

Recorder

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FORTHCOMING EVENT: The Anti-Conscription Campaign at Trades Hall

The Anti-Conscription Campaign at Trades Hall

6pm Wednesday 5 March

Billy Hughes' War Lecture Series

Location: Trades Hall
54 Victoria Street
Carlton South

Presented by Dr Peter Love and Jacob Grech

Trades Hall was one of the main sites of the anti-contriscription campaign in World War I. The building still bears the scars of these turbulent times.

Labour historian Dr Peter Love and Caretaker Jacob Grech tell the story of the anti-contriscription campaign at Trades Hall, where the events took place.

To book for the event email:

programs@shrine.org.au

Or call Alice on 03 9661 8107 on Wednesday 5 March.

It's planned to take about an hour. This event is free.
Assemble on the steps of the Lygon Street main entrance at little before 6.00 pm.
(In the event of inclement weather, go into the foyer.)



SYMPOSIUM IN HONOUR OF ERIC FRY & BOB GOLLAN

By Peter Love

Many Recorder readers would have received notice of this event by email, and a good number attended to offer tribute to Eric and Bob who were foundational comrades of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. While many of us who worked with them at the Australian National University attended the funeral services or memorial gatherings in Canberra, this was an occasion where their numerous Sydney-based friends and comrades could gather to acknowledge their role in bringing labour history into the mainstream of Australian historical scholarship. The symposium was held in the Darlington Centre at the University of Sydney on Friday 8 February 2008.



Susan Magarey, drew together many personal anecdotes of Eric and Bob during her time as a postgraduate student and, later, staff member at the ANU. Although the unifying theme of her stories was the self-effacing generosity of both men, she also showed us how important they were in their open-minded support for new



dimensions to labour and social history, despite the depredations on their reputation by the generational warriors of the New Left.

John Merritt, another ANU postgraduate and subsequent staff member spoke next. Appropriately, for a Society now well into a prosperous middle-age, John talked about Bob and

Eric's role in its birth and growth to scholarly maturity. Focussing on the journal up until it shifted to the University of Sydney, he explored the vision that the founders had for it and how, despite some tribulations, it grew and flourished to take a place in the front row of Australian historical journals. He also explained how that success was in part sustained by the procession of postgraduates who were attracted to the ANU by the prospect of supervision by Eric and Bob.



Verity Burgmann, supervised as a postgraduate by both Bob and Eric, paid a generous and critically acute tribute to the scholarly contribution of both of them, in their teaching, supervision and writing, with particular emphasis on how they brought labour history to the forefront of university scholarship. She also acknowledged their unstinting support for radical and progressive causes, as well as their encouragement for young activists pursuing similar issues.



Although there were no relatives of the Frys present Anne Gollan and other members of Bob's family were present to hear the tributes and bask in the warm regard that all present shared for Bob. The papers presented at the symposium, along with obituaries will be published in a special tribute section of the May issue of our journal Labour History.

VALE RUTH FROW

1922-2008

LONG LIVE THE WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT LIBRARY

By Peter Love

Those of us in the Melbourne Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History who are justly proud of our founder Sam Merrifield's labour history collection in the State Library of Victoria are somewhat humbled when we learn about or visit the Working Class Movement Library in Salford, near Manchester, UK. The co-founder of that library, Ruth Frow died on 11 January 2008 after a long life of left-wing activism and indefatigable collecting alongside her second husband Eddie Frow.

Born in London on 28 July 1922, she had a secure, middle class upbringing, which ended at the outbreak of the Second World War and service in Fighter Command. She joined the Communist Party in 1945 and, having trained as a teacher, combined working life with activism in the peace movement. She and Eddie, a self-educated tradesman, met at a Party School in 1953 and began what became a loving and devoted partnership for the rest of their long lives. Although Communist Party puritanism initially kept them apart, they began living together in Manchester in 1955 and commenced collecting books, pamphlets, posters and other artefacts of the radical, working class and socialist movements. They scoured the country, first in a van but as their collection grew they added a caravan, in pursuit of working class literature and cultural artefacts that soon filled their home in King's Road, Old Trafford. The Working Class Library was born in that house where the toilet was the only room that wasn't cluttered with reading matter. They used it [the collection] to produce their own writings on radical history and made it freely available to academics and activists. As it grew in size and reputation, space became a serious problem until the Salford City Council and other supporters arranged for it to move, with the status of a charitable trust, to Jubilee House on the Crescent in Salford where it is more manageably spread over 40 rooms. It remains one

of the most treasured collections of material for labour historians throughout the UK and the rest of the world.

Indomitable advocates and proselytizers, they were expelled from the disintegrating Communist Party in 1987, their belief in the historic significance of the working class movement unshaken. Eddie died in 1997 and Ruth in January this year. Few activists leave such a democratic legacy as the Working Class Movement Library.

Book Review: Cold Tea For Brandy- A Tale of Protest, Painting and Politics by Joan Coxsedge

By Kevin Healy

Vietnam and the frenetic years of anti-war activity were seminal to the political lives of a generation of activists like Joan Coxsedge.

Life had been relatively routine until Vietnam, growing up in a working class family in the 30s and 40s, the social rituals and atmosphere of that era, its capture of working class life (a friend in her seventies told me she enjoyed the early chapters of life in the 30s and 40s when she too grew up), school at MacRobertson girls' high, nursing (one of the few career paths available for young women), art class and a passion for painting and drawing that has led to exhibitions here and overseas, plans to travel overseas interrupted by marriage- and then . . .

The Indo-Chinese road to Damascus of course meandered through Spring St on the way, an unexpected preselection never likely to rise from the back benches of a Labor party becoming increasingly conservative. Unlike most parliamentary memoirs- in which the career in the corridors dominates and its import balloons by the year- in Joan Coxsedge's 'tale of protest, painting and politics' the parliamentary politics are but a sideshow spent in a shared office in the rabbit-warren bowels of the house.

She admits enjoying the electoral work, the opportunity to assist her working class western suburbs' electorate earned the hostility of both sides when she unleashed a stink bomb- the 'Smorgon's Stink Bomb'- into the refined atmosphere of the upper house to demonstrate the impact of noxious industries on her constituents. 'It took days for the air to return to normal,' she says.

There has been little else normal about her activities. In the 70s she launched a campaign against the myriad of secret agencies with the Committee for the Abolition of Political Police (CAPP) tracking agents, their activities and their paranoia with anything or anyone vaguely left. Many laws, including harsh penalties for releasing the identity of spies and secret agents resulted from these activities. Today's anti-terrorist legislation would probably ensure she never saw the light of again.

Cold Tea for Brandy describes Joan's work for civil liberties, against uranium and the nuclear industry, and through the burgeoning and later mature feminist movement. There are many chapters on Joan's international involvement, political travels ranging from the Pacific Islands to Greenham Common, mainland Europe to Cuba. She is still president of the Australia Cuba Friendship Society.

But I found the most absorbing part of the book her adventures in El Salvador and Nicaragua in the period of plutocratic exploitation, death squads and CIA dirty tricks. It reads like a riveting spy novel, the tensions, fears and threats captured explicitly. Just as explicitly emerges the commitment and bravery of a population living every day literally with the threat of disappearance and extermination.

Indeed the author emerges not just as an artist and activist writing yet another memoir for its own sake but as an excellent writer with a story to tell from a political perspective that has come under constant barrage from the forces of the status quo throughout- but which is a legitimate element of political debate.

If there is a criticism of Cold Tea for Brandy there could have been less anecdotes of routine travel and accommodation problems, but they do not detract from a well-written account and political analysis of an activist who continues to stick it up the powers that be.



Cold Tea For Brandy- A Tale of Protest, Painting and Politics by Joan Coxsedge. Vulcan Press. \$39.95. (Copies are available from the New International Bookshop, or contact the author: (03) 9 857 9249).

VALE KIM BEAZLEY SNR, BERT NOLAN & TONY VELLA

By Brian Smiddy

It is sad to report the untimely deaths of three notable Labor Identities

KIM BEAZLEY SNR died on 12th October 2007. He was a member of the Federal Parliament for thirty-two years, being Federal Education Minister in the Whitlam Labor Government, during which time he oversaw the abolition of university fees. He was a great supporter of Aboriginal causes.

BERT NOLAN died in the latter part of 2007. He was secretary of the Seamen's Union for many years. Bert was involved in many industrial campaigns in pursuit of better working conditions for seamen. Amongst his notable achievement was his opposition to the Vietnam War.

TONY VELLA died on 22nd December 2007. He was a former Assistant Secretary of the Victorian Trades Hall Council. Previously he had been a member and an official of the Australian Workers Union. At the time of the election he won by one vote. That vote may have been mine, because on the night of the election I was undecided as to who to vote for. His opponent, the late Jack Sparkes, a prominent member of the Meat Workers Union (AMIEU) and then President of the VTHC had been very ill. I finally decided to vote for Tony, as I thought it was important to have a fit and healthy person in such a key position. After that election, Tony earned the nickname of "Landside Vella".

To members of their families we extend our deepest sympathies at the passing of such fine Labor stalwarts.

Book Note: Life Class: The Education of a Biographer by Brenda Niall

By Laurence W Maher

In her insightful and beautifully written account of how she embraced the biographer's art, Brenda Niall, arguably our foremost biographer, provides a thoroughly absorbing account of growing up in the Catholic middle/professional class in suburban Kew in Melbourne in the 1940s and 1950s.

The nearby Archbishop's residence, "Raheen", dominated the western precinct of Studley Park Road, Kew (as it still does, though it is no longer the episcopal residence). And, even as an old man, Dr Mannix could be seen walking briskly from "Raheen" to St Patrick's Cathedral.

The Nialls were closely connected to the Catholic Archdiocese. In 1952, the untimely death of the author's father, who was a prominent physician and layman, was the occasion for a requiem mass at St Patrick's Cathedral at which Mannix officiated.

In 1959, Santamaria recruited Niall as his research assistant for a biography of Mannix (she had done part-time editorial work for him in 1954). Chapter 3 of Niall's memoir, which recounts her interview sessions with the old prelate is a valuable psychological snapshot of the Archbishop and his most famous protégé.

Mannix did not display much spontaneity in Niall's presence. Nor did he show any inclination to disclose anything that was not already known.

"From the first moments, [the interviews] went wrong ... (p 64)

More and more I felt that the afternoons at Raheen were a charade" (p 69)

Eventually, Niall "admitted defeat", but along the way Mannix had, however, volunteered one assessment:

"I think Mr Santamaria is the cleverest man I ever knew... (p 67)

Niall observes of the duo – separated in age by 51 years:

"Both men charmed and dazzled, divided and enraged... (p 64)

Some said that the Archbishop was used by the younger man as a means to power. But those who saw Santamaria as 'the son Mannix never had' seemed to be nearer the mark." (p 67)

Niall usefully reminds us that for many Catholics the ALP Split "was a personal and political tragedy" productive of much anger and distress. The author recalls visiting Sydney some time after the Split, when her hostess, the wife of that devout Catholic, Mr Justice Edward McTiernan (who happened to be one of H V Evatt's oldest friends) greeted Niall out of earshot of McTiernan with the advice:

"It [the Split] upsets Edward so much, it's best not to mention Santamaria." (p 80)

Brenda Niall, *Life Class: The Education of a Biographer* (Melbourne University Publishing, 2007) \$32.95

This book note first appeared in *Cold War Dossier* (CWD). For more on the CWD contact the editor Les Louis: les_louis@hotmail.com

CAMBODIA TODAY

By Brian Smiddy

A recent visit to Cambodia leaves one with many fond memories, but none more importantly than meeting local Cambodians. With a population of fourteen million people Cambodia faces many challenges, but giving the young people an opportunity to a good education is a top priority. The Government, UN agencies and NGO organizations are helping to meet this educational need. Considering that sixty percent of the population is under twenty five years of age, the future is in the hands of the young people.

The country has only had relative peace since 1993 and since then the Government and the people have had to reconstruct many services. This situation came about as a result of civil wars and the tyranny of the Pol Pot regime. From 1975 to 1979 it is estimated that over two million people were murdered or died of starvation – mostly for merely being educated, whether you were a doctor, teacher or technician. Large cities and towns were depopulated and the people sent to the countryside to live as best they could, this led to famine and many of the deaths.

In 1979, Vietnam invaded and the war lasted ten years until the Pol Pot forces were defeated. A guerilla war continued in some parts of the country until the late 1990s.

Today the main income earner for the country is tourism, followed by garment manufacture with much of the production exported to the USA. Many of the garment workers are union members and while I was there at one plant the workers had gone on strike because some of the union leaders had been unfairly sacked. The plant had a new owner and he wanted to remove a meal allowance of \$7US per month. This reduction is substantial when you consider most workers are on a six day week, earning approximately \$50US to \$80US per month for a 44 hour week. Teachers and police are paid about \$30US per month and this is insufficient to support a family. Such situations can lead to acts of corruption. Last year inflation increased by 10 per cent and with many Cambodians living on less than \$1US per day there is poverty in many cities and towns.

Many tourists visit Angkor Wat where temples built in the tenth to twelfth centuries leave a lasting memory of the skills of the artisans. The sites have to be seen to really appreciate their beauty.

The country's capital, Phnom Penh, is a bustling city with a population of about two million. Many of the old buildings were built by the French and retain their fine architectural character. There are also reminders of the reign of the Pol Pot regime. A visit to the Tuol Sleng (formerly Khmer Rouge S21 prison and torture centre) leaves you with lasting memories. It is estimated that up to fifteen thousand people died at this infamous place.

The horrors of war are vividly brought to mind by visiting the Land Mine Museum started by a brave Cambodian, Ari Ra. Ari, an ex soldier started clearing land mines as a young man and when seeing the devastation started a school. The school is being run to help young people injured by land mines. At the museum there is a collection of land mines and an explanation is given of the devastation these instruments of war can inflict. Among a number of countries that continue to refuse to sign the International Treaty banning the use of land mines are the USA and Russia.

In July this year there are National Elections and hopefully they will be conducted in a fair and democratic way. In summary I believe there is a great future for Cambodia and its people. The enthusiasm (if not optimism) and enterprise of many of the people will find a way to overcome incredible hardship so they can make a living.

Events of Interest

Billy Hughes' War

Eastern Visitor Centre, Shrine of Remembrance

The Shrine of Remembrance and Old Parliament House present an exhibition looking at the leadership of William Morris Hughes as Australia's Prime Minister during the First World War. This colourful story includes his attempts to introduce conscription for overseas service, his involvement with Australian troops and his participation in the negotiation of the treaty of peace in France in 1919. The exhibition is funded by the Department of Veterans' Affairs and can be seen at the Shrine from 20 February until 25 May.

Women in the Archives: Women with a Mission. PROV's annual Women's History Month seminar.

Celebrating the Centenary of Women's Suffrage.

In this year celebrating 100 years of female suffrage in Victoria, PROV presents this seminar with the Australian Women's Archive Project (AWAP) comprising: Special guest Professor Joy Damousi, Head of School of Historical Studies, University of Melbourne speaking about the life and times of Margaret Cuthbertson, first female Inspector of Factories in 1894; Dr Nikki Henningham, Executive Officer of AWAP, an overview of AWAP in Victoria; and a PROV representative looking at records about women at PROV.

Thursday 13 March 2008, 2.00 to 4.00 pm, Victorian Archives Centre: 99 Shiel Street, North Melbourne. Bookings essential. RSVP James McKinnon on 9348 5675 or james.mckinnon@prov.vic.gov.au

Walking Tour: Suffragists of Hotham Hill, North Melbourne 15 March 2008, 2 April 2008, 12 April 2008 & 3 May 2008

As part of Women's History Month and to coincide with PROV's exhibition celebrating the centenary of women's suffrage in Victoria, Suffragists of Hotham Hill, North Melbourne is a walking tour of streets of Hotham Hill. Led by local historian Lorna Hannan, tours commence at the VAC with a viewing of PROV's suffrage exhibition. Discover more about the suffragist movement in Victoria by exploring one of Melbourne's most historic neighbourhoods. Cost \$5.00 payable at VAC Reception or on the day. Bookings essential. Contact James McKinnon on 9348 5675 or james.mckinnon@prov.vic.gov.au

DANGEROUS AND PERSUASIVE WOMEN: CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE IN VICTORIA

Forum One: Rediscovering Women's Political History

In celebrating the Centenary of Women's Suffrage in Victoria, the **Victorian Women's Trust** will present three free thought-provoking public forums throughout 2008. The first, to coincide with International Women's Day celebrations, commemorates one hundred years of women's activism in Victoria. Admission: Free.

WHEN: Thursday 6th March, 7:00pm for a 7.30pm start

WHERE: BMW Edge Theatre, Federation Square

Speakers: Leading historians Professor Patricia Grimshaw and Professor Marilyn Lake, and literary historian Dr Jennifer Strauss

Victoria was the last Australian state to grant women the vote, after an incredibly lengthy struggle. Despite being granted the vote federally in 1902, it would be another six years before women were able to vote in their own state. The keynote speakers will provide lively and insightful perspectives on women's activism and the suffrage movement, exploring why it took so long to achieve women's suffrage in Victoria, and why women's political history tends to slip from public memory. Following the presentations, there will be the opportunity for Q&A and discussion with the speakers, as well as a chance to mingle afterwards.

Please RSVP to confirm your attendance by contacting the Victorian Women's Trust on (03) 9642 0422 or email women@vwt.org.au.

State Library of Victoria : The Medieval Imagination: Illuminated Manuscripts from Cambridge, Australia and New Zealand

Discover the rich beauty of medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts at this spectacular free exhibition, featuring treasures from the collections of Cambridge University and from Australian and New Zealand collections. Time: 28 March–15 June, 10am–5pm daily (to 9pm Thursdays) Venue: Keith Murdoch Gallery. Free.

State Library of Victoria : The changing face of Victoria

This fascinating exhibition highlights the people, places and events that have shaped life in Victoria over 200 years. Revisit Victoria's early years, see Ned Kelly's armour and discover Melbourne stories and personalities. 10am–5pm daily. Venue: Dome Galleries, Level 5.

State Library of Victoria : The hand in the machine: Facsimiles, libraries and the politics of scholarship (The 2008 Foxcroft Lecture)

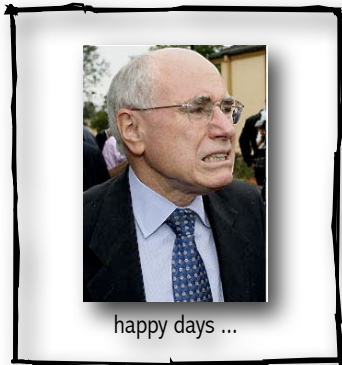
This free public lecture by Dr David McKitterick (Fellow and Librarian, Trinity College, University of Cambridge) will provide a fascinating introduction to the study of medieval manuscripts, focusing on the University of Cambridge's rich collection. The annual Foxcroft Lecture honours the work of pioneering Melbourne bibliographer AB Foxcroft (1884–1938). Presented in partnership with the Centre for the Book, Monash University. Time: Wed 26 March, 6pm. Venue: Village Roadshow Theatre. Bookings: 03 8664 7016 or bookings@slv.vic.gov.au (Free)

New Books

Political Tourists: Travellers from Australia to the Soviet Union in the 1920s-1940s

Sheila Fitzpatrick and Carolyn Rasmussen (eds)

Few Australians went to the Soviet Union in the 1920s, 30s and 40s. It was far away, with a notoriously cold winter and hard living conditions even for visitors. But it did have one tourist attraction: its politics. For Socialists and even many liberals, the Soviet Union was the site of the great Socialist Experiment. Western Soviet sympathisers are often portrayed as 'fellow travellers', whose preconceptions and lack of Russian prevented them seeing the country as it really was. But the visitors' reactions were various, and by no means did all Australian visitors fall into the category of 'dupes of the Kremlin'. Using Soviet as well as Australian archives, this volume explores the Soviet experiences of such figures as Esmonde Higgins, Muriel Heagney, Neill Greenwood, Betty Roland, Reg Ellery, Katharine Susannah Prichard, Eric Ashby, RMCrawford and Jessie Street. (Melbourne University Press, forthcoming).



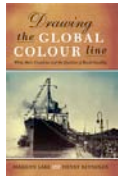
Selling Sex: A Hidden History of Prostitution

Raelene Frances

Selling Sex provides the first comprehensive history of prostitution in Australia from before European colonisation to the present, and situates this history within an international context of labour migration and policy formation. It draws on extensive archival research and interviews to chart the ways in which prostitution contributed not just to women's economic survival but also to broader processes of colonisation and nation-building. UNSW Press. AUD\$39.95

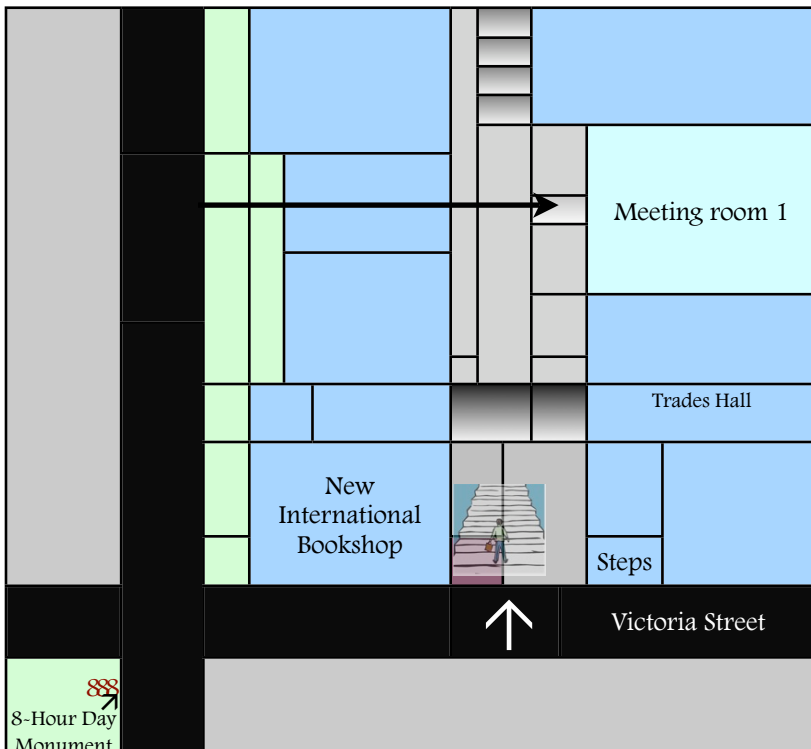
Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality

Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds



According to MUP: '[This] is a pioneering account of the transnational production of whiteness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A work remarkable both for its international breadth and for its sensitivity to local particularity, it is a model for the new global history. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds expertly and imaginatively reconstruct how leading white intellectuals and politicians in Australia, South Africa, the United States, and Great Britain fought demands for racial equality and jointly invented new doctrines of racial superiority to justify the maintenance and, in some cases, the reinvigoration of white privilege in every part of the world that Britain either controlled or in which it had once deposited its settlers. A powerful and sobering history, incisively and elegantly told.' Gary Gerstle, author of *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*. (Drawing the Global Colour Line is published by Melbourne University Press and is out soon).

Melbourne branch ASSLH contacts and meeting place



Meetings of the society are held in Meeting Room 1 in the Trades Hall. Enter Trades Hall through the Victoria Street entrance.

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