

RECORDER

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FIGHTING AGAINST WAR: PEACE ACTIVISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The Melbourne Branch is pleased to announce that it will be hosting the 14th Biennial Labour History Conference,

Fighting against war: peace activism in the twentieth century

Melbourne
11-13 February 2015

Call for Papers

Throughout the twentieth century, labour movement activists have been in the forefront of challenges to war and militarism. This conference seeks to restore their role to our historical memory. Within this overarching theme of 'fighting against war', we invite conference papers that include, but are not restricted to, the struggles against conscription, fascism, nuclear weapons, and war in general. We do not wish to restrict the focus to the organised labour movement. Peace activism has occurred across a broad range of fronts undertaken by a variety of concerned individuals, pacifist groups and clerical organisations, and we welcome papers dealing with their concerns and activities.

Abstracts (due 1 June 2014)

Maximum 200-250 words. Provide a biographical statement, which includes your name, affiliation and email contact.

Refereed Papers (due 1 September 2014)

Maximum 8,000 words (including footnotes)

Non-Refereed Papers (due 1 December 2014)

5,000-6,000 words (including footnotes)

A book of selected refereed papers will be published. Non-refereed papers will be made available, if

permitted by the author, on the conference website. A booklet of abstracts will be available at the conference.

Go to <http://labourhistorymelbourne.org> or email jkimber@swin.edu.au for details.

Death of Wally Curran OAM

By Peter Love

Wally Curran was one of those indefatigable activists who broadened the scope of trade union coverage well beyond strictly industrial matters. He joined the Meatworkers' Union (now AMIEU) in 1954 and soon after became Victorian Assistant Secretary under his old CPA comrade George Seelaf's leadership. He succeeded George in 1973 and remained Secretary until 1997. In that time he fought many hard battles with tough, belligerent employers, and irritated some of his comrades along the way. He was instrumental in setting up the Meat Industry Superannuation Fund and, with Seelaf, the Trade Union Clinic. He also oversaw much improved safety gear for members. He was a founder of the Meat Market Craft Centre, the art gallery in the Union offices, was very active in advocating arts projects as well as serving on the Australia Council from 1974-78. He was influential on the left of the ALP, within the ACTU and in countless campaigns for working class causes. He was an engaging raconteur, a strategic organiser, a forceful advocate and a man to be taken seriously at the height of his powers.

We will publish a full obituary in the next issue.

Billy Bragg launches We Are Union campaign

By Peter Love

During his most recent tour, Billy did one of his usual comradely gigs in the courtyard at Melbourne Trades Hall on Friday 14 March. The occasion was the launch of the Victorian Trade Unions' campaign against the policies of the Naphine Government in the lead up to the State election in November. Unlike his tour performances, the entry ticket was a union card.



In his customary blend of speech and song he urged the comrades to maintain their belief in the cause of freedom, equality and common decency. He recalled his own political awakening as a nineteen year old at the 1978 Rock Against Racism march where he sensed the power of mass solidarity. Now, at a time of widespread defeat and despondency it was easy to give up the fight and retreat to an embittered cynicism. It was all the more necessary now to maintain belief in the comrades, the movement and the basic decency of fellow citizens. He concluded the point by singing 'I Keep Faith'.

Looking around him, he was reminded that Woody Guthrie always played to audiences like them in places like that. Woody never had big gigs like Billy's 1,000 plus Palais performance the night before. While troubadours like him and Woody proclaim the cause, it was the job of activists, unions and the united movement to campaign and force the changes. This led him into 'There is Power in a Union', to the delight of all.

On the way to Trades Hall he had learned of Tony Benn's death and was saddened to remember a great socialist who had been something of a mentor. He thought of singing 'The Internationale' but since Tony had never liked Billy's version, he ended the launch with a rousing verse and chorus of 'The Red Flag' as a tribute. It was a fitting end to an energising launch of the We Are Union campaign.

Anti-Abortion Campaigning and the Political Process

By Ainsley Symons

In an interview on Melbourne radio station 3AW before the coming federal elections in 1984 the indefatigable anti-abortion campaigner Margaret Tighe referred specifically to two Victorian candidates for the House of Representatives. They were David McKenzie, the Australian Labor Party (ALP) candidate for the electorate of Menzies, and Tony Lamb, the ALP candidate for Streepton. Mrs Tighe said that both candidates were 'most unsuitable' (emphasised and in a raised voice) to be members of the federal parliament.

What would cause Mrs Tighe to be so upset at the possibility that these two candidates might be successful in their electorates? The reason for her anger was their action as backbenchers in the lower house during the first term of the Whitlam government in 1973. They presented to the House the Medical Practice Clarification Bill which, if passed, would have legalised abortion in the Australian Capital Territory, but not in any of the states, for any extension of the Bill to include the states would be *ultra vires* under Section 51 of the Australian Constitution.

The McKenzie-Lamb Bill, as it became popularly known, aroused support from feminists, but angst from a large number of politically active Roman Catholics. At the time a majority of Australians, according to opinion poll surveys, did not support unrestricted access to abortion (Betts 2004:23). The Bill was defeated in the House, with all members of the Coalition voting against it, and the ALP split. The vote on 10 May 1973 was 98 to 23. Feminists argued that the all-male House discriminated against women, but the vote might not have been much different had there been a number of female parliamentarians at that time, even a significant number. Right to Life (RTL) campaigners lobbied every member of federal parliament, and their campaigning was very effective.

Abortion had previously been decriminalised, subject to strict conditions, in South Australia under legislation passed by the Liberal government of Steele Hall in December 1969. There are significantly less Roman Catholics in South Australia than in any other state, and this made passage of such legislation easier. In recent years evangelical Protestants such as Uniting Church minister Rev. Fred Nile in New South Wales and Pastor Danny Nalliah of Catch the Fire Ministries in Victoria have resulted in large numbers of non-Catholics joining the anti-abortion cause in big numbers, but in the early years of RTL activity in the cause was overwhelmingly Catholic.

In Victoria, as in the United States, it was the courts rather than the legislature that was instrumental in

abortion law reform. In the United States the Supreme Court decision in *Roe v Wade* (1973) provided that no state could disallow abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy. The Supreme Court ruling of Justice Menhennit in Victoria (1969) likewise allowed abortion in circumstances that had previously been criminalised. In the late 1960s Victorian medical doctor Bertram Wainer led a campaign against corruption involving illegal backyard abortionists that led to an Inquiry by Barry Beach, QC. Wainer's campaigning was an influence, but we will never know to what extent, in the decision of the Victorian Supreme Court. The Menhennit ruling in *R v Davidson* (1969) found that a procedure to terminate a pregnancy was not illegal if the act done was honestly believed on reasonable grounds to be necessary to preserve the woman from a serious danger to her life or her physical or mental health. The Menhennit ruling set a precedent for abortions in Victoria that persisted over many years. In 1972 Wainer's supporters established the Fertility Control Clinic, an abortion facility in East Melbourne, a site of frequent RTL protests from its establishment until the present.

Margaret Tighe has led the anti-abortion movement for much of the period from the 1970s. She has campaigned against parliamentarians of all parties regarded as favourable to abortion. Limited financial resources have meant that the RTL cause has had to limit those parliamentarians it targeted. It has had some notable successes, one being the 1980 defeat of Barry Simon, the pro-choice Liberal member for the federal lower house seat of Latrobe in Gippsland.

The resignation of Premier Steve Bracks in 2007 sowed the seeds for abortion reform by legislation that parliamentarians previously had refused to support, fearing a RTL backlash. Bracks, a Catholic of Lebanese descent, almost certainly would not have allowed abortion legislation into the parliament, but his successor John Brumby did not share this view. Candy Broad, an upper house member for the Northern Victoria region in the Legislative Council, did just this. Her Abortion Law Reform Bill 2008, subsequently passed by the parliament, codified the Menhennit ruling and even went further, allowing termination of pregnancy in late term.

The passage of the Broad Bill, while rejoiced by the feminist lobby and Emily's List, a group of pro-abortion female parliamentarians, caused much resentment among RTL supporters. Pastor Nalliah (Feneley 2009), for example, claimed that the Black Saturday bushfires in February 2009 causing the loss of 173 lives, including high profile television presenter and newsreader Brian Naylor, were God's vengeance for the passage of Victoria's pernicious abortion laws. Margaret Tighe and like-minded RTL campaigners targeted nine supporters of the Broad Bill at the 2010 election. In the *Right to Life* blog (Tighe 2013), she cited an analysis in the *Tasmanian Times* (Allan 2010) that concluded, "The pro-life movement can claim that without its support the Baillieu government would not

have been elected.' The 2010 state election in Victoria, which resulted in a narrow victory for the Coalition under Ted Baillieu, may well be the most significant achievement of the RTL movement. That victory did not result in changes to the Broad Act.

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Book Review: *ACT Labor*

By Liam Byrne

Chris Monnox, *ACT Labor 1929-2009: A Short History* (Ginninderra Press: Port Adelaide, 2013). pp + 96. Cloth \$22.

In this concise volume Chris Monnox provides the first published account of Australia's oldest party in its capital city. In so doing he has furnished us with an accessible and lively narrative that seeks to capture how Canberra's distinctive influence has shaped Labor in the Territory since its founding. The narrative commences with the emergence of Canberrean Labor on the cusp of the Great Depression, with the party restricted to just two arenas in which to electorally compete: the Advisory Council, which lived up to its name, and the board of the Community Hospital. Perhaps not the most inspiring of origin stories in a party built on historical memory and political legend. From its subsequent life Monnox discerns a specific form of community-based politics developing in the party that came to represent Labor politics in the Territory, focusing on services and provisions over political programmes, proving that 'all politics in Canberra was local.' This form of politics was challenged, and ultimately transformed by the 'progressive middle class' who flooded the city from the early 1960s.

He demonstrates that these two traditions helped to forge a distinctive political culture based on consultation, community concern, and social progressivism, a culture that has well suited Labor for governance of the Territory. This is represented through the 'model' of governance established and practiced by Labor Chief Minister Jon Stanhope who managed to 'integrate ACT Labor's progressive tradition into a model of government.' Considering the context of this book's release it is a shame that Monnox does not fully develop the implications of this model that he has identified, particularly regarding Federal Labor as it seeks to repair the serious electoral damage inflicted in recent years.

In tackling the history of ACT Labor Monnox has done a service to a section of the party tended to be ignored in party histories. The main problem with this work is its brevity, natural in a study based on an Honours thesis as this is, which restricts discussions of important topics with which a lengthier history would no doubt engage. Rather than the relatively self-contained narrative presented here, one such topic that could have been pursued is the relationship of the ACT to other branches and how this impacted, if at all, on the national party. Overall, however, this is a commendable attempt to capture the life and political culture established by Labor believers in an oft neglected arena.

A Case of Open Access

By Rowan Cahill

I support 'open access', the enabling of unrestricted and free internet access to peer-reviewed scholarly research. Too much academic/scholarly writing is locked up behind the paywalls of multinational publishing empires, generating enormous profits from the unpaid, often publicly financed, labours of vassal scholars/academics. So too with scholarly books, confined as they are by small print runs and exorbitant 'library copy/sale' prices.

To my mind there is much in contemporary scholarly publishing practice that reminds me of the medieval library at the heart of Umberto Eco's novel *The Name of the Rose* (1980), hidden as it is in a labyrinth, accessible only to the librarian and his assistant, its contents protected by poison and murder. Today, much scholarly work is not publicly circulated, but locked up and limited to a privileged and paying few. Which is the name of the game, since a lot of scholarly research, particularly in the humanities, is presented in jargon and genres aimed at specialist audiences. Publishers have scholars over a barrel here; international practice is that this sort of confined niche publication constitutes the pathway to career enhancement/advancement.

Following the award of my PhD by the University of Wollongong (UOW) in 2013, I authorised open access to my dissertation on the controversial Australian left-wing journalist and intellectual Rupert Lockwood (1908-1997). This went online via the UOW Research Online (RO) facility on 18 November 2013. The way the Wollongong RO team have set this facility up, it enjoys a high online profile. By the end of January 2014, the Lockwood dissertation had recorded 512 full downloads, not an insubstantial tally given the pdf runs to some 101,000 words and 1,000 footnotes. Doctoral dissertations tend not to be significantly accessed, a literary genre regarded in some quarters as little more than an 'apprenticeship' exercise.



[Rowan Cahill at a recent talk at Sydney University]

Given my dissertation's length, and believing the wordage and referencing used were necessary, I resisted suggestions that book publication/publisher interest would be attracted by shedding some 20,000 words, footnote rationalisation, and the inclusion of more personal details regarding my subject. The latter, in particular, was something I was not prepared to do. So I treated the online format of my dissertation as a defacto book/publication. While it met academic requirements, from my own backgrounds in journalism and activist writing I also knew the dissertation would be accessible to a non-specialist audience.

With the luxury of being 68 years old, and an academic career not a consideration, I rejected the 'trickle down process' of academia, whereby one's work is made known to peers via conference papers and publication in peer-reviewed journals. Instead, I set about generating awareness of the existence of the dissertation using promotional skills developed over a lifetime, treating the process as a 'marketing' exercise.

Collegial emails, facebook, blogging, interviews, were variously deployed, while twitter was used by allies. Publicity commenced with an item in *Recorder*, fittingly since Melbourne was the city that shaped Lockwood's politics during the 1930s. The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) followed, with a story about the dissertation on its website, and later a more detailed one in its *Maritime Worker* journal. Lockwood

had been a long-time journalist employee of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, one of the key unions that amalgamated in 1993 to form the MUA. Colleagues placed links to the dissertation in various data banks, and Wikipedia insertions were made. Generally, the 'marketing' task was enhanced by long-standing historical/political interest in Rupert Lockwood going back to the 1950s, and the high online visibility of the RO facility at the UOW.

What the future holds is a work in progress. Initial personal feedback has been positive, but as they say in the classics, the proof of the pudding will be in the footnoting and citations that may ensue. In academia this could well take time, and is perhaps years down the track. However, the object was to generate awareness of an intellectual 'product', and attract an audience. Judging from the number of downloads, increasing even as I write, the Cahill-Lockwood-Open Access exercise has been successful beyond expectation. Interested readers who have not already done so can help themselves, and boost the download rate, at <http://ro.uow.edu.au/theses/3942/>

Book Review: *Conflict in the Unions*

By Tom O'Lincoln

Douglas Jordan, *Conflict in the Unions: The Communist Party of Australia and the Trade Union Movement 1945-60* (Resistance Books: Sydney, 2013). pp +312 Cloth \$30.

This is the story of how a small band of radicals and agitators tried to change the way we think of politics. They experienced dramatic failures and successes, but above all they left us with a tradition of political trade unionism. These are the people who brought us green bans. They were, primarily, Communists.

It's a challenging book. Doug Jordan has dealt with a vast body of material and written a very readable narrative. It begins with a convincing analysis of the Communist Party as a contradictory force in society, neither dismissed as simply Stalinist hacks nor idealised as socialist heroes. Jordan is a political veteran and knows how to identify the strengths and weaknesses of Australia's most controversial political force.

The weaknesses centre on Stalinism, i.e. the party's notorious obedience to the bureaucrats dominating the USSR and its satellites. But these problems had a specifically Australian as well a global aspect, which Jordan recognises and handles in a suitably dialectical way.

Many of these issues arise in the realm of union politics. Meaning not, as it often does, simply the battle for bureaucratic positions in the union structure. Rather it means an attempt to realise

Lenin's dictum that unions must be 'schools of communism' and then put the lessons into action. Jordan's opening section is followed by in-depth discussions of how the protagonists confronted prickly issues and strategic dilemmas in the fields of immigration politics, peace movements, and Aboriginal rights.

One such dilemma reminds us of L.P. Hartley's comment that 'The past is another country; they do things differently there'. Imagine a time when the political right welcomed refugees and the left wanted to keep them out. The refugees in question were from the Baltic states, and others who had left East European Communist regimes, and were likely to take a right-wing stance in this country. Over time the Australian communists realised they were wrong to oppose these refugees.

It was a time when people were scared to campaign for peace because if they moved beyond general platitudes they might be labelled communist. During the Korean conflict, the Communist Party tried to lay the basis for industrial action against the war. They were forced to retreat very quickly. They could get a big crowd to hear the Red Dean of Canterbury talk about peace in the abstract, but couldn't transfer this to practical measures. Those of us who think nothing of organising yet another peace demo, should spare a thought for our predecessors who did some very hard yards.



The book concludes with its finest chapter, tracing Communist involvement with the ripple of strikes by Aborigines that took place across northern Australia in the post-war years. Legendary figures appear here: Don McLeod, Frank Hardy, Odgeroo Noonuccal. And as if to illustrate the thread of history: Eddie Mabo. Many of these relationships are little known but they had a historic importance.

The book derives from the author's PhD thesis, and bears the marks of this, for good and bad. The PhD framework has given Jordan a tremendous rigour. He misses nothing. On the other hand, does the book really need 1700 footnotes? I doubt it. But overall the book is valuable if you want to understand what Communism was all about.

The book is published by Resistance Books http://www.resistancebooks.com/catalog/product_info.php?products_id=987

FBI Informants

By Phillip Deery

The following document is extracted from a 45-page internal FBI report entitled 'Analysis of Successful Communist Informant Interviews'. It was written in July 1957 by J. Edgar Hoover, categorised as 'not for dissemination outside the Bureau', and obtained under the Freedom of Information Act in March 2014. The report comprised individual case analyses of sixteen successful interviews of FBI informants who were members (past and present) of the American Communist Party. As such, it provides a rare and remarkable glimpse into the modus operandi of the Toplev Program, under which 'Top Level' communists who had become disillusioned with, or ready to defect from, the Communist Party were identified and persuaded, through a series of interviews, to become informants.

The document below concerns a self-employed African-American, TL-1 (other interviewees were trade unionists, clerical workers and professionals). In a 'summary and conclusions' section, it was noted that, as a group, 'Negroes in the communist movement have excellent potential for informant development', despite the fact that 'many Negroes' distrusted the FBI's motives in security investigations because 'they lacked confidence in the FBI's work in the civil rights field'. Consequently, the 'most successful interviews with Negroes' avoided initial, direct references to communism and instead revolved around civil rights issues, which 'often succeeded in engaging the subject in conversation' and 'developing an amicable relationship'. The conversation could then turn specifically to communism.

FBI agents employed 'subtle flattery' by emphasising to the subjects that they were chosen for interview because of their 'integrity, intelligence, position, or leadership position'. Agents also used 'tact and practical psychology' since the FBI was aware that few potential informants who had dedicated years of their lives to communism would acknowledge that they were completely mistaken. So, by treating the subject 'as an equal', by exhibiting 'tolerance' to his views, by displaying an 'ability to listen', and 'by providing a favourable explanation of the subject's conduct in joining and working in the communist movement, the Agents furnished a "psychological cushion" for the subject which eased his transition from communism to an active role in opposition to it'. However, there were still barriers to cooperation: the most common was hostility towards the role of the informant. Here, agents often overcame this barrier by using 'material from the [FBI] publication *Stool Pigeon or Loyal Citizen?*' All these techniques, plus the offer of financial support, were used during the FBI interviews with TL-1. They succeeded: while remaining a communist cadre, TL-1 became a 'loyal citizen', an FBI informant.

I. SELECTED TOPLEV INTERVIEWS: TL-1

Personal History

A naturalized citizen, TL-1 was a male Negro in his early 40's, a veteran, had been married, divorced, and remarried, had four children, was a college graduate, and was self-employed. He joined the Communist Party in 1946, and was a front group functionary when interviewed initially under the Toplev Program in October, 1952. Although willing to converse with the Agents on subsequent interviews conducted until February, 1953, TL-1 provided little information about himself and declined positive cooperation with the Bureau. Reinterviewed in April, 1956, he was developed to the point of cooperation. By May, 1956, he was designated an informant. The Bureau has assisted him in establishing his own business, and as a Party functionary furnishing information on a local and national level, he has excellent potential for advancement in the Communist Party.

Decisive Factors in Development

TL-1's acceptance of communism appears to have been caused by two factors: the practical reason, money; the idealistic reason, improving conditions for his race. It was these same factors which enabled Agents to secure his cooperation with the Bureau.

Originally, TL-1's affiliation with communism was due to his dependence on the communist movement for financial security. Several years before joining the Communist Party, he was employed by it for a two-month period. After his discharge from the Armed Forces, he was employed by a front group and he returned to similar employment after completing his college education.

Ideologically, TL-1 had no close tie to communism. What ideological identity he had with it was bound up in his desire to aid the Negro and his belief that communism offered a program for Negro betterment. Apparently, even this tie was loosened prior to the initial interview, because TL-1 had already begun withdrawal from front group activity. TL-1's personal life was complicated by the fact that his second wife was a white person. He said that this caused him considerable embarrassment, because he was not fully accepted by either the white race or Negroes.

Although TL-1 when approached for interview appeared friendly, it was apparent to the Agents that he expected to be questioned about communism and would terminate the interview if that were the case. Therefore, the Agents directed the conversation toward the Bureau's responsibility in the civil rights field. Direct reference to communism was avoided. By opening the interview with a discussion of civil rights, an issue of primary importance to TL-1, the Agents were able to attract and hold his interest and to get him talking, so that eventually the conversation

proceeded to the Bureau's investigative responsibility involving communism.

Subtle flattery was injected into the interview. The Agents outlined TL-1's background to him and impressed him with their detailed knowledge of him. A specific incident in which TL-1 figured was cited to him and he was complimented for his attitude. This incident occurred at a front group meeting concerning a recent racial disturbance. The majority of those present at the meeting insisted that the prior racial disturbance should be met with force and violence. Agents told TL-1 that they had been reliably informed that, against overwhelming opposition, he had been insistent that resorting to force and violence was not the solution to the problem and absolutely no violence should occur. Later events proved his contention to be a wise one. TL-1 appeared proud of the Agents' notice of this incident and told him they respected him for his attitude, as it clearly indicated he was against the use of force.

TL-1 had a basic sense of loyalty to the United States, probably due in great measure to his World War II service. He expressed disapproval of espionage activities by Communist Party members, although he said he was personally unaware of any.

The principal barriers to TL-1's full cooperation were his dislike of the role of an informant and his mistrust and lack of confidence in Government leaders. In overcoming TL-1's dislike of the role of the informant, the Agents found material of assistance in the publication *Stoolpigeon or Loyal Citizen?* TL-1's mistrust of Government leaders was evidenced by his statement that he was inclined to doubt the Bureau's motives for conducting security investigations, because he lacked confidence in the Bureau's civil rights investigations. The greater part of most interviews with TL-1 was devoted to discussions of civil rights including specific cases, Communist Party activities in that field, and the Bureau's jurisdiction and its responsibility. Agents told him that the Communist Party does not offer a solution to racial problems, that, in fact, it actually incites race hatred through continual agitation, and that the Party substitutes agitation and propaganda values for any really sincere effort it might make on the moral issues. At one point between interviews, Agents mailed anonymously to TL-1 a newspaper article reflecting Bureau activity in a current civil rights case.

An example of communist distortion of an event that the Party regarded as a civil rights issue was brought home personally to TL-1. Agents had TL-1 read a Civil Rights Congress pamphlet promoting a fund-raising party for the wife of a Party functionary arrested under the Smith Act. An interviewing Agent, who had participated in the arrest, pointed out in detail the deliberate distortion of facts in the pamphlet regarding the circumstances of the apprehension and, specifically, a statement that the arrested person was not allowed to contact an attorney. TL-1 admitted he had himself received a telephone call from the

arrested person's wife asking for an attorney for her husband and that he had made arrangements through others for the attorney's appearance.

As succeeding interviews developed TL-1's attitude [changed] toward active cooperation with the Bureau. Agents analyzed his reasons for non-cooperation and reduced them to two simple postulates. By identifying and isolating these points, summing them up articulately, and gaining TL-1's admission that he could cast aside all personal feelings these points could be proved to his satisfaction, Agents narrowed their focus of persuasion to permit a concentrated attack on only two clearly defined barriers. In TL-1's case, these postulates were: (1) The Communist Party, USA, is against the best interests of all people; (2) The Communist Party, USA, is a tool of the Soviet Union.

TL-1 had been made aware discreetly toward the end of the initial interview that, if he were cooperative, he would receive financial consideration. It was explained to him that he could expect remuneration, because he would be saving the Government money through his assistance. In a succeeding interview, financial reward was touched upon obliquely when the Agent told TL-1 he could be of great value to the Bureau, not measured in monetary amounts, but measured in the value he would have in protecting the security of the country. The Agent went on to say that although he knew it would not mean much to TL-1, he had been prepared since the interviews began, to offer TL-1 a substantial weekly sum for his time and effort expended in giving full cooperation. The Agent was careful to stress that he knew money meant little to the subject, because when TL-1 offered his services, it would be because of principle and not mere profit. The Agent told him that he should at least consider the value of his time and efforts, and, in addition, that payment of money would be a demonstration of the Government's good faith, would assist him in paying debts, and would insure college educations for his children. From the time of the initial interview in October, 1952, until February, 1953, Agents succeeded in bringing TL-1 to a state of 'neutralization.' He was practically withdrawn, although not overtly, from activity in the communist movement, a course he had already undertaken prior to the original interview; but he was unwilling to accept a position combating communism. It was at this stage that interviews were discontinued and the subject's activities were followed closely to detect, if possible, a change of circumstances or attitude which might make reinterview successful.

In 1953, at the time when interviews with TL-1 were discontinued, he had resigned his regular part-time employment with his front group, was driving a truck during the day, and was operating his own business during evening hours. An informant reported that TL-1 could not afford to be active in his front group, since he had a family to support and was in need of funds that he could not realize from his front group employment. Subsequently, financial adversity compelled TL-1's wife

to leave the care of their children to another woman while she worked outside the home.

In April, 1956, TL-1 was reinterviewed and the Agent called attention to his undesirable family situation brought on by financial hardship. It was suggested to TL-1 that cooperation with the Bureau might enable him to improve his family status through the purchase of a home, and might enable his wife to remain at home with the children. As a result of this reinterview TL-1's cooperation was gained.

In all discussions of financial consideration, Agents carefully blended the two factors of money and principle. TL-1 was told that by assisting the Bureau he could continue his efforts on behalf of equal rights for the Negro, and at the same time he could help the Bureau by furnishing valuable information and help himself through financial reward.

Museum of Australian Democracy

By Barry York

The Museum of Australian Democracy (MoAD) at Old Parliament House in Canberra is very pleased to announce that we are gradually putting our 'open access' oral histories on-line in full. MoAD records and collects interviews relating to Australian parliamentary democracy, political party activism and the story of the Old Parliament House heritage building, which was home to Australia's national parliament from 1927 to 1988.

Our first batch of on-line interviews include three legends of the Australian Parliamentary Press Gallery (Wal Brown, Rob Chalmers and Bernard Freedman), plus individuals with memories of the 1954 'Petrov Affair', and long-time policeman Jack Dealy. You can check out the on-line delivery here: <http://oralhistories.moadoph.gov.au/>

Vale Arthur Gietzelt

By Brian Smiddy

28 December 1920 – 5 January 2014

Arthur Gietzelt's life was one of constant activity. His first job was as a messenger boy. He joined the Federated Clerks Union and remained a member for decades. In 1937 he joined the Labor Party. In 1941 he joined the army and after his war service he was involved in local government in the Sutherland Council in NSW. Later on he was elected to the Senate and was a Minister in the 1983 Hawke Labor Government. He resigned from the Senate in 1989.

To his family we extend our deepest sympathy.

Vale Tony Benn

By Brian Smiddy

3 April 1925 – 14 March 2014

Tony Benn led the leftward drive in the UK Labour Party for many years. He joined the Labour Party in 1943 and in 1950 was elected to the House of Commons. He became a Minister in 1964 and again in the Wilson Government of the 1970s. He spent much energy on policy formation, in particular economic reform. He remained in Parliament until 2001 – a contribution of over 50 years. Well done comrade.

Vale Vida Little

By Brian Smiddy

24 September 1916 – 18 February 2014

A large number of friends of the late Vida Little gathered at the Crick Chapel, Fawkner Crematorium on the 26th February 2014 to say farewell to a great comrade.

In an address by John Rutherford, a long time family friend, he outlined many aspects of Vida's life. Vida was born in New Zealand and migrated to Australia with her parents in the early 1930s. She obtained employment at Mantons Clothing Store in Bourke Street, Melbourne. She joined the Shop Assistants Union and later became a shop steward.



It was during the Depression while listening to a speech being given by a socialist, that she decided to become politically active and she remained an activist all her life.

Vida and her late husband, Vic, were both very involved in the East Brunswick Progress Association and Community Health Centre. In the later years of her life she had the support and comfort of many friends. In particular Sonja and John Rutherford who gave her special care.

Vida's was a life spent fighting for people's rights and fearlessly opposing injustice and oppression. The struggle will continue. Farewell comrade.

Persons Of Interest: Not Quite Perfect

By Ken Mansell

The December 2013 issue of *Recorder* included my glowing review of *Persons of Interest*, Haydn Keenan's four-part documentary about ASIO. The documentary has since appeared on television. A more forensic and critical evaluation is now possible. I will focus here on the episode 'All watched over by machines of loving grace', which chronicles the experiences of Monash radical Michael Hyde.

I do not retract my earlier comments – the film is a major achievement – but in the cinema I was bewitched by the richness of the visual material and missed a lot of the film's faults. Historical accuracy is repeatedly found wanting. The absence of a sound chronological sense becomes apparent at the start of the episode – the spoken narrative and visual text conflate events that have very little connection. Keenan states 'While Hyde was in China the students moved out of Jasmine Street into an old Bakery in Greville Street Prahran'. In fact the initial occupation of the Bakery occurred in February 1969, at least twelve months after the China trip. He further states 'The Bakery would become the headquarters for the growing influence of the Monash Labor Club and its offshoot the Worker Student Alliance'. This is misleading at best: the lease for the Bakery was taken out by the Revolutionary Socialist Alliance, twelve months before the formation of the WSA. The RSA is not mentioned in the film (although its banners appear visually). Nor is Shirley Grove, the virtual off-campus headquarters of the Monash Labor Club in the interregnum between Jasmine Street and the Bakery. Somehow WSA gets the credit for the first issue of the secondary students' (SID) publication *Tabloid Underground* when in fact this appeared in August 1968, a full eighteen months before WSA. The film suggests the mid-1970 occupation of the Monash Careers and Appointments Office had 'student support' when in fact the student body dissociated itself. Nowhere in the film is there any recognition of the heterogeneity of the Monash Labor Club. Not all were Maoists under the sway of Ted Hill and Albert Langer.

The film's lack of respect for historical fact and chronological order reaches farcical proportions in the chaotic relationship established between spoken narrative statements and the visual text. Repeatedly the chosen visuals (photos, or surveillance footage grabs) are either chronologically misplaced or inappropriate. Hyde's description of the composition of WSA is accompanied by an ASIO list of RSA names pre-dating WSA. Off-campus events such as the divisive 1970 July 4 meetings are illustrated with older footage from student meetings in the Monash Union. Bakery work bees of the RSA are represented as WSA events. Michael Kirby's plea for a security service to watch only 'wicked' people immediately prompts two photos of the Revolutionary Socialists at

May Day (1969). A former ASIO officer describes the CPA/M-L while we watch ASIO spy footage of a conference of the (Trotskyist) Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA). An image of a July 4 Committee newsletter might seem appropriate as background until closer scrutiny reveals it to be a rival leaflet (57 Palmerston Street). The 'manifesto' of Monash militants is illustrated with a photo of a large group of nudists.

Hyde's own personal political biography is all but forgotten towards the end of the episode. Two very strange and nasty references undoubtedly emanating from ASIO – an accusation about a possible hijacking of an aircraft, and an accusation that Hyde eventually wished to disband and destroy WSA – are left hanging and unanswered. Attention instead switches to ASIO's difficulties with the Whitlam government. Former infiltrator Phil Geri cries but adds little to the story. The 1969 version of Keith Windschuttle calls for 'violent revolution'. A member of the Jasmine Street collective is given a false surname. There are some very strange, to this viewer meaningless, graphics. In the credits, 'thanks' are extended to the same people twice!

Disturbingly, and inaccurately, Keenan briefly lapses into an anti-communism of his own, accusing the Communist Party of Australia of trying to control the Moratorium. His conclusion – that 'student revolution' was brought to an end by 'life in a rich country' (and 'life's responsibilities') – is also questionable.

Smart Street Films has uploaded a number of unedited ASIO films to their website. These include the 1958 Communist Party of Australia National Congress and a demonstration by Actors Equity in 1956. They can be seen at <http://www.smartstreetfilms.com.au>

Pete Seeger

'Why I Can Join the Celebration' – Pete Seeger: Another View. A response to Noel Ignatiev's January 30 (2014) article in *CounterPunch*.

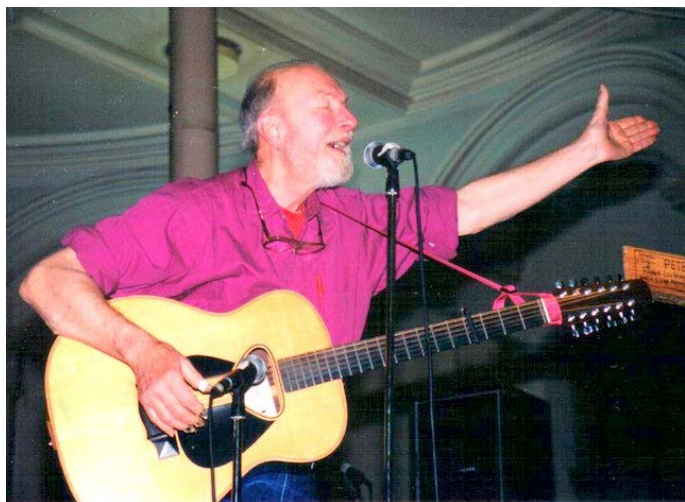
By Ken Mansell

Noel Ignatiev, in declining to join the celebration of the life of Pete Seeger (*CounterPunch* 30 January), has made some interesting points. I beg to differ with nearly all of them.

Noel points to Seeger's anti-war singing activity during the period of the nefarious 1939-1941 Hitler-Stalin Pact. Yes, Seeger's memory is always going to be vulnerable because of whatever he might have done while a member and supporter of the Communist Party (USA). His admirers need to be aware of this, and be ready to defend Seeger's reputation. Noel Ignatiev is criticising Seeger from a left-wing perspective, but right-wingers and Cold

Warriors (I'll use Australian examples: Gerard Henderson and Robert Manne, for example) will no doubt trot out similar sentiments – trying to discredit Seeger's overall career on the grounds of what he did while the CPUSA (and the fledgling folk movement circa 1939-41) were following the twists and turns of Comintern foreign policy.

Noel says Pete Seeger was merely a 'progressive'. This is debatable: there is a 2002 interview with Studs Terkel where the octogenarian Seeger admits to having become a supporter of the ideas of Rosa Luxemburg! How many old Communists from the 1940s era were able to do that, Noel!?



[Photo by John Ellis]

Noel, you are certainly brave for speaking your mind, but you are sectarian. You say your main argument against celebrating Seeger's life is that he never criticised 'misleaders' within the movement. It is not the role of revolutionaries and radicals to focus their main attack on the 'misleaders' within the movement: their role is to attack the ruling class. And didn't Seeger spend a life-time doing that? I can think of many of his targets: Hoover, HUAC, McCarthy, John Birch Society, George Wallace, LBJ, McNamara and Westmoreland, and many many more. When you think of these monsters, focusing on mediocrities – the likes of Meany and McGovern for instance (and similar 'misleaders' within the movement) – would surely have been a waste of a precious resource: Seeger's unparalleled ability to inspire and motivate. Who decides who are the 'misleaders'? A sectarian group would say that everyone bar themselves are 'misleaders'. So where do you draw the line?

Nor am I sure that one should judge Seeger in these terms, as a political revolutionary first and foremost. He was always essentially a cultural radical, an artist. And as a folk artist, in my opinion, he was without equal, particularly if you are including as a consideration his ability to inspire and motivate others. There is no doubt his work on college campuses in the fifties (while blacklisted from the media) was one important factor in the development of the consciousness that led to the New Left. Quite

apart from his morale boost to the thousands of besieged older lefties.

The political line of the songs sung by Seeger and the Almanacs in their 'anti-war' phase (circa 1941) must of course be criticised. However, let's not forget that Seeger, in 1940, was still only a twenty-year-old, fresh-faced kid just out of Harvard. His father had been a Communist. The whole folk movement was imbued with the politics of the Popular Front. He made a mistake, and in some ways this mistake was understandable. He made up for this mistake in later years – a thousand times over. The criterion I apply to Seeger is whether he had an effect on me personally, not whether he attacked the people who were 'misleading' me. No one else, at least since I first heard him in 1963, has ever made me smile, laugh, cry, and feel uplifted and ready for action, more than the great artist Pete Seeger.

From Carmel Shute: 'John Ellis has uploaded audio of Pete Seeger, Howard Fast, and others speaking about the fascist attacks at Peekskill in 1949. The event was to be a concert with Paul Robeson, but it was abandoned.' <http://www.youtube.com:80/watch?v=YNmHUHbpF5I&feature=youtu.be>

It is now also possible to watch the 90 minute PBS documentary on Pete Seeger online. *The Power Of Song* can be seen at <http://www.jambase.com/Articles/120594/Documentary-Pete-Seeger-The-Power-Of-Song>

Launch of *Red Apple* & *Silvertown*



A joint book launch for Phillip Deery's *Red Apple: Communism and McCarthyism in Cold War New York* and John Tully's, *Silvertown: The Lost Story of a Strike that Shook London and Helped Launch the Modern Labor Movement* was held at the Footscray campus of Victoria University on 5 March 2014. This terrific event was attended by a large number of people. Both books were officially launched by Professor Stuart Macintyre. *Recorder* will carry reviews of the books in our next edition.

Events of Interest & Noticeboard

The Independent and Peaceful Australia Network is running a National Easter Peace Convergence Canberra: a conference and demonstration supporting peace and independence, 21-25 April 2014. Details at <http://wilpfact.wordpress.com/2013/11/03/ipan-national-easter-peace-convergence-canberra-easter-2014/>

Colin Cleary has written two plays, one on the AWU in Ballarat, and the second on Billy Hughes in Bendigo. For further information please contact Colin by email colin.cleary@bigpond.com

Peter Ellett, the secretary of the Canberra branch of the ASSLH, is seeking biographical information about Ted Forbes, former FMWU official, and past member of the Melbourne branch. If any *Recorder* readers can assist Peter please contact him by email, petere@vtown.com.au

The International Australian Studies Association will be holding its biennial conference later this year. Titled 'Friends, Foes and Other Intimacies', the InASA's call for papers closes on 30 April. The conference will be held in Hobart, 3-5 December, 2014. Further details can be found on their website <http://inasa.org>

The Australian Historical Association's conference 'Conflict in History' will be held at the University of Queensland, 7-11 July. Details can be found at <http://www.theaha.org.au/conferences.html>

Between February and November, the Royal Historical Society of Victoria hosts a series of public lectures on a broad range of topics. These lectures are recorded and can be downloaded as podcasts. The three most recent lectures will be of great interest to *Recorder* readers. They are *Aboriginal Activism and the Aborigines Advancement League* by Richard Broome; *Observations on the upper classes in Melbourne, 1924-74* by Paul de Serville; and *The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka* by Clare Wright. <http://www.historyvictoria.org.au/downloads/podcasts#sthash.wA4BBD2D.dpuf>

Tuesday 1 April. Fabian Society AGM & First Forum For 2014: Reforming The ALP. The Fabian Society will hold a panel discussion with David Feeney (MHR for Batman), Andrew Giles (MHR for Scullin), and Race Mathews (founder of Local Labor), who will discuss the prospects for Labor and necessary reforms. The panel discussion will begin at 6.00 pm and the AGM at 7.45 pm. New Council Chambers, Victorian Trades Hall, 54 Victoria St, Carlton. Forum: \$5 Fabian members/unwaged/concession, \$10 non-members

Summary Offences Act

By Julie Kimber

About three thousand people attended the demonstration to 'Stop Napthine's Anti-Protest Bill' on 18 February. Despite this action, and dozens of submissions arguing against the Bill, it was passed in the upper house on 12 March. Its passage was accompanied by a telling overreaction by the Speaker of the House who closed the public gallery and called in the Police during the final reading. The Summary Offences Act and its predecessor – the Police Offences Act – has a long and ignominious history of providing Police with large discretionary powers. The latest amendments to this Act extend these further.



These 'move on' powers were introduced by the Labor Government in 2009, and were aimed at 'anti-social behaviour'. Section 5 of the Summary Offences Act (1966) currently states 'This section does not apply in relation to a person who, whether in the company of other persons or not, is—(a) picketing a place of employment; or (b) demonstrating or protesting about a particular issue; or (c) speaking, bearing or otherwise identifying with a banner, placard or sign or otherwise behaving in a way that is apparently intended to publicise the person's view about a particular issue.'

The new amendments, however, undermine these protections. Police will now be able to issue directions to 'move on' where, for example, 'the person is or persons are impeding or attempting to impede

another person from lawfully entering or leaving premises or part of premises'. Union pickets and political protest are the key targets of this legislation. Exclusion orders and increased penalties (including two year gaol terms for breaching an exclusion order) have been added in for good measure. As others have pointed out, while the organised labour movement may be the intended target of these changes, it is not difficult to imagine that the broadening of the scope of 'move on' laws and the exclusion orders will, if allowed to be implemented, have an even greater effect on the poor who lack the basic protections afforded to those undertaking protest actions.

Sources:

Nicola Paris, 'Applauding democracy - it is a riot!', 12 March 2014, *CounterAct* <http://counteract.org.au/applauding-democracy-riot/>

James Muldoon, 'After Democracy: Victoria's New Anti-Protest Laws' *Rights Now*, 13 March 2014 <http://rightnow.org.au/topics/bill-of-rights/after-democracy-victorias-new-anti-protest-laws/>

http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au/domino/Web_Notes/LDMS/PubPDocs.nsf/ee665e366dcb6cb0ca256da400837f6b/b8fb3ba5e9900cb8ca257c3d007aeb7?OpenDocument

The Sam Merrifield Prize: deadline extended

The Melbourne Branch of the ASSLH has extended its deadline for entries for the annual Merrifield Prize. The prize is in honour of Sam Merrifield, foundation member of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History, founding member of the Friends of the State Library, and founder of the Melbourne Branch.

The Merrifield prize of \$400 will be awarded for the most outstanding paper on Australian labour and radical history.

To be eligible

1. Entries should be in the form of an original piece of research into any aspect of Australian labour or radical history;
2. The manuscript must be based on research conducted in 2013;
3. Length of manuscript: up to 8,000 words including footnotes;
4. Entrants should reside in Victoria;
5. Entrants should be 'early career' - such as enrolled students (eg Honours, postgraduate), recent graduates or independent historians.

Applications

Applications should be sent to Dr Peter Love, Branch President, by 1 June 2014 plove@swin.edu.au

Melbourne Branch AGM



[Photo by Lyle Allan]

The Melbourne Branch AGM returned Peter Love, Brian Smiddy, and Phillip Deery to their respective positions on the executive. Our thanks to all three for their work on behalf of the society during 2013. Members elected to the 2014 executive are Lyle Allan, Liam Byrne, David Cragg, Kevin Davis, Nick Dyrenfurth, Peter Gibbons, Julie Kimber, Ken Mansell, Peter Moylan, Geoff Robinson, Judy Smart and Rennis Witham.

The AGM resolved to increase the membership fees from the current rate of \$10 to \$15 per annum in 2015.

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