

ABSTRACTS

Apart from the two keynote presentations, paper abstracts are arranged according to sessions in which the paper will be given.

Keynote, Saturday 9:45am

John Maynard: 'The men only worked when necessary, we called no man master and we had no King'

This discussion will take us back over ninety years ago to the birth of the modern Aboriginal political movement with the establishment of the Australian Aboriginal Progressive Association (AAPA) in Sydney in 1924. The AAPA were led by a remarkable Aboriginal patriot Fred Maynard, my grandfather. Many of the early Aboriginal activists were workers in the Sydney railway yards, returned soldiers and like my grandfather wharf labourers. The railway workshops and the docks in particular were hotbeds of political ideals and these spaces were very significant sites of political awakening, discussion, unrest and revolt. I will examine the impact of these environments and working conditions on early Aboriginal political activism.

Professor John Maynard is a Worimi Aboriginal man from the Port Stephens region of New South Wales. He is currently a Director of the Purai Global Indigenous and Diaspora Research Centre at the University of Newcastle and Chair of Indigenous History. His work has described the way that freedom and anti-racist struggles internationally have influenced Aboriginal activism in Australia. John's writing includes *Fight for Liberty and Freedom*, the celebrated biography of his grandfather, Fred Maynard.

Keynote, Sunday 11:10am

Ruth Milkman: Populism, precarity, and xenophobia in the Trump era

A cornerstone of Donald Trump's populist appeal is his anti-immigrant animus. His rhetoric repeatedly reinforces the view that immigrants have unfairly "cut in line ahead" of hard-working U.S.-born workers. Yet despite their legendary willingness to take "jobs Americans don't want," immigrants are at best a minor player in the dramatic economic restructuring that has upended the economic prospects of U.S.-born workers and forced many to join the precariat in recent years. Growing Trump-fuelled xenophobia obscures the leading forces propelling this four-decade-long drama, namely business strategies promoting deregulation, deindustrialization, and de-unionization (by 2016, 89 percent of the U.S. workforce was non-union). This talk will explore the changing relationship of immigrant workers to the U.S. labour market and labour movement in the United States.

Ruth Milkman is Distinguished Professor of Sociology at the City University of New York Graduate Center and Research Director at the Joseph S. Murphy Institute for Worker Education and Labor Studies; and President of the American Sociological Association. Her 2006 book, *L.A. Story: Immigrant Workers and the Future of the U.S. Labor Movement*, documented the role immigrant workers played in transforming the Los Angeles labour movement from a relative backwater into a centre of labour organising. She has edited two further books looking at immigrant worker organising in Los Angeles as well as studies of Japanese labour relations in the United States, gender at work, women workers and their struggles, the modern New York labour movement and strategies for rebuilding the labour movement.

Saturday 11:30am – 1:15pm

Riverview Room: Internationalism and the Australian labour movement

Diane Kirkby: Seafarer internationalism: the Indian Seamen's strike in Australia in 1939

With the outbreak of war in 1939 Indian seafarers across the empire walked off their ships and refused to sail. In several Australian ports ships lay idle and crews protested through the city streets. While the government responded by gaoling and then deporting them, the Australian maritime unions, particularly the SUA, threw their support behind the strikers, providing material aid, funding their legal costs and challenging official and media representations of the strikers with explanations of their exploitative conditions.

The paper argues for this little-known strike's significance as an illustration of seafarer internationalism, consistent with the internationalism of Australian maritime unions identified previously by historians. It goes further in showing how this support for Indian seafarers was in line with ILO attempts to bring changes to the conditions of Asian seafarers but contrasted sharply with the position of Britain's National Union of Seamen. Bringing Indian and Australian seafarers together in a resistance to racialised categories of labour complicates prevailing views of Australian unions' attitudes to Asian workers in the first half of the 20th century.

Diane Kirkby is Professor of Law & Humanities, UTS and Research Professor (Emeritus) History, La Trobe University; author of *Barmmaids* (1997), *Voices From the Ships* (2008) and currently editor of *Labour History*.

Jimmy Yan: Revolutionary Ireland and transnational labour solidarity in the Victorian railways: the case of Alex Morrison and Tom Wilson, 1921-22

In 1921, the Victorian Railways became a site of contested loyalties surrounding the Irish revolution in the Australian labour movement.

This paper will examine the case of Alex Morrison and Tom Wilson, two Protestant shop stewards of the Victorian Branch of the Australian Railways Union (ARU) dismissed from the state railways service by the Lawson Government in March 1921

for moving a conference resolution sympathising with Irish railworkers killed by the 'Black-and-Tans' in Cork during the Anglo-Irish War.

The widely-publicised case, which coincided with the birth of the Self-Determination for Ireland League, became a focus for both an Empire loyalist backlash and a labour movement defence campaign leading up to the 1921 State Election. It marked a key moment at which the Irish crisis of 1916 - 1923 catalysed organised campaign activity in the industrial wing, in addition to the political wing, of the Australian labour movement.

Framed within the paradigm of international labour solidarity instead of Irish diaspora, the stance of Morrison and Wilson reflected the mutual entanglement of Irish-Australian and the labour internationalist allegiances in the wake of both the Australian conscription plebiscites and the Russian Revolution. A 'view from below' of the Irish question in the Victorian railways presents an alternative, if parallel, form of transnational politicisation around Ireland to that of 'long-distance nationalism'. (Refereed)

Jimmy Yan is a PhD candidate in the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies, University of Melbourne. His research focuses upon the political responses of the Australian and New Zealand labour movements to the Irish revolutionary period in 1916 - 1923. He was recently awarded the Irish Studies Association of Australia and New Zealand Postgraduate Essay Prize for a paper on Irish emigration and British passport controls in the First World War. Email: h.yan@student.unimelb.edu.au

Daniel Hannington-Pinto: Australian contributions to union building in Timor-Leste

Following East Timor's 1999 self-autonomy referendum, a sprawling network of foreign bureaucrats and administrators assisted in the state's transition to independence. Dominating the international community's response was the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET), tasked with establishing sustainable governance structures. Absent in the literature on this state-building project has been acknowledgement of the contribution of trade

unionists from the new state's regional neighbour, Australia. While Australian union support for East Timor can be traced back to the mid-1970s, I focus here on the post-independence period of 2002-2003. Alongside the international aid arm of Australia's peak union body, two unionists, Didge McDonald and Michael Killick, promulgated the concept of workers' rights, and provided guidance to a nascent organised labour movement. Their role in the development of Timorese unions was, I argue, a crucial counterweight to the exploitation of domestic workers by foreign businesses – a phenomenon expedited by the macroeconomic implications of the UNTAET mission. Considered through the prism of nation-building at the civil

society level, and applying the critical modernist approach to development, Australian union assistance to Timor-Leste is presented as a valuable case study in how cross-border partnerships can help labour challenge the growing reach of transnational capital.

Daniel Hannington-Pinto is undertaking a PhD in Australian History at the University of Melbourne, exploring trade union campaigns on social and moral issues. Daniel received a BA from the University of Western Australia, Honours in History from the University of Tasmania, a Postgraduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching from the University of Melbourne, and is currently undertaking further studies in Industrial Relations at Charles Sturt University.

Seminar Room 1: Unionising and de-unionising the Pilbara

Alexis Vassiley: Workers of the Pilbara: Building union strength in an emerging mining region 1965-1972

By the 1970s, the Pilbara was a byword for union militancy. Yet when the iron ore industry was established in the 1960s, workers endured horrendous conditions, unfettered managerial prerogative, received low pay and there was not much trade union organisation. To date, studies have concentrated on the period of union militancy, and little effort has been made to document and analyse the rise of trade unionism in this mining region of Western Australia. This article argues that much of the infrastructure of grassroots unionism - central to the exercise of "union power" in the seventies and eighties - was established in this period. This included networks of shop stewards, combined union committees and universal unionism. Industrial action by unionised mining workers in the period 1965-1972 won serious improvements in pay and conditions, and eroded some of the power of management. Their demands were resisted fiercely by the iron ore companies. In relating the details of this struggle, this article also aims to help explain the militancy of the later period. In so doing, it will examine wider organisational issues relating to union power. (Refereed)

Alexis is a PhD candidate at Curtin University, Perth. His dissertation title is "From 'union power' to de-unionisation: explaining the rise and fall of trade unionism in Western Australia's Pilbara region and its consequences." He is a contributor to the book *Radical Perth, Militant Fremantle*, to be published by Black Swan

Press later this year and has previously written on trade union support for Aboriginal rights.

Bradon Ellem: Remaking the Pilbara: the geography and politics of de-unionisation, 1986-2003

For most of the first twenty years of export iron ore mining, 1966-86, the Pilbara was firmly established in local practice and the national imagination as a union heartland. Between 1986 and 2003, however, all three of the Pilbara's iron ore operations, Robe River, Hamersley Iron and BHP, were the sites of de-unionisation struggles which, despite their different trajectories and timings, all ended alike, with the employer ascendant. A set of union worksites and towns across the Pilbara was remade as globally-shaped, company-defined space. With the unions defeated, the employers not only remade local work practices with twelve-hour shifts and fly-in-fly-out labour but they also remade the towns and social relations more broadly. Furthermore, control of this apparently isolated space allowed them still greater power across the Australian political landscape. Assessing this period in terms of the complexity of its human geography and conceiving of it as a coherent period, not merely as discrete episodes, allows us to understand afresh both the Pilbara itself and its national impact.

Bradon Ellem is a Professor of Employment Relations at the University of Sydney and Co-Editor of the *Journal of Industrial Relations*. His history of unionism in iron ore, *The Pilbara: From the Deserts Profits Come* (UWAP), was published in July.

Al Rainnie: FIFO: Work, workers, workplace and community in the WA resources sector

I locate FIFO as part of a series of four waves of restructuring the relationship between work, workers, unions, workplace and the communities that workers live in. Between 1960 and 1975 resource companies started to invest significantly in the construction of company towns and company built accommodation. 25 new resource communities were established in Western Australia alone (FHRE 2013: 11). This is Wave One, the first spatial fix. From the 1980s onwards many of these 'closed towns' were 'normalised' by handing over responsibility for normal town functions and services to local and state governments. In

submissions to the HoR enquiry both the CFMEU and the AWU described this process as externalising some of the companies' costs onto the broader community. This is Wave Two. More generally, Peck (2013: 249) describes FIFO as outsourcing, individualising and marketising processes of social reproduction at a price lower, and more manageable, than the deeply sunk costs of maintaining company towns. This is Wave Three. Wave Four is represented by the move towards driverless trucks and trains controlled from remote workplaces.

Al Rainnie is currently working with Creative Industries at QUT.

Seminar Room 2: Visionaries and intellectuals

Brian Howe: William Morris and the "clever country"

William Morris (1834-1896) was a poet, an artist and a socialist who spoke about the meaning of work at the high point of the industrial revolution in mid-19th century Britain. The recognized founder of the arts and craft movement, he was one of the more important leaders of the early socialist movement in Britain and in Europe. Morris had a very high view of work writing that 'Nature will not be finally conquered till work becomes part of the pleasure of our lives' Work for Morris is not a curse rather for him it goes to the core of what it means to be human. It is precisely because Morris has such a high view of work that he is so distressed by 'the machine age' (Carlyle). For Morris art and civilization are all embracing concepts: 'I am bidding you to learn to be artist... and what is an artist but a workman who is determined that whatever else happens his work shall be excellent' (Cole 512).

Why did Morris find the industrial age so alienating? It was the destructive values of capitalism, the system of ownership and control that reduced the status and power of the individual worker, the controlling power of the machine, the commodification of labour, an economic system that separated design for manufacture and ultimately destroyed the meaning of work as pride in its essential creativity. Morris remains important because he suggests tests against which can we assess developments in work in a digital age. It is

argued that Australia's information economy offers a less hierarchical world, more democratic work places, more opportunities for individual decision making, greater opportunities for discovering in work a sense of vocation. On the other hand in the 'clever country' there are high levels of joblessness and under employment, the younger are more educated but rarely able to get a job in line with their training, work has become more episodic and precarious, and greater capacity for robotics destroys personal creativity and robs many young of an opportunity to 'do what they like'?

Brian Howe is a professorial fellow at Melbourne University who was chair of the ACTU sponsored enquiry on Insecure and casual work (2012) *Lives on hold*. He is the author of *Weighing up Australian values* (2007).

Martie Lowenstein: Revealing interviews: the unpublished legacy of Wendy Lowenstein

Wendy Lowenstein's unknown recordings present a unique and irreplaceable record of early labour history. Now digitised there are hundreds of hours of interviews from long gone sources, interviews of radical Australians, collected over 40 years, covering topics Lowenstein hoped to write about in the future. Two hundred unpublished interviews cover a diverse range of Labour history quite separate from Lowenstein's well-known works on the Great Depression and the Melbourne Docks. This paper will present an overview of Martie's

discovery of unknown interviews, including short excerpts and a deeper look at the breadth of this material now available for study.

As Wendy's daughter, Martie Lowenstein spent her early years immersed in labour oral history on a daily basis. Martie recently completed her B.A. as a mature student and has been cataloguing Lowenstein's entire collection of published and unpublished recordings.

Rhianne Grieve: The Revolutionary Vanguard; an analysis of Thomas Spence's Rights of Infants (1796) and its commitment to the political agency of women

In 1796, Thomas Spence, a pioneering English socialist theorist, published a pamphlet titled *The Rights of Infants*. The work is extraordinary for its anticipation of certain forms of direct political action and its devastating condemnation of the eighteenth-century ruling elite. It is also highly significant for its recognition of the revolutionary potential of working women. Spence not only calls upon women to usher in a new socialist utopia but to also ensure its longevity by leading and administrating it.

Spence's *Rights of Infants* is written in the form of a Socratic dialogue which takes place between the 'sneering' landed aristocracy and an 'angry', 'righteous' woman. It is a powerful speech act in which a woman proclaims that her sex has, since time immemorial, been the defenders of natural rights. Women will vindicate the rights of the species, she insists, having both the spirit to assert them and the courage to bring about the downfall of the ruling classes. Men, she contends, have calmly given over to apathy and slavery.

This paper will explore the radical, egalitarian vision that Spence set out in *The Rights of Infants*, focussing on the intellectual origins and nature of his commitment to the revolutionary agency and political identity of women.

Rhianne Grieve holds a BA/LLB (Hons) from the University of Technology, Sydney and a Masters of Philosophy in Political Thought and Intellectual History from the University of Cambridge. She is currently undertaking her PhD in History at the Australian National University and researching conceptions of 'harmony' in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century British socialist thought.

Saturday, 2:15–4:00pm

Riverview Room: Impact of the Russian Revolution on the Australian labour movement

Peter Love: Frank Anstey's Red Europe

Frank Anstey's *Red Europe* was the first Australian book to offer a detailed account of the Russian Revolution and the ensuing Civil War. Published in 1919 after an extended visit to Europe, it became an early focal point for Australian debates about the significance of the Bolshevik's October 1917 victory and the rising tide of post-war working-class insurgency in many of the belligerent nations. In addition to the Melbourne original, two editions were published in Vancouver, the second with added chapters by the Canadian publishers, and one in Glasgow. It was distributed widely, especially in the Pacific North-West. The talk will consider the writing of the book in the context of wartime restrictions on information, Anstey's sources on the revolution and, more particularly, the Civil War. We will also consider the book's dramatic narrative structure and its portentous peroration that signalled the post-war 'Red Dawn'.

Peter Love is a long-term member of the ASSLH and a biographer of Frank Anstey.

Carole Ferrier: Kollontai Down Under: Jean Devanny in Australasia

At the 1917 Russian Revolution, Devanny was thirteen and had left school; her formation as a Marxist revolutionary was stoked by her experiences in the New Zealand mining settlements in which she grew up and continued to live following her marriage to a miner at seventeen. Almost entirely self-educated, her political development came about through voracious reading of European socialist fiction, and from the Marxist worldviews of British, Canadian, Australian and American travelling revolutionaries who visited the militant mining communities, many of whom were engaged in turning their organisations and study circles into the first national Communist Parties. In Wellington from the beginning of the 1920s, she published several novels, including the autobiographical mining novel, *Dawn Beloved*, and also wrote "The Evolution of the Sex Life," (an Antipodean version of The

Second Sex), which was never published. In Sydney from 1929, she rapidly became a visible figure and the most prominent orator in the Communist Party, travelling to Berlin and the Soviet Union in the early 1930s, and in 1936 publishing the strike novel, *Sugar Heaven*, that she called "the first really proletarian novel in Australia." The paper will look at Devanny's development as a revolutionary Marxist feminist in the earlier years of her life, touching upon how the rise of Stalinism from the late 1920s impacted upon her life of writing and political activism.

Carole Ferrier has been a socialist and feminist activist since the 1960s. She has worked at UQ since 1973, and published more than a hundred articles and book chapters in the areas of gender, class, race and ethnicity, and a number of books including *Jean Devanny: Romantic Revolutionary* (1999), and, with Raymond Evans, *Radical Brisbane* (2004). She has been editor of *Hecate: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Women's Liberation* since 1975.

James Morris: Alexander Zuzenko, the Communist International and the formation of the Communist Party of Australia.

"I am deeply convinced that the first of all the anglo-saxon countries to declare itself a true Workers' Republic will be AUSTRALIA" wrote Alexander Zuzenko to the Comintern in 1923.

Until recently Zuzenko's story has remained only partially told and few are aware of his contribution to the Australian labour movement or his service to the Comintern. Thanks to recent research and access to Soviet records his role can be matched with other sources to construct his fascinating life in remarkable times. Zuzenko arrived in Australia in 1911 as a political refugee from Tsarist Russia and soon started his labour activities which increased after the October Revolution which he supported. He was deported in appalling conditions in 1919 after the 'red flag riots' in Brisbane. In March he and others flew the banned red flag in a street protest. This triggered riots by organised returned soldiers against Russians and their property, the labour owned newspaper offices of "The Daily Standard" and the unfortunate police

who were obliged to protect life and property against their wishes. Central Brisbane was convulsed by thousands of men listening to speeches, singing of songs and protesting for nearly a week.

In revolutionary Russia he met Lenin and became a Comintern agent with a mission to return to Australia to form a communist party and spur the labour movement – a mission only in part achieved due to arrest and a second deportation.

Tragically he lost his life at the hands of Stalin's secret police as a British spy in 1938. (Refereed)

James Morris is a retired public servant. He has had published *Froth From The Right - Not Serious History* and *Sly-grogging and the Law on the Bendigo Goldfields in the 1870s*.

Seminar Room 1: Historicising Chinese workers in Australia

Julia Martínez: The Chinese cook's life in Queensland during WW1

The Chinese cook has something of an iconic status in Australian history, even while Chinese workers have suffered under prejudices of White Australia. This paper aims to explore their lives in Queensland during the period of World War One. I will consider the extent to which cooks were mobile workers, finding work seasonally in outback stations. Using the advertising section of newspapers I also will consider whether Chinese cooks were as popular as the alternative options, taking Japanese cooks as a comparative case.

Associate Professor Julia Martínez is an historian of labour and migration working at the University of Wollongong, New South Wales. She currently holds an Australian Research Council Future Fellowship researching historical 'traffic' in women and girls in Southeast Asia and Australia. She was awarded a 2015 International Institute of Asian Studies-African Studies Center Fellowship from Leiden University to research Chinese labour in French Congo. Her monograph (with Adrian Vickers) *The Pearl Frontier: Indonesian labor and Indigenous encounters* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2015) won the 2016 Northern Territory History Book Award; the 2016 Queensland Literary Award's University of Southern Queensland History Book Award; and was shortlisted for the 2016 Australian Historical Association's Ernest Scott Prize in Australian history.

Claire Lowrie: Historicising 'houseboys': Chinese domestic workers in Darwin, 1870s-1910s

In the northern Australian port of Darwin, Chinese men were widely employed as servants in white Australian and British homes from the late 1870s to the 1910s. The preference of white colonists in

Darwin for male servants was a pattern replicated across the tropical colonial world. In colonies across Southeast Asia, the Pacific, India and Africa, Indigenous men and Asian male migrants predominated in domestic service well into the twentieth century. In Darwin, as with Singapore, Hong Kong and the Philippines, Chinese men were the most sought-after servants. In contrast, in Britain and Europe by the late nineteenth century, as well as in temperate British settler colonies and former colonies, women dominated the servant class. By exploring the rise and decline of Chinese 'houseboys' in Darwin, this paper aims to illuminate an aspect of the history of migrant workers in Australia's tropical north. It also seeks to illustrate how cultures of labour and colonialism in that region were shaped by transcolonial connections with neighbouring colonies in the Pacific and Southeast Asia.

Claire Lowrie is a Senior Lecturer in History at the University of Wollongong. She works on the history of labour and colonialism in Southeast Asia and northern Australia and specialises in the history of Asian and Indigenous domestic service. Claire's book, *Masters and Servants: Cultures of Empire in the Tropics*, was published by Manchester University Press in 2016.

Peter Gibson: Voices of Melbourne's Chinese Furniture Factory Workers, 1890-1920

Chinese furniture factory workers were the focus of a heated debate that helped shape "White Australia". Regularly regarded as a threat to the "European", or "white", working class, they were vigorously campaigned against by labour movement activists and staunchly defended by Chinese merchant elites, the outcome of this contest

being the institution of a range of anti-Chinese legislation from the 1880s. While historical scholarship has often addressed the claims of European labour movement activists – and to a lesser extent the counterclaims of Chinese merchant elites – this paper examines the reflections of Melbourne’s Chinese factory workers on their own activities. It follows on from my recent Labour History article about Sydney’s Chinese furniture factory workers, where I argued that workers’ understandings of their own activities were

considerably more complex than the assertions made about them. Drawing predominantly on insolvency and other court records, I contend here that the views of Melbourne’s Chinese factory workers were similarly complex, yet in many ways distinct from those of their Sydney counterparts.

Peter Gibson is a PhD candidate within the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry at the University of Wollongong. His thesis is about Australia’s Chinese furniture industry between 1880 and 1930.

Seminar Room 2: Strikes and organising

Phoebe Kelloway: Rothbury shootings 1929: a reappraisal

On 16 December 1929, thousands of locked-out coalminers gathered at dawn to picket Rothbury colliery. The miners and police clashed, police opened fire, and one miner was shot dead. Norman Brown’s death is seen as murder in labour movement folklore, whereas the official view, which historians have shared, is that it was a tragic accident. This paper re-examines those notorious events, which occurred in the context of the conservative Bavin government’s offensive against the unionists. It considers the picketing miners’ motivations, whether and to what extent their actions were planned, the police preparations, and the aftermath. The paper makes the case that Brown’s death was a state-sanctioned extra-judicial killing. It takes account of the hints of interconnections between local experiences and events on the other side of the globe, which indicate how NSW coalminers were workers of the world.

Phoebe Kelloway is a PhD candidate in History at the University of Melbourne, working on a history of the Communist Party of Australia’s involvement in the three major industrial disputes at the start of the Depression, 1928-1930.

John McCollow: The battle for TAFE: teachers and the Newman Government, 2012-2015: a brief history

The Liberal National Party (LNP) led by Premier Campbell Newman was elected to government in Queensland in a landslide result on 24 March 2012 and embarked on an ambitious agenda of neo-liberal “reform” across a number of policy areas. The battle for Queensland’s public system of technical and further education (TAFE) was one

front of a broader war against the public service. From 2012 to early 2015, the Newman government attempted to completely remake the TAFE system, changing its values and modes of operation, reducing the size of its workforce, cutting back funding, hiving off TAFE assets and pursuing an ambitious industrial relations agenda to roll back working conditions and constrain the operation of unions. This paper examines the agenda, policies and practices of that government as these impacted on TAFE teachers and the responses of these teachers through their unions. (Refereed)

Dr John McCollow has been a teacher and a long-time union officer. He is a life member of the Australian Education Union and the Queensland Teachers’ Union. His research interests include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, the funding of education, vocational education and training, and teacher unions.

Warwick Eather and Drew Cottle: Preparing for battle: farmers, wheat lumpers and the 1917 general strike

After the successful miners’ dispute in late 1916, governments and capital expected trade unions to wage a general strike in opposition to the war effort and in response to war time induced shortages and inflation. They viewed the August 1917 strike, which began in the NSW railways and eventually spread throughout NSW and Victoria, and is now known as the 1917 General Strike, as the realisation of their worst fears. The NSW Nationalist government confronted the unions head on, determined to crush union militancy. The government was aided in their efforts by an army of volunteers, most of whom were farmers from the bush. The farmers responded quickly. Prior to 1917 this section of capital had regularly been used by state governments in NSW and Victoria to break

strikes, in particular the industrial campaigns waged from 1911 by wheat lumpers for a substantial increase in the daily rate of pay. The wheat lumpers achieved their industrial aims on the eve of the general strike through a combination of members' militancy, plagues of mice and weevils that damaged wheat stacks, a lack of shipping, and continuation of the rabbit industry. Participants in the 1917 General Strike were not so fortunate.

Dr Warwick Eather is an independent labour historian residing in Melbourne. With Drew Cottle, he has co-authored several articles on the mobilisation of banking capital against the nationalisation of banking and articles on aspects of the rabbit industry in Australia.

Drew Cottle teaches history and politics at Western Sydney University. He maintains an abiding interest in Capital history.

Saturday, 4:30–5:40pm

Riverview Room: Indigenous Australians and the left

Lisa Milner: The unpopular cause: Indigenous members of the Union of Australian Women

Whilst the work of Australian Indigenous rights activists from the 1967 Referendum onwards has attracted substantial academic interest, an under-researched area is the collaborative and networking campaigns of Indigenous and white activists before this time, in particular women.

The Union of Australian Women [UAW], the most significant national organisation for left-wing women activists, attracted a number of Indigenous members in the post-war decades, particularly to their Queensland branches. Working within their own communities as well as the wider political sphere, they included Pearl Gibbs, Gladys O’Shane, Dulcie Flower, and Faith Bandler, who realised that activists like them worked ‘in the unpopular cause of equal status for women’. These women faced some unique challenges: ‘if you were black, there was a stigma about being in the Communist Party’, said one member.

Foreshadowing the New Left’s interest in Indigenous rights and women’s rights, the UAW were giving practical and resourceful assistance to their Indigenous comrades in a number of campaigns, in line with approaches of the Communist Party of Australia and left-wing trade unions. This paper discusses UAW support for Indigenous rights between the end of World War II and the 1967 Referendum.

Lisa Milner is Senior Lecturer in the Media program at Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour. Her most recent work, highlighting the overlooked achievements of an Australian activist, is *Swimming Against the Tide: A Biography of Freda Brown* (Ginninderra Press, 2017).

Padraic Gibson: “Struggle with the Aborigines against Australian imperialism!” – the making of the Communist Party of Australia’s 1931 manifesto on Aboriginal oppression

In 1931, the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) published a comprehensive program for Aboriginal liberation. Andrew Markus has described the program as, “the most radical demands being made by, or on behalf of, Aborigines till the 1960s”. The text condemned continuing genocide, called for the abolition of Protection Boards and demanded political equality, return of lands and self-determination.

This was a breakthrough for the CPA, which had largely displayed either indifference or paternalism towards Aboriginal people since forming in 1920. This paper will explore the reasons for these early failings, despite a stated commitment to fight against colonialism and racism and unite the ‘workers of the world’.

The paper will then analyse how the 1931 manifesto was developed, looking at influences such as the anti-colonial politics of the Communist International and increasing contact between CPA members and Aboriginal activists during unemployed workers struggles in the Depression. Finally, I will provide some critical assessment of the practical contribution made by CPA activists to Aboriginal struggles in the 1930s.

Padraic Gibson is a Senior Researcher, Jumbunna Institute, University of Technology Sydney and a PhD Candidate, University of Newcastle

Seminar Room 1: Globalisation and work

Marjorie Jerrard & Patrick O'Leary: Migrants and the Meat Processing Industry in Australia: A Continuous Contribution

The Federal Government's April 2017 decision to abolish 457 visas and replace them with more restrictive visa categories that do not fit the current job categories in the Australian meat processing industry (to take full effect from March 2018), will have major implications for the industry, as the majority of employers either currently use or have used migrant meat workers on the temporary 457 visas. However, this apparent dependency on migrant labour utilisation is not just a modern industry pattern. The industry in its early years relied heavily on English, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh migrants, during the 1950s it saw migrants from Mediterranean countries increasingly fill jobs in the industry, and from the 1970s, the poultry industry turned to Vietnamese migrants, especially women. There have also been New Zealand and Pacific Islander meat workers in the Australian industry for a large part of the twentieth century. Therefore, it appears timely to investigate the contributions that these workers have made in the industry, using records and other documents from the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union which recruited and organised these migrant workers in the red meat processing industry and, in Queensland, the poultry industry. Therefore, this paper will broadly explore the history of migrant labour utilisation in the meat processing industry during the twentieth century and beyond.

Marjorie Jerrard is a Senior Lecturer in the Monash Business School and holds a PhD from Monash University on the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union and strategy. She has published on the Australian, New Zealand, and US meat processing industries, trade union strategy, and community unionism in Australia.

Patrick O'Leary works at Federation University Australia as a Lecturer in Human Resource Management. Patrick holds a PhD from UNSW and his research covers employer industrial relations practices, industrial relations in the Australian meat industry, international and comparative industrial relations in the meat industry, employers and employer associations.

Paul Macgregor: Chinese mining labour on the gold and tin fields of 19th century Australasia

It was often said of Chinese workers in 19th century Australia and New Zealand that they worked for lower pay than Europeans. This paper will explore how much this was true in Chinese-managed gold and tin mining enterprises, what factors determined rates of pay, and what Chinese workers views were on this. The Chinese approach to managing labour was to work in large teams, with a highly-developed division of labour; have their teams work large areas of ground; and apply systematic extraction across a whole field until most of the ore had been acquired. Many worked as employees, many also under self-managed cooperatives. This paper will argue that Chinese and European enterprises had different approaches to wages. Chinese mining managers in general provided accommodation and food as well as paying a salary. They set up vegetable gardens near their mining fields, imported foodstuffs wholesale from China, and operated communal kitchens. Hence the salary paid to workers on top of this was effectively disposable income, and could be lower than that for Europeans, who had to provide for their own cost of living out of their wage. Yet Chinese workers often left paid employment as soon as they could. Were they unhappy with conditions, or looking for better opportunities elsewhere?

Paul Macgregor, historian and heritage consultant, is Secretary of The Uncovered Past Institute, which undertakes archaeological excavations with public participation. Curator of Melbourne's Chinese Museum from 1990 to 2005, he has published widely, organised many conferences and exhibitions, and worked on several major research projects, all on Chinese Australian history. He is currently researching Chinese economic activity in Australia, and the material culture heritage of Chinese Australians, as part of a wider investigation of the nineteenth and early twentieth century co-evolution of European and Asian societies in Australasia, China, Southeast Asia, North America and the Pacific/Indian Ocean worlds. Website: www.paulmacgregor.info

Seminar Room 2: Solidarity in song

Brisbane Combined Unions Choir: Solidarity in song

The choir will sing a number of significant union/labour history songs with their context presented verbally as well. These will include: *The International*, *Solidarity forever*, *Bread and roses*, *Don't*

be too polite, etc. The writing of these songs, the political activity of the times and their usage could be further researched and presented with these songs. We will also present our recent song, *Penalty Rates Blues*, with a background to the when and why the first penalty rates were applied in Australia.

Sunday, 9:30–10:40am

Riverview Room: Unions and refugees

Kevin Bates (QTU): The QTU campaign for refugee rights

Kevin Bates is President of the Queensland Teachers Union.

Jon Piccini: Labour, refugees and Australia's human rights imagination in the 1940s

Neil Stammers argues that, since the nineteenth century, labour movements around the world have looked to notions of human rights as a way to challenge the hegemony of bourgeois right to property. In Australia, the Labour movement and its political project, the Australian Labor Party, adopted different ideas of human rights as part of its 'sans doctrine' notion of socialism while at the same time championing exclusionary immigration policies. In the 1940s, this contradiction came to a

head, when a new global, universal agreement on human rights that Australia had championed in the wake of World War II was employed by those very people the White Australia policy sought to exclude – in this case Chinese wartime refugees threatened with deportation. In examining this case, we can understand better how the idea of human rights – now a widely accepted term in progressive circles – was vernacularised in widely divergent ways at its time of birth. While organised labour saw human rights as state-based guarantees to employment, housing and international cooperation, calls for universal rights to immigration presage modern notions of rights as existing beyond, and indeed enforceable upon, nation states.

Jon Piccini is a Postdoctoral Development Fellow at the University of Queensland, where he is working on a book provisionally titled *Human Rights: An Australian History*. His most recent book, *Transnational Protest, Australia and the 1960s*, appeared in 2016 with Palgrave.

Seminar Room 1: Labour mobility

Andrea Ringer (Memphis): Big top labor: understanding labor mobility and global markets through nineteenth-century animal trainers

The 1906 Canadian National Exposition (CNE) in Toronto attracted thousands of excited tourists, eager to see acts like elephant trainer Eph Thompson and the women lion tamer, Adjie. These performers are part of the circus's global labor history of people and animals during its golden age. Their careers are a window into the individual mobility of circus workers. Both Thompson and Adjie began their performance careers as children, moved in and out of tented shows, crossed paths as trainers under Carl Hagenbeck's animal empire in Germany, and performed at some of the same venues. They also maintained significant control over their own careers by owning animals with which they performed. But their careers also looked different from one another. They began and ended in vastly different places and found success

on different stages. Thompson navigated the world of animal training as a solo performer in Europe, just as dozens of other trainers were following similar career paths. Their lives and careers as transatlantic migrant workers demonstrate the interconnectedness, mobility, and autonomy of people living in the circus world. As animal trainers, these features remained particularly true over their careers, since their performances had an irreplaceable value to the business. However, sideshow performers, acrobats, and other circus workers had similar experiences. Within a highly mobile workplace, the plight and migration of individual workers deserves an even closer examination. The circus was a highly mobile, cosmopolitan, and transnational workplace that employed thousands of people that worked in a circus diaspora. Circus folks referred to their careers as "gypsy on a grand scale." Because historians have largely focused on entire circuses, they have missed the opportunity to critically examine the global nature at the level of individual

workers. The lives of Thompson and Adjie, then, provide an opportunity to view global circus labour even when the workplace stayed within the U.S. borders. Moreover, their experiences and portrayals in the media provide larger context for how larger racial and gender constructions dictated or affected labour for circus workers well into the twentieth century. (Refereed)

Andrea Ringer is a PhD candidate at the University of Memphis where she studies U.S. history, immigration, cultural history, and labour history. Her research asks questions about the circus as a workplace and the history of its transnational migrant labourers. She is a former Catherine and Charles Freeburg Fellow.

Jayne Persian: “A Hot Siberia”: Displaced labour in post-war Australia

This paper examines the two-year indentured work contract under which conditions 170,000 post-war displaced persons (DPs) migrated to Australia between 1947 and 1952. The work contract involved the use of reception and training centres as temporary accommodations until migrants could

be directed to a workplace, and longer-term holding centres for the dependents of breadwinners. The Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) acted as the Department of Immigration’s agent, administering the contract in order to send DPs to do Australia’s ‘donkey work’. Under the work contract, families were separated and DPs were given the worst jobs, with little subsequent opportunity for professional advancement. Trade unions supported this scheme of utilizing (and exploiting) guaranteed, pliable and vulnerable labour, as it removed the DPs from direct competition with Australian workers. This paper will discuss the political debate around using DPs as indentured workers, as well as describing the lived experience of the work contract.

Jayne Persian is a historian of twentieth century Australian and international history at the University of Southern Queensland, the author of *Beautiful Balts: From Displaced Persons to New Australians* (Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2017) and Co-Chief Investigator on a 2016-19 ARC Discovery Project: Displacement and Resettlement: Russian and Russian-speaking Jewish displaced persons arriving in Australia via the ‘China’ route in the wake of the Second World War.

Sunday 11:10am – 12:30pm

Keynote: Ruth Milkman: Populism, precarity, and xenophobia in the Trump era

Sunday 1:30–3:15pm

Riverview Room: Organising immigrant workers

Craig Buckley (AMIEU Qld): How the meatworkers' union responded to the introduction of long-term temporary workers in the meat processing industry

Craig Buckley is an industrial officer with the Queensland Branch of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union. He has worked for the union for 13 years, and was the National Industrial Officer of the AMIEU from 2007-2015. He is also Secretary of the Brisbane Labour History Association.

Imogen Beynon (NUW Qld): Organising 417 backpacker workers

Imogen is Queensland State Lead Organiser for the National Union of Workers.

Luke Vitale: Organising Italian workers in fin de siècle Australia

During the late 1890s and early 1900s, newspapers of the Australian labour movement often published articles about Italy which presented Italy as a place of oppressive rule with a very low standard of living, while also being home to a labour movement

that was amongst the most revolutionary and organised in all of Europe. These contradictory views of Italy as simultaneously backwards and progressive fostered an ambivalence amongst Australian workers who expressed both sympathy for the Italian worker but also disgust at their poverty, their perceived backwardness, and their presence in Australia. Despite this ambivalence, Italian workers joined Australian unions and become involved in union organising.

This paper will elaborate this history through an analysis of the newspapers of the Australian labour movement as well as some key moments of industrial organising and conflict. It will then argue that the willingness of Italian workers to join unions was interpreted by Australian unionists as a sign of their assimilation and a result of Australian efforts to educate Italian workers. This relied on a dismissal and erasure of the Italian worker's history outside of the Australian labour movement and thus their reconstitution in a British-dominated white Australia.

Luke Vitale is a PhD student at the University of New South Wales. His thesis is on "Locating Italians in the Australian Field of whiteness".

Seminar Room 1: Socialist organising

Andrew Bonnell: German Social Democracy before 1914: Reflections on debates and critiques of a mass working-class party.

As the first million-strong mass-based social democratic party, the German Social Democrats of pre-1914 Imperial Germany have been the subject of numerous analyses and critiques, especially in view of their vote for war credits in 1914 and the party's subsequent split. This paper will consider some of the major critiques that have been formulated in relation to German Social Democracy: Robert Michels' contemporary analysis of the "iron law of oligarchy" and the capture of the party by its functionaries; Lenin's critique of the role of the "labour aristocracy" under imperialism;

the concept of "negative integration" developed by Guenther Roth and subsequently Dieter Groh, which see the party as replicating features of the Imperial German state while isolating itself from practical politics, and Carl E Schorske's analysis of the "Great Schism", among others. Based on recent research into the movement culture of the party, this paper will ask a contrary question: why the Social Democrats were as successful as they were in creating a mass working-class party under the conditions of an authoritarian imperial state?

Andrew Bonnell is Associate Professor in History at the University of Queensland. His publications include *The People's Stage in Imperial Germany* and *Shylock in Germany*, and numerous articles and book chapters on German history, especially on the history of Social Democracy in

Germany. He is currently completing a book on the movement culture of the German Social Democratic party before 1914.

Greg Mallory: Turmoil in the Communist Party of Australia: issues involved in the formation of the Socialist Party of Australia 1971

Some fifty years after the revolution in Russia the Communist Party of Australia underwent significant internal turmoil. The Party's opposition to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia was a catalyst for major internal debate which was led by Laurie Aarons and supported by key figures, Denis Freney and Jack Munday. The new leadership took the Party in a direction that was more aligned with ideas coming out of the emerging new left. They argued for a coalition of the left which would promote a political movement of students and workers. This new direction was met with great opposition from many members who argued that

the Party was moving away from a pro-Soviet position. This resulted in a group becoming active against the leadership. With the expulsion of two of its leading members, Alf Watt and Edgar Ross, a new party was formed in December 1971 called the Socialist Party of Australia. This paper will discuss the main issues that confronted the Communist Party during this tumultuous period, the philosophical directions espoused by Eric Aarons, the emerging calls for workers control and self-management, the pro-Soviet positions of Bill Brown, Alf Watt and Edgar Ross and the major ramifications it had for the Party.

Greg Mallory has been a high school teacher, trade unionist and an academic at both Griffith University and the University of Queensland. In 1999 he was awarded a Doctorate from the University of Queensland for his work on the political dimensions of trade unionism in Australia. He subsequently published this work. Greg has also written books on the Queensland coal miners and the Brisbane rugby league. He is currently President of the Brisbane Labour History Association.

Seminar Room 2: Culture and work

Cathy Brigden and Lisa Milner: Workers' Struggles on Stage: Australian Radical Theatre

The Australian New Theatre employed a novel mix of conventional theatre forms, experimental performative styles and communist theories of 'art as a weapon' in their presentation of left-wing theatre within a society that was largely resistant to their broader political ideals, in an era where theatre was not often a choice of entertainment for working class people. Taking performances to their working class audiences was an important part of their repertoire and in this, trade unions were key. For unions, this 'mobile' work offered access to ideas and the performing arts, and provided a novel and entertaining form of support for workers and their activities. Drawing from primary research

and oral history interviews, the paper highlights the type of reciprocal union-theatre relationships found in this marriage of culture and union activism, which took a variety of forms. To illustrate the intersection, a 1952 performance of an American play, *The Candy Store*, to members of the Miners Federation is examined. What makes the performance of this play notable is the location and audience: 1500 feet down a mineshaft to miners staging a stay-in strike. (Refereed)

Associate Professor Cathy Brigden is in the School of Management, RMIT University, Melbourne, email cathy.brigden@rmit.edu.au

Dr Lisa Milner is in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Southern Cross University, Coffs Harbour, email lisa.milner@scu.edu.au

Ron Lambert: Creating Culture at APM P/L 1936 to 1953 (incl 10 min film)

While looking at the early period of development of the paper industry I came across a promotional Film APM produced in 1952. "The Eternal Forest". This work captures the time and place perfectly and its message went on to become the accepted truth

by the APM" family". My paper seeks to examine the period between 1936 which saw commencement of operation in the Latrobe Valley by APM to 1953 and the post war expansion of the Maryvale plant. I will be discussing the impact of Industrial Welfarism on the development of worker/management relations and I would like to show the film "The Eternal Forest" to demonstrate

managements thinking. We believe it to be a significant part of industrial history in Australia.

Ron is a PhD candidate Federation University, Centre for Gippsland Studies Churchill. He is also a lifelong resident of the Latrobe Valley and is undertaking research into the history of pulpwood harvesting which grew with the fortunes of the Australian Paper Manufactures P/L Maryvale Paper Mill near Traralgon. He has also worked as a rigger in the power industry, as a union organiser and in a range of jobs across industry in the S.E corner of Australia.

Mathin Biswas, Marjorie Jerrard & Julian Teicher: Photoelicitation, Metaphors and Memories: The Meaning of the Fence for Former SECV Employees

The use of photoelicitation - that is, inviting research participants to look at and comment on photographs to prompt recollections of their past - combined with interviews results in obtaining detailed responses from the participants about what is shown in the photograph. For former SECV employees, photographs of their fenced off former work spaces and work-related artefacts prompted the participants to reflect on their past employment with the SECV. The photographs elicited comments from the participants on aspects of their work identity and work processes within the SECV; for example: "So I had all these jobs that I could do. But my favourite job at that time was operating dredges. Because you were in charge of the dredge. You were in charge of the digging and the quality and everything else", said a participant on seeing the photograph of a dredge abandoned behind a

tall wire fence. The images of fences also served as a metaphor for the separation of the present from the glorious past for the former SECV employees. Looking at the photograph of the "beautiful white building" which was the local main SECV office, standing behind another tall wire fence carrying warning and keep out signage, evoked from another participant the comment: "You just leave places like this and put a fence around them. It's wonderful isn't it?" This raises the question - will the recently closed Hazelwood power station meet the same fate and what will happen to its workforce? - which demonstrates the importance of engaging in labour history research to inform the present.

Mathin Biswas, a PhD candidate at Monash Business School, has recently submitted her PhD on 'Redundancy and tales thereafter: An Australian regional perspective'. Her research interests include life course of retrenched workers, formation and change of work identity, and the photoelicitation method.

Marjorie Jerrard is a Senior Lecturer in the Monash Business School and holds a PhD from Monash University on the Australasian Meat Industry Employees' Union and strategy. She has published on the Australian, New Zealand, and US meat processing industries, trade union strategy, and community unionism in Australia.

Julian Teicher is the Deputy Dean (Research) in the School of Business and Law at Central Queensland University. He has degrees in Economics (B.Ec. Hons; M.Ec.) and Law from Monash University and a Ph.D from the University of Melbourne. Julian's research is in two related fields: workplace (industrial) relations and public policy and management.

Sunday, 3:45–4:55pm

Riverview Room: Unions & globalisation

Bob Carnegie (MUA, Qld): Dealing with global stevedoring companies: the MUA experience

Bob Carnegie is Queensland State Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia.

Verity Burgmann: Workers of the World in the Twenty-First Century

Thomas Piketty's *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* ignores the power of labour as a factor shaping distribution, but workers' power – or lack of power – is crucial. Globalizing capital's increased power vis-à-vis labour is the dominant factor causing increased inequality via upwards redistribution from labour to capital. However, any study of working-class responses to globalization should allow for meaningful resistance. Currents within Western Marxism that critique economic determinism are pertinent, for example the writings

of Jean-Paul Sartre, E.P. Thompson and Antonio Negri. Negri's autonomist Marxism places labour at the dawn of the dialectic; and capital's 'dynamism' is merely reaction to the power of labour expressed in 'cycles of struggle'. This paper identifies eight interconnected features of globalization that seriously challenge labour movements. Yet workers have reacted creatively in each case. Responses include normal, traditional forms of labour movement resurgence, but workers have also developed novel ways to confront employer power that are particularly appropriate to the circumstances imposed by globalization. As aging and less agile labour movement forms decline or disappear, new expressions of working-class organization and mobilization emerge to better battle with capitalist globalization.

Verity Burgmann is Adjunct Professor of Political Science at Monash University and author of numerous studies of Australian and international labour and social movements. Her most recent book is *Globalization and Labour in the Twenty-First Century* (Routledge, 2016).

Seminar Room 1: Mobile militants

David Faber: FG Fantin: a complex sense of belonging

Beginning with a definition of 'belonging' as a complex dimension of membership of community and personal identity, this paper explores the compound sense of belonging of a Veneto Italian-Australian migrant worker and international proletarian, Francesco Giovanni Fantin, whose life and work as a political activist and related untimely death have attracted historical attention given his assassination at Loveday Internment Camp 14A, South Australia on 16 November 1942. His death was a turning point in the history of wartime preventive deterrent detention of 'enemy aliens', the single most adverse social event in the history of the Italian community in Australia, then and now one of the largest and most significant ethnic communities in the country. The paper charts the dimensions of community, both socioeconomic and

political, which informed Fantin's sense of identity and activism from his formative years in Italy's Schio district to his sense of identification with Australia on the eve of his death. The paper reports original research employing an historical materialist perspective and archival and oral history methods to biographically explore political activism and processes of belonging, political emigration and class struggle. As such it contributes to Australian labour history a multicultural account of the political history of the Italian community in Australia. In conclusion the practice of political activism is discussed in the light of Fantin's experience and practice. (Refereed)

David Faber is a member of the Adelaide Branch of the ASSLH.

Duncan Money: Ain't I a bastard, well I received my training in Aussie: The life of Frank Maybank, an Australian trade unionist on the Central African copperbelt.

Frank Maybank (1901-1994) was a worker of the world. He lived and worked in five different countries, where he took any job available: he stoked ships, clerked, cut steel, harvested corn, drove cattle, sheared sheep, built pylons, mined coal, copper and gold, prospected, sold cars, salvaged sunken ships, poured pints, ran a hotel, and drove delivery trucks. The job he held for longest though was General Secretary of the militant, whites-only mineworkers' union on the copperbelt, where his strategy and combativity during his 11-year tenure were closely informed by his experiences and contacts with the Australian labour movement.

This paper examines Maybank's formative years in Australia during the 1930s, his visit to the Soviet Union, leading role in the labour movement in Central Africa, and return to Australia in the mid-1950s to explore the influence and spread of a radical yet highly racialized class consciousness. Although hundreds of men left Australia during the 1930s to work on the copper mines, Maybank was the most prominent among them and so his life is a useful way to understand the connections between the Australian labour movement and Central Africa.

Duncan Money is a historian of Central and Southern Africa with a particular interest in labour and transnational history. He is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at the International Studies Group, University of the Free State and was awarded his PhD from the University of Oxford in 2016

Seminar Room 2: Workers of the world

Peter Uledi: Central African labour history from 1946 to 1948 in relation to Southern Rhodesia labour needs

The colony of Southern Rhodesia since its founding faced a number of economic problems; among them was undercapitalisation, locust invasions and labour. The labour problem became one of the major issues that the colonial administration had to deal with, as local labour was not forthcoming due to 'successful' peasant agriculture. Devices, legislation and measures were set to coerce Africans into wage labour, the success of these measures which is subject to debate as Africans found ways to deal with legislation and coercive measure drawn against them. The colony's mining and agricultural sectors were growing enormously that the labour problem continued to hamper any meaningful economic development. African reserves were created in worst areas and conditions to force Africans into wage labour and to increase the plight of the African hut and poll taxes were charged. The only way for Africans to meet these demands was to move out of reserves and offer themselves to European settler miner or farmers. The working conditions were harsh and local labour fled the Country to the Union of South Africa in which wages were high and 'better' working conditions. The quest for labour in Southern Rhodesia seemed not to end and with the development of tobacco farms and the growing manufacturing industry post the world war two

more labour was required. This resulted into the tripartite labour agreement. In as much as there are works on this labour agreement, there has been little or no robust and extensive investigation of the politics and debates, how the labour agreement operated and the points of contention between the three territories. This paper is an attempt to highlight the politics of labour demands and which colony benefitted more from the agreements. Parton seems to argue that it was only Southern Rhodesia that benefitted from the agreement, when in actual fact the benefits were close to equal across the territories though different in terms of economic value.

Peter Uledi graduated with an Honours degree in Economic History at the University of Zimbabwe in 2016. He is currently studying for a Masters in African Economic History with the University of Zimbabwe and working as a Graduate Teaching Assistant with the Department of Economic History.

Emmet Gillespie: Refusing 'to work and also starve': The Federal Workers Section in conflict with the Minneapolis Welfare Board.

In order to prevent Minneapolis's large numbers of unemployed from strike-breaking during the 1934 truck driver's strike, General Drivers Local 574 promised to organise an unemployed section of the union to fight for greater public relief. After the

strike, this developed into the Federal Workers Section (FWS), an organisation of the unemployed which incorporated both workers on the New Deal Works Progress Administration (WPA) and those who remained on direct relief. Unlike the major rival unemployed organisation, the Worker's Alliance, which focused on protecting the WPA from perpetual conservative attack, the FWS sought to improve the conditions of WPA workers by challenging the local institutions of direct relief. These interactions between the direct relief authorities in Minneapolis and the FWS will form the core of this paper.

Accounts of the organised unemployed in the American 1930s generally focus on the militant upsurges of the early 1930s, with the later Worker's Alliance passed over as co-opted into the relief

bureaucracy of the WPA. By focusing on the Federal Workers Section, which had a much more fraught relationship with the relief bureaucracies, this paper aims to complexify this story. Furthermore, this paper will contribute to the rich historiography charting the often complex relationships between direct relief officials and social workers by incorporating unemployed organisations into the story, thus examining possibilities for organised resistance to social welfare institutions.

Emmet Gillespie is a PhD student at the University of Sydney. She is currently working on a doctoral thesis in American History charting the growth of Minnesota's trade union movement in the aftermath of the 1934 truck driver's strike.

Monday, 9:00–10:10am

Riverview Room: Workshop: How to get published in Labour History

Diane Kirkby (facilitator)

A workshop for postgrads and early career academics. Come and meet members of the Labour History Editorial Board, and editor, Professor Diane Kirkby. Bring an abstract of a potential article for instant constructive feedback!

Seminar Room 1: Brisbane union activism

Lesley Synge: A Visual Biography of Wal Stubbings (1913- 2014), Waterside Workers Federation (WWF) activist for 40 Years

Walter Stubbings, grandson of a female convict from Dublin, was born on Tasmania's West Coast in 1913. He initially earned a living timber-getting for the Mount Lyell copper mine like his father and brothers, with occasional wharf work in Strahan. When subsequently working in the port of Hobart he was increasingly drawn to communism, and was recruited to the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) in Brisbane, where he went to assist the war effort, in 1946. The brutal attempts by the government of the day to defeat the railway workers strike of 1948 further radicalised him. He reached the height of his influence and commitment to working-class liberation in his mid-40s when elected Vigilance Officer. In this role (1959-63), besides the pursuit of industrial issues, he supported Faith Bandler, Oodgeroo (Kath Walker) and Joe McGinness, an Aboriginal wharfie from Cairns, to establish the Qld Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders (QCAATSI); helped found the Paraplegic Welfare Association (later Spinal Life Australia); and accepted the invitation of the CPA to attend May Day celebrations in the USSR.

The presentation illustrates his life and times through thirty rare photographs from family sources and elaborates on a number of key political turning points in his life by quoting from his memoir (Stubbings, Wal and Synge, Lesley. Wharfie. Brisbane: Zing Stories, 2017, also available as an e-book on Amazon Kindle). Wal Stubbings remained an active member of the CPA until its

dissolution. Having lived such a physical life, he adopted athletics as his hobby during retirement and became a champion runner. He was awarded Life Membership of the Brisbane Labour History Association in 2009.

Lesley Synge has an MA in Creative Writing from the University of Queensland. She writes in many genres including the novel *Cry Ma Ma to the Moon*, and two poetry collections *Organic Sister* and *Mountains Belong to the People Who Love Them*. Her personal essays are published widely in such journals as *Griffith Review* and *Hecate* and reflect her interests in political activism and contemporary Buddhism.

Carol Corless: Valour among the vats

This is an account of a strike that was undertaken by brewery workers at Castlemaine brewery in Brisbane in 1937. The strike was to gain a 40-hour week and a pay rise. The strike did not have the outcome that the workers hoped for but instead left at least 80 workers without jobs. The strike affected workers at the second Brisbane based brewery due to the actions of the employers. The strike was held during a time when the preferred method to gain the 40-hour week was arbitration. The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), other individual unions, the Queensland Government and the Australian Labor Party (ALP) had been vocal in their preference for arbitration.

Carol recently completed her Bachelor's Degree in Historical Inquiry and Practice from UNE. She was a shop floor union delegate for United Voice at her previous employer, which ceased production in Qld in 2016. She is a life member of United Voice Qld.

Seminar Room 2

Malcolm Abbott: Common interests: the origins of the relationship between the Australian Labor Party and the margarine industry

Given the relationships with the trade unions and the ideological left the Australian Labor Party has often faced a number of questions about the nature of its relationship with the business sector. In light of these questions in this paper the origins of the relationship between the Labor Party and the margarine industry is studied. In doing so an evaluation is undertaken of the historical restrictions on margarine production in Australia and the impact they had on the alliance that was built between the Labor Party and some of the margarine manufacturers from the 1930s onwards. It is found that despite periodic accusations that this was a corrupt relationship, the two partners cooperated primarily because of the similarity of interest they had, which in turn arose from the politicisation of Australian agriculture that took part in Australia in the 1930s and 1940s.

Malcolm Abbott is an Associate Professor of Economics at the Swinburne University of Technology in Australia. He is an economist by profession and the main fields of work in which he has been engaged have been the development of energy markets (natural gas and electricity) as well as education and training, rail, seaports, airports, dairy industry deregulation, and stevedoring. He holds a PhD from the University of Melbourne in Australia and has also worked on consulting projects for the governments of Victoria, Australia, Singapore, Thailand, New Zealand, and Argentina.

Georgina Murray and David Peetz: The history of the future of cyborgs, society and work

This paper will provide an overview of some of the classic fictional literature, as well as some popular culture, relating to the future of society, cyborgs and the future of work. This analysis will consider the concerns in this literature about: growing inequality in society; surveillance, invasions or destruction of privacy and the scope for totalitarianism. Works it will refer to will include: 'end of the world' scenarios of mankind as bifurcated societies in the work of H G Wells' *Time Machine* (as well as in *Dr Who*); George Orwell's dystopian view of totalitarianism and technology in *1984*; Isaac Asimov, on robots and artificial intelligence (especially in *I, Robot*); Philip K Dick, on androids (*Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, turned into the movie *Bladerunner*); cyborgs as portrayed in *Star Trek* (as 'the Borg'); and most recently David Eggers' disturbing *The Circle*.

Georgina Murray is adjunct associate professor in the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Science at Griffith University. She is the author of *Capitalist Networks and Social Class in Australia and New Zealand* and *Women of the Coal Rushes*, and co-editor of: *Financial Elites and Transnational Business*; *Women, Regulation and Labor Segmentation*; and *Think Tanks*.

David Peetz is professor of employment relations in the Centre for Work, Organisation and Wellbeing at Griffith University. He is the author of *Unions in a Contrary World*, *Brave New Workplace*, and *Women of the Coal Rushes* and co-editor of *Wealth, Poverty and Survival* and *Women, Regulation and Labor Segmentation*.

Monday 10:40am – 12:25pm

Riverview Room: Women in the class struggle

Emma Robertson: When women supersede men': Transgressive Femininity on the Railways during World War One

In 1915 a series of cartoons published in the National Union of Railwaymen journal imagined what might happen if women were to take jobs on the railways. They depicted female porters and guards and, still more shocking, a female driver, fireman and station-mistress. The cartoons emerged at the very moment the union were fiercely debating the necessity of allowing women members. They illustrate the tensions between wartime patriotism and the fear of a world turned upside down by the presence of women on the rails. This paper explores these cartoons in their wartime context but also considers their role more broadly in constructing and maintaining the gendered nature of railway work as inherently masculine. During the First World War women took on many roles on the railways (usually temporarily) but certain occupations, notably those on the footplate, remained stolidly men's work and would do so until the late twentieth century. To understand the tenacity of notions of 'traditional' work for men and women, it is crucial to unpick the construction of occupational culture and tradition in sources such as union and company journals.

Emma Robertson is Senior Lecturer in History at La Trobe University, Australia. Her first book, *Chocolate, Women and Empire: A Social and Cultural History* was published by Manchester University Press in 2009. She is currently working with Professor Diane Kirkby on the ARC Discovery Project 'Breaking Down Tradition: Women in male-dominated work, 1840-2000' (DP 160102764).

Deborah Jordan: Queensland Anti-war feminists during World War One

One hundred women were waiting at the Central station in Brisbane to welcome two leading peace women, Adela Pankhurst and Cecilia John from the Women's Peace Army. The guests arrived by train from Melbourne in November 1915. A newly formed Queensland branch of the Women's Peace Army drew on the expertise of the veteran suffragist and 'mother of labour' Emma Miller and the young Quaker Margaret Thorp. From that time onwards the activities, press releases, written material were closely monitored and censored and their mail intercepted. This paper/article addresses the formation of the group, raises questions about other key women in the group, maps the changing players and strategies of the people involved to raise questions about how best to represent the anti-war movement in Queensland, whether as a 'tiny band of women', or the marginalised few, as the wider radical women's movement lost ground in Queensland. (Refereed)

Dr Deborah Jordan, historian, is a senior research fellow (adj) at the National Centre of Australian Studies, Monash University. She has published widely in Australian history, on the environmental imagination and women's history. Her report *Climate Change Narratives in Australian Fiction* came out in 2014; *Loving Words, Love Letters between Vance and Nettie Palmer 1909-1914* is to be published by Brandl & Schlessinger. The current project on anti-militarism during WW1 in Queensland, in consultation with WILPF, develops research on the digitalised Queensland suffrage petitions of 1894 and 1897.

Seminar Room 1: Controversial immigrants

Phil Griffiths: Class analysis and the "coolie labour" crisis in late colonial Queensland

In 1882, the Conservative Queensland government began moves to set up a system for recruiting and

regulating large numbers of indentured labourers from British India for the sugar industry. The Liberals, led by Samuel Griffith, already hostile to the widespread use of unfree Pacific Islanders, mobilised against the idea, and it was pivotal to the defeat of the Conservatives in the 1883 election. In

response, the planters decided to campaign for the separation of North Queensland into a new colony, and this to their defeat as the southern Conservatives deserted them and London refused their appeal for the division of the colony.

One of the most significant aspects of this conflict was that this was not simply a fight between the supporters and opponents of “coloured labour”: different fractions and factions within the ruling class adopted very different positions on the acceptability, or otherwise, of different “types” of “coloured labour”. In this paper I show that an understanding of British and American anti-slavery and liberal politics, along with an analysis of class interests, can make sense of the different positions taken within elite politics.

Phil Griffiths teaches Political Economy at the University of Southern Queensland, Toowoomba. His research focuses on the ruling class agendas behind the adoption of the White Australia policy, and the dynamics leading to what Paul Kelly called the Australian Settlement.

Anna Shnukal: Greek and Okinawan divers in the post-war Australian pearling industry

A brief experiment in the post-war importation of foreign labour to the northern Australian pearling industry brought Greek divers from Kalymnos to Darwin and Broome in the mid-1950s, when these centres were struggling to re-establish the industry in the face of acute skilled labour shortages. Given popular opposition to the re-importation of the Japanese indentured, who had dominated the industry pre-war, the scheme was viewed favourably by the Australian government and the master pearlmen but was unsuccessful. The labour problem remained and the lessons learned influenced the decision to import Okinawan labour to Thursday Island in 1958.

The Greek sponge divers and the Okinawan salvage divers faced unemployment in their home islands and their governments were keen to export these men, just as the Australian government was faced with the industry’s collapse without suitable labour. The Greeks, brought to Darwin with Australian government assistance, quickly transferred to the construction industry, setting off a chain migration which by 1988 resulted in almost 10% of Darwin’s population having Kalymnian heritage. However, the ‘White Australia’ policy required that the ‘Asiatic’ Okinawans be employed under strict terms of indenture and repatriated at their employers’ expense. Both ventures failed because all concerned underestimated the skills required to locate and harvest pearlshell in the

dangerous northern Australian waters and at sometimes fatal depths.

Anna Shnukal PhD in Linguistics (Georgetown University), MSc (Georgetown University), BSocStuds Hons (University of Queensland), Certificate in Community History (University of Queensland), BA Hons (Australian National University) began a post-doctorate Fellowship in Sociolinguistics in Torres Strait in 1980. Now retired, she has been a Senior Policy Officer, Queensland Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy; ARC Australian Research Fellow, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics; and is currently an Honorary Associate, Queensland Museum. She has authored or edited almost 100 published and unpublished works on aspects of Torres Strait and, with a colleague, was awarded a grant from the Australia-Japan Foundation of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in 2016 to research the Okinawan presence in northern Australia.

Max Kaiser: An Antifascist Anti-Migrant Campaign: The Jewish campaign against German Migration to Australia 1950-1952

From 1950 to 1952, the Australian Jewish community prosecuted a vigorous and passionate public campaign aimed at preventing a migration deal between the Menzies Australian Government and West Germany. The campaign objected to the migration to Australia of tens of thousands of non-Jewish Germans and Volksdeutsche – ethnic Germans living in Eastern Europe who either fled or were forced to leave after the defeat of the Nazis. The campaign was informed by a transnationally constituted anti-fascist consciousness that saw prospective German migrants as representative of a transnational fascism.

This paper, using newly unearthed documents, presents a fresh examination of this campaign in the context of the Cold War, the White Australia policy, the politics of the Communist Party and the Union movement. I suggest that the Jewish campaign was a largely independent affair. Despite backing from figures in the Labour movement, it was not fully backed by the Communist Party, faced roadblocks in Trade Union racism and came up against a reactionary Cold War alliance between Australia and West Germany. I suggest that this case raises difficult questions for a politics of working class internationalism in a context of racialised border controls determined through geopolitics.

Max Kaiser is a PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne, Australia. He is working on a history of Australian Jewish antifascism in the immediate post-War era.

Seminar Room 2: Change in the union movement

Bob Russell: Possession, provider, organiser: three eras in an Australian white-collar union

This paper describes three distinct eras in the post-war history of Australia's largest white-collar union The Federated Clerks. These eras are theorised as representing periods when the union was first and foremost a political asset in the cold-war fight against communism, followed by phases when the union focused on membership service and most recently on workplace organisation. The manner in which these transitions were enacted, the reasons behind them and their longer run implications are explored. The overarching narrative describes how a right-wing, non-confrontational body became a progressive social union with a feminist agenda. (Refereed)

Bob Russell is a retired sociologist who formerly worked in the Dept of Employment Relations at Griffith University, and before immigrating to Australia, at the University of Saskatchewan. Bob is the author of a number of books, the latest being *Smiling Down the Line: Info-Service Work in the Global Economy*, University of Toronto Press. His most recent work has appeared in the journal *Economic and Industrial Democracy*.

Brad Bowden: The decline and transformation of Australian unionism

In May 2017 the Australian Bureau of Statistics published the first statistics on trade union membership since the discontinuation of the long-running Employee Earnings, Benefits and Trade Union Membership series in the wake of its August 2013 survey. The new series, Characteristics of Employment, Australia, confirms two long-established trends. First, it reveals the continuing decline of trade union membership, whether measured in terms of absolute membership or as a share of the workforce. Second, it reveals the increasing domination of union membership by those who list their occupation as either professional or manager. Together, these two groupings are now responsible for more than 40%

of national membership. The new series also reveals as failures the "revitalisation" policies pursued by unions in recent decades, which have revolved around two main strategies: the "Organising Model" – a plan to increase workforce activism – and activist campaigns designed to achieve the election of Labor governments and more favourable industrial laws. As the shrinking ranks of unions become ever more dominated by professionals and managers, moreover, the Australian union movement risks becoming increasingly remote from the concerns of the wider society. (Refereed)

Bradley Bowden is Professor of employment relations at Griffith University, Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Management History*, and Past Chair of the Management History Division of the Academy of Management. He has written the histories of 3 unions and is a long-term contributor to Labour History.

John Martin: Centralisation in three large Australian unions

This article considers the centralisation of powers and functions within three large Australian unions. The diminution of state industrial jurisdictions seemingly reduces the utility of separate state-based organisations within Australian unions. Case studies of three large Australian unions examine the causes of centralisation within these unions and associated implications. In the context of falling membership, these case studies are considered in terms of other renewal strategies that have been adopted by the Australian trade union movement.

The findings of the research include that financial and administrative benefits of centralisation will be irresistible to unions facing declining membership. There is, however, significant danger that an associated centralisation of power potentially alienates existing and potential union members. (Refereed)

Dr John Martin, Research and Policy Officer Queensland Council of Unions; Sessional Academic University of Queensland.

Monday 1:30–2:40pm

Riverview Room: Women, work and unions

Heather Goodall and Devleena Ghosh: Workers, women and unions: India & Australia 1940s

As educational opportunities for girls expanded, many Indian and Australian women entered what were known as professional occupations – teaching and nursing – during the first half of the 20th century. But they found their careers were circumscribed by gender and class – and, in India, by caste attitudes. Women turned to unions in both countries for support against such discrimination, but activists found they had to fight to achieve the support they had hoped for. This paper draws on the speeches and reports of two women teachers who campaigned for professional women’s rights in Australia and India, Lucy Woodcock (Sydney) and Kapila Khandvala (Bombay), and who spoke together to unionists in Australia in 1946 and in India in 1954. Both activists argued that unions potentially offered strength for women in professions but both pointed out the obstacles women faced when they tried to mobilise union support.

Renate Howe: “But I wouldn’t want my wife to work here...” Assessing the impact of a 1975 study of migrant women workers in Melbourne

This groundbreaking study was undertaken in 1975 by the Centre for Urban Research and Action in Fitzroy, Melbourne and was financed by a grant from the Whitlam government to mark International Women’s Year. The study researched the exploitation of migrant women, mainly from Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia, working in Melbourne’s inner city clothing and food processing industries. The study found that migrant women’s working conditions and difficulties in balancing work and home responsibilities had been overlooked not only by the male led unions but also by the emerging women’s movement. A significant finding was that the most important issue for these migrant women workers was not so much their often appalling working conditions and their difficulties in coping with family responsibilities as their dismissive treatment by both management and unions. The paper concludes by examining the longer term impacts of the study in addressing the specific problems facing migrant women working in manufacturing industry.

Renate Howe is an Honorary Associate Professor at Deakin University, Victoria.

Seminar Room 1: Cold war attacks on the labour movement

Phillip Deery and Julie Kimber: “A menace to America”: the deportation case of Harry Bridges

On four separate occasions between 1938 and 1955, the United States government sought to deport Harry Bridges, the prominent Australian-born president of the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union. This paper examines the first deportation case, heard in 1939, which lasted two months and heard 60 witnesses. It will

examine, in particular, the role of the prosecution witnesses upon whom the government relied to prove that Bridges was a member of or affiliated to the American Communist Party and therefore punishable by deportation under the 1918 Alien Act. We will argue that the concerted effort to deport Bridges had as much to do with his successful leadership of a militant union, and his pivotal role in the historic 1934 West Coast waterfront strike, as with the ostensible ground of deportation: that he was an alien and a communist.

We will further argue that there was direct collusion between the government (Board of Immigration, Department of Labor, Justice Department, and the congressional Dies Committee), private companies (especially shipbuilding and waterfront employer groups), and numerous anti-labour and anti-radical activist organisations which spied and collected intelligence on labour unions and “subversives” (including the American Legion, Better American Federation of California, Associated Farmers, Industrial Association of San Francisco, and Union of Californian Citizens). As the 1939 deportation hearing revealed, their collaboration resembled a public-private conspiracy with the sole aim of eliminating the influence or presence of Harry Bridges on the West coast waterfront.

Phillip Deery is Emeritus Professor of History at Victoria University, Melbourne, and a book review editor of *Labour History*.

Julie Kimber is Senior Lecturer in Politics and History at Swinburne University, the Federal Secretary of the ASSLH, and co-editor of *Journal of Australian Studies*. Phillip and Julie co-edited *Fighting Against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Leftbank Press, 2015).

Raymond Markey: Cleaning Out the Reds: The Cold War in the NSW Public Service Association, 1947-54

In July 1947 dissident clerical workers in the Public Service Association (PSA) of NSW, led by the ‘Phantom Eleven’, formed ‘The Group’ to organise within the PSA. The Group unanimously resolved that ‘no member of the Communist Party or of any affiliated body be allowed to attend any meeting’,

and expelled two Communist Party members. The Movement’s News Weekly applauded these actions. In March 1948 the deputy leader of the federal Liberal Party, E. J. Harrison, claimed that ‘workers who obeyed Communist orders dictated through their unions, included amongst others, public servants’, two years before US Senator Joseph McCarthy declared that the US State Department employed hundreds of Communists. The PSA executive quickly quashed implications that it was subject to Communist influence.

Superficially, these events parallel activities of Industrial Groups in other unions at this time, in the broader context of the Cold War. However, closer examination reveals greater complexity, whereby Group participants were principally motivated by industrial rather than political issues, and by perceived lack of voice for clerical workers in the broadly based PSA. This internal conflict temporarily produced a breakaway Clerical Officers’ Association, with long-term implications for the PSA’s structure and political alignment.

Raymond Markey became Honorary Professor at Macquarie University in 2017 after retiring as Professor of Employment Relations and Director of the Centre for Workforce Futures. He previously spent seven years as Professor of Employment Relations at the Auckland University of Technology Business School (2005-11), and was Foundation Director of the New Zealand Work and Labour Market Institute (2006-11), prior to which he was Convenor of the Industrial Relations Programme at the University of Wollongong from 1979 to 2005, where he also established and led the Centre for Work and Labour Market Studies. He has published over 130 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, as well as 14 authored/edited books in labour history and workplace relations. He is currently working on a history of the PSA.

Seminar Room 2: Labour activists

Christina Ealing-Godbold: Andrew Spink – All for the Worker

Biography can illuminate changes in society especially in uncertain times. This paper traces the life of Andrew Spink following a path through the labour and working class institutions in Queensland in the twenty years before and after the turn of the 20th century. Self-Help and personal endeavour are at the core of mutual societies. The Labour movement, by contrast, has at its core

collective action (although sometimes for personal gains) rather than personal action. Andrew Spink, Coachbuilder, Union Leader, Lodge Leader and President of the Friendly Society Association in Queensland was active in both movements at different times.

A Secretary of the first Trades and Labour Council in 1887, Andrew Spink was a moderate in terms of labour politics. He later excelled in his leadership and financial management of the Brisbane

Associated Friendly Societies Medical Institute and Dispensary whilst also serving on the first Council of the new University of Queensland, managing Star Bowkett Societies and providing leadership in the Grand United Order of Oddfellows. Always passionate about the working man contributing to his own success and progress, Andrew Spink was involved in every aspect of the movement to improve the life of the worker in Queensland.

Christina Ealing-Godbold is a Senior Librarian in Research and Information Services at the State Library of Queensland. Christina has a Master's Degree in Australian History from the University of Sydney, having written a thesis on Workers in Queensland in the first decade of the 20th century. Christina has worked as a Senior Librarian at the Universities of Sydney and Cincinnati and also at the State Libraries of New South Wales and Queensland. Christina was the Project Officer for the Queensland Heritage Retrieval Project that retrieved many original historical documents relating to Queensland History from British private and public collections between 1992 and 1995. Christina's research interests are primarily in working class history and lifestyle in Australia as well as in Local Studies in Queensland.

Martin Sullivan: A Catholic priest, railway navvies, secondary schooling for girls from the labouring population of Charters Towers, 1880-1910

James Comerford was a native Irishman, ordained into the Catholic priesthood, in 1876, in Thurles, Ireland and arrived in Rockhampton, Queensland, 1878. There he learnt the foibles of colonial life from

a wily old priest, a French native, Charles Murlay who sailed, and rode horses, up and down the coastline as he tried to establish his church in the new colony. Murlay knew about social class and Comerford imbibed the old man's teaching. In 1879 Comerford left Rockhampton and joined the railway navvies, who were headed westwards towards the sunsets. Their numbers varied but 100 men with women and children was not unusual during the nine years Comerford spent with them as they edged their way along the Tropic of Capricorn. Sometimes he built a church but mostly he dragged a building that he acquired at Bogantungan, west of Emerald. Catholic or not, everyone knew Comerford as he put his Irish Catholic footprint down in Emerald, Bogantungan, Pine Hill, Alpha, Beta, and Jericho. A number of Comerford's memorials stand in Charters Towers in 2017, but within a year or two of his arriving, he built St Mary's Convent High School for girls ten years before he built a secondary school for boys, and twenty years before Catholics in Townsville had a secondary school for boys. Why this blustering, abusive, authoritarian, intimidating, frightening, whisky drinking, sectarian, dictatorial, six foot six Irish priest chose to establish a secondary school for girls from working class homes before he did the same thing for boys remains an unanswered question. St Mary's Charters Towers still enrolls students in the building he opened in 1892, but few parishioners in Charters Towers know his name, nor does the labour movement recognise his contribution. It should.

Martin Sullivan is a pensioner and former academic, living in Murwillumbah, NSW

Monday 2:40–3:30pm

Riverview Room: Closing panel: Summing up the conference

Panellists: to be confirmed; facilitator: Diane Kirkby

- What does labour history have to offer in an age of rising nationalist chauvinism and angry populist revolt?
- How do we do labour history in Australia, and Australian labour history, in an era of globalisation?
- What is the relevance of labour history to young people today?