, there must be another way, that is what have we found in this particular place". The two main unions in the metal trades in Western Australia were struck off the books, deregistered, 'defranchised' as an American told me once. Workshops that normally had large numbers of the A.E.U. were decimated by those that deserted into the ranks of the A.S.E. and so on. The Boilermakers' Society had more members when eventually re-registered than before. There must be another way - we can't cop deregistration for ever, so on and so on, not that way. We had two or three generations if you take ten to fifteen years. That's five years of apprenticeship in those times of the young people listening to the old ones. There was a way - not the way we wanted - but there was a way that didn't involve struggle. Overtime! It's almost but not exactly a slur on the trade union movement, but it's not exactly a very bright star either. The fact that when we got the forty hour week then in many sections of the metal industry, in many sections of industry generally, the hours of work weren't reduced, instead they were increased because more people worked overtime. In that period there was a compulsory amount of overtime to be worked and the rationale was, from memory, four hours. That was included in almost all awards. 'A reasonable amount of overtime' was the actual phraseology but it became tied up with the question of four hours in some respects and other hours as well.

When I'm talking about overtime in this sense, I'm not speaking about where you have a breakdown of machinery and it's got to be a job got out, you know a job's got to go on otherwise you put other workers out of work, if it wasn't attended to. I'm not speaking about where there's a firm that's got a particular contract that's closing nearer to it's time and it's got to get off the workshop floor so they work overtime on it, I'm not talking about it in this sense. What I'm talking about is a regular, systematic extension of the working week and for the first time in my knowledge in Western Australia we saw that at the B.P. Refinery, where people were almost forced to work seven days a week. After a while this became part of your life. You accepted that, because after all you might be unemployed anyway after the job's finished. For

a long period of time a hold up to any increase in wages was this idea that there's no need to struggle, look at what happened last time, but you can get what you want with working overtime. I won't dwell any longer on overtime, but I could very well have a study on overtime because I think it's the most evil thing the working class has ever had to confront. Just while I'm finishing on the overtime one, to highlight what I'm talking about - a friend of mine, I think most of you know him, Ron Reid, tells of the experience he had in London when he was working over there. London was one of the strongholds of the British Boilermakers' Society. Ron was working for a company that had landed a contract that they never dreamt they were going to land, and work beyond their dreams, which immediately put the workforce in a very good bargaining position, and what do they want? Not an increase in wages, not increase in safety etc. etc., no new lunch room, or anything like that, no funds for the social club. What they wanted was no less than 16 hours a week overtime! There's another point and this is even more pertinent. When the North-West Cape was built, the satellite navigation, the Commission in Western Australia brought down two awards, one for a set of wages if you worked fifty four hours a week and one for a set of hours for seventy two hours a week. Now maybe I will move off overtime.

But there was a gradual change, for example, around 1956-57-58. A whole number of young people (and this occurs in other parts of the world, for example, I understand that in Glasgow in the ship yards a lot of young people move out and then come back again, they want a change of life. Some of them go in the Merchant Navy and so on) particularly from Kalgoorlie which was depressed at that time, from the Midland Workshops, who wanted a change, wanted to see the big wide world. A whole host of young people went over to the Eastern States and they came back different people because they found themselves in a different environment altogether. As well as that a number of British migrants that came out and some of them had managed to achieve some security in a new country and so on. Then the question of overtime didn't become the be all and end all in everybody's mind. Returning to the influx to the Eastern States, I was only talking to a friend not very long ago who is now a manager of one of the companies in Perth, he was one of those who went across as a young boilermaker. He said "God" he said "at one stage in '58 if you walked down Melbourne on a Saturday morning or a Friday afternoon", he said "you would've thought you were walking down Hay Street because you had to stop and speak to people, everybody that you knew."

Well there was still this bar, of course, about workers taking action and the stimulus for change didn't come from a wages question although it was really bound up with the question of whether you're going to fight for things you need, including wages, and that was at Forward Downs. I think it was 1962 but it could have been '63. They went out on strike for something, at Forward Downs, they went out on strike for anything. They went out on strike and they were out on strike for one or two days, which in the light of later events was a mere hiccup, it wouldn't even raise a sweat anywhere. Then after they'd gone back to work, they were charged like common criminals in the police court. This has never been done in Western Australia before, not that I can recall, except maybe in the mines or on the waterfront a long

time ago. We managed on the basis of democratic rights on the issue of democratic rights, to bring out 800 people into the streets of Perth as a demonstration on the day these workers were going to trial. There were headlines everywhere, right across Australia. For the first time a substantial number of those 800 workers, young people, stepped across the line, so that the fear of confrontation, direct confrontation with your employer, the fear of being on strike was gone. It just vanished. We did it, nothing happened, and further, and probably of greater importance was the fact that the employer never knew when they were going to do it again. Now remember the background of the agricultural, commercial situation in Western Australia, where maybe Midland Workshops, Collie Coal Mines, the Waterfront, were the only place where strikes took place. On top of that was what I said about the '52 struggle where they said "never again", all of a sudden it was changed, they could do it, they didn't go to gaol, and so on.

I spoke earlier about the question of the fabrication workshops. They grew out of all proportion as I said before. The important thing was they had more continuity of work than what each individual construction site did even though they were bound up with work being provided for those construction sites. We were able to mobilise the forces in the fabrication shops to break out of strict award wages and gain over-award payments.

Just to go back again, up to September '53 there was quarterly adjustments of your wages for living costs but they were knocked out, they went off the scene altogether in September 1953 and from then on, mainly in Victoria and New South Wales and to a lesser extent in Queensland, the struggle for wages intensified around the question of what was known as over-award payments. Particularly because of inflation, costs generally were rising. We couldn't wait for the term of the award to get wage justice so we confronted our employer and said we wanted something over the award. This was attempted on a number of occasions in Western Australia but it was like knocking your head against a brick wall. I was employed in Tomlinsons in 1955 and we took up a very, very timid petition amongst all the workers and we had a problem to get them to sign it to approach the manager for something over the award. I was walking to work, I walked past Ledgers where I worked afterwards, and saw a chap who I'd worked with years before at Structural Engineering. I told him what was happening, and his reaction was "where are you going to work next". I'm trying to give the impression of what the feeling was. However to cut a long story short the breakthrough was made in a number of places very close together in time. One was a small ship repair place in Fremantle called Franatovich who afterwards went broke and came up again, he paid something over the award. Then breaks were made in Welshpool where we had an area committee operating and what we did in those places and elsewhere, was to seize hold of what the employer thought was his main - many employers saw as their main - how will I say it - their main staff of life; overtime! The Welshpool shops were bursting at the seams with work. We called a mass meeting of the four or five shops and we didn't ban overtime. Oh no, the Industrial Commission wouldn't like that. We limited it to a reasonable amount and a reasonable amount on that occasion was four hours a week. There was a lot of grumbling and groaning about that within the ranks too

but, nevertheless, in three weeks we had the companies agreeing to paying over-award payments. Now this arose not out of the question of some very smart efficient union official going to the industrial commission and pleading a case. This came about because of workers' action themselves, because while the ongoing scheme was a limit to overtime, restriction on overtime, there were stop work meetings, there were all sorts of activities taking place at the same time that were different to the past. In 1965-1966, I think the first was 10 cents an hour - sorry it'd be 5 cents an hour over the award, but then wages were different then to what they are now. The ideological struggle was going on at the same time if you understand. For example the employers were saying "well, look in the time of the days of B.P. you had a bonus". That's what they wanted us to have, a bonus, because the wages on B.P. construction was fifteen pound five and a two pound bonus. But the two pound bonus wasn't over-award payment as we wanted it, that's for all purpose of the award. A rate that increases your rate for annual leave, compensation, sick leave and so on, and all these things went on but we broke through and it was only because of the fact that we were able to mobilise workers in their own interests.

I haven't mentioned the struggles on construction or the North-West and so on but I'd like to refer to this increase that we got for over-award payments at a later date in 1966 in an award known as 1365. The increase, the award rate was 11 cents increase for tradesmen's rate and that almost equally reflected what was then the current over-award of 1/1d an hour because of the change in the decimal currency, so that to some extent then we had to consolidate it within the award but there were tremors all around the place and excitement. The members asked "are they going to absorb our 1/1d or the 11 cents: and the answer came back "no". There was too much work in the North-West. That didn't end the over-award payments battle, of course. The over-award payments battle went on for many, many years. The agreement was usually without any signed contract, but somebody shaking somebody else's hand, "we wont belt you for another twelve months". He's got a free go for twelve months or to the end of the work contract, whichever it was. But the question of overtime always seem to intrude itself into it. For example, Forward Downs, they didn't have any ban on overtime and nobody worked overtime. And the foreman used to go around and ask "are you going to work overtime"? He would get all the excuses in the world "it interferes with my love life" and I've got to get a young pigeon out of the nest for my kid" or "if I don't go home tonight at 4.00, I'll lose it", etc., etc.

Anyway there wont be anytime for questions if I keep on. I hope I've stimulated some thoughts about what the atmosphere was like in those days.

Charlie Fox: Thanks Harold. Harold's happy to answer questions.

Question: Harold - not a question but something that occurred to me when you were starting off talking about 1952 and the metal industry and so on. What possibly a lot of people don't realise is that the metal industry was virtually a stones throw from here and that was where the

major shops were in Pier Street or Wellington Street. It just shows you how things have changed, how things have grown.

Peden: Welshpool sprung up just as that was going on. That's true. Oh the other thing, too that I didn't mention is the importance of this metal trades break through on the fabrication shop floor. Within less than twelve months over-award payments became a fact of life for the great multitudes of people. In the Government it was known as incremental payment, somewhere else it was known as this and so on; but that was where the spark was lit in that area.

Question: I was interested in you talking about the failure of the higher margin strike and then that atmosphere of fear about the reactions but wasn't it the case that a lot of British tradesmen, metal tradesmen were brought into the Kwinana Strip in order to do a lot of that work. Were there insufficient tradesmen in Australia and how did that effect their attitudes?

Peden: Well that was a point I noticed but I didn't emphasise it enough. The point was that the early British tradesmen that came in particularly during the period of the Kwinana construction (and don't forget that we were still deregistered at the time, the Boilermakers and the AEU) they just accepted the fact that we worked overtime and that's it. A lot of them were going back and others had to furnish their homes in Medina and so on. But then gradually after the B.P. Refinery was completed it came about that they were workers, who despite their overtime horizons, had experience of strong union organization and that certainly helped. There was a combination of things. There was the influx of British and other migrants who had a background of union history, but there was also the young people growing up in a new era. They'd worked in Queensland or New South Wales or Victoria, and they'd experienced the struggle within Western Australia. In that period, what I call the 'dead period' between - roughly between '52 and '63-64, we had to overcome that, and we did eventually overcome it. But what you say is true, it was a very important point, the British tradesmen coming in. But again the first breakthroughs weren't made on construction. It was in the fabrication shops that the breakthroughs were made, because in the main overtime just flowed on to construction. The other point, too, is that you have a comradeship with a group of workers on construction for a limited time. You may meet up with them on some other construction job but in the fabrication workshops you're a family all the time, or almost all the time. It's true some get put off from time to time, some leave because there wasn't any overtime.

Question: Is the overtime still an issue in the metal trades? I've a friend who's a fitter and he actually works enormous amounts of overtime and I'm never sure whether that's right through the metal industry now or whether it's just his particular workshop.

Peden: Well he could tell you better than me because I've been out of it for nearly five years; I think overtime's with us whether we like it or not, and it could well be the subject of a discussion, long discussion, not necessarily from an historical point of view although that

would be included in it too but all the ramifications of overtime. I mean, it's really terrible when you look at it. The question of health, safety, depth of life, fullness of life, all those things are bound up with it and you see it's the easiest wage cut, it's a false level. You don't have to cut wages, see, you know what Keane's told the industrialists in the UK. "Don't cut wages until the prices go up and when those people seek to redress the position they're the villains." See! Don't ever try and cut wages, but what you do is work people overtime. That's a standard then, but then you cut out the overtime, it's perfectly legal, there's no kickback.

Question: Our employer expects us to work five nights a week and five hours on Saturday morning. He thinks that's reasonable. We all said no four hours is enough. He said five hours every night, an hour every night and Saturday morning. We said no, but that's a reasonable amount to him like.

Statement from Audience: I think what Harold is saying is dead right but it doesn't really become an issue to the trade union movement until such time as unemployment starts to rise and then we start looking at those issues.

Peden: I was in Geneva in 1980 and I was talking to a chap, I think he might've belonged to the Labour Party - he might've belonged to the Communist Party - I don't know, but he's a militant, no argument about that and very politically on the ball. He was secretary of a large union. I know they employed a lot of women - weavers or something or other. He looked at the tie he had on. Yes, he said, it'd been given to me by the British Boilermakers Society through somebody else; "oh yes, we made that tie you know". And he was the president, I think, of that union and he was talking about overtime and I expanded what I thought. "Oh", he says, "it gives the workers a chance to earn more".

Statement from Audience: We're having one of the ideological battles that's the problem.

Peden: It would be well worth an essay or discussion on the question of overtime. It's so divisive amongst the workers. As a matter of fact a British Professor has said in a paper he gave, that he considered that some people were addicted to nicotine, some to liquor but some people were addicted to overtime in the UK. Look, I've seen a position in the Welshpool area where Ledgers who had the highest over-award payment for a short period of time, didn't have any overtime, there was hardly enough work for the ordinary hours. But Forward Downs or someone else, was working four hours a week overtime and one chap left to go and get those four hours and we worked it out, we just sat down and worked it out. By the time he'd paid the extra in tax he was getting about a dollar or two dollars a week more than what he was getting at Ledgers. You can hear the biggest scream in the world sometimes, not that somebody else is getting more wages than us, but somebody is getting more overtime.

Statement from Audience: I think it is used as a control mechanism in the workplace

where the boss will give certain workers certain type of jobs which are going to have overtime attached to them. Everyone knows that those jobs will be the ones that are important and so those people that get that sort of work get the extra money, and that's the divisive thing. It also allows the boss to give them all those skills, and the others aren't getting those skills on that work, it means he can keep those workers divided.

Peden: Only once that I know of in Western Australia, certainly in the metal trades, did they try to cut wages, and that was in the fabrication shops. They tried to take \$12 a week off us and that was the most successful strike we've ever had. Even the most backward worker said "no, you're not going to take the money off us" and we had *The West Australian* on side, the newspaper, because after all, about 800 times \$12 in those days coming out of the economy was important, particularly to retail traders.

If there's no more questions there's just one point I want to make. People like myself, not all Communist, but people in the Labour Party, in the Trade Unions, what we were saying at the time was, that if we can get the workers to struggle for their demands, whether it's wages or whatever (it's not quite as simple as this but this sums it up all the same) then we'll raise their political consciousness and any social change will have to come out of that raised political consciousness. Not in your life. It didn't happen that way, because a lot of workers said "if we can struggle and get wages, we can get it out of this system, there's no need for change.

Gil Barr's Story

Part 3*

Reid: In 1972, you became AWU Branch Secretary. How did you come to get that position?

Barr: Yes. Tom Dougherty was the General Secretary. He died suddenly in early October, 1972. The Executive Council of the union had to appoint another person to fill the vacancy. That was almost immediately, well, within one month anyway. We all said you can't leave it a month, because of the size of the union, such a diversity of occupations that we covered. You have to have someone there all the time. Tom died of a heart attack, the Executive Council met a couple of days after that, they appointed Frank Mitchell, Branch Secretary of the W.A. branch, as the General Secretary. then they had to look for another Branch Secretary here in Western Australia. I'd only had a short period as an organiser, four years and two months. They decided that I was the person they were looking for, because of the job I'd done in the Pilbara, the experience I had gained up there in a very quick time. They appointed me about the 15th October 1972. We had to go to an election.

Reid: Was there competition for that position?

Barr: No, I was the only nomination at that time. There was a lot of talk, some of those who had aspirations about being Branch Secretary. People amongst those who could be appointed by the Branch Secretary were told they couldn't or wouldn't get the numbers, so I was really the only nominee at that time.

Reid: Did you have to do some politicking yourself to ensure your position there yourself?

Barr: No, in fact I was approached by the outgoing Branch Secretary, asked would I accept the appointment, should it arise. The Branch Executive had been through a lot of names. Mine would turn up often, so I was the logical person for the job. I immediately faced an election about six months later. I won the election in 1973. I had opposition then, from the rank and file. I won it pretty easily. I was opposed again in 1979, I think it was, and I won that by a mile. I wasn't opposed in 1983 for the union elections. I must have been doing the job reasonably well.

Reid: Where did the opposition come from, for the first election?

Barr: One was a shearer, he opposed me. At the time they were operating all over Australia, calling themselves The Committee For Membership Control. Just another faction of the Union. The left. At that time, the whole Executive of the Union were all pretty well to the right. To this day, it still amazes me, why they picked me. I was up in the Pilbara, had nothing much to

*Gil Barr was for many years an official of the Australian Workers' Union, being both WA State and Federal President before his retirement in 1988.

This is part three of the transcript of an interview with Gil Barr conducted by Stuart Reid as part of the TLC Oral History Project, 14 December 1988.

do with them, they were down in Perth and other areas. Really, the Committee For Membership Control didn't care whether you were right or left wing. They were just a militant group determined to have a takeover. They failed miserably. Then in the 1979 election I was opposed by a fellow by the name of Jock Scambler who worked down at Western Mining's nickel refinery down in Kwinana. He was opposed to anybody. There were certain groups of dissidents who wanted to get one of their lot in as Branch Secretary. Again, I won the election pretty easily.

Reid: Did any of these people have well financed campaigns?

Barr: Yes. Particularly the second one. I don't know where they got their money from. I wouldn't like to comment on it. They certainly had a lot of money. They put out a lot of stuff. In fact they even sent fellows and had meetings all around the place. That's how much money they had to oppose the election. I don't think they were so much opposed to me, as they were to other people in officers positions, such as the President, the Vice President and some of the Branch Executive Committee.

Reid: Were those positions held by right wingers?

Barr: Yes, mainly. Wouldn't say they all were, most of them were pretty well to the right. I was the Branch Secretary, they were opposing all the other positions. They opposed mine as well. Didn't make any difference to me. I won them all.

Reid: How did you get on being a militant, as you describe yourself?

Barr: A lot of right wing people, even though they are politically right wing, and supposedly opposed to communism and the extreme left, even though some people may be labelled politically right wing, they are just as militant as the left wing people are. They just don't cop the real socialist attitude or the real thump and strike attitude. Sooner negotiate and consult, try and fix things by peaceful means rather than strikes and so on. If it comes to a confrontation on the job, some of our officials who were right wing politically, were just as militant as anybody else. Some of the extreme lefts are real fruit cakes, anybody would be opposed to them.

Reid: What were the issues you had to deal with, as Union Secretary?

Barr: In our Union, the Branch Secretary has the overall responsibility for almost everything. Administration of the Union finance wise. He's responsible for giving the organisers duties, where to go and so on. Responsible to see that the Industrial Officers attend to all the awards, bring them all up to date. A pretty heavy load being the Branch Secretary of the AWU. Even though we used to allocate certain areas to certain organisers and certain industries, when it came back, the responsibility is not carried out, the secretary could end up with a backlash.

Almost everything that the union was involved in, you had to be in contact with it. Have your Industrial Officers allocated certain industries. Have them report back to you all the time, what was going on.

Reid: It sounds as if there'd have to be administrative, corporate expertise in that role. How did you get on settling down to that?

Barr: It was pretty difficult. Even though I was a shearer, and had left school on my 14th birthday, I was always very good with figures. I suppose just practical experience during a lifetime brought up as a kid to look after myself. I gained a pretty broad knowledge of everything I had to do, during my life till I became Secretary.

Once I was Secretary I had an Accountant, an assistant, and another person to do the membership. I had three Industrial Officers plus a Workers' Compensation Officer, they were all good at their job. All I had to do was to ensure that things were being done by the people you were paying to do them. This made it a lot easier. Just needs a bit of nouse as far as finance was concerned and stuff like that.

Reid: What were the kinds of initiatives you took, what sorts of changes did you make when you were there?

Barr: One of the first things I did was to get the Union affiliated back with the ALP. I didn't just raise it straight on the Branch Executive. If it were a proposition, I'd probably get it rolled. We had a General Meeting of the members. We used to have a half yearly and an Annual General Meeting, I'd primed a few blokes up. I moved a resolution that we affiliate with the ALP and the matter be passed to the Branch Executive Committee to do just that. That helped a little. That was in about November 1972, we had a Branch executive meeting. I got Bob McMullan and Colin Jameison, he was the president of the ALP, come around and address the Branch Executive. They took a decision there and then to affiliate. I felt that was a pretty good move. I couldn't see why any union wasn't affiliated with the ALP. It was a natural hand and glove partnership. Political and Industrial wing.

Reid: What advantages did you see for the AWU in being affiliated with the ALP?

Barr: I saw more advantages for the ALP, than for the AWU really. Finance wise for the ALP there were the affiliation fees. It's just that I always firmly believed in my whole life, that the AWU was one of the original formers of the ALP. If you read back in history, in Queensland, that's where it all started from, read the 100 year history of it, it tells you a bit about it in that. For the life of me, the years I was an official, before I became Branch Secretary, I just couldn't see why we weren't affiliated. We could assist the ALP politically particularly in winning seats. We used to give a lot of assistance in that field. After I became Branch Secretary, and had affiliated I used to put on two or three organisers in the field to help

some of the candidates during an election. Always had a belief that the ALP was the only political party, it was just a general benefit to the union, that we be affiliated with the ALP.

Reid: What about other initiatives? Were there things about how the office was being run, the way decisions were being made?

Barr: I adopted an attitude that there had to be a bit more membership in the union that what had been previously. Some of the old people were from the old heirarchy style, making the decisions and the members accepting them.

I adopted an attitude with the organisers in particular, simply because of my experiences in the Pilbara. Unfortunately, in a lot of Unions, people become organisers but they don't get that hard job, action experience at mass meetings and hadn't listened to what the guys want, really taken consideration to their problems and really front up for them. You don't get that in a lot of areas. I reckoned from my experience up there, we'd won a lot of things in those four years I was there. Purely because of communicating with the people. Communication with the workers, really understanding what they wanted, and the way they wanted to go about getting it. I used to get my organisers in and my Industrial Officers and say, "Look, Okay, you're going to the Commission, but, before you do, I want you to go and talk to the people on the job." I created a lot more of that, than what there had been previously. I never believed in that attitude of the executive of the union making a decision and telling the members that was going to be the score. I said, "We'll make a decision here but only as a recommendation to be accepted or rejected."

Reid: It must be hard to get real consultation in a union as big as the AWU with such a diverse spread of members?

Barr: Yes, it's very difficult. The only way is by doing it industry by industry. Sometimes you could get a flow-on from one industry to another, but very seldom. The only way was to just meet each group of workers in whatever industry it was, listen to them, and deal with it as best you could.

Reid: As Secretary, did you get out on the job at meetings as often as you could?

Barr: Yes, it was one thing I missed when I first came down as Branch Secretary. In the Pilbara I was very active, I was always out on the job, there wasn't a mass meeting within 300 miles and I'd have to be there. When I got down here I wanted to do everything myself. If an organiser was holding a meeting somewhere I'd feel I had to be there. I found that I was working that many hours it was just ridiculous. I just couldn't attend to my administrative work as well as go out on the job. When there was a big dispute on, I used to always go and attend with the organiser, but it got to the stage in the finish, where I just couldn't do that. I had too much work to do as Secretary.

One stage down here, our union had been very reluctant to have a lot of involvement with the Labour Council or with the ALP. I couldn't get a lot of our people to show the interest that there should be, so I finished up myself being the union officer on the Labour Council for years and years. I was on the Disputes Committee at the TLC because I always felt there was a place there for the AWU. I was elected there for eleven years. I got elected on the Administrative Committee of the ALP for a couple of years. I found, in the finish, I was on that many bloody committees, the ALP, the TLC as well as trying to run the AWU that my work as Administrator of the AWU was dropping off. Simply because of too much involvement in other areas.

Reid: With the work at the TLC what were the things that stand out in your mind?

Barr: With the Labour Council, the major campaigns. We used to have meetings with the officers and the unions involved, then we'd decide to do a statewide campaign. I went along with Jack Marks, Jack Bainbridge and sometimes John O'Connor to do the Pilbara and the Goldfields. I was in the position where I said to my Branch Executive: "We've got to keep the exposure of the AWU, keep up our involvement." I would get the Executive to appoint an acting Secretary while I went away on a two or three week campaign, along with the other unions and the Labour Council.

One comes to mind, the Long Service Leave in the Mining Industry. We wanted thirteen weeks after ten years, and pro rata after seven years. All the mining companies jacked up about that. Young Tony Beech, he and I did the whole campaign throughout the Eastern Goldfields. Marks, Bainbridge, Jimmy Mutton, John O'Connor and myself did the Pilbara. We had a lot of mass meetings up there. It's funny, some of the things that come out of those. We were successful, we got the long service leave.

I was down at Norseman, we had the mass meeting down there with the guys. I was talking to the blokes. When I had finished the address, I said: "Look, this could be a pretty long hard struggle to get this. You guys should start up a fund, get yourself some money in the bank, in case you've got to really go out about it. Then you'd be able to support yourselves." There and then, they carried a resolution that there'd be a compulsory levy on every worker working for Western Mining Company at Norseman. \$5 a week. No new worker would start without signing the procuracy order to deduct \$5 a week out of his wages. That was in 1976. A few years after that we used to have a nickel bonus in the Western Mining Company, it applied at Kambalda and some of the other nickel mines. When nickel went bad on the stock market, Norseman was the only viable proposition, a goldmine, the one that was really making a profit. The blokes decided they wanted the nickel bonus to apply to them. Alf Barwick was up there as the Divisional Secretary, a great little bloke, a real good unionist. They went down to Norseman, had a meeting with management, demanded that the \$40 a week be paid. The company just refused. I went up there, had a talk to Alf, Peter Capelli, the representative from Norseman, and a few of the others. We said that they should sit on the grass and really be

prepared for a long siege. No way was Stan Carter ever going to give in.

I've never seen a better set up dispute in all my life as far as the blokes were concerned. You'd drive in the main street in Norseman - three days a week they had handouts - a vegetable stall, a meat stall, a fish stall and so on, and another where they were handing out money. They had hired themselves a bloody truck, to go and get meat - beef and sheep - from the stations - hired a boat to go and get the fish, another truck to come up to Perth to get cheap vegetables. The best set-up I'd ever seen. For those who were short of money, the single blokes were getting \$20 - \$30 a week, the married blokes about \$50 - \$60 a week. They'd been out about three weeks. I went and had a meeting with the company, the company just said NO. They were not going to pay. The blokes said that they'd just sit it out, the company said they'd starve them out. Peter Capelli, and a few of the others told the company they reckoned they could sit out for six months. The company said: "You're joking, they won't have the money." They then produced the bank book they had started off when we were on the service leave campaign, they still had \$79,000 in the bank book. Two days later, the company paid the bonus. Give the guys an idea, these guys did it properly, and were laughing their blocks off. They could have sat on the grass for months and months. That was a good campaign.

Another one was when they went to change the Workers Compensation Act. The Act was certainly being changed to the detriment of the workers, in particular the Industrial Diseases section. Asbestosis, silicosis or pneumoniconiosis or whatever, mainly silicosis we were concerned with. Wittenoom had closed, we had cases going on with blokes with pneumoniconiosis and mesothelioma. Pneumoniconiosis is the follow up of silicosis. What was going to happen was that they would be paid workers compensation up till the age of 60 on the full wage, then it would reduce from 60 to 65 so much a year, and after you were 65 you got nothing. Just become a pensioner, that was one of the things. A lot of restrictions were there on medical certificates and so on, it was just totally unacceptable.

Once again, we decided to do a state wide campaign. Again I was allocated the Pilbara and Goldfields. I did most of the Pilbara on my own. We had mass meetings everywhere, spelled it all out to the blokes. Peter Cook did a bit with me, but then he pulled out. All the others dropped by the wayside too. I remember doing Koolan and Cockatoo Islands, Port Hedland and Pannawonica on my own. We got resolutions up there, that unless the government agreed to alter the provisions of the Act applying to Industrial Diseases, there would be a total stoppage of the mining industry. I'd been to the Pilbara, on to Kalgoorlie, Norseman, Leinster, all those places. We finished up at a mass meeting in the Boulder town hall. They were absolutely irate. They took a unanimous vote, they were going to stop work on Monday morning, no doubt about it, should a meeting we were to have with the Government on Saturday afternoon be unsuccessful.

With a deputation from the Labour Council, Employers Confederation of Industry, Mining Industry representatives, and the Government officials, including Charlie Court, we had a

meeting in the Superannuation Building in St. George's Terrace. Old Charlie, in his usual style, when everyone was seated, started walking around shaking hands with everybody. He came to Keith Parry, General Manager of Western Mining Corporation. Keith was very concerned about it all, he knew what the consequences were of the Government legislation. He knew the blokes in the Eastern Goldfields and the Pilbara would stop. Peter Cook was sitting just up from me. Harry Peden was there and a lot of union officials. When Charles got to Keith Parry he said: "I needn't shake hands with you, Keith, I've been talking to you for two hours now, haven't I?" I thought straight away: "Hello, we've got them over a barrel here." Parry was concerned that he had been talking to Court a couple of hours before the meeting had even started. Peter Cook put up the union story, a lot of other union officials spoke, and the Government people put up the opposing arguments. Peter Cook then said: "Well Mr Premier, Gil Barr, and a couple of others, have just done a total tour of all the mining sites, right throughout Western Australia, they'd better give you a report." Jack Marks, Jack Bainbridge and a couple of others gave a report. Then, I said to old Charlie: "It's like this, Mr. Premier, I've just spent three weeks right through the Pilbara and the Eastern Goldfields. We finished up with a mass meeting of 2,000 people at the Boulder Town Hall yesterday. The message for me to give you is, that, unless by Monday you change your attitude, when you present the bill before Parliament, we'll put the lid on every mine in Western Australia. That's no bluff, without fear. It's just a matter of a few telephone calls and that will happen." That really changed old Charlie's mind right there and then. The Committee sat down with the Government and changed the Legislation. It was a good campaign. I enjoyed doing those things with the Labour council. I felt the AWU had to be involved. It's no good sitting back on the sidelines, and letting all the others do all the work, then pick up the scraps as they come along. I think, nearly every major campaign we had here, we were involved in. At least I was, sometimes it was a bit hard to get some of my other people involved.

Reid The Nookanbah dispute was another big one, wasn't it?

Barr: Yes, that was a very dicey one. When that started, that was referred to the Labour Council. At the first instance, unions were asked to support it. It was a pretty difficult one to muster support for. Aboriginal rights are okay, but a lot of people aren't particularly interested in supporting that sort of thing. Some people say it has nothing to do with them. It was really an important principle as far as I was concerned. When it started we had a big row with Charlie Court and the bloke from Midland Brick about it. The Midland Brick guy was supplying all the trucks and so on to go up there. We could see that the way they had it all set up, unless we could get the workers downing their tools and stopping work, it was just going to go ahead anyway. We organised all the protests, had mass meetings down on the Perth oval. then we decided we'd try to get my members, the drill operators, to stop work. Tell them they can take it up there, but it's not going to work. I had the addresses of the men, we had put the screws on Richter Drilling a few months before, and had total union membership. We had the names and addresses of the men, we sent them a telegram and got them into a meeting. They were very hard to convince, I can tell you. They just weren't interested.

Mainly young blokes in that exploration drilling, one where they come and go like flies, great turnover. A lot of them couldn't care less what happened with the Aboriginals, themselves, or anybody else half the time. We had Ernie Bridge, members of the Nookanbah community, Peter Cook on behalf of the Labour Council, all came and addressed them. At the first meeting, they didn't even want to vote on it. Luckily, we had one good guy, a good unionist, he really went right up them. Then they voted 13 to 3, I think, to stop work and support the campaign we had. Then the company got at them, and they looked like changing their minds. There must have been 19 men, because three shot through and went up on the rig. We managed to hold the other 16. We got Bob Hawke, at that time he was President of the ACTU, into a conference talking to the blokes. We also put the squeeze on CRA and demanded that they pay the guys for the time they had been off until then, and keep paying them for the length of the dispute. Hawke managed to get that out of CRA, that was the only thing that really held them. Forty percent were good unionists, the rest couldn't care what happened. Even after the conference with Bob Hawke, the question was asked, was it union pressure that kept them out? I had said to the men, "Look, I've had several meetings with you blokes. You've heard what Bob Hawke, Peter Cook and the others have had to say. Now you go and have a meeting on your own, without any union pressure." Well, they had their meeting, the first vote was 9 to 7 to return to work. A couple of the good unionists came to tell me, so I told them to go back and tell the others of the arrests that had just been made of the guys who were picketing the road to stop the trucks. Once the others found out about that they voted 10 to 6 to stay out.

A couple of days later, the company and government got at them again. Bill Grayden decided to call a meeting of all the drilling blokes, down in his office at the Superannuation Building in St George's Terrace. Jones was called to that meeting too, he was the Minister of Mines, and Grayden was the Minister of Industrial Relations. They had all the guys addresses and had them all attend the meeting. One of the blokes rang me and told me about it. Well, this is not on, I thought. As far as I was concerned, Grayden and Jones were not going to hold a meeting with my members without me being there. It was arranged for ten o'clock on a Thursday morning. I walked down from my office, down to Grayden's office. Went up to the floor, there was a big conference room at the end. I guessed that was where they would be having the meeting. There were two blokes standing at the door, when I told them who I was, they refused to let me in. I just walked past and went in. All the blokes cheered, "You beauty." When I came in the door was still open. I was sitting in a chair, looking up the corridor. I saw Grayden and Jones coming down the corridor. Of course they were surprised to see me sitting there. Jones addressed them first, really belting them around the head, responsibility of the workers to the company, how the Government had the right to make legislation and decide where companies would be allowed to drill and so on. Then Bill Grayden got up, started the pleading attitude with them. Started going through them one by one, asking them why they were on strike. I soon put a stop to that. I said, "Listen Bill, this is just a meeting for you to address these people, they will then determine amongst themselves what they are going to do. You are not going to victimise these people, it's just not on." I stopped that rubbish going on.

I said to Grayden, "Right, now you've finished, we all leave the room and let the blokes make up their minds." They had their meeting and decided to stay out. That tactic really backfired on the Government. The attitude the Government had taken towards these workers had only strengthened their resolve. They were getting paid anyway, so why should they worry.

By the time all this happened, the drill had arrived at the site, they had a new team there operating it. I went up there with Peter Cook. Went and met the Nookanbah Community, had a good talk with them. They were very grateful what we were trying to do for them. Then we went down to the site with a camera, tried to get in. They had this ten foot fence around it, barbed wire on the top. It went right around the whole drill site, the drill was operating inside. They had a police sergeant, constable as well as an aboriginal police aid. Peter Cook and I were standing at the gate, along with a couple of others. I said, "What would happen if I climbed the fence, I cover this award, I've got the right." As soon as I said this, the bloke who was running the drill site, came over and read me this Government edict that they had put out. Nobody could go onto the site without the Minister's permission. He told me I didn't have the permission, despite the award or whatever. I said I'd like to see the scabs who were working and threatened to climb the fence. Then they told me, the moment I placed my foot on the other side of the fence, I was under arrest. It was too much effort to get over the fence anyway. Ten foot high with lots of barbed wire on the top. We didn't bother.

It wasn't a successful campaign, the drilling went ahead. In one respect it was good. It made the public aware of the Aboriginal rights and what their privileges should be. Also made the public aware of the nasty attitude of the Court Government. The standover tactics they were prepared to adopt to force the drilling to go ahead, regardless of the Aboriginals. They only did that one hole there, then it stopped. Didn't go on to the sacred sites as they had intended to in the first place. In that instance, we were partially successful, though it never had a great deal of support from a lot of other workers.

Reid: What was the company's attitude?

Barr: Dreadful. The CRA were the parent company, they were okay. Richter, the drilling company, their attitude was just total support of the Government in what they were doing, and going to go ahead with the contract. The guy who had come to pay Peter Cook and myself for the blokes, is now a Federal Industrial Commissioner. He was the CRA Industrial Officer at the time. He was appointed to the Federal Commission about six years ago.

Reid: One of the other big disputes was the 54B Legislation?

Barr: Yes. That was a good campaign, I believe successful, even though they carried the Legislation it has never been used. I don't think it will be. Of course, that was the time of the start of the real right-wing surge as far as the Court Government was concerned. Really a bit of a swing away from the ALP. The Government had a big campaign against the unions at that

time. They had a march through Perth, all the right-wingers, down Beaufort Street passed the Labour Council and back again. That was all organised for the Liberal Government, real right-wing extremists. After that, they started to introduce the 54B Legislation. That was a good campaign. Again, I took on most of the task of doing the Pilbara. Jack Marks did a good job on that one. Excellent job. John O'Connor, Harry Peden and Peter Cook were some of the others involved in that campaign. Even a lot of the more moderate white collar unions were very supportive of that. Great to see. There were some funny incidents in that. Sometimes they'd arrest you, sometimes they wouldn't.

I lobbed at Dampier. It was just after the Labour Council had a meeting with the Government on the 54B subject. At Dampier the blokes had this banner out, "WELCOME GIL BARR". There must have been between two and three hundred guys at the airport. They were waiting for a report from the Labour Council. We got to one side of the airport terminal, out the back of it. Colin Hollett, a guy from the Metal Trades, myself and one of my organisers were there. Two policemen were there also. I addressed them all, told them what was going on. Not a sign of the police coming near me. When some of the blokes did get arrested, they'd appear in the Roebourne Court House. We decided to have a mass rally outside the Court House while they were having charges heard. That's when I got arrested, along with about fourteen others.

Reid: What happened - what were you doing?

Barr: Jack Marks, Bainbridge and a couple of others, a lot of Reps. from the jobs came to this mass rally. Four or five hundred people outside the Roebourne Court House. It was just before I ran for Parliament. I'd been endorsed for some time. A lot of the others spoke over the mike. I got on, we were supposed to talk for five minutes, I went on a bit, fifteen minutes or so. Riley Miller was the Superintendent of Police up there. The Court House was lousy with police 18 or 20 there just standing behind us while we were addressing the guys. When I finished my talk, Miller said to me, "Gil - what's your middle name?" "Andrew" I told him. He said - "That's alright, we know the rest of the details, you're now under arrest."

We all had to go up and appear about three weeks later, proceeded with summons, all got fines \$30 - \$35. We all publicly declared that no way in the world were we going to pay it. A day or two before we were due to pay it, some clown paid the fines, otherwise it would have been a statewide disruption or go to gaol.

That just showed the arrogance of Charlie Court and his Government. At that time they had such a majority in State Parliament, it was crush the Unions. You couldn't trust them. I remember holding a Mass Rally down on the WACA. We'd had a Labor Council Meeting the night before. It was decided that Bill Latter, Peter Cook, Jack Marks and myself would go down and see the Commissioner of Police. We'd advise him that we were going to hold a mass rally at the WACA and then we were going to march up to Parliament House.

We gave him all the assurances in the world that it was going to be a peaceful march. We had the mass rally, during which Marks and a few others had to go to Police Headquarters, just opposite the WACA. They had Wellington Street all policed off ready for our march, they went through the gate, there's about 120 police, all with riot gear, shields, batons, the bloody lot. All standing to attention just inside the gate of the Police Headquarters Building. Just showed the total mistrust. We went there the night before in good faith, and had given the Commissioner our assurances that it was to be a peaceful march. In fact we had almost decided against the march, just have the rally and go. When Jack Marks got back and reported to us, we had to march then. We went to Parliament House then and kicked up a hell of a row. That was one of the biggest marches ever seen in Perth.

Reid: Did they get the 120 riot police out or did they stay?

Barr: No, we didn't see them. They spread themselves out along the route we were taking, that's all. They certainly had their riot gear ready.

Reid: Why did they get Jack Marks to go down and see them?

Barr: They had to go over to the Police Station and just happened to see the Police there. They couldn't believe their eyes when they walked in the gate. They had all these riot police lined up, out of sight. You could see a few ordinary police about, nothing out of the usual.

Reid: Do you think that whole campaign was successful?

Barr: I think it was successful in its way. Charlie Court still carried the legislation, but we still picketed the jobs, still had our meetings, more than three people as the legislation stated. Had them in the street, no one ever got arrested for it. Not to my knowledge at any rate. The Legislation is still on the books to be used one day if they want to use it. Mind you, the dispute up at the Wanneroo Hospital, the 54B was used there, and several other places, now that my memory is serving me correctly. There were charges but it has never curbed the activity of the Trade Union movement.

Reid: What about specific issues that the AWU were concerned about on their own?

Barr: Most of the stuff, we had really combined with the TLC. We had more involvement with the Workers Compensation Act, than anybody. We really carried the bunny on that, most of the way. I suppose demarcation issues have been prominent in our union.

Reid: Can you describe some of those demarcation issues, they tend to be the most bitter of all?

Barr: Sure, the one at Wagerup with the BLF. That was a blatant attempt by the BLF to go beyond their constitution and their work rights. Just through brute strength, take over the

work of the AWU. 1982 or 1983, somewhere around there. That was a very nasty dispute, because the place was picketed. The BLF picket line wasn't really recognised by the Labour Council because of the demarcation between us and the BLF. Another demarcation issue between the BLF and the Metal trades, another row with the FED and us, and a row with the TWU. On for young and old. They had picket lines, we had blokes busting the picket line - it was our work, constitutionally correct. They had blokes on strike, wouldn't let our officials in the gate. We had a couple of big tough officials who took a lot of stopping, they made it through all right. One of the funniest instances of that dispute. They had been out for quite a while. I went down there, had a talk to them, you couldn't get much sense out of them. Every time you went near them, someone would rev them up a bit. Kevin Reynolds was putting out a lot of shit sheets about the AWU and I was putting them out about the BLF. I had a call from one of my Metal trade friends one day. He said, "Gil, be ready about 11:30 this morning, there's going to be two bus loads of BLF blokes coming up from Wagerup, and some of the others they are going to pick up on the way. They are coming to do a march on your office."

Funny, I just had my girls writing a long shit sheet about the BLF, almost ready to print it off on the Gestetner, so I told them to hurry up for Pete's sake. They got it finished. I happened to look out my window. I saw half a dozen blokes in the park opposite the AWU office, near the Beaufort Hotel. Then I saw a couple of bus loads arrive. I went out the front of the office. They must have been waiting for a few more guys to come. I yelled out to them from across the road, "Hey if you're going to come and picket my office it's no good doing it from over the park."

Only two organisers fronted up with me, the rest had magically disappeared. I handed them the shit sheet, they were livid, tearing them up, chucking them away, stamping around, waving their fists. I stood there laughing my head off. Bill Thomas was there, he was the Industrial Officer for the BLF. He is a member of Parliament now. He was standing at the back with this loud hailer. I told him to come up to the front, when he did I got the loud hailer off him and told them what I thought of them. There was a bloke on crutches, he swung the crutches round my head. I had them out there for about an hour and a half. The guys inside my office never had the sense to shut the door. Eventually, I got sick of it, turned to go, and, of course, they followed me into the office. They didn't make much mess or anything like that. Just yelling and shouting, and then away they went. It was quite humorous, I enjoyed it, it didn't worry me. When you'd had my work experiences, mass meetings with guys yelling, shouting and carrying on, this was no problem at all. That was a real nasty dispute. One thing I never want to see again, any of those types of demarcation issues. We finished up winning the decision.

Reid: How was it resolved in the finish?

Barr: It went to Arbitration. It was ruled that the work we were saying was ours, was rightfully ours and not the BLF.

Reid: Did you keep any of those shit sheets?

Barr: No. They might be in the office somewhere, amongst all the gear that was left when I went to Sydney. I had to leave my wife to do everything then. Pack everything up, sell the house and come to Sydney. Unfortunately, some of the boxes of stuff we had just went astray.

Reid: Was the BLF the main union you had the demarcation disputes with?

Barr: In construction BLF mainly. A few with the FED plant operators and stuff like that. We always had an agreement with the FED, that any construction on a building site was their work. They used to try to horn in on big mining construction sites. We always won the argument, we had the Federal award, they never did. They only had a State award. That gave us the total right to represent people on construction sites. In the mining, of course, we had a lot of demarcation disputes with the FED, over drilling. For instance, up at Newman they tried to horn in and take all the drill operators on the 60 and 40 R S, air track drills and so on.

A lot of the blokes, at the time, for some reason or another, were dissatisfied with the AWU, they wanted to join the FED. It was about a 50/50 job. Half wanted to stay with the AWU, the others wanted or sought greener fields with the FED. There was dissatisfaction amongst the blokes. We eventually had an Arbitration Commission hearing to decide the demarcation, and we won that.

It spelled out that the only real rights the FED ever had were in power houses and other stationary operated motors. They tried to argue that those big motors on the 60 and 40 R drills were generating power and so should have FED operators. The Commission ruled that, despite the fact they were generating power, the function of the plant was where the worker got the union coverage from.

We had lots of barneys with the TWU and a lot of others with the FED over new machinery being introduced on sites, excavators and so on. Instead of using shovels, they've got these excavators, front end loaders, loading off the face. The FED used to always try and say that because they always operated the shovels, that any other bit of machinery that moves earth off the face on to the truck ought to be FED. That hasn't turned out to be the case. Their only rights are on the shovel. There have been a lot of arguments about that with Hiab cranes on trucks. The FED argued that it's a lifting device, operates the same as a crane therefore it should be operated by the FED men. We've always won that argument too. The truck driver operates the Hiab crane, drives the truck on the mine site. The crane is a lifting device to assist him with his loading and unloading. I know it all gets a bit technical sometimes, but that's how it turns out.

What happens sometimes, the blokes are pretty cagey. They get on the job and get at the guys, saying, "You shouldn't be in the AWU, you should be in the FED." They encourage the

blokes themselves. I've pulled the same stunt on other unions too. Sometimes you do work you shouldn't be doing, only as a kickback.

Reid: Were there any demarcation disputes that you lost?

Barr: Oh, yes. We lost some to the BLF. Every time you lose one, you think it's a shonky decision. They were building a tank down at the BP Refinery once. It's just like pitching an ordinary wall up, the BLF won that demarcation argument.

We had a lot of disputes with the TWU over the truck drivers on the mines, even the iron ore industry. At Newman, they've got all the truck drivers, but we've got them at Mt Tom Price, Paraburdoo, Goldsworthy and Cliffs Robe River. At some of the mining sites, they've got the town site truck operators, we've got them in other places. Majority of them are AWU still. They did have some equal rights, that's the way it was eventually sorted out. Kelly made a carve up of the industry. There are a lot of other disputes that have occurred.

One thing about it, I'll always say this, that the unions we had demarcation disputes with, we'd have our row. In particular with a bloke like Kevin Reynolds, a great bloke, he and I were quite good friends, but if there was a union demarcation on, that was it. Even though we'd been having a barney, Kevin and I would always go and have a beer together.

It was quite funny once, the ACTU Executive had a meeting over here. We had Edgar Williams on as our rep. on the ACTU - he was an extreme right-winger. Norm Gallagher was on for the BLF - he was on the ACTU Executive at that time. We'd just been having a big row federally with the BLF. All the Branch Secretaries here had been invited to an ACTU dinner. I drove my car in, I used to live in Balga, parked behind my office. Kevin was driving down, he parked his car behind the Labour Council. He saw me and asked if I was going to the dinner. So we walked in together. You should have seen the raised eyebrows. Williams and some of the others. What were we doing, coming in together. Even at the Labour Council meetings some people wouldn't support him, purely because he was BLF and a strong left winger. They thought you had to oppose what he was putting up just because of that. We used to sit opposite one another at the TLC meetings. I used to tell my delegates that when Kevin was putting up good stuff, support it, which we did. Turned the eyes of the right wingers over here.

It was funny, when I came down as Branch Secretary, the right-wing group here, made an approach to me. The AWU traditionally has been right-wing. They told me they had a faction in the TLC and wanted to talk to me. I said to them, "Look, there might be a label on the union, but there is not one on me." I told them I didn't believe in factions either. I just didn't want to talk to them. Even though at times, I supported some of the things they put up. I always had the attitude, that if something sensible was put up by anyone for resolving a problem or towards TLC policy. I didn't care whether it came from the left-wing, right-wing

or wherever. If it were good sensible stuff, I'd get up and support it. No way, would I get too involved with the extreme Trots, or right-wing, they do more damage to the trade union movement than anybody. I think the extreme right-wingers are worse than the Trots. They do you more damage than you can poke a stick at.

I really believe that we had a great TLC here, in the years I was involved in it. When I said I wouldn't be in groups, I was in what you would call broad left. We had some consensus of opinion. A few of us, if there were something we wanted done, we'd make a few phone calls, sometimes I'd go as far as the real lefties, or they'd get me to talk to the right and we'd end up with a good consensus of opinion. At the TLC we'd get a few fiery fights. I haven't been there for four or five years now, to me that was the best way of doing things. I know I was used by a lot of people a lot of times. They'd ring me to see if I could talk to so and so to support a particular thing. I really enjoyed my association with the TLC.

Reid: Did you every find companies making use of the demarcation disputes?

Barr: Yes. One problem we had, the BLF had their State award. They had hourly rates, their rate of pay was above that of the AWU by about ten to twenty cents an hour. This made it very difficult for us, until we got this new construction award in. Took us a long time to get there. A lot of times companies deliberately tried to use the AWU to take over a job or do a job, simply because under our award, the provisions weren't so hard as far as wet weather clauses were concerned - our blokes would work in the rain. Our rate of pay wasn't as high in some areas, and they were deliberately opting to get the AWU in, rather than the BLF. A lot of companies look at it, that the fewer unions you've got on a site the better it is for them. A lot of times, of course, that was an advantage to us. We got such a wide coverage we could go and do a negotiation and cover nearly all the area of the operation. That, of course, would upset the other unions, the TWU, sometimes the FED or BLF.

Reid: What about the Building Workers Industrial Union?

Barr: Well, since the BLF deregistration there have been a lot of demarcation disputes in the Eastern States, it's still on in fact. I managed to negotiate with the Federal people a demarcation deal which has been written in the transcript, to apply between the two unions. It is operating very well, only now and then is there a bit of a hiccough. You get some over zealous organiser from one side or the other, will go out and ignore what the Federal People have agreed on - they just want the work. They cause a blue then you've got to go and sort it out.

Reid: So did the AWU federally, benefit from the carve up of the BLF?

Barr: Not in particular. A bit, but not as much as the BWIU did. No way in the world. The only thing it did, instead of us having demarcation fights with the BLF, we just went and took

the workers we always said were ours anyway. We also did a deal with the BLF in Western Australia, since the deregistration of the BLF federally, we did a similar deal with Kevin Reynolds. With other people from South Australia, Queensland and Tasmania and myself in my office in Sydney, we hammered out a demarcation deal between us and the BLF. It's been much more peaceful ever since. Now and again there is a bit of a barney on, but not to the great extent it was before.

We've always had a policy as far as uranium mining is concerned. The AWU supports uranium mining, providing all the codes of conduct, safety and so on, laid down by the Government are strictly adhered to. It was quite funny, years ago, when they were going to build this pilot plant in Kalgoorlie, they had a sampling plant operating there for a couple of years. We had a meeting with the Labour Council. All the unions declared, "NO WAY" were they going to have anything to do with it, black ban it completely. We had a meeting, the Metalies, the FED, The ETU, The BLF, the TWU, the lot, all sorting out a policy. They couldn't do this, and they couldn't do that, opposed to it absolutely. I said, "Well, it's like this, we've got a policy allowing uranium mining, providing all the safety precautions, codes of conduct are carried out. You fellows obviously don't want to make an award for it. The AWU will go and make an award and then cover every worker on the job, you please yourselves." It was marvellous how they changed their policies overnight. Next day they were all back, negotiating to get their fair share of the membership. No matter what happens they weren't about to give away their membership.

Reid: Why is it that the AWU had that policy?

Barr: As you know, the AWU, particularly Federally, at our union convention, has always been a pretty moderate sort of union. One that always seeks consultation and negotiation, rather than confrontation. That was the attitude, not to oppose things just for the sake of opposing them. At our convention, about 1974, they had Professor Harry Messell along to address the convention, him and a couple of others. Even though I tried to move an amendment a few years later on, to change the policy it was unsuccessful at the time. At the first introduction of uranium mining, they convinced all of our delegates that there were no real safety fears, as far as workers were concerned.

I got a trip from the Labour Council to America, through the State Department in 1978. Through all the work I had done, I guess the Labour Council reckoned I deserved one. While I was in America, I went to Wyoming to look over a uranium mining plant in operation. A place called Riverton. I met the union guys there. They'd been going 18 years then, and nobody had suffered any ill effects from the uranium operation. I've never seen a safer operation in my life. Even though it's wet when it comes out of the sandy stuff, there was not much blasting, and even when they were loading there was no dust. A bloke would take a sample out of each load. I watched him. He had complete protective gear, face mask, the works. He had a little sample machine, a crusher thing that the stuff went through. There was

a fan blowing between him and the machine, he could not start the machine till the fan started. Blow anything away from him. I went and had a look at the refining operations. The uranium wasn't touched by human hands. The only time anybody even looked like touching it, was at the finish of the operation. It goes through a big dryer, they bring it out into this final tank, like 44 gallon drums. A bloke was there with all the protective gear you could poke a stick at. He pulled a lever, it was measured, the exact amount that would go into the drums. It slid out on a roller, he just put the lid on and tightened the clamp on the side - no exposure. That satisfied me as far as safety on the job was concerned. As for the moral attitude of whether it goes into making plutonium or bombs, I feel, regardless of whether we mine or not, they are going to get it from somewhere. Plenty of other places besides Australia they can mine it. If we don't mine it and gain the benefit for Australia, it's only going to be mined elsewhere.

Reid: It sounds like that mine was a model, you would take people to see.

Barr: I've never been to one here in Australia. There's one in South Australia, that's covered by the South Australian Branch. When I went up to Kalgoorlie, the safety was something terrific. No way could anybody get contaminated or even get near the stuff. We were totally satisfied. It was the safest operation you could get. No worries.

Reid: You have coverage also of the Ranger Uranium Mine in the Northern Territory?

Barr: No, that's covered by the Miscellaneous Workers' Union. They've got all the Northern Territory.

