



**PAPERS IN LABOUR HISTORY NO.7**

**EDITORS: MICHAEL HESS and CHARLIE FOX**

Perth Branch, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

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The Editors  
*Papers in Labour History*  
 Department of Industrial Relations  
 University of Western Australia  
 Nedlands WA 6009

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### COVER

The illustrated cover for this edition of *Papers in Labour History* was drawn by Kent Coulter, who is a local artist and active member of both the Printing and Kindred Industries Union and the Painters and Decorators Union. Kent says that the candle has symbolic value by implication and allusion. It represents light in the darkness, watchfulness, diligence and perseverance. It alludes to our forbears in that it was their form of light and to peacefulness and collective consciousness. The light of the candle is common to all. He quotes J.C. Cooper's, *An Illustrated Encyclopedia of Traditional Symbols*, (Thames and Hudson, 1978) as follows: "*Candle*: Light in the darkness of life; illumination; the vitalising power of the sun; also the uncertainty of life as easily extinguished...".

### Acknowledgements

As well as those listed above who contributed to this edition acknowledgement is due to fellow workers who made suggestions, typed, proofread and supported the publication especially Lorna Duffy, Penny Fayle, Helen Riseborough. *Papers in Labour History No.7*, is available from the Office of the Department of Industrial Relations, University of Western Australia for \$10.00. It is anticipated that *Papers in Labour History No.8* will be available for a similar cost in November 1991. Correspondence and proposed contributions should be addressed to The Editors, *Papers in Labour History*, Department of Industrial Relations, University of Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6009.

*Papers in Labour History* seeks to publish material of a serious nature about the 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.

It is a truism that winners write history and one of the aims of labour history research is to record and analyse the part played in the development of our society by those who were not (and are not) part of its ruling elite. Even amongst workers, however, there are some who are more likely and some who are less likely to attract the interest of historical research. The largest group of these must be women workers, who for a long time remained invisible to historians and are only now taking their place in the written record of labour as major participants. In this edition of *Papers in Labour History*, Leonie Stella's article on women police in WA raises and answers quite a few questions both about these women workers and the nature of their policing work. This is followed by an article focusing on the contribution of one famous woman to the history of WA's labour movement, from one of our most reliable contributors, Bill Latter. This time Bill is looking at the visit of Adela Pankhurst to WA at the time of the conscription debate during World War I and her part in that debate.

We continue our program of publishing oral records of work and worker organisation in WA with Stuart Reid's collection of reminiscences of work at the old Fremantle power station. The second part of Rosa Townsend's recollections of the Hotel and Club Caterers' Union provides a further example of just how much history we lose if labour movement veterans do not commit their memories to tape. It is, however, not only veterans who have useful things to say about understanding the history of labour. Rachael Robert's article on understanding the nature of the exploitation and resistance of Aboriginal workers in WA's pastoral industry is an example of what younger members of the labour movement are able to contribute. While it does not pretend to provide definitive answers, this article raises issues which ought to concern all Australians.

The reproduction of Peter Woodward's speech from the annual general meeting of the Perth Branch of the Society for the Study of Labour History provides some interesting insights into the industrial problems faced by musicians. In this era of increased recreation time the plight of workers employed in providing entertainment is likely to become a more and more significant part of the labour movement.

A new publishing venture, the Sydney-based Left Book Club, dominates our book review section. If their first efforts are anything to go by this publisher will be of considerable interest to students of labour history. Finally we carry a position paper from the Perth Branch of the Society for the Study of Labour History on the question of a Labour History Museum for WA. Readers interested in responding to this should get in touch with Ric McCracken at the TLC Arts Office.

## Women's Police in Western Australia 1917-1943

Leonie Stella†

In Western Australia today policewomen are expected to attend to similar duties to those of the men, wear hand guns, truncheons and uniforms and have, at least in theory, an equal opportunity for promotion within the Police Department. The State's first policewomen, however, were members of a 'minor branch' of the Police Department referred to as the Women's Police, wore no uniform, had no opportunity for promotion and carried out duties quite distinct from those of policemen. Their appointment followed an initiative in Britain where voluntary women police had been formed by social purity campaigners and militant suffragettes prior to the 1914-1918 War. The former were mainly concerned to protect women from 'white slave' traffickers while the latter were concerned to promote the presence of women in the public service and protect or assist women appearing in Court or taken into custody. Increasing fear of venereal disease during that war led to the British government subverting the initiative and appointing women constables to control the sexuality of women(1).

During the first decades of the twentieth century women's organisations across Australia agitated for social welfare reforms and legislative changes aimed at assisting and protecting women and children. Their demands met with a variety of responses ranging from ridicule to cautious consideration, concession and subversion. The most successful of the initiatives for which the women's organisations lobbied were those supporting the progressive reforms promoted by 'scientific experts', underpinned by an ideology which regarded the health and welfare of the population as essential to the moral and economic progress of the nation. The central target of these reforms was woman as the ideal mother of future generations of healthy Australians(2). She became not only the subject of this ideology but one of the means of its dissemination. As a result 'the right type of woman' was sought for appointment to the Women's Police in Western Australia in 1917 not for the primary purpose of assisting women and children appearing in court, or to carry out investigations into crimes against them, but to control women's sexuality and prevent the spread of venereal disease.

The belief that women police could protect and assist women and children spread from Britain to other nations. In Australia the suggestion was first made as part of prison reforms being sought by the National Council of Women in Victoria in 1902, in the belief that it would result in improved in police practices where women and children were concerned. Over the next fifteen years the proposal met with resistance and even ridicule by the press and police. Debate raged over the role and function of women police, and the entry of women into the public sphere(3).

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† Leonie Stella was formerly a student in the Honours program in the History Department at Murdoch University. She is currently a freelance research assistant working on the history of fishing in Australia.

Requests by women organisations across Australia for investigations into criminal assault on women and children, and 'white slave' trafficking were dismissed as unnecessary. State governments throughout Australia capitulated to the demand for women police at the height of national debate concerning appropriate methods for dealing with the spread of venereal disease(4).

In Western Australia no provision for dealing with venereal disease existed within the Western Australian Health Act but women suspected of carrying the disease could be dealt with under the vagrancy, soliciting, and idle and disorderly clauses of the Police Act. In 1915 a Royal Commission into the Administration of Health, revealed evidence of unlawful collusion between police, magistrates and health authorities who claimed they were acting in the interests of the public by detaining and compelling women to undergo medical examination(5). The Commission also drew attention to reports of venereal disease amongst local service recruits, that 'shiploads of venereal disease' were returning from the war, and that 'amateur prostitutes' were responsible for increasing levels of 'contamination'. This led to the introduction of the Health Act Amendment Bill of 1915 which, despite debate about the 'liberty of the subject' and the insertion of a 'safeguard' clause to allow some redress for those wrongly accused of being diseased, only led to confirmation of the view that the disease was being spread by 'clandestine or amateur' prostitutes; young girls and women 'who accept lovers either...for the sake of additional pocketmoney or from mere sensuality-sexual impulse...' (6).

In 1911 an alliance between the Women's Service Guild, National Council of Women, Children's Protection Society, Women's Christian Temperance Union and the National Council of Churches successfully thwarted attempts to introduce compulsory examination and treatment into the Health Act 1909. During the 1915 debates, however, the NCW under the leadership of Edith Cowan and supported by Dr Roberta Jull supported the amendments to the Bill in the 'interests' of the health of the general population, in Cowan's words, 'the new generation of a young and promising State'(7). This weakened the alliance of women which had been joined by the Labour Women's Organisation by 1915. In 1916 the WSG disaffiliated itself from the NCW(8).

Davidson asserts that those opposing the 1915 legislation were aware that it was a piece of class legislation that would encourage 'tyranny over defenceless women and girls' and that as they had little concrete evidence of the unlawful collusion between police, magistrates and health authorities there was little they could do to prevent it(9). I suggest that the fears of harassment and the indignity of compulsory medical examination by men of women and girls, led to them supporting the appointment of women police.

The first recorded suggestion that the government should appoint women police was announced by Labour women in the Westralian Worker alongside a report on the WSG's opposition to the Health Act Amendment Bill 1915(10). Jean Beadle the writer of the women's column in the

Westralian Worker was a prominent member of the WSG and a supporter of working class women. The reports that appeared in the Westralian Worker over the next few months indicate that members of the Labour Women's Organisation, WSG and WCTU supported the appointment of women police in the belief that they would be of assistance to women and children and protect them from abuse and 'white slave trafficking'. Although the WCTU subsequently expressed the belief that the *need* for women police was a 'disgrace to any civilised country', brought about by intemperance, the organisation clearly expected them to be punitive protectors; 'God's Police': Women Police would protect the 'weak', and 'punish...those who deliberately plan their destruction'(11).

The Australian Labour Federation appears to have been the first group to approach Colonial Secretary John Drew with a request for the appointment of Women Police during the parliamentary debate on the Health Act Amendment Bill in 1915(12). Further representations were made to the government over the next few months and in February 1916 Drew announced that he and the Commissioner of Police, Connell, were giving consideration to the suggestion. According to Drew, the Commissioner had expressed the opinion that:

the type of women required was a middle aged experienced person of lovable nature (a trained nurse if possible), who, by kindness, could exercise an influence for good over unfortunate girls ... their duties ... should be as little like police as possible.(13)

However, the Commissioner resisted their appointment to the Police Department arguing that the best course to adopt would be to increase the numbers of female inspectors attached to the State Children's Department. Following this announcement, a deputation of organisations, including those who had opposed the venereal disease clauses of the Health Act presented themselves to Drew, advocating the appointment of women police and women justices of the peace. Drew stated that he believed that the duties of women police should be 'clearly defined within stated limits' and that he was opposed to the 'idea that women police ... should be vested with the same powers of male police', or asked to perform the same duties. Experience, he said, had shown that when the 'untrained' were vested with authority they 'easily become a danger'. He confirmed that the Commissioner was not entirely in favour of the proposal but indicated his own interest by stating that he would use 'every endeavour to obtain the decision of Cabinet within a fortnight'(14)

Rischbieth and Beadle had represented the WSG at this deputation, and reported the outcome to the April general meeting of the WSG. At this meeting concern was also expressed about the 'lenient sentence' passed on a man who had assaulted a five year old girl; and the necessity for continued vigilance in regard to the administration of the amended Health Act(15). The WSG continued to lobby the government on these issues, and the implementation of 'reconstructive' methods to deal with the 'vital question of child welfare'. The Guild's concern therefore was not primarily the control of women's sexuality. The women's organisations were well aware of the double moral standard and the unequal social and economic position of women. The WSG,

LWO and WCTU in particular believed that prostitution could be abolished through an improvement of women's position. Women who had no economic support faced very real dangers: poverty, disease, illegitimacy, and discrimination on the grounds that they were not 'respectable'. Although influenced by the ideology of the good mother and ideal woman, the women of this time believed these dangers could only be alleviated through reform and training, usually in domestic service, so that a woman could become self-supporting.

In 1916 the WSG initiated and promoted an international conference on Child Welfare. When its members presented recommendations for welfare reforms to Colonial Secretary Colebatch (who had replaced Drew during the second half of 1916), Colebatch brought up the question of appointing women police. He gave the impression that the Commissioner of Police was no longer opposed to the suggestion although he still held the view that 'such officers' should be attached to the State Children's Department. Colebatch also stated that he understood from reports received from London and Adelaide that the appointment of women police was really only a war measure(16).

The appointment of Women Police was not mentioned in the press again until May 1917 alongside a West Australian report on venereal disease amongst troops. A further deputation consisting of J. McC. Smith, MLA, E. Cowan, NCW, C. Oliver, Women's National Movement-WCTU, the Rev. Tom Allan, Methodist Church, the Rev. C.H.D. Grimes, Anglican Social Questions Committee, the Rev. W. Huey Steele, and Pitchford, Presbyterian Church had met with Colebatch on 17 May(17).

At this meeting Edith Cowan contended that the appointment of women police was a 'reform...[which]...would have the effect of saving the girls and young women who walked the streets from social degradation and from disease'. She also asked that women constables be placed under the control of the Commissioner of Police and not attached to the State Children's Department, where she believed they would be less effective(18).

The clergymen's views indicate a distinctly masculine view of women as either 'moral guardians' or sexually voracious 'temptresses'. Grimes claimed that 'boys of 14 and 15 years' were being 'tempted to vice by young girls who had already been corrupted'. Allan said he thought women should be the protectors of women 'because there were many girls and young women who 'stayed out all hours who were difficult for men to handle'. He agreed that such women should have the authority of the Police Commissioner behind them but also stated that he did not want women police to 'stop fights and chase burglars but to watch over the social purity of the sex she represented'. The 'good woman', he added, 'had a high sense of the purity of her sex...' and could be a protective social force. Steele also believed that they should be used as agents of social control and that 'strong minded, capable women should be appointed to look after their young and foolish sisters who were walking the streets'(19).

Colebatch responded sympathetically to the deputation but warned that the Commissioner of Police was still resisting their appointment to the Police Department. Oliver and Pitchford suggested that fifty women would be needed but Colebatch reminded them of the need for careful training and selection of 'one or two suitable women to start with', as 'it would only be necessary for one woman policeman to do something injudicious for the whole system to be prejudiced. Those who were opposed to it would make an outcry'. He confirmed, however, that his government intended to take action(20).

The WSG sought a separate meeting with Colebatch and the Commissioner the following week and Rischbieth and Lillian Medcalf (from the WSG and WCTU) reported to the general meeting of the WSG that the Commissioner was now favourable to the appointment of women police in the Police Department. Rischbieth explained the WSG's absence from the deputation arranged by the Anglican Social Questions Committee on the grounds that short notice of the meeting had not given it time to arrange for representatives to be present(21). It is also possible that the Guild was unwilling to participate because of its disillusion with the NCW's approach to the venereal disease clauses of the Health Act and the fact that Rischbieth and Cowan had disagreed over the role of the NCW and the autonomy of the WSG as a lobbying group.

Members of the police force were cautious, if not at times antagonistic, to the employment of women in the police force. The Police Review, the official organ of the W.A. Police Association, contains a strong sexist attitude towards women and a jealous guarding of its own sphere(22). Women police were first mentioned in March 1917. The Deputy Commissioner of Police in Cape Town South Africa favoured the use of women police in social welfare work and expressed a point of view similar to that of the members of the deputation to the Colonial Secretary in May 1917. He blamed the social conditions brought about by the war and stated that there was a pressing need for social help and reform amongst those who 'fester away on the outskirts of society'. This need could be met by the appointment of a limited number of 'high-minded and specially trained women' for the 'surveillance and reform of female social evils...for the common good of the community'. He added however, that the women's chief work would be to supplement and aid that of the men, not to supercede it. This policeman stated clearly that he believed that such 'social work' could best be done by the Police Department(23).

The editor of the Police Review did not agree. He declared that it would be impossible and absurd to expect women to be able to act as policemen. As policemen were expected to 'deal with every offence and violation of the law whether it affect man or woman', there would be nothing for women to do in 'the ordinary curriculum of police duties'. Although the voluntary policewomen in South Africa and England were 'alleged' to be doing good work and he was sympathetic to the view that morals policing was necessary, he believed it was 'altogether outside the jurisdiction of the police force'. The police he stated, did not have the power to control evil or interfere with the morals of people. This work he believed, was 'purely social work, and could be more successfully accomplished by voluntary organisations than by State policewomen.

This editorial also pointed out that other government officers in South Africa had stated that 'the best policeman a woman could have was her mother', and that the motion to appoint women police in the South African Union had been withdrawn. He went on to criticise advocates for the appointment of women arguing that it was too dangerous for women to frequent the 'haunts' of immoral women in the slums and 'absurd' to expect a woman to control 'this class'. Although he agreed that the work should be done by women he reiterated his view that it should be done by 'societies of women and religious bodies'(24). This writer evidently believed that unpaid volunteers would be immune to danger.

Journalists continued to make fun of the suggestion. The West Australian made reference to comic opera lines stating that since it had been decided to appoint women police the 'policeman's lot is not a happy one'(25). The Sunday Times published an article which ridiculed the idea of using women in the police force and criticised middle aged women who took on the role of 'God's Police' as well as those viewed as 'Damned Whores'. The writer's final insult was that, in his opinion, the best thing about the scheme to appoint women police was merely that they would not always be borrowing other policemen's 'fags and matches'(26).

Colebatch announced on 4 July 1917 that on his recommendation Cabinet had approved the appointment of two women police whose duties would be to deal with offences committed by or upon women, girls and children, assist newcomers to the city, patrol public places and prevent or detect molesters of women and girls. He stressed that all authorities were agreed that 'the one great essential is that only the right type of woman shall be appointed'(27). He played down the role of women police as controllers of women on the street. The Sunday Times announced the appointment of Helen Dugdale, a trained nurse and inspectress from the State Children's and Charities Department, and Laura Chipper, from the Salvation Army Rescue Home, and commented that 'As the lady-cops do not wear any distinctive uniform there's a very lively time in store for the pasty-faced young woman of the white-top boots and the expensive furs(28). The Commissioner of Police confirmed the reason for their appointment by announcing to the public that:

The reason for their appointment is the better safe-guarding of the moral welfare of women and children, particularly of girls between the ages of 14 and 21 years and their chief concern is not so much the prosecution of offenders as the prevention of misconduct that often leads to disaster in the lives of young women and girls(29).

They commenced duties in September 1917. The circumstances which led to their appointment and the views expressed by various interest groups indicate that the central concern was the health of the population and the progress of the nation. Even Rischbieth who had expressed concern at the unnecessary harassment of individual women favoured the appointment of 'good' women as probationary officers and policewomen to 'protect, defend and uplift [our] future citizens' in order to 'build up a good and virile nation'(30). However, the concern expressed by the WSG over unlawful detention and forced medical examination of women charged with vagrancy and suspected of carrying venereal disease, may also indicate its desire to see women in

a position where they could 'police' the actions of police, doctors and magistrates. Although the women were proponents of the ideology of the 'Good Woman' and supportive of the ideals of a socially pure and healthy nation, they were not 'unwitting dupes' of a masculine world view. The most powerful and influential members of the women's organisations who lobbied the government for the appointment of women police included the more conservative leaders of the National Council of Women who supported the amendments to the Health Act, but also members of the labour movement; Jean Beadle, Amelia MacDonald, Susan Casson and Alice Rapley. In the middle was Bessie Rischbieth, an ardent theosophist who supported progressive reforms but not the harassment of women or labour militancy(31). Other less visible women included militant suffragettes from Britain who resided in Perth, in particular Mrs L Foxcroft who was a Labour Woman. At the 1914 Western Australian Women's Conference Foxcroft warned the women to be wary of accepting men's demands that they take responsibility for the morals of the community. She said, 'Men were always wanting women to be good. They wished them to possess all the morals and save the men the trouble'(32).

The majority of the members of the women's organisations were therefore probably pleased that women were to be appointed, nervous about the extent to which they would be used as 'morals police', despite their support for the rehabilitation or reform of 'fallen' women, and optimistic about the Women's Police's ability to protect and assist women and girls. Little interest had been taken in their calls for protection and assistance for women and girls until their 'welfare reforms' became entangled with the venereal disease issue and concern for the future of a fit and healthy nation. The State government, informed by medical authorities and police, capitulated at the height of concern about venereal disease and 'amateur street loiterers' in order to protect troops. The result was increased surveillance of women and girls, a limited role for women police, and little protection and assistance for women or children subjected to assault by men. The latter duty, together with the 'control' of prostitutes, remained the province of the men of the Criminal Investigations Branch.

### **Restriction and control of the Women's Police**

Police Commissioner Connell reported in 1917 that the two women had been sworn in as constables under the provisions of the Police Act, 1892, and were under the control of the Commissioner of Police. This statement together with his announcement that they had been appointed not to prosecute offenders but to prevent 'misconduct' amongst women and children set the precedent for relegating the Women's Police to that of a 'minor branch' of the Police Department and an auxiliary of the police force(33).

Between 1924 and 1936 the number of Women's Police in active service remained at no more than five despite constant lobbying from women's organisations. The women were Dugdale, Chipper, Fogarty, Crawford and Dunlop, all appointed prior to 1922. In 1920 Fogarty and Austin had been appointed and transferred to work in Kalgoorlie. Austin resigned to marry after only a few years service and was not replaced. Fogarty was declared redundant in 1927.

Although stating that she carried out her duties well in 'endeavouring to safeguard the moral welfare of erring girls of tender years', the Commissioner advised the Minister that there was little work for her and other policewomen. He also stated that although provision had been made in the government's estimates for further appointments in 1926, 'subsequent reports ... did not justify the retention of the item'(34).

The women's organisations renewed their interest in the appointment of women's police, an interest which concerned progressive women all over the western world between 1929 and 1935(35). Bessie Rischbieth, as President of the Australian Federation of Women Voters and the WSG, attended international conferences such as that of the International Alliance of Women for Suffrage and Equal Citizenship in June 1929 and July 1935. She returned to Perth with resolutions concerning the appointment of uniformed women police and the attainment of an equal moral standard. For example, women were urged to:

...press for abolition of all measures of exception, whether in law or police regulation directed against women or any group of women under pretext of morals(36).

At the same time reports from London were published in the local press which stated that the successful appointment of women police indicated that their numbers should be increased to enable them to carry out patrol work in uniform(37).

The influence of the international women's conference, the findings of the British reports and local concern about sexual crimes committed against women and children led the women's organisations to make further demands. Throughout the late 1920s and 1930s they called for the appointment of more women police and a woman's probationary officer to protect and assist women and children. These demands were continually rejected by the Commissioner as unjustified. In July 1929, he responded to one request by stating that: 'We are sufficiently hard pressed for male policemen ... without increasing the cost of the Department in this direction'(38).

In 1935 the WSG, the Labour Women's Central Executive, the NCW, Women Justices, and the women's branch of the Primary Producers Association, again called for reforms which they believed would protect and assist women and girls, and lessen the risk of harassment. They called for the appointment of more women police, for a senior woman to be in charge of them, for their separation from the control of the Commissioner, for increased training for women police, and for the extension of their duties. A few months later the Commissioner of Police announced plans to implement a new recruiting and training scheme for 16 and 17 year old male cadets, which would alleviate the necessity for employing women and raise the 'efficiency of the force'(39). This statement by the Commissioner together with his continual resistance to increasing the numbers of Women's Police, indicates that he hoped to be able to dispense with their services.

The women's organisations responded quickly to this and pressed the Minister for Police again on the issue of numbers, uniforms and control of the Women's Police. The deputation also challenged the Commissioner's stance on women in the Police Department. Vallance, on behalf of the WSG, stated that:

... we might read into it that the present women police as they retire would not be replaced. We would like your assurance that this is not so. If it were so women's organisations would make a very strong protest. We cannot do without women police. We feel there should be more of them (40)

She also stated that the women's organisations believed that the Women's Police should be organised on the same basis as those in South Australia and London where they were under the control of a principal member of the Women's Police and had the same powers and hours of work as men constables despite carrying out duties more in the line of social welfare work(41).

In response the Minister denied knowledge of any plans to disband the Women Police but stated that 'much of the work', which the women considered justified their demands, was 'now being done' by the Child Welfare Department, and that this was preferable to having the Police Department 'deal with such matters'. However, the women were concerned about young women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one years who could not be brought under the control of the State Children's Act, and regarded the appointment of more Women's Police as essential. Although the Minister agreed that the work of the Women's Police was distinct from that of men police, he implied that appointing more women was not necessary as policemen could continue to 'police' such girls. He concluded the interview by pointing out that there was a shortage of funds, and a shortage of male police. This confirmed the view expressed by the Commissioner in 1929, and implied that preference would be given to the appointment and training of men rather than women(41).

Despite the Commissioner's resistance to increasing the numbers of the Women's Police, Eileen Healy and Stella Westcott were appointed as 'cadets' to replace Dugdale when she retired in 1936, and Grace Paddon and Eileen Black were appointed to replace them when they resigned to marry in 1939. Chipper also retired in that year(42). By 1940, however, there were still only six women police in Western Australia: Dunlop and five younger women; Bennett, Scott, Abrahamson, Browne and Paddon.

The conditions brought about by World War II led to another women's deputation meeting with the Minister for Police in April 1940. They claimed that more well-trained younger women police were required to patrol the streets in uniform in order that girls could recognise them, and so that the women would have greater authority. The Commissioner of Police stated that he believed the use of uniforms would do 'more harm than good'(43). Vallance, from the Women Justices' Association, stated that her major concern was to protect younger women from 'male solicitation', 'forced marriages', and 'illegitimate births'. The Minister and the Commissioner confirmed the view that the women police were appointed to carry out welfare duties and not to

'accost uniformed soldiers'. This they said was a job they would find difficult whether in uniform or not and they would have to call for assistance from a policeman. This would create more work for him, work which it was claimed he was already capable of carrying out alone. The Commissioner reported that he had thoroughly investigated the question and found that South Australia was the only state which 'fosters' women police; New South Wales was opposed to them; there were very few in Victoria; and he thought they would soon become 'extinct' in Queensland(44). Although it was acknowledged that the work of the women's police was 'onerous' at times, he claimed that there was no evidence that they were overworked or unable to cope with their duties and further appointments could not be financially justified.

In October 1940 the women's organisations tried a different strategy. They pointed out that the War and the presence of troops in Perth and Northam was causing social problems related to prostitution and the spread of venereal disease(45). This elicited a quick response. Within three weeks the Commissioner advised the Minister that as a result of reports from his Inspector in Northam he had decided that it was necessary to appoint a 'Woman Constable' to Northam and that he was also 'desirous of having two women constables on regular duty up to 12 midnight or later in the metropolitan area...'. He asked for approval to increase the strength of the women's police from six to eight(46).

Lukin and Osborne were appointed in February 1941. Although the WSG congratulated the Commissioner of Police on the decision their concern to protect women and girls from molestation on the street led them to suggest the appointment of voluntary women to 'lighten the burden of your limited staff' at peak periods when large numbers of troops were ashore(47). Not surprisingly, the Commissioner was unimpressed and rejected the proposal on the grounds that the duties of a policewoman required a great deal of tuition 'under the guidance of woman constables who have had considerable experience' and stated that 'the appointment of females who have had absolutely no experience in this work would...be most inadvisable(48).

One of the reasons for this request from the WSG was that the twelve month probationary period imposed on the new recruits would not make the increase in staff effective for a further twelve months. After three months resistance to the suggestion several volunteers from amongst the women's organisations commenced evening patrol with the Women's Police. Surviving records do not indicate whether the Minister overrode the decision(49). But in any case the voluntary women only worked for a few months. The Modern Women's Club opposed the use of volunteers to act as 'guardians of young girls who were behaving in a disorderly manner and drinking with soldiers on the streets'. Founding members of the Modern Women's Club included prominent labour women, Jean Beadle, Margaret Green and Elizabeth Rogers(50).

### **Criteria for Appointment**

No Police Department records relating to the criteria for the employment of women to act as 'guardians of all these girls' prior to 1927 have survived. However, other sources demonstrate

that the main criteria were that a woman should be the 'right type of woman', preferably a trained nurse of an appropriate age and not married. Dugdale was a trained nurse and had previous experience in working with girls whom she regarded as a 'positive menace', and lived independently of her husband(51). Chipper was single and had been trained in social/rescue work by the Salvation Army(52). Dunlop, appointed in 1921, was a widow, and also a trained nurse. These three women pioneered and dominated the work of Women's Police in Perth from 1917 to 1943(53). All were white anglo-saxon protestant women born before 1885 and possessing the Christian moral values dominant among middle-class women of their time; a strong 'air of authority', and some nurturant and compassionate qualities. They believed that it was necessary to reform, protect or 'rescue' 'wayward girls', neglected children and 'immoral' women, for 'their own good'(54). They were selected to be 'morals police' and considered to have the attributes appropriate for such a role.

Apart from Chipper, all the women appointed during the interwar period were trained nurses and by the mid 1920s this was explicitly stated to be the primary pre-requisite apart from physical fitness(55). During the first decades of this century nursing training was the most readily recognisable form of professional training available for women working in a nurturant capacity(56). Ex-nurses were also used to 'dealing with difficult cases', taking orders from a masculine hierarchy and probably regarded as the most appropriate assistants for the police and health authorities in the detection of women suspected of carrying venereal disease. At a Select Committee inquiry into the Health Act Amendment Bill in February 1918 the Inspector of the Central Police Station advised that increasing numbers of '...girls, amateur prostitutes' were being arrested by the women police and that some as young as 14 years were 'suffering from a disease'(57). The following day Dugdale was called as a witness and agreed that one of the most important of her duties was to 'guard all these girls'. She told the Committee:

We cannot examine cases ... We might meet a girl in the street, and some little thing about her may cause us to think that she has something the matter with her. We cannot tell the girl that, because she would fly from us. We have to take her gently, and after a little while she may admit that she has something the matter with her. We then endeavour to persuade her to go to the Hospital(58).

The evidence given by the Inspector and Dugdale made it clear that if the women police suspected that a girl under the age of 18 had a venereal disease, they could make her a ward of the State on the grounds that she was 'neglected', 'incorrigible', or in 'moral danger', and the 'authorities would have to examine her ... and ... the report would go to the Board of Health'(59).

The nurses appointed during the late 1930s, do not recall working directly with women or girls suffering from venereal disease, although they did assist parents in the 'control' of their girls, and apprehended those who had absconded from institutions. Although their duties were otherwise very similar to those undertaken in 1917 their attitudes were different. One retired policewoman informed the author that she disagreed with Dugdale and Dunlop that it was her duty to 'part couples on park benches'(60).

Although the role of the policewoman changed little, her image was changing. The mature, motherly, morals police with a 'strong air of authority' were being replaced by younger, fit and active women who would socialise with policemen and assist them in their work. The original list of duties and conditions drawn up in 1917 and eventually published in the Government Gazette in 1944, included a new paragraph indicating that the image of the policewoman had changed from that of one of 'God's Police' to that of a robust and fearless street worker. Since they were still not uniformed and did not carry out the same duties as policemen this was a false image(61).

The attitude of policemen to the Women's Police continued to be reflected in the contents of the Police Union journal. Only one reference was ever made to their work in Perth and this article denigrated Chipper and Dunlop for rarely smiling(62). By the later 1930s and 1940s more frequent reference was made to individual policewomen but only in the personal column or social notes where they were referred to by diminutive nicknames such as 'Abe' for Abrahamson or 'Scottie' for Scott. It is impossible to imagine that Dunlop, Dugdale or Chipper were ever referred to in this way. Dunlop, whom it was reported had 'joined the proud ranks of grandmother' in 1943, was referred to as 'Mrs. Woman Constable Dunlop'(63).

Early recommendations from Britain encouraged the appointment of mature women because young women who specialised in sexual offences tended to become 'hard and superficial and lacking in the very qualities for which their presence in the Force is required'(64). However, by the 1930s British Reports circulated amongst the staff of the Police Department stated that 'A woman's efficiency has diminished in most cases by the time she has reached 45....others go off in their work after 30 or 32'(65). At this time all five of the women police were aged between 48 and 59 years of age. The Department subsequently appointed two 29 year olds. Most of the younger women appointed during the 1930s, however, resigned after a few years in accordance with public service regulations requiring them to do so when planning to marry(66). During the Second World War those who married servicemen were granted permission to continue working until their husbands were discharged from the armed forces(67).

Throughout the interwar period the Police Union journal contained many accounts of meritorious work undertaken by policemen, photographs and biographies of those being promoted or retiring. No such mention was ever made of the Women's Police and despite twenty years of committed service, and membership of the Union, the retirement of Dugdale, Dunlop and Chipper was ignored.

At the time of the appointment of the first women police there was no training facility for welfare officers in Australia, apart from on-the-job training, often voluntary, with charitable organisations(68). The Women's Police were therefore participants in the growth of professional welfare work. In 1938 the Commissioner attempted to appoint trained social workers instead of nurses but the initiative failed due to the high demand for trained social workers in the eastern

states(69). The nursing training prerequisite remained and attempts by women's organisations to use it as an argument for higher status and remuneration were dismissed by the Commissioner on the grounds that all the male constables were required to undergo training in first aid(70).

### Conditions of Work

When announcing the appointment of women police Connell stated that their duties were to be carried out as arranged by the Inspector in Charge; at times best suited for them to be carried out; and in plain clothes(71). The wearing of 'plain clothes' by the women police had several functions: it encouraged the confidence of 'girls who were leading an immoral life' who would not 'otherwise approach them for assistance'; it enabled women police to 'afford valuable assistance, particularly on account of being able to visit and observe certain places without being suspected of being police'; and it helped justify limitations to the status and authority of the women police(72). A clear distinction was also drawn between the women police and the 'plain clothes' men who were trained detectives. The decision not to put women in uniform was also influenced by the fear that the women's police as untrained welfare workers, given equal powers of arrest and the authority of a uniform, would 'hinder the work of the ... police service through injudicious use ... [of authority]'(73). The decision in Western Australia to keep the women police out of uniform was not reversed until the 1960s. The women were issued with badges which they usually wore under their lapels until they considered it necessary to assert their authority(74).

During debates with members of the women's organisations over the status, duties and conditions of the Women's Police in the 1920s, the Commissioner advised that their salaries and entitlements were the 'same as applying to other members of the Force'. He clarified this by stating that commencing salary was 14/6 a day, seven days a week, they were paid a lodging allowance of 2/6 a day, and a uniform allowance of 20 pounds per annum. They worked for thirteen days and had every second Sunday as a day off duty(75). In accordance with the numbers of years employed they were also entitled to grade increases but as no pension scheme was in existence in Western Australia a gratuity based on the number of years served was paid on retirement from the force(76). The Commissioner also stated that because the women were so few in number no special training such as that undertaken by male police was warranted. He added, however, that 'recent appointees profit by the experience of those already attached to the Department(77).

Prospective applicants for positions with the Women's Police in 1939 were advised that:

the wages during the probationary period of 12 months would be 11/6 per diem, plus 2/6 per diem lodging allowance, plus an allowance of 20 pounds in lieu of uniform. On passing out of the probationary period the wages would be 14/6 per diem, plus the two allowances mentioned. The hours would be from 9 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 6 pm one week, and 9 am to 1 pm and 7 pm to 11 pm the other week. One day off in fourteen, which is taken on a Sunday as arranged. Annual leave is three weeks per annum, and Long Service Leave is granted after 10 years service, such leave being for 3 months(78).

Ten years separated the two statements and the rate of pay had not changed. However a probationary period, at a lower rate for twelve months, had been added along with long service leave and a clearer statement regarding the hours of work.

In regard to access to the career structure of the force, the Commissioner stated that no provision was made for the rank of sergeant in the Women's Police, and throughout the interwar period this was reinforced with repeated statements that the women currently employed were 'incapable of passing the required examination'; that they carried out welfare duties and therefore did not require training for promotion, or that they were too few in number to have the required number of subordinate officers to qualify for promotion(79). The last point maintained the position of the Women's Police as a separate 'minor branch', and avoided the possibility of a woman being in charge of a man. Ethel Scott, appointed initially in 1939, was the first woman to achieve the status of sergeant but not until 1947. Even then there was still resistance despite the fact that she had passed the required examination. Inspector Doyle, in charge of the Women's Police, delayed processing the promotion but whilst he was on leave the Acting Inspector Tetterington processed it. Scott was only a sergeant in the minor, auxiliary Women's Police branch, not the Police Force and therefore had no male subordinate officers(80).

The denial of promotional opportunity also prevented any acknowledgement of a hierarchy amongst the women themselves although the years of service provided some differentiation. New recruits were trained by the older women and expected to attend to duties under their guidance, but the senior women were not given official recognition of this status, or an increase in remuneration(81).

Commissioner Connell ignored reports from Britain and South Australia which stated that women police should have access to promotion and should, even if limited to their own sphere, be trained like detectives to take statements from women who had either committed crimes or were victims of crimes(82). The women's organisations drew the Commissioner's attention to a reports from Britain and South Australia in 1928 which stated that this work should be done exclusively by women in every 'civilised community'. They pointed out that in most of Australia women and girls had to tell their 'sordid stories to men' and that this was not 'fair'(83).

By denying the need to increase the numbers of women police, restricting their duties to those of welfare officers, denying access to promotion and training for detection work and exploiting them as 'auxiliaries' the Commissioner justified the maintenance of control over the Women's Police as a 'minor' branch of the department. The women's organisations continually challenged this control and sought direct access to the Minister lobbying for an autonomous women's branch led by a senior woman. In 1927 the Commissioner advised his Minister, who had asked for advice in order to respond to a request from Labor politician May Holman, that:

... a separate Police Department...would be most extraordinary ... Whilst it is recognised that these ladies are most enthusiastic in their work, experience has

shown they have to be subject to control and that control must be in the hands of an experienced officer. If it were not, and they were allowed a free hand to do as they desired, then, possibly, some of them would be inclined to overdo matters...(84).

The women's organisations applied so much pressure to the Minister and the Commissioner over the issues of autonomy and extension of duties of the Women's Police that, in 1928 and 1929, the Commissioner placed the subjects on the agenda of the National Conference of Police Commissioners (85). In May 1928 he made a special point of referring a resolution from the conference to his Minister:

Conference considers that the Commissioner of Police for his State is the only competent authority to advise the Minister controlling the Department of the requirements and numerical strength and utility of women police(86).

The way in which this statement was forwarded to the Minister indicates that he and the Commissioner had different views on the issue. The Minister appears to have been more willing than the Commissioner to consider the women's demands. In September Connell chastised the WSG for directly contacting Dugdale for information regarding the conditions of employment and curtly stated: 'I should be glad if you would address me direct in future'(87).

In 1929 the NCW asked the Minister to consider placing the Women's Police under a 'special officer of their own sex', under the jurisdiction of the Children's Courts. The Commissioner advised the Minister that 'continual complications' would arise if they were under the control of a woman, and that their duties must be directed by an experienced police officer and 'not by a female, whose knowledge of Police procedure and investigations is very limited.' He also stated that if the Women's Police were placed under the jurisdiction of the Children's Court 'it would have to be very clearly understood that the Commissioner of Police would thenceforth accept no responsibility for their work.'(88). This threat to abdicate responsibility for the Women's Police indicates the extent to which the Commissioner resented attempts to undermine his control, and the attachment of 'welfare workers' to the Police Department. If they were to remain his responsibility, control and organisation would be on his terms.

### **Duties of the Women's Police**

The list of duties to for the Women's Police which accompanied the 1917 Annual Report read as follows:

1. To keep young children from the streets, more especially at night.
2. To assist, where necessary, the Education Department in the prevention of truancy from school.
3. To watch the newspapers and furnish reports of persons endeavouring to decoy young girls by advertisements or any other means.
4. To patrol railway stations and visit picture shows, theatres, and other places of public entertainment, in order to guard and advise women, girls, and children, who are strangers and have no friends waiting for them.
5. To patrol slum neighbourhoods and look after drunken women, and to obtain assistance for their neglected children.
6. To keep under observation reputed brothels, wine shops, hotels, and other places frequented by women of ill-fame, in order to prevent young girls being decoyed and drugged with liquor and entrapped.
7. To protect women and girls in the public parks and gardens, and when going to

and leaving work.

8. To make inquiries for the State Children Department and Charities Department in cases where it is desirable that the inquiry should be made by the police in plain clothes.

9. To watch over and safeguard unprotected and innocent girls against unscrupulous employers and other persons.

10. To keep a separate file for all young women and girls, who they endeavour by their assistance to put on the 'straight path, such file to record their movements and behaviour until the officer is satisfied that they have either reformed or have become incorrigible(89)

There is little evidence of how the women police carried out this work in the Police Department files, apart from the summaries attached to the Commissioner's Annual Reports. These reports were very generalised and inconsistent and can therefore only be taken as evidence of the general duties carried out by the women police and not a list of actual work performed or of the methods used. They simply reflect the requirements of the duty statement listing thousands of inquiries made regarding women's 'misconduct', destitution, drunkenness, and immorality.

The reports of the Women's Police, referred to the Commissioner for editing before inserting into his Annual Reports, also list the numbers of children being brought before the Children's Court and charged with being neglected, uncontrollable or destitute. During the 1920s growing concern for children resulted in the appointment of women justices to the Children's Court bench, Amendments to the State Children Act 1908, the appointment of a special stipendiary magistrate to the Children's Court, and the restructuring of the State Children's Department(90). The Women's Police attended to 'misconduct' of women and girls, following the concern regarding the spread of venereal disease by 'amateur street loiterers' during the 1914-18 war, and again during the Second World War, but the surveillance of young women and girls gradually became part of the community's general concern regarding the welfare of children or 'juvenile delinquency'..

The Children's Court and the State Children's Act were used to increase surveillance and control of women and girls. The evidence books of the Children's Court demonstrate the class nature of the welfare duties carried out by the Women's Police, their involvement in State intervention in families, and the imposition of values in regard to cleanliness, appropriate housing, how leisure hours and money were best spent and, of course, sexual morality.<sup>88</sup> They also reveal evidence of some members of the Women's Police's genuine concern to protect women and children who were subjected to ill-treatment. However, their role in the Children's Court was restricted to that of witnesses. Prosecuting sergeants laid the actual complaints and the women were called upon to give evidence regarding neglect or 'misconduct'. In the cases of complaints of sexual assault their role was further restricted by the fact that investigations, the gathering of evidence and the laying of charges were undertaken by policemen from the Criminal Investigations Branch(91). Women police often had difficulty convincing police and magistrates that women and children needed protection from the men in their own homes.

Other welfare work of the Women's Police included distributing food and clothing to the 'needy' and referring them to charitable and welfare organisations. They also 'brought in' well known 'eccentric characters' some of whom might today be described as intellectually handicapped, in order to 'give them a good feed and a bit of a clean up'. Some of these people resisted such 'assistance' as interference, but others approached the women who often provided assistance from their own pockets and after hours when charitable organisations and the State Children and Charities Department were closed. (92). It may have been this extension of their duties which contributed to the attitude of the Commissioner that if they were not kept under control they would tend to overdo things. O'Meara cites cases in the eastern states where women police were reprimanded for acting as 'charity' workers and for taking up collections for needy women and children(93).

As an auxilliary branch of the police force the women police also assisted the policemen with their work when, in the words of the Commissioner, it was 'necessary to us'(94). They assisted the men because it was believed that they could elicit more information from women and girls, protect men from accusations of assault or bawdy harassment by prostitutes, provide assistance to women appearing in court, act as decoys in the detection of crime, and be less likely to be recognised. They also acted as escorts for 'mental' cases, sick people, female criminals and witnesses, and destitute children or drunken women. Aboriginal women and children were escorted to institutions such as the Moore River Native Settlement(95).

There is little evidence that any of the women police, during the interwar period, aspired to work as detectives. Most appear to have accepted their role as welfare workers; Dunlop frequently told her family that she regarded her work in this way and that she would not have wanted to be a 'policeman'(96). Those who might have aspired to training as a detective had little opportunity. If they took initiatives in this direction they left themselves open to reprimand on the grounds that they were not appropriately trained, especially in the 'finer points of law'(97).

The apprehension of fortune tellers was high on the list of duties for women police during the depression years when owners of tearooms, and women seeking employment, tried to outdo each other in competition for trade. Many of the women police, especially the new 'cadets' were used as decoys for tea-cup reading sessions and other methods of fortune telling. Despite protests from the Caterers Union that women who were finding it difficult to find work were being exploited and victimised, the police were relatively successful in the detection of fortune tellers especially when new recruits such as Healy and Westcott, and later Paddon, Black and Scott, were used as decoys. However Healy recalled that, as the Perth community was quite small in those days, 'word soon got around that you were Women's Police'(98).

Healy and Stella Westcott were also called upon to assist the men of the CIB in other ways. They were asked, during the late 1930s, to try to place bets with unlicensed bookmakers and to order wine in unlicensed restaurants. Healy informed the author that she enjoyed this kind of

work with the CIB because she knew she wasn't in any danger. What she didn't like, however, was 'trying to catch those exposure people...when we were seeing what we didn't want to see...[these] were the only times that I used to have knocking knees...' (99). Eventually, the men of the plain clothes branch agreed not to use the women as decoys in indecent exposure cases and suggested that greater effort be put into obtaining formal accusations. Healy also recalls that the police sometimes declined to follow-up some of these accusations on the grounds that it would cause distress to the wives and children of such men.

The women police were also used to assist the men at protest marches, again to protect the men from accusations of assault. In 1919 during the waterfront strike, the police claimed that a 'lawless mob' of waterside workers protesting about the use of 'scab' labour 'deployed in the vanguard of the advancing phalanx of peace-disturbers' a 'belligerent type' of woman as a protecting shield. This was regarded as an embarrassment to the Police; '...a heavy burden of responsibility.... Nobody wishes to injure a woman...' (100). This fear of 'lawless mobs' was also expressed between the late 1920s and 1930s when the organised unemployed, threatened to tear down the Salvation Army headquarters; participated in marches under the red flag; stormed Parliament House, the Labour Exchange, and the State Welfare Department, and held, in the words of the police, 'communistic' rallies led by 'crafty and unscrupulous' communists and members of the Industrial Workers of the World (101). The Unemployed Worker's Organisation held a fund raising function for 'destitute girls' in July 1930 and even this meeting was infiltrated by police under instructions from Scaddan to 'find out to what purpose these funds have been put' (102). During the period of this concern by politicians and police about 'growing unrest', the wife of one of the 'hungry and homeless men demonstrating their needs' during the Franklin River protest was arrested and attended to by a policewoman (103). According to Joan Williams, the policewoman was 'sympathetic' to the cause of the protestors. Bail money for the woman was provided by Katharine Susannah Prichard, and shortly afterwards Inspector Douglas took Dunlop on a raid to the author's home. Williams informed the author that she believed it 'would have been very difficult to have been a policewoman during the thirties ... but we always regarded them as showing the flag for women's entry into the public work place.' (104)

Entry into the public work place, however, was not easy. Resistance to the incorporation of women police into the ranks of the police was apparent prior to their appointment and continued throughout the interwar period. When resisting demands from the women's organisations during the 1920s and 30s the Commissioner confirmed their role by advising the Minister that he 'could do no better than agree with the Chief Constable of Birmingham' who stated that:

We have discovered the true sphere of women's influence in police work. I see no usefulness in putting women in uniform and stationing them at corners to do nothing. Our woman inquiry officer conducts inquiries where female witnesses are concerned in cases of a delicate nature or involving children, but no woman is competent as a trained detective (105).

Their role remained an auxiliary one restricted to welfare work amongst women and children.

This 'Welfare work' was used to justify restrictions of their numbers, and position as a 'minor' branch under the control of the Commissioner. It also enabled the Commissioner to deny them promotion and training as investigators of crimes committed against women and children. Resistance to the involvement of police in welfare work was apparent in the debate surrounding the initial appointment of women police, but a contradiction arose. After they were appointed limitations and restrictions of their duties and status were confirmed by repeated assurance that they were not really police but welfare workers. In the 1920s a paragraph was inserted into their list of duties to vindicate this:

Anything which helps the very poor and so relieves them from the temptation to crime, and anything which helps to take the children of the criminal classes away from evil surroundings and companions, and, while there is yet time, implants in them instincts of honesty and virtue, is true police work; and a policeman should throw himself heart and soul into such work just as readily as he does into the ordinary work of preventing and detecting crime-(Liverpool Police Regulations)(106).

By the 1940s, however, the extent of their involvement in actual welfare work initiated by Dugdale, Dunlop and Chipper was affected by the appointment of social workers to other government departments and organisations.

Throughout the interwar period the women's organisations challenged the Commissioner's control and restriction of the women's duties in the belief that it was 'women's work' and might provide greater assistance, protection and career opportunities for women. Precedents had been set in South Australia, England and Scotland and the League of Nations had recommended that the Glasgow Women's Police be used as a model. The organisations failed to achieve their goals in this regard but they did increase community awareness of the role of the Women's Police, and influenced the decision to retain them. They were also influential in increasing their numbers during the Second World War but renewed fears of venereal disease merely reconfirmed their function as 'morals police': Policing of women, by women.

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- 85 'Conference of Commissioners' 1928, PF7680, AN5/3, Acc. 430BL.
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- 106 Addition to list of duties made by Commissioner during 1928 to 1942, printed in Government Gazette of Western Australia, Perth, No. 57, 4 December 1944, pp. 122-132.
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Acknowledgement: I wish to make special acknowledgement of the assistance given by June Ogilvie whose unpublished research on the early twentieth century network of women's organisations was invaluable to me.

## Adela Pankhurst's Sojourn in the West

Bill Latter†

*This article originated in some research into Fremantle Police Court records where I came across a case in which Adela Pankhurst was prosecuted for speaking on the Esplanade without permission. At that time I was only vaguely aware that she had ever visited Western Australia. Later reading showed that her visit had not received a great deal of attention by historians and biographers, although Mitchell in The Fighting Pankhursts briefly states, erroneously, "in February she left for a tour of Western Australia with Jack Curtin". There is also an equally brief anecdotal reference to her campaign in Chester's biography of John Curtin.*

*Intrigued by the absence of information, I reasoned that there might be some reference to her activities in WA in the Commonwealth Archives. Sure enough, she was listed in the card index as having a file compiled by Military Intelligence. Upon accessing what was a very thick folder of information, it was obvious that what I had stumbled upon was a very valuable collection of historical evidence both on her and the intelligence section's activities in the lead up to the second conscription referendum.*

*The file consists of some 44 pages, mostly transcripts or notes of six addresses which she gave to various meetings in Perth and Fremantle. In addition, there are communications between the State and Federal authorities and personal notes of attendances at meetings. Included in the file is a four page newspaper called the 'Industrialist' issued by an Australian Labour Federation committee, the margins of which contain the shorthand notes of a speech given by Adela Pankhurst, taken by Lieutenant Carew Reid. It is probably the only extant copy of the paper.*

Adela, the third daughter of the famous suffragist family, came to Australia in 1914. She was then in her twenties. The radicalism with which she, her mother and sisters, had become associated in Britain was continued in her adopted country. Female suffrage had been won in Australia before her arrival, long before it was achieved in her country of origin. But there were, of course, many other issues of women's rights which required attention and Adela immediately became involved in the Women's Political Association (WPA) in her country of adoption when Vida Goldstein, an active Australian feminist, offered her a job as an organiser with the association.

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† Bill Latter is a former President of the WA Trades and Labor Council and a former official of the Collie Mining Workers' Union, the FMWU, the Teachers' Association and the Firefighters' Union. He is currently undertaking research and writing labour history.

The amalgamation of various political bodies in Australia into a single party of workers under a labour banner had taken place in 1891 but in the period immediately prior to the World War there were still a number of disparate political groups seeking mass recognition whose aims and objectives revolved around a new and more equitable society for working people. The war and the events leading to its outbreak, which served both to unify and divide the anti war movement, coalesced some of the radical groups behind a common demand but divided the Labor Party into those for and against the war.

The Victorian Socialist Party (VSP) coexisted with the Australian Labor Party (ALP) in that State. Most members of the former were also active in the latter, and even though the VSP pursued an independent line on a lot of issues, it was not embargoed by the Labor Party as were other left of centre organisations.

The WPA changed its name but not its initials when in 1914 at the onset of the conflict with Germany it became the Women's Peace Army. Adela Pankhurst, from the inception, campaigned against the war which split her family as it did so many others. Emmeline, the mother, and daughter Christabel were for, while sisters, Sylvia and Adela, opposed it. Their family relationship, which though strained in the past had survived the vicissitudes of imprisonment, isolation and forced-feeding in the struggle for female suffrage, foundered on the reefs of war.

In 1917 Adela resigned from the Women's Peace Army and joined the Victorian Socialist Party. Adela had earlier, even in her suffragette days in the North of England, reached the conclusion that there was a need for political action to go beyond the limitations imposed on a party, devoted mainly to issues affecting women, which excluded men from its membership. Women's problems, she concluded, arose out of the nature of the social system rather than the male-female relationships within society.

An Interstate Trade Union Congress on Conscription was held in Melbourne in May 1916, for the principal purpose of campaigning against the referendum called by the Hughes Government for October. John Curtin, who had been working on the VSP newspaper *Labour Call*, was appointed by the Executive as the organiser for the 'No' vote and in particular to involve workers in a one-day stoppage scheduled to be held on October 8. The referendum was defeated mainly as a result of the massive opposition vote in NSW the States being evenly divided for and against. After a successful election in May 1917, when a National Government under Hughes was voted into office, he decided to try again and called another referendum for December.

Adela was appointed as a full time organiser for the VSP effectively taking on the role that John Curtin had vacated to take up the position of editor on the *Westralian Worker*. Frank Anstey had been in the West seeking to secure the position on the paper for Curtin and to ginger up the movement after its bad showing in the referendum campaign. As a result of his representations, the party decided that Adela should travel to Western Australia to campaign against the war and conscription. She journeyed to Fremantle on the *S.S. Katoomba* together

with John Curtin, whose position as editor of the *Westralian Worker* had been confirmed.<sup>1</sup>

Both Pankhurst and Curtin had attracted the attention of wartime security intelligence because of their stand against conscription. By this time Hughes was using the intelligence services for his own ends. Frank Cain writing about the origins of political surveillance in Australia noted that:

The referendum campaign was an important turning point not only for the Labor Party and Hughes but also for Military Intelligence as a political surveillance authority. After the campaign and the establishment of an anti Labor Government under Hughes, Military Intelligence came to be used increasingly as a means for collecting information about political groups and activists whom he took a dislike to.<sup>2</sup>

Adela Pankhurst arrived in Fremantle on Wednesday February 14 and was quickly into action addressing her first meeting, a gathering of Lumpers union members at the wharfside, on Friday the 16th. That speech caused Lucy M. Silverwood to write on the 18th to Colonel Corbett of Military Intelligence in the following terms:

Sir,

Under the Defence of the Realm Act does it concern your department, that Miss Adela Pankhurst is here, lecturing professedly under the auspices of the Labor Movement upon "Solidarity of Labor" but into which is introduced all the war matters and problems.

She is speaking in Fremantle on Monday night 19th. I heard her address on Friday noon to the Lumpers & her praise of their anti conscription work, also that the German submarine work is not answerable for shortage of shipping nor high rate for food, but the Shippers & those making the great profits do not wish the war to end. Also that the women and girls are compelled to work for low wage in the Munitions Factories & that the poor man will have to bear the heavy taxation, she does not explain how they will do so if their wages are so low. Now I consider that these agitators are as great a menace as the G Submarines, we here in W.A. neither need or desire them & can they be stopped from sowing strife & discord.

I have the honour Sir to be for Empire<sup>3</sup>

Political surveillance at that time was variously handled by the State Police or Military Intelligence but all reports made ended up with the Military, so Detective Dick reporting on the meeting referred to in the above letter wrote that Miss Pankhurst said:

I want to congratulate the Lumpers' Union on their effort to secure the defeat of the Conscription Referendum and said how they in the East had beaten the attempt made by the Hughes party to enslave the people. She urged them to hang on to their Industrial Organisation and defend themselves against exploitation by those interested in the War.....  
.....They were driving the young blood of the country to the war to be placed in front of the cannon and the young land was being drained of its vitality. Was that right? Was it right that wives should have their husbands taken from them and children left fatherless? That was what conscription meant. Miss Pankhurst spoke for about half an hour and received

<sup>1</sup> The information upon which this preamble is based, came from a number of sources. The two biographies of John Curtin by Alan Chester and Lloyd Ross, *The Fighting Pankhursts* by David Mitchell. "E. Sylvia Pankhurst" by Patricia Romero and the contribution of Anne Summers on Adela Pankhurst in *Women Class and History* edited by Elizabeth Windschuttle.

<sup>2</sup> *The Origins of Political Surveillance in Australia*. Frank Cain. Angus & Robertson Australia 1983.

<sup>3</sup> Commonwealth Archives (W.A.) File Acc No PP 14/1 1/9/58.

a good hearing<sup>4</sup>

Detective Dick's report was sent to Major Corbett of the Intelligence by Inspector Walsh of the Perth CIB. The following Monday when Adela spoke at King's Hall her speech was again the subject of a report:

Major Corbet,

I have to report that I attended Miss Adela Pankhurst's lecture upon Labour Solidarity at King's Hall, Fremantle, last night. Unfortunately, the address was delivered in the dark, except for a light on the platform, and this rendered verbatim note taking somewhat difficult. She had an audience of some 600 or 700 (and there may have been more in the gallery) comprised of working men and their wives, and a sprinkling of soldiers. She is a clear, forceful and rapid speaker, and she brought forward her points and rammed them home in a manner that both delighted and excited her auditors. With the exception of a few obviously drunken interjectors she carried the meeting with her absolutely, and no matter how wild her utterances were they brought forth unstinted applause. I have seldom heard a speaker who held such sway over her audience as did Miss Pankhurst and whose remarks were more inimical to the cause of recruiting. Attached please find points in her speech that seemed most striking.

H. Carew Reid,<sup>5</sup>  
Lieut I.S.G.S.  
20/2/17

Lieutenant Carew Reid must have had afterthoughts about his report, perhaps that he had been too fulsome in his commendation of the ability of the speaker. The comments underlined above were written in ink on his typed draft, thus adding a final note of disapproval of the content, if not the delivery of the speech.

The labour movement in Western Australia like its counterparts in the East had established an action committee and charged it with the responsibility of prosecuting the anti conscription campaign, the 'Industrial Vigilance Committee' as it was called, produced a paper naming it *The Industrialist*. In its first issue dated 1 March, 1917, under the heading, "Miss Adela Pankhurst", it stated: "Not the least and perhaps the greatest of the series of successes scored by the Industrial Vigilance Committee since its inception is the securing of Miss Adela Pankhurst, the noted reformer for a lecture tour of W.A." The article added, "so effective is her work that the daily Press have practically boycotted her".<sup>6</sup>

That there was a boycott or something similar is proven by Military Intelligence communications. A copy of a telegram from Major Courtney, who was the District Military Commandant in W.A., addressed to his superior in Melbourne reads:

492 REFERENCE TELEGRAM W2426 SIXTEENTH INSTANT FROM D.M.I.  
REPLYING INTELLIGENCE X456 THIRTEENTH INSTANT AND INTELLIGENCE  
REPORTS SECOND AND FIFTH INSTANT ONE STROKE NINE STROKE FIFTY  
EIGHT ALL RELATIVE ADELA PANKHURSTS SPEECHES STOP WILL YOU PLEASE  
CONSIDER FOR PROSECUTION WAR PRECAUTIONS STOP STATE AUTHORITIES  
CONSIDERING PROSECUTION FOR SEDITION.

Headquarters responded:

2906 YOUR X492 AND 1 OVER 9 OVER 58 CONSIDERED BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

THIS CASE IS TO SEE THAT PRESS DO NOT PUBLISH THOSE PORTIONS OF SPEECHES THAT CONTRAVENE LAW STOP NEWSPAPERS THAT ARE LOYAL SHOULD BE ASKED NOT TO GIVE PUBLICITY TO UTTERANCES STOP THIS POLICY KILLED INFLUENCE ELSEWHERE AND SHOULD DO SAME WESTERN AUSTRALIA STOP COURSE YOU SUGGEST WOULD MAKE A MARTYR OF SPEAKER. FOSTER<sup>7</sup>

Foster was probably referring to the censorship policy laid down by Hughes in the lead up to the 1916 referendum when

Australian censorship staff were urged by their Melbourne headquarters to control strictly the news relating to the referendum. All pictures and cartoons referring to conscription were to be censored "according to the spirit and intention of the instructions issued for printed matter" and Hughes was also to be protected by a censorship edict which prohibited the publication of any article which "attacked the P.M. for purposes of nullifying his efforts in connection with the referendum campaign."<sup>8</sup>

A less obvious means, based on past experience, was to be adopted by the authorities in the containment of Miss Pankhurst. However, despite the press embargo, according to the *Westralian Worker*, she continued to address large and significant crowds of people, both in the city and the country, with the gatherings in Kalgoorlie, Bunbury and Collie well attended. The intelligence services did not appear to run to shorthand note-takers outside the metropolitan area so there are no reports on file of her speeches other than those given in Perth and Fremantle.

One of the more subtle tactics was employed on a Sunday at the Fremantle Esplanade, where it had been advertised that she would address a public meeting. As she took the platform, Sergeant Jones tried to stop her from speaking because no authority had been obtained from the Council to use the venue. Messrs. Baglin and Roche, the A.L.F. conveners, advised the police officer that they would take full responsibility for the conduct and good order of the assembled listeners. It was also reported that Pankhurst addressed the crowd and said that she was prepared to speak, if they were prepared to listen, even if it was unlawful.

In the Local Court some weeks later, when Miss Pankhurst was charged by the City Council of "Using a Reserve Without Consent". It emerged that Mr. Baglin had applied to the Town Clerk for a permit and had been advised that a permit could only be given by a full council meeting. The general tenor of the notes of evidence of the Clerk, taken by the Magistrate indicates that he was not disposed to help the applicants to obtain the necessary permission. She was found guilty of the charge by Dowley R.M. and Prout J.P. but Singleton J.P. was for a dismissal.<sup>9</sup>

Lieutenant Carew Reid was more circumspect, when reporting to Major Corbet, on this occasion:

There was an audience of between 300 and 400, several uniformed police, and returned soldiers. There was more adverse interruption than on the previous occasion at King's Hall Fremantle. Miss Pankhurst was warned at the outset, by an officer of the policy, that as she had no permit to speak in a public place she did so at her own risk. She said that she was prepared to take the risk, and was loudly cheered.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Op Cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Fremantle Police Court Magistrates Evidence Books. Battye Library A.C/ 2952 Vol.20, P141.

Following his notes of her comments including the interjections of her opponents, he concludes:

The meeting terminated quietly as happened, but things might have been different owing to the indignation of some of Miss Pankhursts supporters over the statement of a returned soldier that she was "A Thing, and a pro-German". Attached is a copy of "The Industrialist" which was being circulated to a select few. So far it seems less free of speech than Miss Pankhurst who complains that there is no freedom of speech.<sup>10</sup>

Not all of her meetings were attended with success, which is not really surprising in a State which had voted solidly for conscription. One held at the Perth Town Hall was taken over early in the proceedings by a pro war-conscription faction who changed the purpose of the gathering to a recruiting drive after they had ousted the organisers of the rally from the platform.<sup>11</sup>

It was strange that the Town Hall incident did not receive a great deal of attention by the authorities, a brief note enclosed with a report of another speech simply said: 'She attempted to speak in the Town Hall, Perth, on Wednesday 28th idem, but was refused a hearing after the opening sentences which reflected on Mr. Lloyd George'.<sup>12</sup> The *West Australian* was not nearly as subdued headlining its report:: "REFUSED A HEARING" "MISS PANKHURST'S EXPERIENCE". The writer went on to chortle:

Perth is full of excitement these days and the pandemonium in the Assembly on Tuesday was equalled, if not exceeded by the proceedings in the Town Hall on Wednesday evening, when Miss Adela Pankhurst made an unsuccessful attempt to deliver a lecture on War and the Workers.<sup>13</sup>

The disruption had been organised by the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Association who had advertised their intention to meet at the Y.M.C.A. and march on the Town Hall meeting "to combat Miss Pankhursts utterances regarding the conduct of the war".<sup>14</sup> Led by a Lieutenant Burkett, the crowd took over the meeting and changed it to a recruiting rally in the course of which Burkett assured the audience that "when the Director General of Recruiting hears how this meeting was broken up he will be the proudest man in Australia."<sup>15</sup>

The actions of Lieutenant Burkett and his friends were clearly likely to raise the ire of the labour movement. Within a few days of the incident plans were laid for the formation of a group of workers to protect the speakers at such meetings. A letter headed, 'LABOR'S VOLUNTEER ARMY', was circulated over the typewritten name of E.L.Driver, Secretary of the Clerks Union. It read:

Dear Comrade,

I regret to inform you that in this Freedom Loving Country it has become necessary to organise our forces for the purposes of maintaining Freedom of

<sup>10</sup> *Op Cit* Commonwealth Archives. The copy of the '*Industrialist*' (probably the only one in existence) has the margins full of shorthand notes taken by Carew Reid of the speech given by Adela Pankhurst on the Fremantle Esplanade.

<sup>11</sup> *West Australian*, March 1st, 1917.

<sup>12</sup> *Op Cit*. Commonwealth Archives.

<sup>13</sup> *Daily News*, March 2nd, 1917.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, February 28th, 1917.

<sup>15</sup> *West Australian*, March 1st, 1917.

Speech, and the right to hold Public Meetings. During the past week, as reported in the press, Freedom of Speech and the right to hold Public Meetings has been assailed by an organised gang of meeting smashers led by Lieutenant Burkett, Secretary of the State Recruiting Committee, and one Priestly, Vice President of the Returned Soldiers Association.

On Wednesday the 20th February, a lecture was to have been delivered in the Town Hall, Perth, by Miss Adela Pankhurst who was to have spoken under the auspices of the Australian Labour Federation. This meeting did not eventuate as Burkett and his gang turned up in full force, smashed our meeting, insulted our womenfolk and turned the gathering into a recruiting meeting.

The question now before us is:- what are we going to do about it? Are we going to tamely submit to the brutal tactics, or are we going to retain those rights for which in the past we have struggled (sic) so hard to obtain. If you are a lover of Freedom and Liberty of Speech we ask you to join Labor's Volunteer Army and help us in our struggle. Should you desire to join, please put forward your name and address to the undersigned as soon as possible.<sup>16</sup>

The letter went on to advise the time and date of the next scheduled meeting and the arrangements being made to keep order.

The copy of the letter held in the Australian Archives was intercepted by the Censor because it was addressed to a Mr. P. Anderson who was under surveillance because, according to the note attached, he was 'a person to whom a large quantity of I.W.W. literature was addressed and intended for circulation'. The Censor's memo was referred to local police, with Detective Sergeant Mann advising Inspector Walsh that the literature referred to should be seized and perused because it was 'known that Sydney and Fremantle (IWW locals) are conspiring to deal with several matters in an unlawful way'.

Armstrong may never have received his advice of the meeting or of the nascent 'army', but others most certainly did and a reasonable number attended Pankhurst's next speech at the Hibernian Hall to see that the speaker got a fair hearing. Lieutenant Carew's report to Major Corbett indicates that these efforts were successful:

Some 400 people paid 6d each for admission. About 20\ men, wearing badges marked 'N.C.' a kind of Vigilance Committee, were admitted by a side door before the meeting commenced and distributed themselves amongst the crowd. Anyone commencing to make an interjection of a nature adverse to the speaker was immediately silenced by one or other of these guards with the threat, 'if you don't shut up I'll put you out'. A returned soldier made himself somewhat obnoxious to the Chairman, a member of the A.L.F., who at last called on the police to put him out - he was put out amid an uproar. If the soldier had been a German the remarks concerning him could not have been more bitter. I overheard three of the Vigilance Committee assay that if the police refused to put the soldier out they would.<sup>17</sup>

As Pankhurst's campaign developed, more and more obstacles were placed in the way of the organisers getting their message across to the public. The *Westralian Worker* complained that "the Town Hall was being deliberately closed against her and Her Majesty's having been booked was also subsequently refused."<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Op cit.*, Australian Archives, File 2/1/210

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 1/9/58.

<sup>18</sup> *Westralian Worker*, March 16th, 1917.

The denial of the fundamental right to free speech angered Curtin and he used the columns of the *Worker* to propound his views about the war, conscription and the duty of its opponents to express their opposition. Adela Pankhurst was given unlimited coverage of her meetings and enjoyed the privilege of contributing to the pages of the paper in a column headed 'Cleopatra's Needles'. In true Pankhurst style she wrote:

In Australia, women possess a great source of power eagerly sought by their fellow women in other countries - the franchise. Moreover they can belong on equal terms with men, to the great organisations of Labour, which, representing the collective will of the masses of the people, are more powerful than Parliament.<sup>19</sup>

This was the message of the suffragettes with a little twist. Notwithstanding some setbacks, the forums continued, mostly under the auspices of the Vigilance Committee but also through various branches and the executive of the Australian Labour Federation. One particular meeting raised much ire and vitriolic comment from the 'Sunday Times' journalist, Mr. A.T. Chandler. Under the headings "THE PANKHURST POISON"; "SUSPICIOUS SPEECHES IN PERTH" and "AN ENGLISH APOLOGIST FOR THE HUNS", he wrote:

The "Industrial Vigilance Committee" which sprang out of no popular emotion or need, and whose origin is clouded in ugly mists of suspicion, attempted to counter the patriotism and loyalty of W.a. by importing the claptrap merchant Frank Anstey. His mission was a disastrous failure. Then an inspiration struck the self-appointed committee - bring over the Pankhurst lady. Her name will be a 'draw'. She came, but she is a grave disappointment, and has merely proved that the un-British agitation engineered by a very dubious element is doomed to failure.

Chandler called for action to be taken against Pankhurst for her seditious utterances while heaping coals of fire on her head for her outrageous disloyalty. According to the reports in the press and those made by intelligence or police reporters, Curtin was often on the hustings in support of Pankhurst and Chandler reserved his greatest outrage for the future Prime Minister concluding his article by saying:

The Chair was occupied by a young man who is evidently a neophytic industrial, Dyak. He talked about educating the workers and propaganda so that they could demand greater concessions. He did not say a word about educating the workers to be better workmen, more conscientious workmen, or more effective workmen, taking a pride in the quality of their handicraft. Nothing of that only education in getting, not giving. Incidentally he referred to the New South Wales elections, and ventured a premature cockerel crow about teaching such 'rats' as M'Gowen, Black, Holman and others that they were not the masters of the movement, but that the movement was their master. "Rats" he called these men. And the malignity he imported into the word indicated that it was not so much their independence that he hated as their loyalty and patriotism.<sup>20</sup>

Not only did the anti-conscriptionists have to put up with press jibes, organised opposition and surveillance, but on occasions, physical danger. Such was the case when a crowd was addressed at Cottesloe Beach from a horse drawn buggy. The newspaper report said, after regaling the reader with the evident hostile climate:

Adela sat down and one of the Labor heads took the floor of the buggy,

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Sunday Times*, April 1st, 1917.

presumably to make a final appeal for free speech. However he was not destined to be heard, for the horse moved on (possibly under some outside stimulus), and threw him back into the lady's lap, the lady still amiably smiling and much less ruffled than her champion.<sup>21</sup>

It is not possible to calculate from the material available the significance of Adela Pankhurst's impact on the anti-conscription movement during her sojourn in the West. The Intelligence file has notes of six speeches given in the metropolitan area but at least three others in Midland, Guildford and North Fremantle went unrecorded as did those in Collie, Bunbury and the Goldfields. There is an abundance of evidence in the *Westralian Worker* that she attended other gatherings of the party faithful. There is no doubt that she was energetically active in the campaign during her visit to the West, and the fact that, notwithstanding the approaches to the 'loyal' newspapers by Intelligence, she still was reported, albeit with hostility. The surveillance and organised disruption of her meetings lead to the conclusion that she was certainly feared by the establishment. That she was perceived to be a threat to the Prime Minister Hughes' conscription aspirations is shown in his decision to release the telegram he had received from Adela's mother: "Am ashamed of Adela and repudiate her. Wish you success. Make any use of this." This was almost identical to the telegram which Mrs Pankhurst had sent to the Women's Social and Political Union in 1916 denouncing her other daughter, Sylvia, also campaigning against conscription in Britain at the time.

It is beyond belief that the telegram arrived unsolicited. There is no proof that her activities in Australia were being widely reported in the British press, sufficient to have provoked her mother to send the message to Hughes. The Prime Minister knew of Mrs Pankhurst's and Christabel's pro-war activities because their recruiting rallies were very widely reported and he had met them on his visit to Britain in 1916. The fact that Hughes did make use of it provoked Henry Boote to report that:

a mean little man the other day handed to the newspapers a cable referring to a great little woman, and the fact that the mean little man was Prime Minister of Australia only aggravated his meanness and his littleness."

Boote concluded that

The conduct of Hughes, in seeking to discredit her through an unnatural mother, was cadish and contemptible, though no more than might be expected of a politician who, in the course of his political career, has proved himself to have been as spiteful as the Yellow Dwarf in the story. The whole affair is saturated in despicability. It was despicable of the Mother to insult her daughter to please Hughes. It was despicable of Hughes to pass on the insult to the public press to please himself. It was despicable of the public press to advertise the insult to please their readers. But as only those as despicable as themselves will take any pleasure in such an exhibition of vulgar malice, very little harm has been done after all."<sup>22</sup>

So ended Adela Pankhurst's two month sojourn in the West. Ironically the most complete record of the visit was retained in the files of the intelligence agency who did their utmost to frustrate the objective of her campaign. Unfortunately, we will never know what contribution she made to the increased anti-conscription vote in Western Australia.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, March 11th, 1917.

<sup>22</sup> Reprinted in the *Westralian Worker*, April 13th, 1917.

## Powerhouse Lives\*

Stuart Reid†

*When I was producing an edited tape to go with the 'Powerhouse Lives' exhibition I attempted to organise the extracts of interviews into themes. So the tape begins with stories of the early days of construction, descriptions of the work the Comraderie and the Credit Union. It then goes on to look at industrial issues and the role of unions, which leads into safety issues and industrial accidents. Several workers are singled out by their workmates for special mention and the tape concludes with reflections on the Power Station as a place to work.*

*In recording the interviews I heard a good deal of banter about who was the first worker on the site. It seems appropriate to open this written version of the tape with the words of one worker who must have beaten the others by about twenty years: ..... 'We used to go rabbiting as kids there'. Where? "South Fremantle Power Station".*

### Early Days

In '48 W.H. Taylor was the General Manager of the Tramways Electricity Commission and he confronted Clive Rosette to get somebody down to the South Fremantle Power Station to look after the construction company as far as power was concerned because there was nothing down there at that time; so he put it on the board to go down and I can remember quite vividly a chappy called George Chambers said, "Oooh! I'm not going down there. There's sand flies and everything down there. Don't entertain it! Don't entertain it!" So it was stopped on the board for about a month and W.H. Taylor always made an appearance at the Power Station just walking around. So he confronted Clive Rosette who was the Electrical Foreman at the time and he said "Rosette. Have you got anyone going down to Fremantle?" He says "Well not as yet" and he said "Well detail one." Joe Muller and I set off the next week with Arthur Dittmer. Arthur and I got down there and sure enough, Chambers was right. There were sandflies and everything mixed up.

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\*This transcript of interviews comes from the "Powerhouse Lives" exhibition, which was held at the Film and Television Institute in Fremantle in 1985. The exhibition featured photographs by Michael Gallagher, silk screen prints by Jim Cook and oral histories recorded and edited by Stuart Reid. Here we present the stories of those who worked at the powerhouse.

† Stuart Reid is a contract oral history interviewer, who works for the National Library and the Battye Library of Western Australian History. He has completed several projects for the Trades and Labour Council extracts of which have been published in previous editions of *Papers in Labour History*.

**Roy Mycoe:** I went on to a pile driving machine. Never done pile driving in my life before but our foreman; bloke by the name of Cecil Samby, said "How do you reckon you'd go pile driving?" "Christ!" I said, "I've never seen a pile driver before let alone drive piles with it." And he said, "Now's your opportunity" and he gave me five blokes. He said, "That's your gang." And I think there was around about four thousand piles under the Power House and I could say I drove a third of them. Thirty two foot was the minimum. They were all jarrah and we had to drive the piles down to the time that you got eighteen blows to the inch and drove a lot of piles then.

**Harry Fletcher:** I went down there in early '49 before the first unit - that's the 25,000 kilowatt - had been completed. It was still under early construction under limited cover from the weather. Ah! It was just a wind swept desert with flying beach sand because the beach was in such close proximity and the sand dunes had been flattened. Piles had been driven into the sand to create a decent foundation upon which the cement floor was poured. But there was difficulty as I was saying in keeping sand out of some of the precision bearings and working parts of the turbine owing to inadequate cover.

I might mention that it was private enterprise, of course, that built the place and truck loads of cement frequently came in to supply the demand and the truck would frequently circumnavigate the site and later come out the main gate again to deliver to an alternate address in projects under construction by an on site contractor.....

The Contractor for the building here was Fairweather & Co. He was a well known builder in Perth at the time and we had given him an order to erect a temporary block of toilets on the western side of the workshops which was just adjacent to the beach area and so he put up the building and he set about a dozen toilet pans in cement one afternoon and during the early part of the evening a boat rowed up to the shore. At that time we didn't have a fence completely around the site. About half an hour later the engineer saw that they were pulling away from the shore and he seemed to have quite a heavy load aboard and what this person had done; he'd rowed in from some other location, landed, and removed all the pedestals from all the toilets and taken the whole lot of them and rowed away. So we lost our toilets.....

**Roy Mycoe:** I used to work in Metropolitan Vickers, Manchester, England. We erected the turbines out here. It was an opportunity for me to fetch my wife out here and also get on an erection site which was what I was doing in England. We were erecting the turbines and doing all the alignments and the erection itself, the condensers, tubing the condensers, all the pipe work, the H.P. Rotors, the L.P. Rotors. We did the complete system in itself. Actually No. 1 was completed in 1951 and we were at the opening this particular time and they had a big marquee and it was quite a day when the first turbine turned over.....

## **The Grand Opening**

**Harry Fletcher:** They were trying to usher us in buses out the back gate so that we wouldn't drag our filthy bodies past the opening celebration. This caused particular umbridge so the men carried a resolution to this effect - that unless the buses were in the usual place at the appointed time we would hold a stop work meeting not inside or outside the gates BUT inside the marquee during the opening celebration. This had the desired effect and I had much satisfaction in taking that resolution to Sam Clarkson, who was the Liaison Officer with the PWD between contractors and Government.....

**Tony Slee:** I was told to arrange some means by which when the final preparation of the speaker came and the button was pressed to open the Power Station the doors would swing quietly open. We just didn't have time to work out some sort of electric drive for it so the idea was that two employees were stationed out of sight behind these doors with cords attached to the top of the doors and when they heard the bell ring they were to slowly and quietly pull the doors apart to symbolise the opening. Unfortunately, the opening speech went on and on and I should think the two employees concerned got rather bored with the proceedings and when the bell rang they didn't even hear it and when it rang the second time they did, they rushed forward and grabbed the cords which promptly broke and they had to swing them open by hand which spoiled the whole effect. I slunk away after that to escape the General Manager's wrath but fortunately he didn't know who had arranged it.....

## **Seaweed - and Other Trials and Tribulations**

**Harry Fletcher:** The fellows went away in the buses. It was a stormy day and the seaweed was coming in badly and of course, if weed gets into the condensers it blocks the condensers and it trips the load because the turbines automatically stop. It would be very embarrassing for, I forget who it was, possibly the Premier, who had to push the button on the panel to start the thing rolling. As I say, in the absence of other employees, despite the fact that it was a labourer's job rather than a tradesman's job I was the one that pulled aside the screens that were blocked and installed other screens until the weed accumulated on that and then dragged that away and put back a clean one. And so, the Power House opened and the Station Superintendent, Steven Brackenbridge, thought better of his Shop Steward for having played such an essential role. I wasn't altogether proud of it but after all they were the circumstances of the day.....

**Stan Rutley:** They come and rouse you out of bed at about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning to go out there and rake the seaweed. It used to get on the seaweed screens and over the top of them and going into the pumps that provided the water for the condensers and you had to get down there to the raft outside the grating with a rake and try and rake the seaweed off and

when it was raining, which it mostly was, usually raining like blazes, there was a ledge on the wall and it'd hit that ledge and go straight down the back of your neck. It didn't matter what you had on that bloody water would go straight down the back of your neck. There was a fellow called Matt Cooglejay who was mostly there with us. He'd have all the clothes he could get on plus an oil skin and if he ever fell in the water he would have drowned because there's no way we'd have got him out. You would have needed a crane to get him out. That was a heck of a job. The seaweed would come in faster than you could pull it off the screens, you know, it'd be piling up and piling up and the truck would be there trying to take it away and sometimes you just couldn't cope with it at all. That was one of the most horrid jobs I had as a cleaner before I started on the shift work.

The other problem we didn't like was when you were on the ash plant dumping the boilers. They had a channel running underneath the boilers and hoppers to take the ash from the thing away. Well sometimes the previous dump didn't clear itself or something and you'd be winding the thing down, you know, and all of a sudden it would all go at once - ooph - you'd think it was the end of the world that had come. The boilers hot ash would hit the water and she'd go 'ooph'. Well it'd lift the plates off the channel.

**Reg Watt:** If you got a big dump come down well it just used to come out and it was still red hot when it come out at you. The plate on the boiler at the front; you had to be careful that that was securely tight otherwise when the dump come down you'd have copped the ash all over you. That was a dangerous job down at the boilers.....

**Don Hartley:** Actually, [the boiler controller] provides steam to the turbines, one, two, three or four or whatever to cope with the load requirements. There isn't anybody who actually knows what the requirements are. You get a pretty good idea generally but they're fairly unpredictable and it means with a Station such as South Fremantle you have to constantly correct or control the flow. It's got to be at the correct pressure, the correct temperature at all times. It's a pretty demanding job.....

The actual controls, they consisted of the supply of pulverised fuel. We had auxiliary plant attendants in the mills for example where the fuel would come in, roughly let's say for argument's sake, about matchbox size and then a bit bigger and it would come out to something to the degree of face powder, ground about that fine. You would control the amount of coal that was admitted to the boilers. You would control the amount of oxygen that was admitted to make sure that you had the correct combustion and you would also control the degree of fineness of the coal from the mill. If there was a drop in load, the meters, the fuel control would drop back but there was always a time lag. You had to use a tremendous lot of anticipation, and if you didn't, it was just like the man that fell out of the balloon.

**Jack Lillywhite:** If you let your furnace get cold and the fire actually go out and you introduce cold pulverised fuel into a cool furnace then you'd get one big explosion which we'd call a blow back. You'd fill the boiler house up with dust. You'd trip off your precipitator gear and you know you could damage the boiler house. I can remember a certain gentleman over here blowing the front out of number five boiler one morning.

Of course, in later years they shifted all the fuel pump switching gear from the basement up onto our panel and all we had to do was press a button and introduce oil which introduced no explosion instead of coal. It was much simpler.....

**Bill McNally:** How much of South Fremantle was done like that - trial and error? You had these difficulties and you had to find some way of getting round them.

**Jack Lillywhite:** Thank Bob Dainton for a lot of these things at South Fremantle, if he saw a practical idea or you put a practical proposition to him he would accept and investigate it and he would do it. But early in the piece people like Steve Brackenbridge, who were very genuine people, but they based their ideas on the very old fashioned Station at East Perth and they couldn't see past it. Everything that worked there, it had to do for South Fremantle. Everyone else was practically labourers according to Steve.

**Bob Bickley:** Some of the Engineers had their own ideas about this and Steve used to come along and he was sold these ideas by different Engineers and if you spoke to an Engineer in a rather uncouth manner he used to be very upset about this at the time because some of them had been Engineers in some sort of a battleship and when they suddenly came down here and found they were in charge of eight or fifteen men, depending which shift they were on, they expected you to more or less throw a salute.

**Bill McNally:** They didn't get it from the Goldfielders anyway.....

**Jack Lillywhite:** That was the big shock. Men like ourselves that came in - we were holding down outside jobs that we were in charge of and we had no intention of knuckling down to "Open that valve" or "Shut that valve." We wanted to know the reason why.

**Bill McNally:** We would lose our certificates you see. If there was anything wrong we were the ones who would lose our certificates with the result that we wouldn't do anything unless we knew what it would do.....

**Don Hardie:** A lot of it was guess work and you knew what everybody was doing after a while. You were a proper sticky-beak. You knew what industry was doing. You see we

were the main power produces in Western Australia. And I might quote an example of the first time that I ever controlled the Melbourne Cup. I knew what I was faced with - I thought I did, and when you're controlling these sort of things safety valves are there for the purpose of protecting the boiler but they're not there for blowing steam through. It's actually a bad operation to happen. Anyway, this particular day; I thought it was funny; it was very funny actually because I was ready for it I thought but never experienced one before and if I remember rightly it was about 11:00am and the Melbourne Cup come on and in those days women folk always ironed on a Tuesday and installation engineers informed me that throughout the civilised parts of the world where they'd installed the gear this was a common practice. It wasn't only just in Australia. Well you can imagine what happened.... the housewife turned their electric iron off, industry shut down, and I can assure you that we just about shut down. The requirements was too low to keep ignition in the four boilers. We had to introduce the air.....we had to introduce oil because you come down to oil to maintain ignition waiting for the load to come back, and in the meantime all the safety valves went up and the people that were crowded around the various radios, you know, they had to be a fair way from that Station because they wouldn't hear the race. The valves are pretty noisy. So I wasn't the only one who didn't hear the Cup that day.

Another example was when the television first came out and Channel 7 I think was the first station. We would proceed along as normal on Sunday night. Then Sunday Night Theatre would come on. There would be one particular film on and I don't think that made any difference. The black and white TV sets didn't pull a great wattage and if it did, well lights went off and things seemed to be pretty even BUT when the show finished you carried an extra turbine; you carried an extra two boilers and the reason for carrying that was the people were just like us; they wanted a cup of tea so they all got up and they all went and put the kettles on and that lasted five minutes, so you carried an extra turbine and two boilers for probably an hour and a half for those five minutes.

It was essential.... the Power Station corresponded with the TV Station to find out what time the film finished and this sort of thing, you know, but you'd have all this gear, this great gear rumbling and noisy and everything, you know what it's like when things are running partly empty; the mills weren't loaded and it was noisy and you'd be waiting for this cup of tea and my mate, .....the moment this cup of tea was over I'd say "Okay Jack, we'll shut down one" and then I'd try and be as reasonable as possible but it wouldn't be long before we'd be "Righto, number four Jack". I can see him now, you know, he was a good man at his job. They were all very good engine men, these fellows and he would be from one down to four and from four back to three. We might come down to one boiler later on to suit the night load. So, just little things that happen.....you know everybody's business and if you don't, you can't do the job.....

## The Workers and the Work

**John Vickeridge:** I came to work at South Fremantle Power Station after the State Electricity Commission took over the Fremantle Tramways in 1952. It was more or less to finish my Apprenticeship and after finishing my Apprenticeship with the Commission I stayed on working as an Electrical Fitter. During that time I was trained as a Control Room Operator and about seventeen years I think I was with the Commission. I resigned and went to Australian Iron & Steel. After Australian Iron & Steel shut down about three years ago I returned to the Commission to work as a District Fitter in the Southern Districts and then applied for a job back at the Power Control in South Fremantle Power Station which I was fortunate enough to gain and I've been here ever since and it looks like I'll be here till the end. The job more or less consists of the control of four 25 megawatt alternators. When I first came down here in 1952 A Station was only just being commissioned and B Station was just an empty shell.....while still installing the three and four alternators. You had to be careful where you walked because there was open holes everywhere.

**Phil Prior:** At the moment I'm relieving in the office on the switchboard. I started there I suppose on 30th October, 1957 as a Plant Cleaner. I think I was about three years on that and then I went into the Fitter's Shop as a Fitter's Assistant and there was a further, probably three years on that, and from that time on I was a truck driver there and have been driving a truck ever since till three weeks ago. If you had of told me I'd be here..... what is it.....28 years later, I would have said I wouldn't, but somehow I've stayed all those years and the longer I've been here the more I grew to like the place. I've spent more than half my working life here and it's probably the only job I really remember.

**Frank Hilliard:** I commenced employment with the State Energy Commission on 8th April, 1963. Since 24th February, 1981 I have been the Instrument Foreman. During that time I've seen an amazing lot of work carried out in this section. There's been a lot of modifications and much better instrumentation has been developed. Unfortunately nowadays the instrumentation that was of use 20 years ago is obsolete and they've gone onto electronics. During the time that we've been here at the Power House we've had quite a few apprentices go through. In fact, we've had 29 apprentices. Well we do all the instrumentation to do with the Power House. That is all the pressure gauges; all the electrical gauges. There's all the controls; the smoke density indication. We look after the fire systems. We do the chlorinator that chlorinates the sea water to stop the shellfish and whatever growing in the pipes. We do all the.....analyser work. We've got some pretty modern analysers at the moment working on the siconian tubes. We do lathework and the preventative maintenance schedule and we endeavour to do either a monthly, a six weekly, a three monthly or six monthly or even a yearly check while the plant's in operation. We still go over it and over a period of twelve

months we try and check every piece of instrumentation we have on our books which I might add is quite a fair bit.

**Vic Grover:** I came down here as the original Auxiliary Plant Attendant where I was with the Commissioning Engineer for the Lodge Cottrel. That was the dust extraction systems on the roof. I wasn't on it very long and the opportunity came up to be an Assistant Boiler Controller. At that point in time we only had three boilers and number four boiler was only part finished.

**Don Squance:** I started there as an Auxiliary Plant Attendant and I was working on the mills. I was down there for about three and a half years and these dates are sort of sketchy..... and then I went up onto the firing floor as an Assistant Boiler Controller as he was named in those days and after seventeen years on that job I became a Boiler Controller until such time as I retired. Yeah, it was all shift work.

**Owen O'Neill:** I had a very long and happy association at South Fremantle and when I was transferred from there finally back to Head Office to take over the stores, that's the Operational Stores in the State, it was one of the saddest days of my life because my office down there was called the Crying Room and everybody, the Station Engineer down, used to come down there and talk out their problems and woes and I found it one of the best areas as a work place that I've ever worked in actually. The people, the comradeship, the enthusiasm of everybody involved was something I thoroughly enjoyed being associated with and I've got the most happy memories of South Fremantle and I'll be sorry to see it closed.

**Jack Priest:** The Charge Engineer has overall responsibility for the Power Station. The Boilerhouse Engineer is responsible to the Charge Engineer as are all the other staff - salary and wages. When I say he's responsible for the whole Power Station, that's on shift work. During the day the Station Engineer of course, has the responsibility and he can be referred to on night and afternoon shifts but by in large the Charge Engineer handles the crises or unforeseen circumstances that arise, mechanical and human. Someone said recently "Gee, those were the days when if someone was sick or his wife is sick or his family was sick, everyone knew about it" and everyone was wondering how they could help that particular man. That feeling persisted for a long while. It died off in latter years and the Station's run down. There's still a good feeling. The changes are really in the feeling that when in the 50's South Fremantle was The Power Station and during the 50's Bunbury was built and then Bunbury and South Fremantle were both big wig stations so we felt very important and to a large extent what we said was taken a lot of notice of.

**Fred Cumbor:** At that particular time number six machine was giving us all the problems. It was really tense. They said, "Oh Christ! We're not going to be in the blue again. We're not going to get this machine going." But that was all it was, you know, and from then on there seemed to be a great spirit in South Fremantle. You know, they used to have cricket teams and football teams, soccer teams, you name it, they were great.....

**Bill Annendale:** The comradery was really good.

**Dick O'Grady:** One of the things I noticed with the South Fremantle Power Station. I had been at East Perth prior to that and apart from the cleanliness, everyone there was keen. Now it was a new station and all the people were keen to do their best. There were a lot of very colourful characters at South Fremantle and many are now gone to the other side, of course, but some are still around. I can remember the chaps that used to do all the boiler cleaning. They'd be covered in grime and soot every day and they were quite a sight but it was part of the job; very hot, dirty job. We used to go swimming in our lunch hour, water polo teams, we had a cricket club going. It was certainly a very sociable and enjoyable place to work. With the water polo it was quite good because we used to have other people visiting from the workshop sometimes there as well as the games among the chaps and I can remember on several occasions we were swimming right where the seaweed screens were and if you got hold of the water polo ball and held it more than a minute you were in danger of being drowned because there was some pretty hefty players there and they'd push you below the water and hold you there until you'd release the ball. There were no rules that I can remember, simply the rule of who had the ball let go as soon as you can.

## **The Credit Union**

**Jenny Weiland:** In those days there seemed to be a much more family approach to it. Everyone was there to do a job and worked hard and they played hard and this sort of brought about a very good team spirit in the work place. Nothing was too much trouble if you wanted any assistance, you'd only have to lift your head and you'd got it from somewhere, and conversely of course, if you can help someone else then you were always too happy to do it. And this type of spirit was still evident in South Fremantle. We had some marvelous blokes down there, mainly from the U.K., and we had some very good - what should I say? - gatherings, to celebrate various events and if we couldn't think of anything else, well, we just had a party anyway. But there was this very good spirit and I think from my experience, South Fremantle was about the last of that type of thing although it was carried on to a much smaller extent at other stations and I think also that possibly the Credit Union that was developed at South Fremantle had something to do with that. We also had social functions which always went off like a shot and they were always booked to the limit and they were always most enjoyable and that gave people another interest in the Power Station, an interest

of not only working together but saving and this I think, had a big bearing on the team spirit that we've maintained at South Fremantle. I know, if you could see the files at South Fremantle you'd see letters of appreciation that would really stagger you. Some of the strife that people did get into and were helped and put back on the right road by the Credit Union. They would have five or six hire purchase commitments and no hope of meeting them. So the Credit Union used to make them a loan, after going into their financial situation, their commitments and so forth, family, rent, make them a loan which they could pay back - they knew they could pay back. With the money - we wouldn't give it to them - we would settle their outstanding hire purchase commitments and gradually get them under control so they'd have one loan to worry about, not five or six and we were there to guide them right the way through and get them out of trouble.

**George Gordon:** This was the first indigenous Credit Union in Western Australia. We were the first private one, although we were in the S.E.C. we were not an S.E.C. Credit Union. It was private; it was accepted by the management and was formed purely of the employees down there and this gave a lot of people struggling the idea.....credit unions found its worth there. It was believed in, the philosophy was accepted but it doesn't exist today. The Teachers' Credit Union and all these are only just, you might say, minor financial institutions now. The old idea was that if you had a little extra you put in so that your mate who was having a little bit of trouble or a new baby or something like that or needed clothes, so he could borrow. And by the same token that worked because there were never any bad debts. In all the years since 1952 we have only had about a total of \$3000 of bad debts. That's not a lot of money when we rated about half a million assets and just \$3000 in 22 years. It 's significant in the fact that it proves what a real philosophy of Credit Unions was. It welded the person who was down on his luck. It welded him into the workforce and there was no management on it. There was even a bloke who was a cleaner and he was one of the Directors. It was shared around maintenance and staff but not management. It was purely our own show. It was good because it was on the American pattern. They were the ones who we got the material from. As a matter of the fact the chap is still in the S.E.C., Joe Wately who formed it. He was the one who went to the East and I think in Victoria he was at a meeting and he got the idea, and I must admit that to me, and not only myself, it didn't seem logical to us that you could put a pound in and help somebody get money back. However, we were all original members, the whole lot went in, just wondering what is it if we're going to lose a pound it was just too bad in those days, however it succeeded and it continues to flourish. To this day I believe it was one of my greatest fulfillments when you saw the smile on the face of a wife who had been really scratching and had been helped and they appreciated it.

Now, in the Credit Society system our members were being assisted and they understood it that way, not that they were getting a loan and they had to pay for it but that they were being

helped and that made a big difference. Manager after manager always said that that was the thing that made such a harmonious workforce. Not the actual policy of the S.E.C. but the predominance of the South Fremantle Credit Union. Nobody was ever knocked back. We were very fortunate in having Darryl Bull. He was in the store and of course, he was a qualified accountant and he has maintained his interest to this day.

**Judy Sorc:** Every second week, on a Friday, I came in to do the Payroll Deductions that members are on now. It usually involves about five hours work, mainly doing the postings onto the cards and then the other week it is likely to be about two hours. Most of the work is pre-prepared by the men on a voluntary basis and it's just my job to bring out a trial balance at the end of every month. Rather interesting work, for me it is anyway; I haven't been in the workforce for such a long time and I enjoy the fact that everybody is very close and get on well together. The South Fremantle Power Station Credit Union has still retained the original ideals of a Credit Union which is to have a common bond with everybody helping each other and as I see it, South Fremantle has retained that in as much as a lot of members who are not on a particularly high salary or wage would probably find it difficult to get help from a recognised finance company or bank whereas here, they know that they can come and get the maximum help. The men themselves are very friendly because most of them have been here for years and I think there will be a few sad spots when they all decide to go. There are a few retiring in the next few months and of course that will break up the little band even more which will be sad in itself.

**George Gordon:** One of the best things that has ever happened to this Power House was the Credit Union. The type of man who was originally at the Power Station, they were all very responsible sort of staff. Their background was mainly Kalgoorlie, winder drivers, who had the safety of men; they understood that responsibility. That's what they were there for.

**Bill Annendale:** The difference between the old turbine and boilerhouse crew and today was that everyone those days were proud. They took pride in their work. Now there's no pride in their work. They just go there as a number.

### **Changing Conditions: The Role of Unions**

**Jack Lillywhite:** I can remember back in the early times there.....51,52 it was bitterly cold at wintertime. Half the power station erected and all open and the cold south/easterly wind used to sweep down that boiler house. You could have three boilers on at night time and we complained bitterly about this cold all the time. And so Steve Brackenbrige gave us this sentry box. It was about three foot wide and about two foot deep and about six foot high to sit in with our back to the wind and one little electrical heater that had no reflector, on a bar sitting up there to keep us warm. We were all over six foot. Bill's knees would be up that far, mine

would be up that far and we'd be sitting there huddled up trying to keep warm. The turbine side was the same. They sat in there without any enclosure for years and years.

**Don Hardie:** The tough one on the turbine was the heat. You see the air was coming in all the time and being taken out on the boilers to go through the air heaters. In theory that worked, but in fact what it did was because you had the seals the air at the bottom was somewhat saturated and the air went over the top to the boiler side with the result that the temperatures there were so hot and all we had was a table just out in the open. And we used to spend all our time there in the hot weather. You would go and do your readings, put your machines on, whatever you had to do. If you didn't you were at the window with your head out like a cow in a cattle truck. That was the only way you could get enough air. I used to say you were starved for oxygen because the temperatures were so high. And it was only in the last 10 years that we got cubicles.....

I don't claim credit for much but I do reckon I got it enclosed. We got things done; we got the finest bloke ever. There's men who'll work on the Power Station for the rest of their life and the conditions they enjoy can go back to a bloke called Ernie Simms. Ernie was a Union Rep. or shop steward as they're called these days. Ernie never abused the management. He was a bulldog type of bloke in his approach to real problems. He had a very determined attitude towards essential things. We come into the job as ordinary men the same as were at East Perth but we were qualified and we operated on our own certificates whereas at East Perth they operated more or less as per instructions. Don't think for a moment that I'm critical of East Perth men. They were wonderful and how they kept the place going I'll never know. They done a fantastic job. But it was a different game. A boiler controller prior to South Fremantle was a marine engineer, not an engine driver. Engine driver had the turbine but not the boiler control. So it meant that a whole new set of rules had to come out when we started under Mr. Gillies who was Production Engineer at that time. Ernie Simms negotiated and negotiated for years to get everything to where they are. And we never lost one minute's work through industrial problems.

**Arthur Carter:** In my time at South Fremantle I did rise to the dizzy heights of Acting Station Engineer. And there was a shop steward with the fitters, the mechanical section down there, Harry Fletcher. Harry Fletcher later of course became member for Fremantle in the State Government. Now of all the union people in the S.E.C. and out of the S.E.C. I think Harry Fletcher was the most sensible bloke that you could talk to. He would see the employers point of view and he would present quite seriously the employees point of view. And I have great respect for Harry.

**Harry Fletcher:** I wrote to every other powerhouse in every other State in the Commonwealth, to QLD, NSW, VIC, TAS, SA and asked what conditions additional to the flat rate they were paying there in excess of award conditions and much to my satisfaction they were paying well in excess. Now armed with this ammunition I went to management and said, "Why such an anomaly here in WA?" And even though I hate the personal pronoun, as shop steward I did that and I'm proud of it when there was such unanimity demonstrated. He said, "Well what is it you want Mr. Fletcher?" He was calling me Mr. Fletcher then, giving me the respect I didn't expect and I reiterated the various benefits that I just mentioned and it was soon around the table at Head Office at SEC with Jimmy Mutton, the Union Organiser along side me and other Union representatives also. We didn't get the best conditions that they were paying in the East but we did get the Service Grant of 1/- per week for each year of work. We did get the Industry Allowance, admittedly not the equivalent but that was negotiated later. We did get dungarees but then we got that and when I got back to report to the men.....and let me mention in passing that I never reported personally, I would always take a couple of representatives of the rank and file to listen to what I said to the Management and what the Management said to me, so that they could report accordingly.....and when I put it to the men that it would be selfish for us to take those conditions to be bribed into acquiescence whilst there were so many men out of work at the State Engineering works and the Midland Workshops so I said, "Look fellas, stick till they get, if not equivalent, some concessions which will make it possible for them to go back to work. I don't like saying this, but the ASE membership condoned by their Union Management were prepared to take the conditions and in effect "to hell with the others". Well, we were driven into a corner in that respect. We the Amalgamated Engineering Union, also took it, but that breakthrough that we made there.....it'd be the early 50's.....was the cause taken up by other Government employees and later still, non Government employees to ask for Industry Allowance, Service Grant and other amenities and I'm proud to have been associated with what happened then. We made the breakthrough in that respect and were the first to do so. It was only as I say as a consequence of metal trades.....not the metal trades solidarity.....the Amalgamated Engineering Union, of which I'm still a retired member.

**George Gordon:** We originally belonged to the Institute of Marine and Power Engineers. There was only a branch here with no authority. In other words you were just a collector of complaints and fees. I became the secretary of that and we saw that we were getting nowhere because we had no muscle and were only a small group in a very big organisation, you see. And we didn't have access to the Arbitration system because the Institute was an Adelaide based show, so we went into the Salaried Officers. That was the SEC. Unfortunately, we found that that was a management orientated thing, or otherwise outvoted by the Head Office. We were, I think at that stage \$2,000 behind and nowhere to go. There was nobody. We had to rely purely on the Minister for Electricity. It was our only appeal if the management said

"no". It didn't matter what it was about; anything in the Award, we could only appeal to the Minister and of course he'd already got the message and that was it and we were pretty frustrated and we did strike. That's when we formed the Municipal Officers' Association. We formed and I was the original president of the MOA and others have of course followed and now it's a powerful body in the SEC. The Salaried Officers doesn't exist. The MOA took over and we were a bit disappointed in that because it could have brought it back to the situation we were in before but we could be outvoted by the Clerical, however, we did put safeguards in it that we were different sections and we could run our own sections and right up to the finish it's been quite successful. Put it this way, by joining the MOA we were able again to force an appraisal and there was an investigation and they went over East and came back. Mr Coleman, he was on it and he went over and came back and they made the decision then and of course we came to parity but with similar stations, not of course their big stations but similar stations and from then onwards we maintained that parity so there hasn't been a lot of industrial hassle since then.

**Len Johnson:** I was a boiler cleaner. I've been a boiler cleaner, in the canteen and also I'm doing the greasing at the moment in the Station and also loco driver. I'm also a Shop Steward for the Federated Engine Drivers which is a fair amount of responsibility to all the members of the Union and to the Commission itself. On the Union side of it I like to keep unity without loss of time and keep everyone happy. That includes SEC officers and members of the Union and they do have some differences but I keep a low profile and keep harmony amongst the workforce. I suppose I stuck my neck out two or three times for things that happened but it's okay, my neck is in the chopping block but everyone's happy. I worry about different things. I think of other blokes not including myself because when everything's sorted out I've got to work with these chaps and with the different foremen and Station Engineer so it pays to be lenient and keep harmony because you're still a member of the workforce and you're not up in the clouds. Well, with any difficult Union matters, if I'm not sure I make contact with the Union Office, the Organiser, privately on my own phone at home and I come back to work the next day and if the boys have got any problems I sort it out with assistance and take it to the Commission Station Engineer and explain things that have happened and the foreman, and we work in good harmony and that's the main bloody point. If you can't work in harmony you may as well not even attempt to cause any commotions. At the Coal Plant they're four chaps short and they're also short in the Station but that's okay, that's reality. Another thing, there is a safety factor. Safety working factor is a big concern because you can't ask a person to do a job he is not familiar with and if a person does the wrong thing he could be in trouble, he could be in dire trouble, someone could get hurt and safety at this present stage is a very important issue.

## Safety Issues

**Bob Dainton:** The Coal Plant was the most hazardous place to work in. One time a skip rope which was being fitted got away. That's a long wire rope and you know there's a skip down there and there's a winch here and balance weights.....they had all this tied together and it got away and this rope went berserk and it got a Trades Assistant and they come straight to me, a fellow named Bob Arlow, and really mutilated him. It didn't kill him. He was ill for many months.

**Bill McNally:** The SAS used to do night raids on us and you'd be sitting there of a night with possibly just one machine going and all of a sudden you'd see a joker, rifle and everything else running everywhere and they were planting bombs under machines and you wouldn't know they were coming in or anything and eventually over on the coal plant the coal used to come in in wagons and then a big gripper used to get hold of the wagon and they take the oil over and they turned it over and dropped it into a hope and a tippler would pick it up and put it onto a conveyor belt, you see and unfortunately the SAS didn't know that so one joker ran along the railway line and fell down below and was killed.

**Fred Cumbor:** Another accident involved Tommy Mackie. He shut the whole bloody place down did Tommy Mackie. His job was to check out the oil levels on all the gear in the switch yard. He went up there and was doing his job faithfully as he should. He got an old wooden ladder there and he picks it up so he can get a good view of it you see, so he climbs up the ladder, a bit of rag in his hand, wipes the glass, which means he's only that far off 66,000 volts and of course, he gets the whole lot and he shuts the power station down because it comes out on fault. There was an apprentice there, he fell down off the ladder of course, and he was thrown off and he was on fire, he was on fire, he was a pretty fat fellow, like me, and his stomach was on fire; he was burning and the kid got a pair of overalls and he doused the flames out. He was on fire, he was really a torch, and doused the fire out. That's what happened that day. I can't remember if there was two machines or three machines on that day, but we lost the lot.

He was then put in the Gatekeepers job but he was never the same fellow, was he? He was hospitalised for a long time and he never really recovered but he finished his time out as a Gatekeeper.

**Bill McNally:** One of the good things with the SEC is you never ever got out of a job. They always found you a place to work. Now I was thinking about when Doug Enright got hurt. What actually happened was, they had the fan on number four turbine. There was two fans and we were using one. It was winter time and you always have two you see, for different loads and conditions. Doug and Alan Ambehaun were working on this and they had

the current cut out up to the bottom of the box that held the switches to the fans for the turbines and it was dinner time and as a lot of them used to do, they had a kerosene tin cut down with a handle on and all their tools were in it. So when they're knocking off for dinner, about 5 to 12 or something like that, he got this and he just shoved it in like that and of course, it bridged across on the bottom and he got thrown, I suppose at least thirty feet away. I was on it that day and the first I can remember was him staggering up against that wall. That's how far he was thrown from it and he never got hurt. Just got the shock. He threw it in but he'd let go you see and the kerosene tin that held all the tools. All the tools had just burnt through it.

**Vic Grover:** On number 5 boiler, when it was fairly well completed we had one accident when a chap overbalanced and was killed. Basically that was brought about by skylarking. There was a lot of lagging being thrown around and he ducked and overbalanced and fell to the ground. He was killed.

**Bill McNally:** There was one chap who committed suicide off the roof. He was working with the welder. That's right, he went back, after he'd been home, and he jumped off the roof and he landed right on his head just outside about where the coal truck used to be. Anyway, when we got there, George Gordon said to me, "We don't know who it is" and we went out there....couldn't contact his relatives.....and I knew that this particular chap had that finger off right there and my dad had the same one, and that's how we recognised him.

**Bob Dainton:** At South Fremantle, eye injuries would have accounted for a third of the total injuries.

**Vic Grover:** There was always a lot of dust in the air. We always had something in the eye. The place was very dirty through inappropriate type of cleaning in which they used compressed air and they gradually blew it from one place to another and not really any dust got out so what was accumulated overnight was blown around and was added to what was made during the day.

**Billy Dixon:** I've always been safety conscious. We've always had a spate of eye trouble here, not so much serious injuries but grit from coal and stuff like that because coal is east of the Station and in summer time we get east winds and it blows it around a bit. We can't dodge that but lately with the issue of glasses and that it's been pretty good that way.

**John:** When I went to the main store I went to the Tool store. That was issuing out the tools and so forth. I used to do the electric etching for the tools with an electric etcher, you know. Especially, the apprentices when they get issued with their set of tools, you know, I'd etch

them for them although I will say I was pretty good on the handwriting. They were pleased with them. I think I did a bit of injury to myself as far as the eyes because when I was about 57 or earlier than that but I remember us playing cricket.....we used to play social cricket you see.....and I noticed you know that it was getting a bit hard to see. At that stage I never had a thing wrong with me physically, that's why I was able to play. I was 55 see, so anyway, as time went on I eventually had cataracts and I think possibly it was through not having any glasses to safeguard me doing that etching.

**Don Squance:** I think the biggest problem amongst the boiler controllers mainly is the old eyes. This was a big problem....the panels down there.....the lighting on them was very bad. There was an awful lot of glare from them. What we did notice amongst us was anybody who went onto a panel, if they didn't wear glasses it wasn't many years before they would have been wearing glasses because of the eye strain of the place. They made some sort of an effort to correct it over the years but it was never successful, whatever they tried was never ever successful and as a matter of fact they were doing something about it not that long ago but when they realised the station was starting to close down I think they'd forgot about it.

**Don Hardie:** It was certainly bad for the eyes. I never wore glasses before going there.

**Bill McNally:** I have a great deal of trouble. I bought three hearing aids and the only time they're any good to me is at a meeting. I can't wear them anywhere else and even now if there's a lot of noise.....take for instance if I go playing cards somewhere and it's in a lounge, I just get bewildered. My ears reverberate. I've had an examination through the Army and Repat. and it's bilateral deafness or industrial deafness. I've tried to get a hearing aid before I left work but no chance there and whenever the acoustic people came down it was logical to know that you were going to have all your machines on a 25 megawatt that day. All your machines had their valves wide open or pretty well wide open and that was the load that made the least noise. Seventeen was the most economical load but where you had the shrillest noises and as far as I was concerned the turbines did a great damage to my ears.

**Fred Cumbor:** Started to use ear plugs didn't you?

**Billy McNally:** I used ear plugs from whenever they brought them in. I used to use two as a matter of fact. Ear muffs and ear plugs and nowadays, today I have three grandchildren and everyone know that if they're going to speak to Bill you got to speak slow and in particular the little ones I just can't pick them up.....you get into a conversation in the bar there when there's three of you.....and the noise there.....you gradually fall out of it because you're trying to lip read and so forth like that but they reckon the turbines didn't do anything.

**Jack Lillywhite:** If I hear any background noise I hear nothing. It's simply a blur.

**Bill Annendale:** It was caused by a fault in the governor valves where the highest pitch squeal was so intense that we all went deaf on the turbine floor. There's not one turbine driver who isn't deaf and in later years they discovered that number 3 governor seating was leaking on the machines and when all the machines opened up the noise went out but later they discovered there was a fault in the governor valve seating. It wasn't seating on the valve and when the valve was down the steam was escaping around the edges of the seat and causing the squeal and they rectified that in the later stages but in the early stages I had been hearing but I'm stone deaf now and I wear a hearing aid and if two or three talk at once, I can't hear.

**Jack Anderson:** It's quietened down over the last fifteen years. That was only due to Roy Mycoe fitting the governor valves correctly. He got them pretty right but there was a big squeal in them. There is a bit of steam leaks but the noise level is not as bad as everybody thinks it is.

**Don Squance:** I do suffer from a hearing problem now. I can hear very plain if it is all very quiet but if there is anybody trying to talk to me and there is background noise I just go deaf as a post. Whether I'm trying to listen to the two noises at once, I don't know but I find it very difficult to listen to anybody when there's a background noise.

We've had a marvelous safety record. Our safety record reads something like 1,600 days without a lost time accident. We do hold three trophies but we shared one with Bunbury this year but yes, we have had a marvelous safety record. The safety record of the station in itself hasn't been very very good at times mainly because it's antiquated, it's old and there's a lot of dark patches and it wasn't designed when the safety was on everybody's lips. Modern places have looked into this aspect. They've got different paints and they've got different ways of doing things. They design the things so that it does lend to be safe. Here we've got all sorts of ladders and there's corners and you know, you have to look where you're going. It's not the sort of place you can just fumble around, especially in the dark because there's a lot of areas that are not safe at all. The foreman that I took over from, Dick van Zyll, lovely chap, he slipped in the Control Room and broke his hip and from then on he unfortunately never recovered. We all liked Dick and we knew he was one of the foundation members of the Credit Union and he was also one of the first to start here in the Instrument shop.

**Jack Priest:** One thing that can be said about the MOA is that they pushed a case.....a test case.....for asbestosis victim here Dick van Zyll, the Instrument Foreman, who passed away a few years ago and they pushed the case and got it going and in conjunction with Dick's solicitors the compensation was awarded for the asbestosis which in itself is a very big thing.

It protects all ex-employees and employees here if they are unfortunate enough to have it come up.

### "We Had Some Good Chaps Around Then"

**Don Hardie:** We had men like the late Arthur Dittmar. He was foreman and fitter and he was a big man in every way, he was just one of those men. Arthur's gear was always good and then we had the instrument section. Gerry Weiland was superintendent. His gear was always good. All good men working on it. There was a couple of the men that can't give you a story. They're not with us any longer. A winder driver that was on our shift for a very long time Clem Green, very knowledgeable sort of engine man and a very humorous character. You know how a lot of shifts have characters on them that keep everything sort of good, you know, put a bit of life into it. Clem was one of those blokes. He'd tell stories about different things in Kalgoorlie. And we had another one who's also not with us and his name was Jack Lang and he was affectionately known as Little Jackie. Anyway, with Clem and Jack they were two wonderful men to work with and their sense of humour and ability as engine men was just a little point I'd like to mention because they probably won't be mentioned. I mean we've all got to die sometime but they were mighty blokes to have on your shift.

**Bob Dainton:** But we had some good chaps around then. Reg Edwards, he used to run the battery section and when Reg left a fellow called Billy Dixon, who's still out there; Bill's a bit of a mechanical genius in some ways. He really is and he's always fiddling about with things. We had what we call a number nine boiler. There was only eight boilers on the power station but just after the station was completed, down near the canteen...or back of the canteen, there was a series of huts for the construction. There was a fellow, Gerry I think his name was, I forget his other name. He was the cable jointer and that's where his workshop was and it became a place where if you had a bit of a hangover you went down there and had a cup of tea because there was always a cup of tea going and there was always a fire going or if you wanted a haircut you went down there and had your hair cut and of course in those days power station things were a lot easier and the work still got done and there was no quibble about it. If somebody said you were wanted up on number one boiler then you immediately went up there even if your hair was half cut or otherwise but to me it was a very relaxed situation when I first went to the Power Station.

I had a tremendous number of friends at South Fremantle through the work. There was the case of the conversion in say 1961 or thereabouts from coal to oil, when the coal strike occurred on the Collie Coal fields. The word went out, right, we want to convert over the weekend. We want to generate over 100 megawatts on Monday and we've got to do certain things to be able to do it. Are we all in it? The whole thing was explained. A name that

comes to mind.....you can ask Mycoe about this.....he worked himself poor over that weekend.....I don't know how many hours he would have worked but he stands out, Roy Mycoe. I've got a lot of feeling for that guy. They all got into it and they worked their soul cases out - Mechanical Shop, Boilermaker Shop - and got the place set up and it was doing 100 megawatt Monday morning. Now Ron Briggs was the turner and he was the only guy in the mechanical shop who used to get invited to the electrical dinner that they used to have. I don't know why but he used to get invited. He's a nature lover. He loved fishing and he accused me of tipping effluent out from South Fremantle; ashes into Cockburn Sound; which I was doing quietly. In those days we used to think we were clever if we could beat the environment people and Briggsie.....I must say this because of his love of nature and I like nature, I like the country and I love the power station and I wanted it to go and I thought it was necessary to make it go and do it as cheaply as possible which included tipping my water out in the Cockburn Sound which I should be ashamed to say but 20 years ago I used to do that. And at one of these electrical dinners he took me to task.....of course he knew and everyone in the place knew about it and when I think of what he used to say in retrospect I look up to the wisdom of that man in his thinking at that time of environmental issues because today, now, to me they're important.

**Bob Bickley:** Old Gerry Warburton I'm talking about now. His job was to get this coal out of the tray when a certain amount of coal got in the truck, drive it away and empty it into that tipping plant and then come back again. Anyway, he went to sleep on the job this particular day and when he came out there was this eight ton truck under a mound of coal. You could just see the headlights sticking out of one end and the number plate out of the other. Now, Keith Carlton I think was the Engineer. He said, "I'm not going to touch it" and what's-his-name, over here, Reg Watt was the official driver that day and Reg said, "Well, I'm not going to attempt to drive it out." and Gerry said, "Oh well, it's got to come out" he said and got in there and revved the engine up and - bang - he blew the transmission and the gears and everything out there. He broke the tailshaft away. And then he said to Steve - and Steve said, "What happened there?" and Gerry said, "I don't know, I never saw it" And he swore he never saw it. Everybody on the flamin' shift seen him do it.....Stood round to see the action, nobody could have driven it out. A bulldozer could have shifted it out these days but they didn't have one there.

**Ron Heath:** One character we had there was a chap named Fred Dedman and he was a great one for having the apprentices on and we had a young apprentice here at one time. He was talking to Fred about the ducks his father had at home and he said they eat so much and they get there and they shovel their tucker in with their bills so Fred said, "Why don't you do what I do?" he said, "I've got ducks at home." He said, "But I go and get a bastard file out of the store and I take it home and I file their beaks to a point like a chooks and then they got to pick

the food, see." So the lad went up to the foreman and he said, "Arthur, can I get a bastard file out of the store?" and he said, "What do you want that for son?" . He said, "I was talking to Freddy Dedman and he was telling me that what he does with his ducks is he files their beaks to a point so they got to pick like a chook and not like a duck." With that Arthur told him to get out of the office quick smart.

**Georgie More:** It was really a great place to work; they were a great bunch of guys. They sort of looked after us, you know. And I don't think anybody that worked there wanted to leave. Nobody at all, including me. I don't know, they were all sort of like one big happy family there. I know it sounds like a cliché but they were. It was really good. Everyone was very friendly. We had a few odd arguments with a few people, but very very seldom.

**Wendy McMindon:** I really think it's unfortunate that it's gone. It's sad really, that it is gone because it's a good place to work.

**Georgie More:** I arrived one morning through the side door of the kitchen. There's two doors there - fly wire door and a large wooden door - and somehow, between the two doors there was a goanna. The fly wire door couldn't have been closed properly and he crawled in and was on the doorstep. Now, we both went in and didn't see him. I went back out and said, "Oh! there's a goanna here" and when I went back in the kitchen, Wendy was sitting in the sink in the far corner of the kitchen which must have been fifty feet away, and she was literally sitting in the sink. She was terrified of this poor goanna so I think I got a broom and just sort of gently pushed him off the doorstep but we never did find out whether he'd actually crawled in there or whether someone had put him there, which wouldn't surprise me.

## Epilogue

**Ken Nicholas:** Coming into this Power Station a couple of years ago, which was virtually the last say, two and a half years of its life, one of the things that has impressed me tremendously is the way in which the staff in this power station have cared for the plant and looked after it and maintained it. The equipment is really in excellent condition. The boiler plant has been just so well looked after it almost brings tears to your eyes just to think that it's going to be thrown out and the same with the turbo alternator plant. The loving care really that's been cast upon that plant is very touching and I can see often when we talk about the possibility of the plant going to scrap or some similar ending that it stirs the emotions a little bit of the people that have served the community in looking after this plant and keeping it in such good reliable condition.

**Roy Mycoe:** It's all been good relations at South and no matter who you speak to anybody over these thirty odd years that's worked at South Fremantle Power Station you know, have had a good word for it. I've not heard a bad word yet about the Station so that's a pretty good record.

Well, I enjoyed my time, you know, I sort of got a great kick out of working on the turbines and sort of completed a job.....and making decisions and then seeing it run and the satisfaction was mine. I'm only a practical man so I don't profess to be anything else but a practical man and I like my work and I like what I've done and I don't think I would have worked anywhere else in the world than South Fremantle Power Station. The greatest thing I ever did was arriving at South Fremantle Power Station and as I say, it's brought my family up and it's given me a home and it's given me a great many friends so I think this is the only place in the world that a person could work.

**Lloyd Valberg:** .....the big hammers are coming down to rest. Only the bravest of ghosts will come here.

## Rosa Townsend's Story\*

### Part 2†

**Reid: What were the main advances the union made in that time?**

**Townsend:** We made a lot of strides under Eugene Fry. We got apprenticeships for cooks, we didn't have that before. We got equal pay and opportunity. I was on equal pay and opportunity committee for many years and we got that breakthrough. The Barmaids' and Barmans' union always had equal pay. If you were a woman you got the same pay as a man in the bar and just before we amalgamated with the Barmaids' and Barmans' union and brought them into the fold we had got equal pay for Barmaids and Barmans in the clubs. The stewardesses, stewards, they were on a different rate. Cooks, waitresses, they were now all on equal pay which they weren't. You know, you could have cooks working alongside of each other and the female cook was getting half the pay that the male cook was and probably doing a better job. Chefs were hard to get into the union. There are very few chefs, I would think still, very few chefs that are in the union unless they're union minded because a chef that calls himself a decent sort of chef wouldn't work for the rate of pay. They negotiate their own and I can understand that because they're trained. They're from overseas and they've trained for years to be what they are and you couldn't put somebody that had been working for shearers as a cook alongside a chef and say that's their pay. But we've now got these fast-food outlets which is a dreadful thing to my mind, the way they absolutely treat these kids, fifteen year olds, it breaks your heart. It breaks my heart. They're all millionaires, they're all making an awful lot of money and they're doing it on the backs of these fourteen and fifteen year olds, and they're paying them, I don't know what the rate is now, I think it's some \$2 something an hour, which is wrong. I don't know what we can do about it. The union, perhaps could do something as I don't think they've got cafeterias like shop cafeterias in some of the other States. They're covered under the 'Shop Assistants' Award, and the Shop Assistants are getting much more than my cafeteria girls are. They work harder than the Shop Assistants actually. There's a girl putting a pair of stockings in a bag and a girl running around clearing tables, washing up, running all the time in the food departments, and they're getting much less pay. I would rather have seen our crowd, the Liquor Trade Union give them over to the Shop Assistants so they could get that pay.

**Reid: How did you go about taking that up? What was the Committee like for example when you first went on to it? What sort of subsistence did it have?**

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\*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 second and final part of the transcript of an interview conducted by Stuart Reid as part of the Trades and Labour Council's Oral History Project. Part 1 of Rosa's story was carried in *Papers in Labour History* No. 6.

**Townsend:** Very good. I was asked to go on the committee because of the industry I was in or representing. There was teachers, there was a very fine lass, Rosalie Denning, she was the Matron of King Edward, she's just retired. Rosalie and I were great friends. There was Cruikshank, I forget her other name. You've heard of Irene Greenwood and Phil Wild. We used to meet in the Civil Service Rooms once a month and work out what we could do. It was a very uphill battle to get equal pay and opportunity, they didn't recognise females at all, you know, but we got it through. We disbanded about, I suppose, 1965-66-67. I used to go from about '63 onwards to meetings and I was also on the Trades and Labor Council. I was a delegate. Fry disaffiliated with Trade and Labor Council. I was on State Executive. When I left the union I was on there for 17 years altogether. When I left, when I upset Fry by this reform group that we had, he took me off being a delegate for State Executive. I'm not on now. I'm just as happy.

**Reid:** What about some of the male trade unionists, were they supportive of the equal pay issue too?

**Townsend:** Oh yes.

**Reid:** Did you have some on the committee as well?

**Townsend:** No. No, only women. Not in my time. I think it was going before I was invited to be on it. I suppose we didn't do a lot, I think it was just a thing that had to come. I don't think we did anything that was really great. I can't remember anything really but we just put our views forward and we contacted people and that sort of thing.

**Reid:** Did you take any cases to the Commission?

**Townsend:** Oh well, we did. In our union we did. We had... we took cases for the equal pay for cooks. We had the Commissioners have inspections and things like that and they'd go up to David Jones' cafeteria and we would point out that that cook was doing this and this cook was doing that. Your workforce is a lot to blame for low wages because they don't want to go to court. As soon as you say, "Court - go and give evidence, what they were doing against what a man was doing" they would say, "Oh a court" and they'd go to jelly. And you'd try and explain to them that you must - this is how to do it, not only for them but for people coming on. We had several cases. Well, in the end it all came about which was great.

**Reid:** And when you started working as an organiser was around the time that the Trades and Labor Council was starting as well.

**Townsend:** Just about that time yes, because it used to be the Metropolitan Council of the ALP. Jim Coleman was the secretary and Don Cooley was the president. I think they were the

first president and secretary, I'm not sure. I don't remember anyone before them so they must have been. We had a lot to do with them when we were having this trouble with this takeover of the union by the DLP.

**Reid: And you were a delegate to the TLC from the start?**

**Townsend:** Yes, yes from the start, yes. Cecilia Shelley was too, Shelley never attended but she was... but we were the two delegates. I went in '69. I remember going in '69 to the ACTU Congress, when Bob Hawke was voted into the presidency. Yes, we went to Melbourne. We couldn't afford to go. I think some of the unions helped us with a donation and we paid as much as we could. Our fares were paid because we couldn't afford it, and the union couldn't afford it, and we paid our own accommodation when we got there. We scraped up and we sold all sorts of things. We sold bits and pieces of the office to pay our fees up to the ACTU.

In 1970 we used to have what we call reciprocal visits before this from the Estonian - Trades and Labor Council - that's the USSR. Don Cooley saw me in town one day, he had been to an ILO conference and he was invited back to Estonia, and from that visit he was invited to go on a reciprocal visit, and he and his wife went from the ILO congress. The Labour movement was invited to send four unionists every two years, every two years we'd go there, and the other two years they'd come here and Don said to me, "We're wanting a woman - they want to see a woman. We've sent delegates and the Eastern States have sent delegations, but they've never sent a woman delegate and the Estonians said haven't you got any women in the union movement?" He said, "Seeing you're the only woman Trades Hall organizer, and there's no organizer of the union gone over, would you like to go? We'll put you up." I said, "I'd love to" - so I went. And that was in April of 1970. I went to Estonia and Moscow and Tashkent and all around there - took my holidays. I didn't get paid while I was going - well, I did get paid, but I took my holidays and we went for a fortnight to Moscow and had a lovely time.

Oh it was wonderful. Because we met with the equivalent to the TLC over there. We were feted, we were treated like royalty actually, it was really great. While I was there I said to my interpreter, "Red," I said, "I'd love to go to visit England - I'll never be able to afford to go to England - I'd love to go to England and look up and see if I've got any relatives there", and she said, "Why not?" So I'd had a few days to spare, you know from when my leave was up. Anyway I talked the unions into letting me have a couple of extra days. So I said, "How much is it to go from Moscow to London and back?" Oh she said, "You'd have to come back here to Moscow and then go on the flight." I said, "Good." So she said, "I'll arrange it." So she arranged it all. It was \$125 to go from Moscow to London and then back to Moscow. I had five days in London. Stayed at a little old pub. Walked around, and went to Australia House to find out if I had any relatives and I didn't. So I was quite satisfied and I came back again.

**Reid: What sorts of discussions did you have with the equivalent of the**

## **Trades & Labor Council in Estonia?**

**Townsend:** Oh, not an awful lot. Mainly they were showing off there. Of course, as you know, they're all unionists. Before I went I thought everybody in Russia was a Communist, but apparently they're not. There's only 1% or 2%. You've got to be invited to join the Communist Party in Russia. Anyway they had a stoppage. They had a stoppage in the hotel we stayed at. A stop work meeting - while we were there. The interpreter said there's a stopwork meeting in progress, we'll have to wait a little while till they've aired their differences and then we'll get back and have a meal. The secretary of the meat industry union went, Max Byrnes, the Postal Workers' secretary was Len Hale, he's dead now, he went, and a bloke named Bob Fletcher, he was with the ETU, and me. We saw over the communications system and then we were taken over the meat industry, the shale mining and the collective farms. We were running all the time. Well, I was tired out when I got back. We were running from 7 o'clock in the morning till 3 o'clock the next morning. We went to Night Clubs... we had a ball, yeah - it was great. It was a wonderful experience. Red Square, of course. May Day, we were in Tashkent, and we had May Day there. I missed May Day in Moscow though, I would've liked to have seen the Moscow one, but in this one there was over a quarter of a million people marched and they were 60 deep. It was an athletes march with all their great athletes and their kids. It was a beautifully organised march. Not heavy artillery or anything like that, not war stuff. It was good. Yeah I enjoyed it.

**Reid:** That would've been fairly shortly after your son came back from Vietnam? Did you have any difficulty with that, you know being in a communist country when your son had been away fighting communism in Vietnam?

**Townsend:** No, because I think as we all thought. I went to Moratorium marches here against Vietnam. At that time, I wanted Tony, my son, to burn his draft card and not go because I don't think we should've ever been there. And it aged me. I worried for the whole time. He was twelve months training and then twelve months in Vietnam, and I worried for that twelve months. And he was in the TET offensive, see he was there in '68. He was called up in '67, he went '68, '69 he came home. But they didn't talk about Vietnam much while we were in Russia. They didn't talk about it at all. Everything was peace. They toast, every toast was peace, that's all they seemed to want and I think that's what they still do and when he came back, thank God he was OK, very unsettled for a long time, but he was OK physically. But it was a war we should never have been in. I used to go on all the moratorium marches and as I said I wanted him to do a William White and tear up his draft card you know, and he said, (Sam was alive, then he died whilst Tony was in Vietnam) "if anything happens to Dad I would blame myself that I've killed my father by bringing all this publicity on to him." So he didn't burn his draft card, but he copped it sweet and luckily he came back.

**Reid:** You mentioned being involved with the ALP in the early days handing out leaflets with your father. Did you retain your involvement with the ALP?

**Townsend:** Oh, all the time. I still am. I'm a life member of the ALP. They made me a life member in 1980 when Bob McMullen was here. When I retired from the Union I was very lost, I was very, very lost. I didn't know what to do with my time so I came into Curtin House to see Marge Miller who was the accountant on the eighth floor, and I went up to see her and I said 'have you got any work for me to do, voluntarily work? "Oh yes", she said, "We've got a conference coming up." From then I spent every day for 5 days of every week, voluntary work. If they didn't want me I'd still come in. In those days they didn't have computers, and I did all the membership and that sort of thing. I enjoyed that, it was great. I think it was 1980 Conference, they made me a life member and I said, "What does this entail?" Bob McMillan said, "A lot of hard work for nothing". But I worked. John Curtin used to our home to see my Dad. My Dad was a Communist. He belonged to the Communist Party. He was buried a Communist. He's still got the hammer and sickle on his grave. He was a Communist from when he left England. I didn't ever join that party. I believe in lots of things. I perhaps don't believe in others, but my Dad was very dedicated to what he believed in and I respect him for that.

I've had a lot of flack over it. I remember one time this Yakich, DLP, he sent a screed out to all my members. And the girls said to me when I went in from the union, "Hey, what's this we're getting from this Yakich, your father was a Communist, your grandfather was a Communist, that's right, yeah your grandfather was a Communist". I said, "My grandfather. No. My grandfather wasn't a Communist. My grandfather died before I was born and I was born in 1917. There were no Communists then, before the Russian Revolution, there was none. They'd got a dossier on me and they did their homework but not that well. They'd found out, I'd been to a Convent. I was fifteen or sixteen when my father died, but they thought it must have been my grandfather. See he was only 46 when he died. So they worked it out it was my grandfather. But they had it all wrong. I didn't have to say, "No my father wasn't". I didn't have to explain that my father was a Communist. Not that I was ashamed of it but you could work out the connotations. I mean as soon as they said, "Oh, a Communist", it frightens them.

**Reid:** Where would they have got that sort of information?

**Townsend:** God knows! God knows! God knows, they've got ways. They're very clever. I didn't really tell anybody about that. They've picked it up from somewhere that my grandfather was a Communist. Well my Dad was. I wasn't, but my Dad was.

**Reid:** So when did you join the ALP

**Townsend:** Well I suppose I've been in the ALP all my life, I think. I wasn't very active while I was married because although my husband voted ALP, he never belonged to the party and he wasn't politically aware of anything. You know, he voted Labour and that was it. He

wouldn't let me be involved at all in those days, I think I used to perhaps go to a few rallies and things like that. A friend of mine around the corner from me was Wyn Johnson, she's dead now. Her husband was a member of Parliament for a while and she used to get me to come down on Labour Day which was the 1st of May in those days and we used to put on a thing for the orphans. We'd bring all the orphans into town and give them a picnic at the Zoo or at a picnic at Perth Oval and provide their food and if it was wet, which it mostly was, we used to have big concert in Trades Hall and hand them bags of sandwiches and cakes and fruit and lollies and I did that for years. But I wasn't a member of the party until I joined the Union, because I had to be a member to be on State Executive and that was when I sort of joined the party as a party member. But until then I'd worked in the party for years. My mum and I, we used to go to all the rallies, even the five months we were in Melbourne, we'd go to all the rallies. We'd go to all the Yarra Bank and listen to the meetings and spruik. My mum was very involved with the Franklin River Strike in the depression days and of course she spoke from the Esplanade. My Dad was too sick, so she spoke and I remember she had a red dress on and somebody said, "Oh yes, she's a red-ragger, she wore a red dress, she spoke on the Esplanade about this". You've heard of the Franklin River strike?

**Reid: No, it's not something I know about.**

**Townsend:** I don't remember a lot of it because I was only a teenager and wanting to go dancing in those days but they were all put on the Franklin River for a shilling a week, all the unemployed single men, that's about as much as I know about it. They were sent down there and did the roads and things like that. Then there was this great big march up from Franklin River and they marched into Perth, around Perth, and people spoke at the Esplanade about them. The Labour Party got involved, there was no TLC then, you know, and I remember her speaking there. Actually I thought she had a nerve to get up there and speak in front of all those people. At the time I can remember going to hear her but I belonged to the young theatre group at that time with Mauri Lashburg and we put on plays and things like that. The Eureka Club, there were party members in it, there was a lot of Communists in it too. But then when I got married I faded away, I was just a married lady and did my housework and helped in the office when I could and put up with a few bashings.

**Reid: So your married life wasn't a happy time for you?**

**Townsend:** No not really. I was very much in love with the guy but, no, he was very volatile man, very handsome and very volatile. Very jealous, very possessive more than jealous. Didn't like me mixing with my mother and that sort of thing because she opposed him when we were married. Anybody that opposed Sam was in the bad books, and he was only 49 when he died. He died four and a half years after I left him. But he was the father of my son. He was a good father, bad husband.

**Reid: To take you back again. I'm sorry I'm jumping around a fair bit. I'd like to know any recollections you've got about Jack Curtin.**

**Townsend:** Oh well, he used to come and see Dad. I'd call him "Mr Curtin" and he said, "Don't call me Mr Curtin, it's John!" Dad says, "No she's too young to call you John". He says, "Well Uncle John then". So I always said he was my courtesy Uncle John. He was a fine man and I think the weight of office killed him really. But I remember quite often he'd come up. My mother started a soup kitchen. She used to go and beg, borrow and steal in the depression days, you know. She'd get bones from the butcher and she'd go and see anybody that was growing a few vegetables and she start a soup kitchen out the back of our place in Kenny Street. Kid's would come for miles with their billies. But she was a Briton, she was really marvellous. She used to work hard and worked hard for everybody. She'd work hard at her work. She was at the Beaufort Hotel for seven years as a cook.

**Reid:** Was she involved in the union too?

**Townsend:** I've got her card. I found her union card one day, I was looking through some of her things and I found her union card and I also found a whole thing of butter rations. Ration card and union card. I think from the day that Shelley got me the money for working for that cafe, she kept in touch with Shelley and she always came and paid us threepence a week for the union, and Shelley got her on to the Management Committee of the union. She was on the Management Committee for years, I don't know how many, because I wasn't terribly involved with it or interested really. She'd say, "I've got to go to a union meeting, I've got to go to a general meeting," and things like that.

**Reid:** And then later when you joined the union, Cecilia Shelley didn't know that your mother was on the committee?

**Townsend:** No. I mean I was fifteen/sixteen when she got that money for me and I was Rosa Foster then and when I got the job, of course, I was Rosa Townsend and she didn't realise that I was one and the same person. She was always worried about the DLP and I always remember the day she said it. We'd been out together looking at some books or something and we were coming over the Horseshoe Bridge when she stopped in the middle of it one day. She'd been pretty hard on me for about three months I think, and she said, "Tell me, are you a plant from the DLP?"

I looked at her and I laughed. I said, "Is that why you've been giving me such a bad time, you old devil. You've been giving me an awful time." She was, she would hardly speak to me, real rough.

And she said, "I thought you were a plant from the DLP."

I said, "Don't you know who I am?"

And she said, "No."

I said, "I'm Fossie's daughter," (that's what they used to call my mum).

She said, "You're not Fossie's daughter."

I said, "I am. Yes, my name's Townsend now, but it was Foster."

She put her arms around me and she said, "Oh my darling, I am sorry. I didn't know. Why didn't you tell me?"

I said, "I naturally thought you knew, but I thought you were giving me a hell of a time."

She said, "I adored your mum, she's a real battler. She worked so hard for the union, the movement, for everybody."

And I said, "I know, that's why I couldn't understand it."

So from then on I could do no wrong. You know, I was okay and she treated me very well. I remember one time I'd been there about three weeks, before she found out who I was. Well, go back a bit. When I joined the union I was given seven awards, a list of names of places and members - current members and told 'go out and get them'. So I thought, "Oh my God, where do I start." I worked out a plan. I'll go the City Block and go to every hotel and big restaurant and ask if I can see the Manager, introduce myself and ask "when would it be convenient to see your staff." So I spent the first week doing that. Didn't get any money - Shelley was upset about it.

I said, "I've been making appointments."

"You don't do that," she said, "You just bowl in and get the money."

So I said, "Oh well, I'll get it next week."

I hadn't written out hardly a receipt you see. So I went into all the hotels and I went into the City Hotel and the Licensee's wife was there and I asked when would it be convenient and did my little spiel. "Oh," she said, "Come on Monday at 2 o'clock, that's when they get paid and they will be all be here in the office and you can see them as they get paid and they'll pay the Union."

"Oh," I said, "Fine, that's great." So I walked out.

The following Monday I went in and this fellow, great big six foot fellow said to me, "Who are you?"

I said, "I'm from the Union. I've already introduced myself to your wife last week, I've got an appointment here to see your members."

"You can get out," he said, "You won't see my members."

I said, "But I had made an appointment."

"I don't care who you made the appointment with, I'm the licensee. Get out."

He said, "Anyway, where did you work before you got this job, you're new?"

"Yes," I said, "I m new, very new."

He said, "Where did you work? You must have got the sack!"

I said, "I beg your pardon. I didn't get the sack. And I don't have to answer to you. I'm representative, here's my credential."

He said, "I don't want to see that bit of rubbish. Piss off."

And I said, "I've never been spoken to like that."

He said, "You're drunk."

"I beg your pardon," I said, "I ve never been spoken to like that in all my life. Don't you dare. You're drunk. You're drunk in charge of premises and that's an offence." So I got on the attack.

He said, "Get out, or I'll throw you out!"

So I got my briefcase and I hot footed it over to Trades Hall. "I'm not going to take this. I

can't stand this I'm going." So I went into the office all flushed in the face, put my briefcase down. Shelley said, "Who's upset you?"

I said, "The Licensee down in City Hotel."

She said, "Thompson."

I said, "Yes, that's his name."

She said, "Oh, I got him for a lot of money a while ago. Come back with me. Oh no," she said, "just a minute". So she went back in and she rang up. "Mr Thompson." They said, "He's not in."

She said, "Tell him to be there in ten minutes because it's Miss Shelley here. I'm coming straight over." She said, "Come on".

I said, "They said he wont be there Miss Shelley."

She said, "He'll be there." So back we walked into the City Hotel.

We got there and he said, "Hello Miss Shelley," shook hands with her, "Nice to see you Miss Shelley, how are you?" He said, "I wont have that woman here" - that was me.

She said, "She is my Organizer and if I send her here, she'll be here. Now I want to see your staff."

He said, "They've all gone," because they had all been paid and gone.

Miss Shelley said, "She'll be back next Monday. In the meantime, let me look at your books". So she turned over the time book.

"Oh yes, Miss Shelley, the time and wages."

She said, "Oh yes, I remember you. I got you for a lot of money when you were at Merredin. "Take this down," she said, "How many hours in a half day. This girl's worked six hours. There's only four hours in a half day. Put that down." So and so, and so and so - two hours overtime." I'm writing madly. She said, "You'll get the bill."

"Alright, Miss Shelley," he said, "But I won't have....."

She said, "I beg your pardon, what were you going to say?"

He said, "I don't want that woman coming in here."

She said, "She'll be coming in every Monday of every three months, she'll be here and any trouble from you, anyway, you've got a bill here to fix up before this, we'll work it all out."

I never saw him again. His wife used to deal with me. She'd come out and say, "Hello, how are you?" You want to see the staff?" She'd call the staff up and they all got a bit more pay and everything was beautiful. Then he was leaving and I said, "Hooray". A few months later I said to Shelley, "Thompson's leaving the City". She said, "Oh, that's good". Anyhow he left but he went to the Royal Standard and I thought, "Oh my God, here we go again, the Royal Standard was one of mine too". Anyway it was alright. His wife dealt with me and she was a lovely woman, but he just hated me on sight. You get some funny things. I was thrown out of pubs. I got along quite well with a lot of the employers by talking to them. I sort of got friendly. I had some very funny experiences too, with employers, but I was a lot younger then.

**Reid:** What sorts of things?

**Townsend:** Oh heck. I had a bloke at the Savoy Hotel. He was a drunk. He was always drunk. I'd go in in the mornings about 9 am when they were having breakfast. I went in one

day and he said "I want to see you on the second floor in my office." His big office was on the second floor. I went up with him and he opened the door for me. As I got in he kicked it shut. He grabbed me and said, "I've wanted to do this for ages." "Oh," I thought, "What am I going to do now. Here I am on the second floor, nobody around." I just stiffened up and said, "Excuse me, Mr Williams."

He said, "Can't we make a little bit of love?"

I said, "Mr Williams, if I made love to every manager I see, by the end of the day I'd be worn out" I thought, "That's the only way to deal with it, joke it off. "Don't be silly," I said, "Now come on, what did you want to see me about?"

He opened the book and he said, "Oh; this and this and this"

I didn't know what I was reading. I said, "Oh yes, yeh, well that seems alright." I'm backing off towards the door. He never ever looked at me again, never spoke to me again. In fact, he used to see me coming and he'd walk away. It was one of his lapses. Another time I went to His Majesty's Hotel and the yardman was there and he said, "Oh, the money's up in the TV room with my clothes. I leave my things there. If you come up after you've finished with the girls I'll pay you". So I went up. The door was shut and I thought, "Oh hell", but I went in and it was dark. I put on the light and he was there alright. He had no clothes on. He said, "Come in". And I said, "Oh, my God." Different things have happened, some of them funny things. But mainly, it was a lot of fun, oh dear. You had some great times. No money as I say, but fun.

**Reid: So how did you get on then? Was that your only income that you were reliant on what income you did get from it?**

**Townsend: Yes.**

**Reid: It must have been difficult financially for you?**

**Townsend:** It was. I was lucky, when I left my husband I had a flat. Tony (my son) and I got a flat in the Causeway Flats and I think I was getting from the Union 25 pounds a week and you had to run a car. Tony got a job. My husband had him at Scotch College while we were with him and when I left him he took him away from Scotch and I found him a job. He was working for the Trade Protection Association, just an office boy, and on his pay we bought a car. Funnily enough we bought it from my husband, no deposit, but I got a personal loan from the R & I Bank and these friends of mine went guarantor for me. We were paying that off, three pound a week. That was Tony's wage. When I was working for David Jones I think the pay was about twelve pound ten a week and I was paying six pound a week rent. I applied to the Housing Commission. I got a flat when Tony was 19, just before his callup. I got a flat at Wandana, 2 bedroom flat, which was cheap rent. It was good. I was getting about twenty five pound a week then from the Union, so it was nearly double what I was getting in the industry, but you had to run a car, you didn't get any car allowance. It didn't go up very much, it was about \$50 a week when it was dollars, so it wasn't very much, and you had to run a car. Ours was only a bomb. It was hard to keep on the road, but we managed. It was

handy. It was better than working in the industry. It was better pay than that, but very poor pay compared to what other unions were getting. Other organisers used to say to me, "Take Fry to court about the rates of pay. The Union is quite rich now." They've got all payroll deductions and now they've got a big Taj Mahal for an office. Board rooms and all sorts of things. He wouldn't ever re-affiliate with the TLC which I was disappointed with because we were members, but the ALP was able to do a deal with him and pay on 40% of the membership I believe.

**Reid: So this was an affiliation with the ALP?**

**Townsend:** The ALP, yes. They did a deal with him but as Bob McMullen said to me, 40% is better than nothing and they affiliated on 40%. I don't know whether they still do because, you see, Fry's argument was that they had so many casual and part time workers in the industry that he was paying the same affiliation fees as the Brewery Union were paying on their membership. Our members were only paying a portion of the fees and our fees were so small. It was costing us, he used to point out to the management committee, about 80c in the dollar to collect the fees so there was nothing left over for the running of the union. But he did a good job financially because I believe they've got \$300,000 in the bank now so probably everybody's getting a lot better deal now. They should be.

**Reid: On the subject of Miss Shelley what was the view of Miss Shelley during the time that you were working there?**

**Townsend:** Well the membership thought she was getting too old, she'd been there too long. She was secretary from when she was about 19 and for 47 years and she would never tell anybody her age. Everybody said she must be 80. She was very bright for her years, but as I said earlier, she got tired, you know, physically tired. She didn't update the awards and things like that. She'd never been opposed or had to hold an election until this Michael Yakich (he was a chef at the Shaftsbury Hotel) argued. Michael himself wasn't a bad bloke and they ran him. He opposed her and they had an election. I think it was the first time they had an election. She won and then it was nit-picking all the time. They took it to the Court of Disputed Returns. There were more court cases, more litigation and the Court upheld Miss Shelley's case.

Then the next year he opposed her again and he had the machine behind him. After he'd gone, we found books and books and books of receipts of members dues. We had never heard of them, they were never on the books. He beat her by 11 votes in that one. Well she went and got rid of all the records. She burnt them. First of all, we went to a union meeting. They had on the committee an old chap named Mr Anastakis as the President, and Michael Yakich as the new Secretary. He stood up in the meeting and said, "The Union's in a dreadful state," which it was, financially. "Are we going to make it pay?" He had the meeting stacked, absolutely stacked and someone said, "Well, what are we going to do about it" as a plant. "Oh well, what we can do is we can do without staff, sack the office girl. A friend of mine will do the office

for nothing and we'll sack the organisers and I'll do it on my own". Somebody said, "We want someone to move it". Oh yes, there was a mover, and there was a seconder. Fry looked at me and I said, "We've been sacked," and he said, "Yep, just like that." So he said, "What'll we do." He just barged out, just about closed the meeting then, that was all the meeting was about.

Harold Skidmore, who was the Baker's and Pastry Cooks Union secretary, said, "They can't do that."

I said, "He's done it."

"Well," he says, "We'll go up and see Bowyer," he was the Registrar of the Industrial Court. First of all, we went into the office and were handed this note. "Give your briefcases in, all you monies in" and Yakich had sacked our office girl too, and he said "Give all you papers in, all your books, and here's your note." There was no money in the Union, they weren't going to pay us any holiday pay or anything else you see and this was 'goodbye, thank you'. It wasn't even a golden handshake.

So we go down to see Skidmore. "What do we do now?"

He said, Well you go to the Industrial Court." So he rang up and we went to see the Registrar. Of course, he took the rules and constitution and he said, "So damn complicated, it hadn't been updated, hadn't been revised or anything for years and because the rules are so he can do it." So we went out and we got pamphlets. The other unions helped us, because they didn't want him in there and we saturated the place with pamphlets. He got a court order to have us stopped and he'd put out screeds - "Don't let Mrs Townsend and Mr Fry see staff" but we were holding meetings with staff for ten weeks. We didn't have any pay, but we worked. We got a good group around us. We went to every hotel and every restaurant, you know, all the metropolitan area and we called meetings and there was a great big write up. They were saying "Trouble in the Hotel Club Caterers' Union". "Fry and Townsend have been sacked". We had this story that Jan Mayman, the journalist, wrote. The papers wouldn't print it so she got it printed in the Smith's Weekly under great big headlines - "Hitler's cook, sacks Union Organiser" because he was a cook for Hitler during the war. He boasted this. "Hitler's cook sacks Vietnam soldier's mother whose child, only child, whose only son was fighting in Vietnam." It'd make you cry. A great big screed. We were on television. The Reporters came to see us. Some of my friends said, "God I know that voice, that's Rosa". Of course, they got all these screeds out about us, about how my grandfather was a communist and all of this sort of thing.

It was a horrible campaign and in the end we didn't know what to do. Fry had the key to the padlock on the office, and we changed the locks. We sat out the front of the Trades Hall and watched Yakich go up and try to open the office. He couldn't. We went up and we served him with a summons but he wouldn't have a bar of it. He had that summons to attend court. Then we went to a chap we knew and we called this general meeting. He framed this five or six point resolution, and we called a special meeting and it was carried. Yakich said, "Oh well, no confidence vote, you don't like me but I'm going to carry on". So then we had this other meeting and we took him to court for misrepresentation and other charges, I don't know what

they were now. I was trying to make a living and trying to eat and pay my bills and it went on for ten weeks anyway. We were eight or nine days in court and the judge threw Yakich out. We got rid of him and we walked back into the office and we asked at a meeting. We got them to appoint Skidmore as Acting Secretary until everything was resolved. He'd burnt a lot of stuff, got rid of a lot. We finally got him out anyway. We were signing along trying to get money, trying to sort it out, and we got this little office girl back again. Fry was going out and we were getting a bit of money in, not enough to pay wages or rent.

I went down to the WA Club one day to collect, it was their day due and I bowled in and a fellow said to me, "The bloke that took over the Union was in here yesterday and collected all the wages. All the pay."

"Oh my God," I said, "Have you got the receipt Bob?"

He said, "Yeh, here it is." He'd started up his own little Union at home, in Federal Street Osborne Park and he'd had them printed. It had 'M.Yakich, Secretary, 188 Federal Street, Osborne Park'. Well we took action stopping him carrying on himself as Secretary. We had started to collect ourselves and we got that all sorted out. The Arbitration Court judge made the rule that he wasn't allowed to be a member of the Liquor Trades Union or the Caterers.

Some years later I went into the Kings Park Restaurant and David Love, the licensee there, said, "I've got somebody you'd like to meet," and he said, "Michael Yakich, he's my chef."

I said, "Bloody hell, David, you haven't!"

He said, "Yes I have, come out in the kitchen".

I said, "Oh I don't want to meet him" because he actually told someone that he was going to knife Jim Coleman. He reckons Jim Coleman was the instigator of all this and he was a Croatian, bit of a nasty piece of work. I went into the kitchen, I used to always go into the kitchen, they were very good at Kings Park Restaurant. The girls said, "Hello Rosa," and they said, "Look who's here."

I said, "Mr Love's told me." I came in and Yakich said, "Hello Mrs Townsend".

I said, "Hello Michael, how are you?"

He said "I'm very well. I cannot pay you any money because I'm not allowed to join your Union".

And I said, "No, that's right Michael, that's very right". All the girls paid me and I'd go down and have afternoon tea with them and they said, "He's still a nasty piece of work. He gives those apprentice cooks hell. He dobs them in all the time. He's really hard on his apprentices".

I said "Oh yeh, that'd be him". But he was as good as gold - "Hello Mrs Townsend." I haven't seen him for many many years.

**Reid: What effect did that have Miss Shelley?**

**Townsend:** When Shelley accepted that she was gone, she was alright. She was in the fight. She wasn't terribly keen on Eugene Fry being Secretary, she wanted me, "You should be there not him". I used to go and see her and I went out when she was in a home. She had all her faculties, right up to her last. She was bright as a button. Somebody said she was 91,

somebody said 97, I wouldn't have a clue because she wouldn't tell me. She did stop me one time, and she said, "You know I'm 70 in January. That was in about June 1963, next January she was 70. It's the only time she's even said her age but whether that was even true I don't know. Going on my mother's age, my mother was 82 in 1969 and I think she'd have been my mother's age.

**Reid: Just before we finish, there were a couple of other things you wanted to mention about Cecilia Shelley.**

**Townsend:** Oh, Cecilia Shelley, she was very well known. She came originally from the Goldfields, I believe, and I think she was 19 when she was voted or appointed to the position of Hotel Club Caterer's secretary. She had a great record in those days. She was a real fire cracker. She had the Albany Bell girls from the tea rooms out on strike when they had their premises in Forrest Place and she had the Esplanade Hotel in Perth picketed. That was the big hotel in Perth, the very expensive hotel where Bob Menzies, Joan Fontaine and all those people stayed. I believe she had them on strike for months and she was very well known.

She was known as the "tigress of Trades Hall" to all the Unionists and everyone was frightened of her. I remember one time going into the Strand Cafe and I walked through to the kitchen to see the staff and the owner came in and he said, "Get out! What are you doing here?"

I said, "I'm just seeing your staff, Chris, your cook and any staff. I m collecting fees".

And he said, "I won't have the union here, get out.". I said, "Oh well, that's alright, I'll just go and get Miss Shelley."

"Oh," he said "No, no, no. You don't get Miss Shelley, you don't get Miss Shelley, don't bring Miss Shelley here. I fight with her, I fright with her." I didn't know whether he was frightened of her or fought with her, I wasn't sure. He was Greek. You just mentioned Miss Shelley to your members or your employers and they used to go to water - "Oh no! We don't want Shelley here, don't bring her into it . She was really a firecracker, she really had the union her way. Pity she got old.

## Aboriginals in the Pastoral Industry of Western Australia to 1968: The Nature of Their Exploitation and Resistance\*

Rachael Roberts†

*If certain people had the chance, they would shoot the blackfellas like they're shooting donkeys, because they've got no jobs for them!* (Ivan Watson, 1988:146)

In the 1960's and early 1970's, a group of Australian historians emerged from the student protest movement of the time. Known as the New Left, they often used a Marxist framework to ask questions of Australian history which had hitherto been largely ignored. Sparked by the civil rights campaign in the USA, the New Left brought the plight of Australian Aborigines into focus (Merritt 1982: 124).

Labour historians have since entered into detailed debates regarding the nature of racism in the Australian labour movement as it applies to non-European immigrants (as enshrined in the White Australia Policy). However, very little mention has been made of Aborigines in Australian Labour History.

Labour historians should be criticised for the way they have neglected Aboriginal history in much the same way as they themselves criticised orthodox historians for failing to notice the "common" man in history. Labour historians have traditionally focussed on the heroes of the labour movement, the development of organisations and institutions, and the great achievements of the movement. Yet, even with the changes wrought by the New Left labour historians, the plight (or fight) of the Aboriginal within the capitalist mode of production in Australia has been largely ignored. This is incongruous, as Aborigines have perhaps experienced the most desperate struggle of any group (of workers) within Australian capitalism.

This neglect has been partly propagated by the empiricist/positivist approach to orthodox and Labour history alike. The British historian E.H. Carr, claims that this method is fundamentally flawed. For Carr, historians select facts in terms of the questions they are asking. Therefore history based on empiricism is neither detached nor objective, as its proponents would hold. The criterion of significance as applied to the selection of facts is seen as the product of cultural and political values (Merritt, 1982:125).

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\* This paper was first written as an essay in UWA's Australian Labour History unit and won for its author the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwright's Union Prize for the best essay in that course.

† Rachael Roberts now works as an industrial research officer and organiser with the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union, WA Branch.

Therefore, facts need to be considered within a theoretical, rather than individual framework. Since the 1970's, a Marxist or neo-Marxist model of the development of capitalism has often been used as a framework in which to view race and ethnic relations in an expanding world of capitalism (Hartwig, 1975:119).

Mervyn Hartwig has suggested the use of such a framework when writing about Aboriginal history in Australia. Hartwig extends the theory of Internal colonialism espoused by Harold Wolpe in his analysis of South African Society. The theory of internal colonialism views society as a composite of class relations and race and ethnic relations. It therefore differs from theories which have tended to subsume race relations under class relations (Hartwig, 1975).

Using a Marxist framework the nature of the colonial relationship is defined, exploitation is expressed as a production relationship, whereby the capitalist class adopts a policy concerning the non-capitalist mode of production which enables the capitalist mode of production to expand. This policy, and therefore exploitation, is variable and dynamic.

In the pastoral industry of Western Australia, the Aboriginal people were subject to a policy of domination, segregation and conservation. The pastoralists were able to extract the only commodities Aborigines had to offer them, that is their labour-power and the sexual services of women, most efficiently by leaving the Aboriginal communities partly intact (Hartwig, 1975). Hartwig argues that internal colonialism is characterised by the fact that the exploitation is masked by an ideology focussing on race and ethnicity. In this way an exploitative class relationship may be sustained by capital. Internal colonial relations only cease when the racial or ethnic group is no longer isolated ideologically from the class relations within the capitalist mode of production.

### **Kings in Grass Castles**

During the early 1860's pastoral expansion began north of the Tropic of Capricorn, and with the opening of the Kimberleys in the early 1880's, all the areas the Europeans thought were habitable in the north-west had been settled. The resultant relations between settlers and Aborigines were initially very similar to the pattern set throughout the continent. The settlers were met with fierce resistance from a people determined to defend their land. By this time there was little doubt in Aborigines minds of how "civilization" would affect their lives. As early as 1856, Charles Archer was confronted at Fitzroy River by Aborigines openly voicing their determination to destroy all whites who continued in that direction (Reynolds, 1981:70).

The whites were as eager to enter the north-west, however, as the Aborigines were to keep them out. As Shaw (1979:262) writes: '....this was the province of companies and large holdings and the "Kings in grass castles" tradition.' Land and cattle were the order of the day, and Aborigines were seen as a direct threat to both. Due to their isolation, Biskup (1973:17) believes pastoralists tended to exaggerate the danger and saw every Aborigine as a thief or

killer. Shaw (1979:263) suggests that the shooting and gaoling of Aborigines was more commonly in retaliation for cattle spearing, than for the killing of Europeans.

Despite this, the resistance of the Aborigines can not be underestimated. In 1879 a Queensland newspaper wrote:

During the last four or five years the human life and property destroyed by the Aborigines in the North totals up to a serious amount.....settlement on the land, and the developments of minerals and other resources of the country have been in a great degree prohibited by the hostility of the Blacks, which still continues with undiminished spirit.(Reynolds, 1981:91)

Throughout the nineteenth century, violence towards the Aborigine was by and large condoned by public opinion (Lippman, 1981:24). Usurpation was justified by the imperialist influenced adoption of "Social Darwinism". Societies were seen as developing entities with the European model at the apex. "Inferior" indigenous peoples "assimilated" (entered society at the lowest rung) or became extinct, as the "weaker" society of the two.

In 1883, Alexander Forrest, encapsulated this attitude in Parliament:

.....whether the life of one European is not worth a thousand natives, so far as settlement of the country is concerned. A native does nothing to improve the carrying capabilities of the country; he does nothing at all in fact, unless it is some mischief.(McLeod, 1982:30)

Forrest was wrong. Biskup (1973) and Reynolds (1981) both argue that Aboriginal labour was the foundation of the prosperity of settlers. The Sergeant of Police in Carnarvon in 1904, Thomas Houlahan, gave evidence to the 1904 Royal Commission on the Condition of Natives that supported the payment of wages to Aboriginal workers "because they honestly earn a fair wage" (Roth, 1905:48).

John Martin, a Sub-Collector of Customs and Shipping Master in Port Hedland supplied further evidence to the Commission of settler dependence, and also exploitation. Martin reported that drovers and carriers from Turkey Creek station take young Aboriginal women with them droving to "help get wood and water, and other reasons best guessed"...and added to this that.."To tell the truth, they cannot do without them" (ibid :82). In a reply to a question asked about the treatment of "blacks" by station managers, Martin again refers to the pastoralists dependence on women workers:

As regards the Fitzroy district, I consider that it is a disgrace. From what I have seen there, in the majority of cases women are employed. The "boss" has his own fancy woman, and the overseer has from eight to ten to choose from. I have seen not one but several whipped at night for allowing sheep to wander or because they did not muster the sheep in the paddocks. (ibid :83).

Furthermore, in response to a question about the treatment of Aboriginal workers by Kimberley pastoralists, Martin says:

They have to work night and day, and all they get is a bit of clothing and a little food. They are only half-fed and half-clothed. It only costs about a shilling a week to keep them. When they get old and infirm they are allowed to lie down and die. (ibid :83).

This evidence, in keeping with most given at the Commission, is brief and begs further investigation. Unfortunately, Commissioner Roth appeared far more concerned with the expropriation of government funds than with conditions of employment of Aboriginal workers. Despite this, the brief sketch of conditions by Martin is interesting in its focus on pastoralists' dependence on women workers, and also in that it corresponds with Aborigines' recollections from this time right through to the 1960s. This dependence was verified by the pastoralists themselves, when during the 1946-1949 Pilbarra strike, they sent delegations to the Minister for Native Affairs informing him of their inability to muster their sheep or commence shearing without Aboriginal labour (MacDonald, 14/4/47, cited in Hess, 1989 :31).

From the 1880s onwards, Aboriginal communities were forced to become part of station life, and the station became a way of life for many Aborigines in the north west of Australia. Some Aborigines joined stations voluntarily, curiosity overcoming fear of the European lifestyle. Many people were also kidnapped for their labour and/or sexual services. Eventually, even those people who had been able to maintain some distance were forced to congregate around the station camp to escape the "tightening vice of hunger or violence" (Reynolds, 1981:92).

### **The "Employment" Relationship**

The employment relationship established by the pastoralists in the 1880's was reinforced by Government policy and so maintained through to the late 1960's. The pastoral lobby possessed power far beyond their numbers and

Like other groups concerned with the preservation of the status quo.....it operated subtly through powerful allies in parliament, the civil service and the press. (Biskup,1973:76)

If government policy went against their interests, they ignored it as much as they were able. However, both of the important Acts pertaining to Aboriginal Affairs in Western Australia, that is the Aboriginal Act 1905 and the Native Administration Act 1936, supported the exploitation of Aboriginal labour. The Commissioners who ran the two parliamentary Inquiries into the welfare of Western Australian Aborigines,.....Dr W. E. Roth and H.D. Moseley, both reported that pastoralists did not abuse their position as employers, although Roth "defined a situation of widespread iniquity and abuse in which pastoralists, among others participated" (Woenne, 1979:333-334). However, Roth saw this as resulting from a lack of Government "protection" of Aborigines and therefore saw it as an legislative problem. Moseley dismissed as unfounded all the allegations of maltreatment of Aborigines he had investigated (Biskup, 1973:167).

The 1904 “Royal Commission on the Condition of the Natives” provides an insight into the legal environment surrounding Aboriginal employment in the pastoral industry in Western Australia (Roth, 1905). Roth reported the use of contracts as well as indentures as the means by which employers bound Aboriginals into service. An interesting situation existed, however, where out of the estimated 4,000 Aboriginal employees only one twelfth were employed under contract. Out of this number only 53 contracts were reported as stipulating a wage. In the majority of cases where Aboriginals were not bound by contract, both the pastoralists and police implemented a system which ensured that workers remained with a particular employer (ibid,7-8).

The “indentures of apprenticeship” were legal, and as Roth admitted, unjust (ibid:9). The law made provision for a child as young as six to be indentured to an employer until his or her twenty-first birthday at no cost to the employer whatsoever. One can only guess at how many children remained in their employers service indefinitely, even after the practice became illegal.

The employment status of women has not been documented to date, however, out of the estimated 369 people employed under contract in 1904, it was said that 111 of these people were women. It was also reported that warrants and goal sentences were issued for Aboriginal women absconding from service, as they were for men (ibid, 7). On the question of Aboriginal workers rights to wages, Roth appears to have been most influenced by the pastoralists threats to evict Aboriginals from “their stations” if they were forced to pay wages. The Chief Protector of Aboriginals, Henry Prinsep, explains the situation during evidence he gave to the Commission in this manner:

Many of the squatters merely go on employing natives simply to keep them from disturbing their stock, and generally declare that, as a source of labour, black labour is the most expensive they could have. In many cases I feel sure that humane consideration drives the squatter just to find work for the resident tribes to keep them from being a pest to his runs (ibid. 35-36).

This statement is particularly illustrative of the “humane consideration” which may be extended (however vaguely) to an Aboriginals willing to work within the capitalist mode of production, who is otherwise to be cast aside as a “pest”. - a state of affairs understood only too well by the author of the quotation which opened this paper.

The result in this particular debate was a recommendation from Roth to make “each contract conditional on one destitute aboriginal being rationed for every native lawfully employed” or have a wage paid that could be recouped by the government for rations disbursed. Such a compromise was advantageous for the government and pastoralists alike. Roth goes on to argue that “able-bodied” blacks not be relieved of their responsibilities towards those who cannot work, which would result in nothing less than an abuse of charity (ibid, 22-23).

The employment conditions in the Aboriginal Act 1905 virtually remained the norm for Aboriginals until the 1960’s, that is the introduction of employments contracts, the prohibition of employment of children under the age of sixteen, the provision of “good and sufficient”

rations, clothing and blankets and medical attention. Of all these, the use of employment permits was most widely enforced. Through these permits the Department of Aboriginal Affairs was able to keep a watch on pastoralists' use of relief money. The permits could also be used to arrest Aborigines for deserting their employers service (Lippman, 1981:26).

Stockmen, in their account of station-life describe far harsher punishments by pastoralists anxious to control their workforce. Jack Shandley describes how his father was seized, chained up and marched back to the home station, where he was tied up and flogged.

They used to use a pick handle or whatever they could pick up. They really belted that old man!.....And then they put him back to work.....They were like policemen, those Station Managers.(Shandley, 1988:72)

This incident occurred at Christmas Creek. Shandley also recalls an incident in which the managers from Cherrabun, Christmas Creek, Bohemia Downs and Go Go stations shot an excellent stockman who refused to go droving because he was "...spoiling the young fellas!" (1988:66).

The pastoralists policing over the Aborigines was total. They decided the quantity and type of food, the opportunity for medical attention, the age at which children began to work, the length of time off for the wet season, as well as how much noise could be made at night. Yet they were caught in a double bind, between domination and dependence and Elkin (1937, cited in Evans, Saunders and Cronin, 1975:109) describes how an Aboriginal was called a mongrel or an animal, yet at the same time their labour was indispensable and the women desired and taken.

The justification for exploitation used by the pastoralists was two-pronged. Firstly, Europeans saw Aborigines in the labour-force as constituting something "useful". Therefore direct and forceful methods were deemed necessary to keep them servile, and "useful" (Evans et al, 1975:110). Being viewed as an economic possession, they were no more or less than a horse or bullock. As such, they were only used in tasks considered demeaning and arduous for whites. They were supposedly never brought into economic competition with white workers. Secondly, Aborigines were also stereotyped as the faithful and child-like native servant (Evans et al, 1975:114). It was felt that Aborigines had only reached a child-like state and needed to be treated fairly and firmly. This idea was often used to justify the withholding of wages. It was "not desirable that natives should be in possession of spending money" (Gale, Chief Protector, cited in Reynolds, 1981:77).

Of course, the reality of the situation was often far removed from the perspective of the Europeans. Jimmy Bird, a full-blood stockman born in 1901 saw the situation as the Whitefella bludging on the Blackfella.

When a new manager came along it was the Aboriginal people who taught them the proper way to handle cattle (1988:103).

It was also the case that Aboriginals became managers and head stockman of the smaller outposts on stations (Watson, 1988:122, 136). Shandley had Europeans (kartiya) working under him who were paid while he received no wages.

Until the second World War only a half of the Aboriginal stockman in Western Australia received a wage. Their wage rate was a lot lower than the European equivalent (Broome, 1982:130). In the Kimberleys wages were a rarity right through to the 1960's. In the Pilbara there was evidence of a degree of independence in the emergence of "contractors". These people had a greater economic bargaining power, and from their ranks emerged important leaders in the post war strike movement.

### **White and Black Workers**

In the north-west of Western Australia there was intense animosity from organized labour towards Aboriginal labour. In 1908 a deputation of Kimberley shearers told the travelling inspector of Aborigines that pastoralists should not be allowed to employ Aborigines if white men could be found to do the job (Biskup, 1973:78). In 1912 the State Executive of the Labor Party wanted to ban the employment of Aboriginal labour on private properties (Biskup, 1973:79). Acting on the assumption that no employer would employ an Aborigine who was paid the same as a white, the AWU attempted to include Aboriginals in the Shearers and Agricultural Labourers Award as an avenue of exclusion from 1928 (Markus, 1978:144).

In defence of trade unions it could be argued that organizing Aboriginal labour within the legal environment in which Aborigines existed would have been extremely difficult. However, a study of AWU policy, the main union in the West Australian cattle industry, does not support such a line of argument. Local branches of the AWU decided separately on the admission of Aborigines, and the intention was clearly racist. Biskup (1973:162) points out that many part-Aborigines in Broome and Port Hedland were educated and aspired to white status (as was demonstrated by the creation of the Euralian Association). In Broome however, ".....they found it almost impossible to get permanent jobs, for they were excluded from membership of the Australian Workers' Union.....", while in Port Hedland, the few part-Aborigines who managed to join the AWU were usually last to be considered when labour was required at the wharf.

The Communist Party of Australia (CPA) was one of the very few sections of the labour movement which supported Aborigines. This support was based on the internationalist outlook of the CPA, which stipulated the embracing of all workers and was particularly pronounced in the period 1928-1931, when the Communist International Party, of which the C.P.M. was an affiliate, adopted a specific race policy, and the Pan Pacific Secretariat took a more active stance. The ACTU was an affiliate of this body from 1927-1930. The CPA was not very successful in the area of influencing union policy, but made significant inroads in assisting Aborigines brought before the courts on capital charges.

### **The Pilbara Strike**

The strike in the Pilbara was the outcome of many years of discussion amongst the Aboriginals concerning the clash of Aboriginal and European cultures. In the planning of the strike at Skull Springs, the Elders of the region gathered to discuss how their traditional life could be protected, and their living conditions on the stations improved (Wilson, 1979:160).

The strike was suggested and coordinated by two Aboriginals, Dooly-Bin-Bin and Clancy McKenna, and Don McLeod; a European who was born in Western Australia and began fighting for Aboriginal rights a few years earlier in Port Hedland.

In May 1946, just before the shearing season, 20 of the 22 Pilbara stations were strike-bound. The strikers were demanding 30 shillings a week plus keep and better conditions. The strikers were not only challenging their “employers”, but also the colonial establishment. During the three year period it was not uncommon for 50 to 60 men to be in jail in relation to the strike. Many were arrested at gun point and then placed in neck chains. The authorities used the Native Affairs Act for the protection of the pastoralists. McLeod was arrested seven times during the period of the strike, charged with being within five chains of a congregation of natives”, “for inciting natives to leave their lawful employment” and once for forgery (1984:49).

Due to their isolation from the centre of the strike, the strike movements in Broome, Derby and some inland towns were short-lived, yet the Pilbara strike continued for three years. Many Aboriginals lived off the land and some, guided by Donald McLeod, formed private companies. Others left the pastoral industry altogether.

The effects of the Pilbara strike were felt throughout the pastoral industry in Western Australia, and on some stations the total demands of the strikers became reality. Eventually the establishment won out. The strike was extremely successful, however, as a move towards Aboriginals taking control of their destinies, and in forcing the industry to actively defend its interests. That the pastoral industry did so using all the avenues at its disposal is telling of the dependence of this industry on Aboriginal labour. Moreover the strike sparked a burgeoning political movement by Aboriginal people.

During the 1950s and 1960s Aboriginals formed organizations to press for civil and land rights. The Federal Council for Aboriginal Advancement placed considerable pressure on the Trade Unions Congress, lobbying in 1959, 1961 and again in 1963. Finally, the ACTU adopted a policy of ending all discrimination against Aboriginal labour and, in 1965, it actively supported the AWU and Northern Australian Workers’ Union in their application to have Aboriginal pastoral workers included within industry awards.

### **An Equal Wage?**

In 1965, in an historic judgment, the Commission decided that “there must be one industrial

law, similarly applied to all Australians, Aboriginal or not” (cited in Broome, 1982:140). The sell-out was complete. John Watson points out that,

...during the ‘fifties and ‘sixties Aboriginal stockman started pushing for better wages. They didn’t realise the drastic effect it would have on their lives. (1988:208).

It is true that many individuals in the labour movement worked hard for equal wages for Aborigines and without this support progress would have been much slower. The motives of the AWU and NWU, however, are indeed dubious. The pastoralists presented their case (prepared by {Sir} John Kerr) alleging that Aboriginal workers were less efficient than European workers. The unionists did not give Aborigines a chance to testify and dispute this erroneous argument. The result was the insertion of a “slow worker” clause in the award. Markey (1978:155) suggests that the aims of the AWU and NAWU had not changed since the first years of the century. They hoped that by bringing skilled Aboriginal workers within the industry awards, pastoralists would choose not to employ them, and to employ white workmen instead.

The Commission’s acceptance of the application to delay the implementation of the equal wage for three years benefited the pastoralists enormously. Not only were they saved \$4 million in wages (the Aborigines were deprived of the same amount) (Broome, 1982:140), but also they began to fence their properties, replace Aboriginal drovers with truck transport and began the use of helicopters for musters. They were also able to attract a European workforce. The pastoralists simply phased out Aboriginal workers, and many managers illegally evicted the Aboriginal communities from the stations. People who had been born on, and worked on the stations their whole lives were told to “pack up your camp and start walking” (Watson, 1988:208). Broome (1982:141) describes the history of Aboriginal employment in the north as one few other Australians’ could match: “They moved from no wages to small wages to “equal” wages and then to unemployment”.

## Conclusion

Hartwig’s Theory of Internal Colonialism in Australia has been used as a framework in which to understand the history of the Aboriginal labour force in the pastoral industry in Western Australia. Particular focus has been given to the ideological and political domination has been moulded to suit the mode of exploitation in the industry. That is, pastoralists required a cheap, hard-working workforce. Cheap because Aborigines were capable of supplementing their own diet, and colonial government policy shackled these workers so they remained available for when and at what price the pastoralists desired.

Aboriginal people became dependent on the white settlers as these settlers were able to continue to enforce their ownership of the land. Government policy of the time was supportive of this principle of land ownership and also of the creation of total Aboriginal dependence on the colonial system. That the pastoral industry was able to expand by making intermediary use of the displaced Aboriginal communities was quickly accommodated by colonial policy makers.

The colonial government wholly supported the unequal “exploitative symbiosis” (Hartwig, 1975:135) which the Aborigines were forced to enter into with pastoralists. Policy was directed towards creating a user pay system, whereby pastoralists to some extent were forced to support the Aboriginal communities on their stations. The assumption was that pastoralists did in fact benefit from having these communities on their stations, but government had nothing to gain from forcing the pastoralists to pay their Aboriginal workforce as long as they could force the settlers to provide for basic needs. It was also useful if these communities could be tied to the stations for the purposes of tracing government funds outlaid.

Hartwig argues that internal colonialism is characterised by the fact that the exploitation is masked by an ideology focussing on race and ethnicity. This ideology remained unchallenged by Australia’s labour movement until after the second world war and then was only challenged by a small section of this movement. In the main the labour movement did little to assist its fellow Aboriginal workers. Where attempts were made by the union movement to create awards to encompass Aboriginal people it was in the knowledge that the effect would be exclusion from employment. Despite this threat, the northwest Aboriginal workers were able to implement and maintain a strike in the pastoral industry. The initial success of this strike provides support for the argument that Aboriginal workers were indeed valued employees. That a strike was even able to be begun and continued in the climate of exploitation and overt racism in which it took place is testament to the cooperation and solidarity of these people

Aborigines have resisted domination under some of the most difficult conditions ever faced by any labour group in Australia. Their struggle has not only been against class exploitation, but also against the racist ideology used to justify the further erosion of their freedom and power. Within the pastoral industry this ideology has isolated Aborigines from the perpetrators of exploitation and fellow workers alike. There is little doubt that these attitudes and ideology are the basis of Australian Society today.

From an historical perspective, Aboriginal history must be integrated with and understood within the framework of Australian Labour History. With the new focus on social history by labour historians such an outcome will be more likely. Even more fundamentally, however, as John Watson writes in his introduction to Raparapa, stories from Fitzroy River drovers:

It is time history started to acknowledge the contribution Aboriginal people have made to the pastoral industry in northern Australia (1988).

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## MUSIC AND LABOUR\*

Peter Woodward†

I'd like to thank the society for the opportunity to speak to you on the issue of music and musicians. I must say that trying to address the topic gave me some anxiety so I opted to make some general observations and then to move into areas which you may find of some interest - notably how the actual working life of musicians may be of interest to the labour historian, specifically - music and musicians *as* labour history.

I think it's *fair* to say that the actual practice of music need not be more removed from the struggles in the labour movement than it is from any other manifestation of human society. On the other hand, I think it's *true* to say that the practice of music in the struggles for change or reform transcends the aspect of music as mere entertainment and reflects the role of musicians and music as one of the voices of the participants in those struggles.

This is not to say that entertainment of itself is a bad thing - what a dull old world it would be without some entertainment. Even revolutionaries need that and if you've got something to say you may as well say it in a song to a tune that people can hum, sing, or play along with. In high polarised situations such as the revolutionary movements in Central America, South America, Asia and Africa musicians, along with poets, writers and filmmakers are recruited to both sides and all factions of those struggles and their endeavours take on a far more elemental character than they do in a society such as ours. To many musicians in *our* political and social landscape, the preparedness of "arts workers" to turn their art to the requirements of a political struggle seems somehow alien and less valid than the work of those engaged in "art for art's sake" or art uniquely as entertainment and far removed from the perceived banalities of the ordinary world.

For some of us, this reinforces our view that there is low political consciousness amongst a large proportion of our arts workforce and that many musicians have, in fact, been unknowingly recruited to the conservative side of the political equation and I suppose in this regard they are not much different from many others in our community. However, despite this rather bleak view, there is undoubtedly a dedicated core of activists amongst our musicians and a pretty strong history of involvement in what I suppose could be termed labour history. Furthermore, there is an ever increasing interest in issues which are obliquely related to labour history, such as the environment, Aboriginal land rights, and the anti-apartheid movement. More and more musicians are prepared to support such causes by donating their time and talent. I think you'd be amazed by how many calls the union receives from people wanting musicians to volunteer their time for this or that cause.

On the more specific issue of the role of musicians in our own State, I don't think it's well known that musicians in Western Australia were the first workers to achieve equal pay for

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\* This paper was given as an address at the Perth Branch, ASSLH, Annual General Meeting, 13 April, 1991.

† Peter Woodward is the Secretary of Musicians Union of Australia, WA Branch.

women and this occurred, as far as I know, as long ago as 1908. Some may contest that we were the first, but I haven't heard any assertions that another union was. One of the early activists in the Musicians Union was a woman whose name was, I think, Madge Court (I hope I've got the name right). She was active in the equal pay issue and, during the campaign for an eight hour day was involved in a musical group known as the Eight Hour Day Pavilion Orchestra. What interesting images that conjures up! Where was the Eight Hour Day Pavilion? When did the band play there and what was the ambience of the whole enterprise like?

What a pity my own Union has never kept records of such people and the role they place in the labour movement. I'm sure there must be others whose careers could form the basis for a study of musicians in our own history. I'm sure some of our more recent activists such as Scott and Louisa Wise, Christine Evans and Rita Menendez, just to name a few will find their accomplishments recorded in the history of our own state. Perhaps your own society will pay a part in such a work.

In more recent times, of course, we have seen initiatives such as the Art and Working life programme of the Australia council and the establishment of arts officers in the Trade Union movement which, in addition to the immediate benefits of forging strong links between arts workers and other workers, will have the additional result of recording for posterity the work of our artists in the history of labour. A tangible outcome of all this is the Fremantle Arts Centre Press' book *Working Musicians* which is being relaunched here today. I commend it to you as a publication which gives some insight into the day to day aspects of a musician's life - several steps away from the glitter, glamour, gossip, hype and rumour which characterises much popular perception of the work of musicians.

This reference to *Working Musicians* provides me with a convenient approach to the aspect of musicians in labour history which I really want to pursue - that of the musicians as a worker in our community. I want to focus on this aspect because I have to admit to a lack of any thoroughly detailed knowledge of the purely technical aspects of music and musicians in labour history and it seems to me that an examination of the issues surrounding the day to day working lives of musicians is an equally valid expression of their role in or as labour history.

As a person who has spent many years working at the musical coal face so to speak - if you'll excuse a rather jumbled metaphor - I have finally and reluctantly come to the conclusion that your everyday working musician has little political or economic power and generally low status in the community. One of the most little known but interesting - and for us depressing outcomes of this, is the inability of musicians to participate in any meaningful way in the mainstream industrial relations processes in Australia. This might come as a surprise to some of you because it is commonly held in this country that working people can enjoy the benefits of the conciliation and arbitration process. Not so for us.

We are faced on a daily basis with the difficulty that the overwhelming proportion of our members will be regarded as subcontractors rather than employees and therefore outside the

jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission. The consequences of this are of course, that we cannot enforce award conditions in respect of the work of nearly all non orchestral musicians in Australia and this has huge consequence for the living standards of musicians and similarly for many other performing artists.

Sure - we have awards and it all looks very nice but, the difficulty comes when we try to enforce them. The first line of defence of the employers will nearly always be that the musicians in the band are independent contractors - so, end of story as far as the Commission goes. We have got to the stage where we can hardly contemplate going to the Commission on matters of this kind. Most people with subcontract status make a definitive choice that that is how they prefer to work. In our case, the imperatives of the common law applied to the work of musicians will generally produce a subcontract relationship regardless of the will of the musicians.

I ask you to contemplate the positions of a rock and roll band. They rehearse collectively away from their place of employment, are hired collectively - normally through an employment agent - and no individual contracts of service are entered into with the band members. Furthermore, employers are totally disinclined to put their signature on any bit of paper so the arrangements are generally verbal. In addition, the musicians provide their own instruments (for obvious technical and aesthetic reasons) and generally their own amplification equipment. Also, they are mostly casual with many different employers in the course of a year. Even a first year law student would understand the difficulties presented in establishing an employer employee relationship under such circumstances. In my view, this is the single biggest problem faced by musicians both here and internationally and needs to be resolved if musicians are to enjoy those benefits applying to other members of the Australian workforce.

There are also other difficulties which are endemic to the music industry and militate against orderly regulation of people's working conditions. For instance, unlike other employees who, at the end of their shift, clock off or front the pay office for their money, musicians are generally in an environment where there is a greater or lesser degree of pandemonium. The publican is angrily or happily counting the takings, the bouncers are removing the recalcitrants, the musicians are locked in discussions with fans, drunks or members of the opposite sex - (sometimes all in the same person, I might add) - and the whole atmosphere is generally not conducive to the conduct of normal industrial relations practices. Can you imagine the musicians lining up to draw their pay, sign the time and wages book and present their portable superannuation identity number to the publican who would do the paperwork and submit his or her remittances to the superannuation company in respect of the myriad of musicians engaged during the year?

Workers compensation is another area which presents great difficulties for our membership. Where you have a band who has collectively rehearsed a repertoire to serve a particular purpose, it can be difficult or impossible for a player to be replaced. I think this is a unique characteristic of musicians. If, for instance, you have a shearing team of five, it can always shear with four if one is sick or injured. How very different for a band if say the singer is

injured. Even if we could overcome the employer/employee difficulty, there is not much point in the singer getting workers compensation if the other band members can't work. I once saw an example of this in a restaurant in Melbourne. It involved a strolling saxophone quartet - if you can imagine such a thing - and the bass saxophone player had a broken leg. While the other players strolled - he hopped along behind - a great example of the old adage about the show going on and an even better one of the compensation problems faced by musicians. These are the sort of situations faced by musicians on a daily basis.

For the last several years in Western Australia we have tried to get some aspects of industrial law changed to better protect our members. Our first option was to have performing artists defined as employees in the act so that we could overcome the common law problems inherent in trying to establish a contract of service. This was rejected, of course, by the employers and would clearly have no hope of getting up.

Our second option was to say - OK, we accept that musicians are subcontractors, so let's just amend the act to give musicians the right to use the Commission to merely *enforce* their contracts for service. This would avoid the need for both employers and musicians to confront the turgid and time consuming processes of the local court. To our astonishment this was rejected out of hand by the employers at the Tripartite Labour Consultative Committee. We rather thought they would find this a lovely idea given their current attraction to free labour market philosophies. I mean, if you want a great example of implications of free market labour philosophies you need look no further than the music industry.

Our last option was to amend the small debts division of the *Local Courts Act* to allow lay advocates to appear in the court. This would permit the union to represent its members in actions in that jurisdiction in exactly the same way that other workers can be represented by their unions in the Commission. This was rejected by the Attorney General who said that nobody else had sought such an amendment and he couldn't see any good reason why musicians or other performers should get it.

So, after all that, we're back where we started with no hope it appears of getting the legal reforms which performers in this state and this country so desperately need.

Of course, there are many other elements which affect the working life of a musician, such as Australian content on radio and television, copyright laws, the increasing impact of visiting overseas artists on our local industry, and the control of the industry by booking agents. Imagine for a moment the industrial consequences if, for instance, builders' labourers couldn't get a job on a building site unless they went through an agent who deducted ten percent of their wages each week in exchange for getting them the work and builders wouldn't deal directly with the workforce.

Detailed consideration of these matters is beyond the scope of this short address, so I thought it sufficient merely to allude to them to give some sense of the broad and complex matters which affect the day to day working lives of Australian musicians.

I think it is important to say is that the nature of the problems faced by musicians are a reflection of their status in our community and I have a sneaking suspicion that because most people see music as an activity related to enjoyment and leisure, they have difficulty in assimilating the fact that some people do it for a living.

Furthermore, we have a situation where the impact of technology is having a severe impact on the work opportunities for musicians. Disco's, karioke bars, FM-TV, etc.etc. are now, and have for a long time, been creating an environment where it is no longer necessary for the average person to be anywhere near a musician to experience the pleasures of music. For instance, the ability to home tape music from records and CD's with technology which is easily accessible to the average person has surpassed the ability of musicians to protect the rights to their performances and created a situation where the everyday person regards access to the music of our composers and performers as a right rather than a privilege, and involves no remuneration for the creative musician.

Musicians exercise little political or economic power and have virtually no opportunity to exercise industrial muscle in the traditional sense. Many times publicans have said to me, "If the musicians don't like the deal, I won't have any musicians and will put a record on instead. Year by year the employment opportunities for musicians are slipping away and we see no short term answers to the dilemma. This is despite the fact that the music industry has been 'discovered' recently by governments who see music as an export earner which involves virtually no public subsidy. For example, the first album of *Men at Work* was recorded for sixty thousand dollars and generated over one hundred million dollars worth of sales internationally - an incredible result on the investment. The problem is that the music industry is like a pyramid - the broader the base the higher the summit and a narrow base threatens the stability of the whole structure.

It seems to me that some fundamental reforms are necessary in this country to protect our creative talents and to capitalise on the potential of our artistic workers. Should this not happen, I fear that the eventual role of musicians in labour history will be for some future historian to record the fact that once upon a time we used to have live musicians working in a dynamic and creative industry in our society, but that like blacksmiths and horse drawn baker's carts, they have now passed away.

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## Book Reviews and Notes

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**Malcolm Booker, Background to the Gulf War, Sydney, Left Book Club, \$3.00.**

This is a very opportune pamphlet particularly with the widespread discussions among sections of the labour movement in WA around the present problems of the Middle East and in particular Iraq and Kuwait. The publishers (Left Book Club, Sydney) are to be congratulated for making this well resourced document available to the public at such short notice.

The pamphlet takes the reader on a journey back in time, 2400 B.C. and forward to the present day, recording along the way albeit briefly the wars, changes in leadership and changing religious dogmas. These upheavals have continued in Iraq to the present day. This may appear as strange behaviour to those of us who live in more placid surroundings. Nevertheless it has to be understood before a reliable assessment can be made of the present troubles.

Malcolm Booker's background makes him eminently suitable to be the one to write the account of events in Iraq. He was a member of the Australian Diplomatic Service from 1941 to 1977, has been involved in the movement of Jewish refugees to Australia from Germany and since retirement has been writing on current affairs.

Try to imagine a mixture of intense nationalism, racial intolerance, armed might, religious bigotry, displaced populations and economic deprivation - all in a group of nations that also produce 60% of the world's oil. Add to this the greedy machinations of western countries such as the U.S., U.K., and France and you have a condition that would rival the explosive potential of the hydrogen bomb.

It is a pamphlet well worth reading and keeping for reference on the Middle East and at \$3.00 it is extremely good value.

**Duncan Cameron, Maylands**

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**Audrey Johnson, Bread and Roses, Sydney, Left Book Club, pp.136, \$14:95.**

This is the story of three working class women and their friends, of the role they played in many campaigns, their struggle for recognition, the attitude to them at work, in the unions, in political organisations.

Mary Lamm is the first of the three. The author tells how her political convictions grew from

her harsh early years and when she worked in a clothing factory at the age of sixteen. She met and married seaman John Lamm and it was when they began to read the *Workers Weekly* that she made contact with the Militant Women's Group began political activity and joined the Communist Party in 1929. Her growing understanding and commitment - and her strength and sense of humour - are shown during the history, for it is all part of history

Topsy Small came from a working class family, grew up in Perth where their early plans for home and family were hit by the depression. Here she saw the march of the unemployed from Frankland River described by Katharine Susannah Pritchard, and met Cecilia Shelley secretary of the Hotel & Restaurant Employees Union. Topsy's involvement in the union movement began in Sydney where the family moved in search of work. She joined the Hotel Club and Restaurant Employees Union which led to her meeting the third woman, Flo Davis.

There are wonderful stories of Flo's life - she was surprised at the way her own life turned out. She became acting secretary of the union in 1945, then general secretary. On retiring twenty-three years later she was named woman of the year by the International Women's Day committee and received tributes from all sections of the trade union movement. Even after retirement Flo returned to become secretary of the Combined Pensioners Association.

The author Audrey Johnson gained her arts degree at Sydney University; politics has been her main interest and she worked as a researcher, tutor and administrator in universities. This certainly shows in her lively and interesting book. It is written with warmth and understanding of the hard and selfless work of these three women and their friends and of their devotion to the cause to which they devoted the greater part of their life. Those who spend their lives in the struggle for justice may sometimes wonder if their efforts have been effective, and no doubt some die wondering. But there can be no doubt of the contribution made by these three women. And while there is still a long way to go to achieve the aims of industrial and social equality, we can see the benefits that have followed since the dedicated work of people like those shown in *Bread and Roses*.

**A. Cameron, Maylands**

### **A Note on the Left Book Club**

The Left Book Club Pty Ltd is a non-profit making body which gives members concession rates for its books and some price reductions from other publishers. To buy shares in the Co-op is money well spent, particularly for those concerned with history of the Labor movement.

It aims to publish, sell and distribute books, pamphlets and other publications challenging the ideas of the New Right, to organise group discussions, seminars and meetings on social and

political issues and to encourage and assist writers and other creative workers to take part in this process. All members participate in electing the board of directors.

Other publications since November 1989:

Abe David and Ted Wheelwright, The Third Wave: Australian and Asian Capitalism, pp. 289 \$14:95.

Anne Gollan, Questions for the Nineties, pp. 215, \$13:95.

Paul James, Technocratic Dreaming of Very Fast Trains and Japanese Designer Cities, pp. 247, \$15:50.

For those interested, a branch of the Left Book Club is being formed in Perth.

Contacts include: H & J Butorac, 299 6068  
A & D Cameron, 271 6635

## A Labour History Museum

A position paper by the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, Perth Branch

*This paper has been prepared for circulation to the members of the Ministerial Labour History Museum Policy working party established under the auspice of the Minister for the Arts, the Hon. Kay Hallahan, MLC. It is an attempt to put forward the views of the executive of the Society for the Study of Labour History, Perth Branch, to the working party participants to encourage discussion on what a labour History Museum may be. We have not attempted to put forward our heart-felt commitment to the value of labour history and the contribution that a labour history museum will make to our future society. We take the value and contribution of labour history to society as given.*

### Preamble

The Society for the Study of Labour History (SSLH) exists to

- (i) encourage study, teaching and research in the field of labour history
- (ii) to encourage the preservation of labour archives and other cultural materials.

In the three years of its existence, the Perth Branch has published 6 issues of *Papers in Labour History*, undertaken extensive and oral history taping of the stories of key labour activists, held a number of seminars, discussions, book-launches and performances of labour music. The Society has actively participated in May Day and other significant labour commemorations such as Eureka anniversary.

Interest in Labour History focussed by the Trades and Labor Council's *Organise: A Visual History of the Labour Movement* exhibition, and work being done by Dr. Michael Hess, led to

the formation of the SSLH Perth Branch. From the activities and publications of the SSLH, the scope of the material available for labour history may be implied.

### **The Material of Labour History**

Items collected for the "Organise" exhibition held in 1988 included union banners, regalia, pennants, streamers, emblems, badges, certificates and membership cards, trophies and other objects, journals, cartoons, petitions, pamphlets and other printed material, placards, paintings, drawings, sculpture and photographs.

Other Labour History material utilised by the SSLH includes live performances of theatre and music, speeches, books, and history tapes and transcripts, cassettes, recordings, posters, video and film.

These objects derive from a range of sources - The unions of workers, socially progressive groups and organisations and from individuals. While many of the objects are important and in some cases monetarily valuable, it is frequently the case that their value derives from their ability to signify an event or attitude of importance to working people and to be sympathetic with the issues of working people.

The role of a Labour History Museum will be to encapsulate and communicate to others the significance of these attitudes and events while preserving the diverse range of material which illuminate the issues of labour history.

### **The Nature of a Labour History Museum**

The Perth Branch of the SSLH has considered the possible nature of a labour history museum. These ideas are in three categories ie. what a labour museum may do it, how it may do them and a structure to allow these activities.

#### What

- (a) A labour museum should collect appropriate historical objects. These may be obtained through donation, purchase or bequest. The museum could centralise material already held in diverse public collections such as some material from Battye Library, Alexander Library, WA Art Gallery, WA Museum and regional galleries.
- (b) A labour museum should have a role in cataloguing, documenting or transcribing historical material. This may be materials in its own collection or in other public and private collections including materials held by individuals, unions, the Trades and Labor Council, the ALP and in private industry.
- (c) A labour museum should have as a role the preservation and restoration of historical material. Much of the material from the past is in poor or fragile condition and much contemporary material will become fragile. The preservation and restoration of significant

material is crucial to ensure a mature understanding of labour history is available to future generations.

### How

(a) A labour history museum will be lively and engaging of the public. Given that labour history is the history of people, the material of labour history is engaging, diverse, polemical, political, anecdotal and lively, the visitors to the museum will become absorbed, engaged and active. The museum will need to provide avenues for access to exchange of ideas and experiences.

(b) The labour history museum should have a participatory project basis of activity. The museum should undertake issue-based projects which are derived from involvement of people with knowledge and experience of the chosen issue. The museum should borrow material for projects and exhibitions, cause publications, oral histories, aural and visual tapes, posters, discussion papers and events.

(c) The labour museum should engage in regional tours and exchanges with regionally based agencies including other museums, libraries, art galleries, local organisations and unions. The project basis of activity and thematic development will encourage this and will ensure a decentralisation of services.

### **Structure**

(a) A labour history museum should be incorporated appropriately to allow it to engage in developing funds for projects, restorations and other activities. While it is believed that the primary financial resourcing responsibility rests with Government, the organisation should have a capacity to attracting funds from a diverse range of sources.

(b) The organisation of a labour history museum should have links to the union movement in structure and location. The personnel of the union movement should have a role in goal setting, issue prioritisation and other management activities. The museum should be located in or near venues of significance to the labour movement.

(c) The labour history museum should have a management committee structure which includes people with expertise and interest in labour history. This committee structure should have a management and advisory role.

### **Unresolved Issues**

The SSLH, Perth Branch, has identified three issues which it has, at this stage left for further consideration. These are:

(i) The relationship between a labour history museum and WA Museum service.

(ii) The role and function of the proposed reconstruction of a workers cottage.

(iii) The venue for a labour history museum in Perth. The SSLH Perth Branch is sympathetic to the view held by the Trades and Labor Council that the Perth Trades Hall of 74 Beaufort Street, Perth, should, in the long term, house a labour history museum.

## Parkhurst 'Apprentices' in Western Australia, 1842-1852

### A Note on Sources.

Andrew Gill

Due to the length of the article appearing in *Papers in Labour History* No. 6, there was insufficient space to print the 'note on sources' used in the article by Andrew Gill. Readers may also have been puzzled by the absence of Tables 7 and 8. To appease the author, we reprint the 'Note on sources' and the missing tables.

Table 7: Parkhurst Apprentices: Number of Masters Served.

Vessel	Simon	Shepherd	Halifax	Cumberland	Orient	Ameer	Mary	Total	%
No. of masters served.									
1	6	10	6	9	24	29	21	105	44.8
2	5	2	6	5	16	14	21	69	29.4
3	5	6	3	0	8	5	6	33	14.1
4	1	6	2	2	3	2	4	20	8.4
5+	1	4						5	2.1
uncertain			1				1	2	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Sources: Tabular Returns of the Guardians 1842-1851  
 J. Schoales Letterbook 1842-1847  
 F.D. Wittenoorn Letterbook 1847-1852  
 F.D. Wittenoorn Account Book 1847-1852

Table 8: Punishment of Apprentices

Vessel	Fined	Whipped	Gaoled	Total Individuals Whipped
Simon Taylor	3	2	4	5
Shepherd	11	3	4	12
Halifax	8	1	1	9
Cumberland	1	0	4	4
Orient	9	1	6	15
Ameer		1	12	15
Mary	13	3	15	19
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>% of all 234 apprentices</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>33</b>

Sources: Tabular returns of the Guardians - 'remarks' column;  
 J. Schoales Letterbook 1842-1847 WA archives acc. 47/1  
 F.D. Wittenoorn Letterbook 1847-1852 WA archives 489/6  
 F.D. Wittenoorn Account Book 1847-1852 WA archives 489/4

## Note on Sources:

The individual identities of the Parkhurst convicts who were apprenticed in Western Australia can be established from two related sources: the pardon lists which were sent out with each vessel carrying the convicts, and the Tabular Returns made out by the 'Guardian of Government Juvenile Immigrants' in July and December of each year between August 1842 and July 1851.

### Pardon Lists

AN 24 acc. 36: Colonial Secretary's correspondence (inwards)

<u>Simon Taylor</u>	CSOR Vol.138 pp.156-157
<u>Shepherd</u>	CSOR Vol.138 pp.158-159
<u>Halifax</u>	CSOR Vol.138 pp.160-161
<u>Cumberland</u>	CSOR Vol.138 pp.162-163, 166.

AN 395/1 acc.391: Colonial office despatches to Western Australian Governors with original enclosures:

enclosure with:

<u>Orient</u>	despatch no. 61, 27 November 1847
<u>Ameer</u>	despatch no. 36, 20 October 1848
<u>Mary</u>	despatch no. 37, 3 July 1849

In the Tabular Returns (TR in the footnotes), the names of the convicts arriving on each vessel appear in the same order as they do in the pardon lists. As each vessel appear in the same order as they do in the pardon lists. As each vessel arrived, so a new 'block' of names was added to the bi-annual returns. Thus, names for the *Shepherd* follow those for the *Simon Taylor*, those for the *Halifax* follow those for the *Shepherd*, and so on through to the *Mary*. Once the indenture of an apprentice had expired, so his name was removed from the Tabular returns. John Gavin, hanged for murder in April 1844 appeared in only two lists TR no.3 reporting his arrival, and TR no.4 reporting his death. The same principle applied to those who 'escaped' during their indentures. The careers of the apprentices can be traced by extracting their entry from each of the Tabular Returns. The Tabular Returns give the following information: the name of the apprentice, date of his indenture, length of his indenture, current 'occupation', name of current master, and 'remarks' on his behaviour during the previous 6 months. This information forms the basis for 4 and 6 and my conclusions about the 'Trades', 'Farm servants' and 'Shepherds' in the text of the article.

## Bi-annual Tabular (TR) Returns of the Guardian of Government Juvenile Immigrants.

No. of the return	Period covered by the return. 6 months to:	Ms.source for the return
1	31.12.1842	C.O. 18/34 pp. 80-88
2	30. 6.1843	C.O. 18/35 pp.168-169
3	31.12.1843	C.O. 18/37 pp. 27-33
4	30. 6.1844	W.A. archives acc.36 CSOR 1844 vol.133 pp.21-23
5	31.12.1844	C.O. 18/39 pp. 18-39
6	30. 6.1845	C.O. 18/39 pp.186-189
7	31.12.1845	C.O. 18/42 pp. 29-50
8	30. 6.1846	W.A. archives acc.47/1 J. Schoales LB pp.234-239
9	31.12.1846	C.O. 18/44 pp.141-147
10	30. 6.1847	C.O. 18/45 pp. 11-14
11	31.12.1847	C.O. 18/47 pp.138-152
12	30. 6.1848	C.O. 18/50 pp. 43-54
13	31.12.1848	C.O. 18/50 pp. 73-83
14	30. 6.1849	C.O. 18/51 pp.216-220
15	31.12.1849	C.O. 18/53 pp. 69-87
16	30. 6.1850	C.O. 18/54 pp.110-120
17	31.12.1850	C.O. 18/58 pp. 66-79
18	30. 6.1851	C.O. 18/60 pp. 87-92

The figures in Tables 1 and 2 are derived from the Parkhurst Prison Register (H.O. 14/15) which records -

the convicts name,  
date of arrival at Parkhurst,  
age at arrival at Parkhurst,  
date and place of conviction,  
length of sentence,  
occupation, 'literacy',  
date of discharge and  
destination after discharge.

With two exceptions I have been able to match the names on the Tabular Returns against the Pardon lists and to match these to entries in the Parkhurst prison register.

