

RECORDER

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Activist Season Again

Peter Love

Taking a short-term historical perspective, it is interesting to look at the Your Rights at Work campaign that peaked with the Fill the G rally in November 2006 leading up to the 2007 election and the current Change the Rules campaign. The first was directed against the draconian provisions of the

WorkChoices regime and the current one against the legislative and institutional network that snares so many in a downward cycle of living standards. In both cases the objective is clear cut and the campaigning suitably precise in its target. We hope that Change the Rules will change the government as Your Rights at Work did in 2007.



The present campaign in Victoria is perhaps one of the most closely co-ordinated ones so far. The 23 October 2018 Change the Rules rally was led by Sally McManus, ACTU Secretary; Luke Hilakari, Trades Hall Secretary; and Daniel Andrews, ALP Premier of Victoria.

Each, in their respective domains, are esteemed leaders who carry the authority of their roles in the industrial and political wings of the labour movement. While trade union density is historically low, there is increasing evidence that trade union sympathy is on the rise. This is indirectly reflected in the 2018 Victorian election result where the ALP won 55 of the 88 Legislative Assembly seats. Union activists played an important role in several marginal seat victories.

While the large rallies are an impressive expression of support for Changing the Rules, and we hope to see another one on 10 April, there is some very effective organising behind these headline events. Among the many preparations for the May federal elections was the launch of the Young Workers' Centre campaign on 9 March that targets selected seats where there have been egregious cases of wage theft and exploitation of young workers. The Young Workers carry the authority of many high-profile victories in recent times against employers who have theft at the core of their business model.

The current campaign, from national to grass roots levels, has the clarity and sharpness of Sally McManus' focus on widening inequality as a compelling reason to Change the Rules.

Photo (Page 1) by Peter Love.

On Fairness

Janet McCalman

Sally McManus, *On Fairness* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2019). 9780522874853 (pbk) 9780522874860 (ebook) 100 pp. \$14.99.

This is a little book not only of big ideas but of immense passion and relevance. It could not be more timely, as the world staggers under the burden of ever-increasing unfairness and inequality, a burden that is driving people everywhere to seek solutions in hate and intolerance, in violence and crime, in drugs and disengagement.

What we need is both clear thinking about what Fairness means and how we can enshrine and protect it, but also fearless leaders. Sally McManus has delivered both.

'Fairness' is at the heart of union and Labor politics. Unions fight for fairness but the political arm of the ranks of labour has the duty to institutionalise fairness: in the law, in the processes of government administration, in work, health and education, in personal human rights, in the protection of the interests of the individual amidst protecting the interests of wider society.

This is a very personal essay. McManus starts with the memorable roasting by Leigh Sales (McManus likens it to facing a bouncer), just three hours after being elected as the first female secretary of the ACTU. The question Sales posed threads through the whole work: should unjust laws be obeyed just for the sake of obedience.

The conclusion hits home hard, especially in the wake of the Royal Commission into the Banking Industry: that laws are being broken every day by the financially powerful, by employers and by private institutions. Why is a strike so much more socially outrageous than the systematic wage theft that pervades our fragmenting economy?

She has a fine sense of labour history and the past is ever present: we are taken back to the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the long struggle to make 'combination' legal. Of course unions are still not accepted as an integral part of society: the conservative forces still suppress industrial action and never miss the opportunity to depict unions as, by definition, illegal and dangerous.

There is also much of her personal union history from the great teachers' strike when she was at school, to the Maritime Union's battle with Patrick Stevedores, to the struggle now to Change the Rules. McManus's passion is driven by her close connection with the people she represents, her sense that she is beholden to 1.8 million Australians who depend on her to win them a 'fair go'.

She argues that the 'fair go' is quintessentially Australian. Nothing enrages Australians more than 'crook umpires' in sport. Yet it is dangerous to take this national ideal too far. White Australia has never given Aboriginal people a 'fair go'; the Australian Settlement enshrined in the Harvester Judgement and the subsequent Arbitration and Conciliation Commission, did little for the workers trapped in seasonal and insecure work; and how did the once Workingman's Paradise end up with the most unfair education system in the OECD?

If Scott Morrison can cannibalise the 'fair go' as having a 'fair crack' at getting rich, then it has a problem. We need to think about fairness: first in the direct, bread-and-butter struggle that McManus is now so ably leading against wage theft, insecure work, excessive hours, and stagnating living standards. But the labour movement needs also to expand the case for the institutionalisation of fairness through a democratic free education system—a National Education Service for life-long learning; a National Health Service; the NDIS; affordable housing; and dignity and comfort for those who cannot provide for themselves.

These are matters for other books and debates. Meanwhile McManus's 10,000 words *On Fairness* will excite discussion and passion and should become the 'Little Red Book' of Labor. If only its publisher had bothered to break the text with a few snappy headings, then it would reach an even wider audience.

John Curtin's War

Michael McKernan

John Edwards, *John Curtin's War, Vol II, Triumph and Decline* (Melbourne: Viking, 2018), 497pp, \$49.99.

Almost opposite the National Archives of Australia building in Canberra is one of the city's favourite pieces of public art, Peter Corlett's *John Curtin and Ben Chifley*. The sculptor finds the two senior politicians taking their daily walk from the Kurrajong Hotel to Parliament House, a relatively short distance. Curtin half-turns to Chifley, as if making an important point, and Chifley, head down, shows he is a good listener. The two men, surely very high up on almost every Australian's list of our greatest leaders, give great humanity and warmth to this quite sterile spot in the national capital. Most people, whether in bus or car, half-smile in recognition of the friendship as soon as they notice the work.

Readers of this monumental second volume from John Edwards on his hero, John Curtin, could be forgiven for smiling at many of the pages of this book. It is not funny – though there are some very funny moments (Arthur Calwell provides quite a few) – but it is warm and human and the writing is deeply felt.

Unlike the first volume, which had a much larger cast of characters, necessarily so because Edwards needed to establish all the details of Curtin's upbringing, background, early life and emerging political involvement, this volume has few main characters, but all are drawn with such skill that the reader never tires of them. Some are desperately boring, like Sir Frederick Shedden, but crucial to Curtin's presentation of the war to his allies and his opponents. Some are enigmatic – supremely Douglas MacArthur – whose friendship with Curtin is a surprising element of this book. Some are deeply significant in Curtin's life, his wife Elsie, his driver Ray Tracey and his Treasurer, Ben Chifley.

Edwards argues that Curtin, as wartime Prime Minister facing the possibility of invasion, took on burdens that perhaps none other in Australia has ever shouldered. What is impressive about Edwards' depiction is the calm certainty that Curtin brought to his responsibilities. Until he became prime minister few thought of him as an obvious leader. To some he was a recovering alcoholic, to others he was indecisive and timid. No-one expected the calm authority that Curtin immediately applied to the top job once it was his.

Many historians have needed to write about Curtin – he cannot be left out of any general account of Australia in the twentieth century – but none has written with the clarity and insight of John Edwards. Yet this is not hagiography. Edwards remains clear-eyed, even sceptical. It is a consistent theme of this second volume that Curtin was unable, clearly unable,

to imagine the post-war world into which Australia would be flung. His attempted sponsorship of a new conception of the British Empire from 1944 onwards is, to some extent, simply embarrassing. His insistence that Australians were, and always would be, a British people reflects this lack of political imagination. The reader is left wondering how Curtin would have coped after August 1945 if he had survived the war.



TAKEN OVER.

Cartoon by John Frith, *The Bulletin*, 8 October 1941.

As soon as he assumed the office of Prime Minister Curtin drew the Canberra press gallery into his personal confidence and continued this practice until almost the end. He engaged in these press 'conferences' largely because he enjoyed the company of journalists but also because he wanted the journalists in Canberra to brief their editors and proprietors in a way that he could never have contemplated from his high office. It worked a treat. Ross Gollan, for example, writing for the *Sydney Morning Herald*, rang through the content of each of Curtin's 'yarns' to his news editor, Angus McLaughlin, who diligently summarised Gollan's observations for his editor and his proprietor, Warwick Fairfax. In this way, Curtin had a direct line to Fairfax, putting him in the know and appealing to his sense of patriotism. In this way, too, the Curtin government got a very good run in most Australian newspapers.

Edwards makes excellent use of the reports of Melbourne *Herald* journalist, Harold Cox, briefing Keith Murdoch, though Murdoch was much less inclined to be enthusiastic for Curtin than Fairfax. Cox has a good feel for Curtin's humanity, his vicissitudes and the decline in his health. It is a crucial insight into Curtin, the man, and used wisely by John Edwards.

In the second volume of this magisterial work, more so than in the first, Edwards is less interested in allowing us to see Curtin in the round. In volume one we discovered that Elsie cooked only one of four evening meals in rotation, starting the week with meatballs, which would arrive again in five days time. We learnt what limited range of clothes John Curtin liked to wear, how he endured the interminable train trips from Perth to Canberra, what he liked to read (Westerns), how he relaxed. There is much less of this intimacy in volume two, which some readers may regret.

But where we need to be told what Curtin has just done and what its significance was, you may be sure that John Edwards will tell us. Take this early statement of Curtin's relationship with MacArthur as typical of the way the reader is directed by the author: 'he seized the chance to share authority with MacArthur, refused to offend his vanity, drew him as close as he could. Of Curtin's military decisions, it was the cleverest, most fruitful, most abidingly successful'. Conclusions like that do not leave the reader wondering.

Edwards gives the reader a thorough and complete account of Curtin's difficult dealings with Churchill, gives a sad picture of Curtin's failed visit to Washington, the heavy role that the Australian defence forces assumed, particularly in 1942 and 1943, and the way that contribution was misinterpreted by Churchill and misunderstood by Roosevelt. He shows the foppishness of Bruce as High Commissioner in London and the deceit of Earle Page. He also shows the duplicity of Menzies once he resumed the role of Leader of the Opposition and his persistent ability to pick the wrong strategy.

No Australian Prime Minister has been better served by his biographer than John Curtin by John Edwards. Would it not be wonderful if Joseph Benedict Chifley could, by great good fortune, attract a biographer with something like John Edwards's remarkable skills?

The two men, frozen forever in time on a Canberra national boulevard, deserve near equal treatment.

New book on JB Chifley

Perhaps in answer to Michael's appeal that a talented biographer attend to the life of JB Chifley, a new book by Julie Soares on the life of the great man will be released later this month.

JB Chifley: An Ardent Internationalist is published by Melbourne University Press and is available for pre-order (\$49.99 for paperback). <https://www.mup.com.au/books/jb-chifley-electronic-book-text> Recorder will carry a review as soon as possible.

Barney Cooney

Hon. John Cain

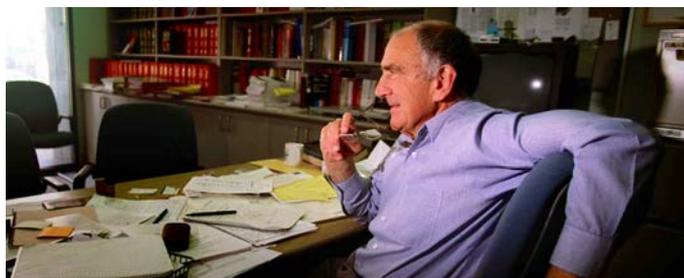
Few reported deaths of public figures have attracted as much attention as that of the late Barney Cooney who died on the 9th February last. Words of admiration for his public life have come from right across our society. Perhaps the most telling piece was that published in the *Melbourne Age* on Saturday 23rd February, when John Silvester (*Naked City*) used his regular column to publish a substantial part of a submission that Barney recently dictated to be sent to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. That was a powerful statement from a recent user of the system which is being investigated. It should be of telling influence when the Commission comes to consider recommendations.

To some extent, the breadth of Barney's influence on public life in this country has, as it should, overshadowed the role that he played in recent years in the Victorian Branch of the Australian Labor Party. When Barney joined the Party in the mid 1960s, being a pioneer member of a new branch in St Kilda, the party was not a welcoming one to Catholics, and he was a devout one, or people who did not support the strong sectarian views held by those who ran the Victorian Branch after 'the Split' in 1955. It was an ugly time for people who believed in Labor Values and who wanted to play some part in nurturing those values and see the party advance politically in Victoria and nationally.

Barney was one of those who 'took on' the controllers of the Victorian Branch over many years. They won ultimate success with the national intervention in Victorian Labor in the early 1970s and the consequent success of the Whitlam government and the Victorian Labor government some years later.

Barney was never self-seeking. His primary purpose was to pursue the goals of seeing a Labor Party that was always out to advance the interests of the less fortunate in our society. He never lost sight of the true goals of those who believe that Labor is about achieving what is best for the long-term interests of the mass of the people, not the few. The fact that there were fewer around him who held those views never diminished his enthusiasm for the party.

As his submission to the Royal Commission demonstrates, it was there in him to the end despite the appalling ill health that he had to endure in the last years. He will be long remembered.



Barney Cooney, 1997. Cropped photo. By Michael Rayner.

The Spy Who Drove Me

Ken Mansell

In March 1967, after two years of desultory political commitment to the anti-war cause, I decided to get serious and join a radical youth organisation. I was a worker, not a student, so the Eureka Youth League seemed a perfect fit. I found the EYL at 456 Queensberry Street (North Melbourne), was greeted by full-time secretary Max Ogden, and joined up. The League, fraternally associated with the Communist Party, was established in December 1941 and boasted 3,793 members nationally in 1944 (1,420 in Victoria). Space does not permit a catalogue of the EYL's proud record of achievement.

By 1967 the EYL in Victoria was in serious decline and may have had fewer than fifty active members. It was no longer the only radical youth group and there was an image problem. Student 'new left' organisations regarded the EYL as 'old left' or out-of-date. Max Ogden suggested 'there are far more politically committed and interested young people outside our ranks than inside, and the position is getting worse'. [1] To broaden its appeal the EYL changed its name at its Fourteenth National Congress held in September 1967, to the 'Young Socialist League'. In Melbourne, the YSL moved to more salubrious rooms at 185-187 Lygon Street Carlton in January 1968. The newly-formed Draft Resistance Movement (DRM) provided a focus for action, and the YSL took the DRM's combative militancy a step further with its pamphlet 'Evade the Draft – Refuse to Register'.

YSL membership in Melbourne nevertheless remained stagnant despite the deepening radicalisation of 1968. The Victorian State Conference of the YSL due in October 1968 presented an opportunity to broaden and revive the organisation, to create a 'new look'. A statement signed by 23 'convenors' (half of whom were not YSL members) invited all young radicals to attend the Young Socialists conference on Sunday 13 October at 57 Palmerston Street Carlton, headquarters of Melbourne University Students for a Democratic Society. I was one of the 'convenors' and can remember a disappointing attendance, perhaps thirty. (One of the short ASIO surveillance films released by Haydn Keenan a few years ago has Max Ogden pacing anxiously up and down the pavement near the Canning Street corner, and peering hither and thither near starting time).

The YSL comrade who had for several weeks been showing the most adrenalin-charged enthusiasm for changing the world was a chap who called himself 'David Palstra' and gave his occupation as 'clerk'. Naturally therefore the Conference elected him the new YSL President, taking over from Gary Marks. One night after a meeting in Carlton the President obligingly drove me down to Leo Ball's commune in Albion Street Prahran. We stopped at the pub on the

corner of Punt Road and Toorak Road for a beer. Palstra knew I had been at Monash that year and said he would like to meet the Labor Club's Mike Hyde, for the purpose of building an alliance, of course. This seemed a reasonable request in line with the YSL's 11 October seminar on 'student-worker cooperation'. 'Can you introduce me to him, Ken?'. 'Sure thing, David'. I was looking into David's eyes, as one does in a pub. There was something a little odd about him, but after knocking back a couple of pots I couldn't quite put my finger on it.

In the meantime, Max Ogden had begun to suspect the oh-so-frenetic President might not be who he said he was. Of course, it was an EYL tradition to suspect anyone wanting to hitch his or her wagon to an organisation going slowly down the proverbial plug-hole. I arrived at Headquarters one night for a meeting and overheard Max chatting on the phone to Leonie D'Aprano. 'We have discovered that David Palstra is a police agent', he said, with a wicked grin. The YSL phone (346 041) was of course bugged and 'David' was never seen, or heard of, again ... until ...

Fast forward a few months and Karl Armstrong is being processed at Russell Street police station after being arrested (yet again) at a demonstration. Karl reaches the desk where he has to hand in his watch and other valuables and recognises the copper holding out his hand for the watch. Karl is astonished and exclaims (unfortunately not loud enough for everyone to hear) – 'My God David, I haven't seen you since you were President of the Eureka Youth League!'

[1] EYL Newsletter, *Targette*, No. 11, July 13, 1967.

'Recovered Lives'

Two separate efforts are being made to reintroduce to our living memory the lives of those overlooked by history. Spearheaded by the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (ADB), under the leadership of Professor Melanie Nolan, the ADB has partnered with the *Canberra Times* and *Inside Story* to publish the biographies of twenty-eight women whose lives helped to shape Australian history. Two examples: Peter Davies' biography of Lucy Hicks, who at twenty-seven years old ran Sydney's Female Immigration Depot, while Alison Alexander tells us the profoundly sad story of Mathinna, a Port Sorell woman, whose life was cut short by the terrors of colonisation. You can read these women's stories here <https://insidestory.org.au/topic/recovered-lives/>

In addition to this wonderful initiative, the ADB has also committed to publish an additional 1,500 biographies of women (currently only 12 per cent of the biographical entries generally, and only 4 per cent of biographies of the colonial period, are of women). To nominate a woman for a biographical entry into this important source, visit <http://history.cass.anu.edu.au/centres/ncb/colonial-women-adb>

Diane Anderson. ALP Warrior and Heresy Expulsion.

Lyle Allan

Diane Anderson, born in the United States and a law graduate from the University of Melbourne and a barrister, was once described by Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews, perhaps tongue in cheek, as a very important member of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) Victorian Branch. Anderson served once on the party's Victorian Administrative Committee representing the Transport Workers Union during a brief period when that union was controlled by the Left in the 1980s, and was a delegate for over two decades to Victorian State Conference from the Higgins Federal Electorate Assembly from the mid-1980s until the mid-2000s.

She was also a thorn in the side of various state leaders. John Brumby (Premier of Victoria from 2007 to 2010), when Opposition Leader in the 1990s, told Anderson at an ALP Conference that the party would be better off if she left it. I told Brumby at an ALP function following the Northcote state by-election on 15 August 1998, won by Mary Delahunty, that I had seconded a nomination by Ms Anderson to be a member of the Melbourne Unitarian Church. Brumby told me that I would regret that decision (I did).

Anderson published *Higgins News*, a gossipy newsletter circulating widely throughout the Victorian ALP, where she condemned party corruption, 'ethnic' branch stacking, and the lack of integrity among ALP parliamentarians. *Higgins News* was occasionally cited in parliament by members of the Liberal Party, including Geoff Leigh and Nick Kotsiras. The source of the leak was certainly from a member of Anderson's Tooronga ALP branch.

Anderson was interviewed by Stephen Crittenden on the Australian Broadcasting Commission radio program *The Religion Report* in May 2002 in which she claimed that the Church was a victim of old-fashioned ALP branch stacking, and that it had effectively been taken over by a bunch of Far-Left trade unionists and fringe groups, who have zero interest in religion.

Telmo Languiller, later to become Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, was invited to address the Church on Liberation Theology in 1999. Peter Abrehart, Chairperson of the Church, interviewed on the *Religion Report* after Anderson, claimed that the Languiller address ended in virtual disarray because Anderson talked about factional disputes within the ALP, a totally irrelevant matter. This event was probably the trigger for the Church to begin expulsion proceedings. The finale of these was a special meeting of the Church on 27 April 2003 at which an expulsion resolution was voted on.

A story in the Melbourne *Age* newspaper by columnist Lawrence Money, in his 'Spy' column on 4 May 2003, credited Anderson with being expelled from the

Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church for heresy. Money claimed grounds for the expulsion were listed by the Church as:

The use of media and other outside bodies to denigrate the Church; the use of ridicule and slander against the Church and its members, particularly new visitors to the Church; intimidating and threatening behaviour toward fellow Church members; constant false, unseemly and abusive conduct 'on the most trivial of issues'; and disruptive behaviour at meetings and Sunday services.

An article in American Unitarian Universalist publication *UU News* by a Caroline Church on 18 May 2003, claims Ms Anderson to be the first Unitarian ever expelled from the Church for heresy, with a Rev Theodore Parker in Boston in 1841 tried but not convicted.

Ms Church gave the result of the expulsion meeting, at which members voted by secret ballot, as For 28, Against 9, Informal 2, Abstention 1. The Returning Officer for the ballot was Peter Milton, a former Labor Member of the House of Representatives. Milton was the abstainer, claiming that under Australian electoral law the person conducting the election was not allowed to vote.

Anderson returned to the United States in the late 2000s, and is no longer a factor in Victorian Left politics.

References

- Caroline Church, 'UU (Unitarian Universalist) History Made in Melbourne Australia with Heresy Trial and Conviction.' *UU News*, Boston Massachusetts, 18 May 2003.
- Stephen Crittenden, 'Unitarians Divided,' *The Religion Report*, Sydney NSW, Radio National, 1 May 2002.
- Lawrence Money ('Spy'), 'Big Trouble in Paradise,' *The Sunday Age*, Melbourne, 4 May 2003, News Page 22.

Eric Fry Research Grant

A notice from the Canberra Branch:

The Eric Fry Labour History Research Grant was established in 2004 to assist promising students with an interest in labour or social history to overcome the financial obstacles to doing research in Canberra. The grant honours the memory of Dr Eric Fry (1921-2007) who, together with Prof Robin Gollan (1917-2007), founded the ASSLH in 1961 and was its first Vice-President and journal editor.

The Canberra Region Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History (ASSLH) and the Australian Studies Institute at the Australian National University (ANU) invite students doing honours or equivalent to apply for a \$1,000 grant to do research at the Noel Butlin Archives Centre (NBAC), based at ANU in Canberra.

Applications will close on 31 March each year and the research grant will be awarded in April. Visit <http://archives.anu.edu.au/collections/noel-butlin-archives-centre/eric-fry-labour-history-research-grant> for details.

Harry Bridges on Trial

Phillip Deery

It is difficult today to appreciate the intensity of the hatred felt towards Harry Bridges by the Californian anti-communist community in the mid-20th century. That community embraced a sprawling coalition of interests that had one unifying objective: to neutralise Bridges through deportation. Harry Bridges, as most *Recorder* readers would know, participated briefly in the Great NSW Strike of 1917,[1] left Australia in December 1919, joined the IWW after he arrived in the United States in 1920, became a militant union organiser on the San Franciscan waterfront and came to national prominence during the historic and successful West Coast maritime strike in 1934. Readers may also know that in 1937 he established the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and, significantly, became the West Coast director of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO). What readers may not know is the concentrated and relentless twenty-year campaign to deport him. This crusade involved not only private right-wing interests and employer organisations but almost every branch of the American government. Indeed, from 1935 until 1955, Bridges was subjected to the full force of the state; this spanned, according to his biographer:

'several investigations by the San Francisco police, the Immigration Service and the FBI; two bills in Congress... for the explicit purpose of deporting him; two 10-week administrative hearings before special Immigration Service examiners; one Immigration Appeals Board review; one deportation order; one criminal conspiracy trial [before] a judge; at least seven lower and appellate court decisions; and three Supreme Court [hearings].'[2]

I will focus on just one of these actions: the first round of deportation proceedings commencing in July 1939, finishing in September, and the judgement, which, for now, exonerated Bridges, being issued in December, just before the draconian Smith Act was introduced.[3] The protracted hearing, the longest and one of the most bitterly fought in the history of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), was remarkable for its revelations of a network of informers, union spies, private detective agencies and Red hunters colluding police departments, sheriffs' offices and immigration officials. The transcript of proceedings and, later, the findings of the trial examiner, make for astonishing, even shocking, reading. A contemporary pamphlet was quite correct when it stated that the official report revealed 'how fully the government based its charges and built its case on prevaricators and liars...[and how its] witnesses [were] a parade of criminals, labor spies and perjurers'. [4] And this is ten years before those tactics punctuated congressional hearings during the McCarthy era.

First, some background. The origins of the 1939 trial lay in the 1934 strike. Bridges' pivotal role in the vicious but victorious 83-day maritime strike that escalated to a 4-day general strike after two strikers were shot dead, saw

Bridges emerge as a local hero. It also triggered the first call for his deportation. His opponents claimed he was a communist, an affiliation Bridges repeatedly denied while openly praising the Communist Party. Being a communist and an alien (Bridges was not an American citizen) made him 'eligible' for deportation.

Martin Dies' House Special Committee on Un-American Activities (the precursor to HUAC), meeting in Washington, targeted Bridges in the summer of 1938. Much was made of a secret Communist Party membership card in the name of Harry Dorgan (Bridges' alleged Party name). The same card reappeared at the 1939 trial. If it were genuine Bridges would be deported, so this membership card was highly significant. But we now know it was a forgery. The mastermind was Stanley Doyle, a prominent member of the American Legion and a small-time Oregon lawyer. He was given a special agent's commission by the Governor of Oregon and began to work closely with the so-called 'red squad' of the Portland Police Department. Doyle obtained blank party membership cards from a disaffected Communist Party functionary. In June 1937, when Bridges was in Portland for a union convention, Doyle gave the Portland police the forged card allegedly taken from Bridges' hotel room – the same hotel room that Doyle, with the help of Portland police, bugged throughout the convention.[5]

Under immense pressure from the Dies Committee, which heard hearsay testimony that a Harry Dorgan Communist Party membership card existed, and from powerful conservative forces on the West Coast, a warrant was issued for the arrest of Harry Bridges.[6] Economics as well as politics played a role: the Dies Committee was told that West Coast employers had lost millions of dollars through 'unbridled and unchecked Communist activity', and that industrial peace and economic prosperity demanded Bridges' deportation.[7] The arrest warrant for Bridges was based on the Immigration Act of 1918, which called for the deportation of any alien who belonged, or was affiliated to, any organisation that believed in or advocated the overthrow of the United States government. On this basis, 76 aliens had been deported in the previous four years. Under the Immigration Act, cases were heard at an administrative hearing presided over by an examining officer. Thus, hearings were usually quicker, the admissibility of evidence less restrictive and the defendant's protections fewer than if processed through the criminal justice system.

Accordingly, the FDR's Secretary of Labor, Francis Perkins, appointed not a judge but the Dean of the Harvard Law School, James Landis, to take charge of proceedings against Bridges. Although he had a distinguished record as a legal scholar and an authority on administrative law, this was, according to Landis's biographer, 'the most politically dangerous assignment of his career'.[8]

The hearings opened on 10 July 1939 to a packed room at the INS headquarters on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay. Unexpectedly for Bridges' political opponents, the

hearings were neither quick nor successful. They lasted 11 weeks, heard 61 witnesses, had 274 exhibits and produced an 8000-page transcript. I will focus on three prosecution witnesses for two reasons: to explain the outcome of the trial and to argue that collusion existed between government officials and private interests.

The proceedings commenced with an explosive opening statement by Bridges's redoubtable lawyer, Carol King.[9] She argued that the case was a frame-up by powerful interests and certain employer groups that 'have spent, and continue spend, large sums of money to get rid of [my client]'. She identified Larry Doyle as 'the linchpin of the whole conspiracy...who has supported himself by this case for several years. It is he who does the dirty work of perjuring witnesses so the government's hands may remain clean'. She also alleged that Harper Knowles, was central to this conspiracy: 'If there were no evidence, Knowles would find it necessary to create some'. Both he and Doyle paid handsomely for affidavits against Bridges, including from three men facing prison terms who were offered clemency for positive identification of Bridges in a communist meeting, but murder convictions if they refused to cooperate. 'We shall show', she concluded, 'that this blackmail was carried out with the assistance of high public officials'. She actually named these officials – from the INS, the State Bureau of Criminal Identification, and the Los Angeles and Portland police forces. None of this was reported in the Los Angeles Times, which was virulently anti-Bridges, only the fact that Bridges denied to the chief government prosecutor that he was a 'Red'.[10]

The first witness called by the prosecution was Major Laurence Milner. Since 1933, acting as a special agent of the military intelligence unit of the Oregon National Guard, but posing as a communist, he infiltrated the Communist Party. He sometimes acted as an agent provocateur using his military training to foment violence and to prove his credentials to the Party as a highly militant radical. He testified that he had personally observed Bridges paying party dues and attending maritime 'fraction' meetings of the Communist Party. As an undercover operative within the Communist Party and spying on Bridges, he seemed a star witness, with damning evidence. However, under a lengthy and complex cross-examination Milner was forced to admit that that he had perjured himself when he previously appeared as a character witness for a communist accused of criminal syndicalism. When challenged on this, he initially denied the accusation, thus perjuring himself a second time. His testimony was therefore rendered unreliable to everybody except the Los Angeles Times. Most importantly, this included the presiding judge, Dean Landis, who recommended that Milner's perjured testimony be subject to criminal charges.

The next government witness, John Leech, fared no better. It was his and Milner's affidavits that had led to Bridges' arrest. Leech joined the Communist Party in 1931, became an organiser in 1934, and was expelled in 1937. Like Milner, he claimed he saw Bridges at several Communist Party meetings and knew him to be a communist. And like Milner he had much to hide. He

admitted under cross-examination that he had traded his testimony for financial support and a new job. The shadowy Larry Doyle was involved in this. Landis was highly critical of Leech, and his rambling, often contradictory answers, and commented that he was 'afflicted with verbal haemophilia.'

To rescue its case from the ignominy of further unreliable and dubious witnesses, the government called on Aaron Shapiro, a seemingly respectable Los Angeles lawyer. Shapiro represented numerous maritime unions including one longshoremen's local and in this capacity got to know Bridges. He even acted as Bridges' attorney at one point in 1936, claimed he was on close terms with senior Communist Party officials, including Earl Browder, the Party's general secretary, and alleged that Bridges was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Moreover, Landis remembered him from earlier years as a reputable labour lawyer. So the prosecution presented Shapiro as a highly credible, authoritative and dedicated anti-communist whose testimony against Bridges was damaging. That is, until the cross-examination. The defence lawyers tabled documents that Shapiro had been disbarred from New York federal courts for jury tampering, had been indicted along with Al Capone for racketeering under the anti-trust act, and had been involved with immigration officials working with Harper Knowles and Stanley Doyle (mentioned earlier) to manufacture evidence and secure affidavits against Bridges. This was explosive evidence in an already remarkable trial, and the reputation and credibility of this silver-tongued lawyer was shredded.[11] So was the government's case. Instead of being air-tight, as anticipated, it was in a shambles.

A key witness called not by the government but by the defence was Harper Knowles. Knowles chaired the Subversive Activities Committee (later called the Radical Research Committee) of the ultra-right American Legion. Under his control hundreds of Legionnaires gathered intelligence on thousands of individuals. These informants were actually labour spies embedded within unions and radical organisations across California. As Bridges' lawyers extracted from Knowles, often painfully, Legion members were not his only sources. In his testimony, Knowles was obliged to outline the exchange of surveillance information with the anti-labour Better American Federation, the State Bureau of Identification, army and naval intelligence, and certain members of police departments across the State. Similar to FBI files, this surveillance archive was indexed in a complex cross-referenced file system. Knowles controlled this vast database and shared it with Legion commanders, private organisations, employer associations, immigration officials and federal government agencies and congressional committees (Dies). These astonishing details emerged during his three days on the witness stand.[12] Although he dissembled and prevaricated and had convenient memory losses, it became clear that he and allied organisations had a long-standing agenda to push the prosecution of Harry Bridges.

The testimony of an associate of Knowles, Captain Keegan, a chief detective with the Portland police department, enabled the defence to link directly a government official to the campaign to induce witnesses to sign manufactured affidavits asserting Bridges' Communist Party membership in return for payment or clemency. This private-public coalition was not only a vast surveillance network. It was also a get-Bridges conspiracy: a broad-ranging and concerted attempt to eliminate the leader of a resurgent labour movement that had cost Californian employers significant sums of money since his rise to prominence in July 1934.[13] Carol King's opening statement was being proved correct.

How did Bridges' defence team piece together the information that permitted them to cross-examine with such forensic precision, which so unsettled Knowles, Keegan and others while on the witness stand? Yielding to a sympathetic journalist's questions about the mysterious suitcases they had by their side during the hearing, they explained: 'we've lugged this stuff around and watched it like hawks because it took a year and a half to get it together...It was mighty precious information.'[14] The suitcases were filled with rows of card files, indexes to a huge research archive assembled in anticipation of an attempt to discredit and deport Bridges. In a sense, this research archive was the mirror image of Knowles' surveillance archive.

Judge John Landis issued his written decision three months later on 28 December 1939. He ruled that the government had failed to show adequate grounds for deportation. He wrote that on the evidence submitted, it was not possible to conclude that Harry Bridges was a member of the Communist Party. Consequently, a ruling on the second charge, that the Communist Party advocated the overthrow of the of the United States government, was unnecessary. His report reads like a crime detective novel. It was an intricate examination of shady witnesses, and their contradictory, dubious or disingenuous testimony. It boldly asserted improper if not illegal police tactics to obtain affidavits and witnesses hostile to Bridges. While Landis avoided the term 'conspiracy' he acknowledged the soundness of the defence argument of a private-public collusion to secure Bridges' deportation at any cost. This, and his sharp rebukes of the credibility of government witnesses, persuaded the Secretary of Labor, Francis Perkins, to withdraw the arrest warrants and not issue a deportation order.

And there the matter should have ended. It did not. The case dragged on into the 1950s. As Justice Frank Murphy wrote in 1945 in a majority (6-3) decision by the Supreme Court that overturned yet another conviction of Bridges, 'The record in this case will stand as a monument to man's intolerance of man. Seldom if ever in the history of this nation has there been such a concentrated and relentless crusade to deport an individual because he dared to exercise the freedom that ... is guaranteed to him by the Constitution.'[15] In 1955, after a third Supreme Court decision in his favour when jail seemed imminent, Bridges was finally vindicated and

he lived out his life of industrial and political activism until he died in San Francisco in 1990.

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1. This little-known fact is revealed in Robert W. Cherny, 'The Making of a Labor Radical: Harry Bridges, 1901-1934', *Pacific Historical Review* 64:3 (1995), 371.
2. C.P. Larrowe, 'Did the old left get due process? The case of Harry Bridges', *California Law Review* 60:39 (1972), 41.
3. A direct line runs between Bridges' 1939 trial and the Smith Act of 1940. As Hill has suggested, 'The importance of the drive to deport Harry Bridges to the passage of the Smith Act cannot be overestimated'. Rebecca Hill, 'The History of the Smith Act and the Hatch Act: Anti-Communism and the Rise of the Conservative Coalition in Congress', in Robert Justin Goldstein (ed.), *Little 'Red Scares': Anti-Communism and Political Repression in the United States, 1921-1946* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 339.
4. [Anon], 'In the matter of Harry Bridges' 1939 and 1941, [New York: New York City Bar, 1941], in Virginia Gardner Papers, TAM.100, Box 2, Folder 62, Tamiment Library and Robert Wagner Labor Archive, New York.
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8. Donald A. Ritchie, *James M. Landis: Dean of the Regulators* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980) 95.
9. The following is based primarily on the daily reports of proceedings in the *Los Angeles Times*, July-September 1939, and [James M. Landis], *In The Matter of Harry R. Bridges. Findings and Conclusions of the Trial Examiner* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1939). See also Estolv E. Ward, *Harry Bridges on Trial* (New York: Modern Age Books, 1940); [Anon.], 'In the Matter of Harry R. Bridges'; Larrowe, 'Did the old left get due process?', Larrowe, *Harry Bridges*, 149-216.
10. 'Bridges Branded Red at Deportation Trial', *Los Angeles Times*, 11 July 1939, 1.
11. For Landis's damning judgement on Shapiro, see [Landis], *In The Matter of Harry R. Bridges. Findings and Conclusions*, 85-7.
12. See 'Legion Head of Red Inquiry Tells of Bridges Case Survey', *Los Angeles Times*, 8 August 1939, 1.
13. For further details, see Robert W. Cherny, 'Anticommunist Networks and Labor: The Pacific Coast in the 1930s', in Shelton Stromquist (ed.), *Labor's Cold War: Local Politics in a Global Context* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), ch. 1 (especially 18-21 on the American Legion).
14. Ward, *Harry Bridges on Trial*, 225.
15. Cited in Larrow, *Harry Bridges*, 246.

Vale John Molony
15 April 1927 – 16 September 2018

Brian Smiddy

The death of John Molony, historian, writer and humanitarian, has brought to an end a very fulfilling life. He was originally from Ballarat. Damien, John's son, in his eulogy at the Funeral Mass said, 'Dad understood that Australia had the potential to create something genuinely different from the class and racially divided countries of the old world, and he wanted to be part of forming it'.

John's studies over many years enabled him to become Professor of History at Australian National University. John's writings covered such subjects as Ned Kelly, Eureka and James Cook. Throughout these years he was involved in a number of humanitarian activities such as assisting people who came here escaping from the Vietnam conflict in the 1970s. More recently he, along with his wife Denise, assisted refugees and asylum seekers from many countries.

His love of Australian Rules football saw him help build the local community through his involvement. John inspired many people to become active in their communities, thus contributing to make the world a better place. We mourn his passing and we tender our condolences to his family.

Vale Bill Landeryou
17 April 1941 – 27 February 2019

Brian Smiddy

It is with sadness that we report the death of Bill Landeryou. Bill came to prominence in the Labour movement when he became Secretary of the Storemen and Packers Union. The Union is now known as the National Union of Workers. In 1976 he was elected to the Victorian State Parliament. He was a Minister in the John Cain Labor Government that was elected 2 April 1982. He retired in 1992. We extend to his family our deepest sympathies.

Vale Morag Loh
3 March 1935 – 7 February 2019

Carmel Shute

Morag Loh has died. She was an oral historian, historian, curator of photography, scholar and writer of children's stories. She gave women, working people and immigrants a voice and provided histories that included and celebrated those who had been forgotten or marginalised. She collaborated with Suzane Fabian on *Left-wing Ladies: The Union of Australian women in Victoria 1950-1998*, Hyland House, Flemington, VIC, 2000. She spent a number of years in the CPA, and was also a community activist of long standing, most recently in regard to the environment and clean air. Here is a link to some of her books: <https://www.bookdepository.com/author/Morag-Loh>

Vale Eileen Capocchi
12 March, 1925 – 27 January 2019

Sue Jackson

Eileen was a lifelong fighter for women's liberation and the emancipation of the oppressed. She was a highly active stalwart of the Women's Liberation Movement in Melbourne. Having been a member of the Union of Australian Women since 1957, she set up the Aspendale Women's Liberation Group in 1972, was a member of the collective which produced the Women's Liberation Newsletter and was a passionate participant in the many Women's Liberation demonstrations and actions that changed women's lives. In 1977 she became paid Co-ordinator of the Western Region Women's Learning Centre.

Eileen did not have an easy life in her early years but linked her personal struggles to the larger struggles for justice. She joined the Eureka Youth League and the Communist Party at an early age. A memorial service will be held on 30 March at Fitzroy Town Hall from 1pm to 4.30pm. A brief biography of Eileen can be read at <https://www.vwllfa.org.au/bios-pdf/arch34-capocchi.pdf>

Noticeboard

Request for information

The Melbourne Branch has received a request for detailed information on both the life of **James Gilvray Galloway** (1828-1860), pioneer of the 8 hours movement in Melbourne, and details on the erection of the 8 hours monument in his honour at the Melbourne General Cemetery. Please send information via the editor (jkimber@swin.edu.au).

Vietnam Moratorium 50th Anniversary Committee

A proposal to form a Vietnam Moratorium 50th Anniversary Committee is currently circulating. Drafted by Jean McLean (Vice President VMC 1970), Harry Van Moorst (Vice President VMC 1970), and John Lloyd (Vic Secretary VMC 1970), it is asking for volunteers to contact them if they would like to be involved in the Committee. Contact the organisers directly, or email the editor to put you in contact.

Skatt: treasure and tax in the Nordic countries

Andrew Scott has just published *Skatt: treasure and tax in the Nordic countries*. Recorder readers may find this report of interest as it explores 'policy settings in Nordic countries and their potential application in Australia'. The report is freely available for download from <https://apo.org.au/sites/default/files/resource-files/2019/03/apo-nid223816-1336716.pdf>

Letters & Errata

Des Files

The book review by Rowan Cahill of *The Far Left in Australia Since 1945* had a cheer leader's tone about it (*Recorder*, No. 293, November 2018). What caught my attention was his concluding comment that the book 'will be mined by researchers for years to come for it is a mother lode'. But what if the lode is sprinkled with iron pyrite?

For example, in the chapter by Drew Cottle and Angela Keys, the date of the Victorian Royal Commission into Communism is given as 1947. Not only is the date wrong – it was held in 1949 – but it omits the link to 1950 and the evolving Communist Party Dissolution Bill.

Cottle and Keys also state that 'R.G. Menzies sent one thousand troops to Vietnam in April 1965.' This is also wrong. Menzies announced on 29 April 1965 that a battalion of Australian soldiers would be sent to Vietnam. They went in June 1965, and a battalion is normally 800 soldiers. But that's a minor transgression. The authors' assertion that Menzies sent these troops, without pressure from the Americans, simply because he was in his last year of office as Prime Minister, is stated without any verification.

Of particular interest to me is Russell Marks' chapter, '1968 in Australia'. He comments on two anti-war/anti-conscription events in which I was involved. I reject Rowan Cahill's view that contributions to the book 'are not confectionary cut-and-pastes from secondary sources'. In my case there was no original research into the incidents I was involved in as the president of the Draft Resistance Movement in 1968. It's clear that in Marks' chapter his claims that curtains were set on fire at my house in Northcote by unknown assailants, and that police acted viciously at the D.R.M. demonstration against John Gorton at the Caulfield Town Hall on 13 February 1968, came from secondary sources that gave him erroneous information.

Mary Elizabeth Calwell

Thank you for publishing my speech that was in support of Luke Hilakari who gave the Calwell Memorial Lecture 2018 on Arthur Calwell and his achievements as a union leader.

[Thank you MEC, we have amended the online version of *Recorder* to make it clear that your speech was in support of Luke's and was not the Calwell lecture itself. We have also fixed our typographical error introduced into your speech].

ASSLH Annual Conference

16th Biennial Conference of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

3-5 October 2019

Perth Trades Hall building (now CFMEU Offices)
80 Beaufort Street, Perth, WA

The Perth branch is busy organising the 2019 Biennial Labour History Conference. Registrations are now open and you can let the Perth branch know if you're going to be there. It promises to be a memorable and exciting conference. Ralph Darlington, from Salford Business School and Diane Kirkby FASSA, FAHA, editor of *Labour History* have been named as keynote speakers. Visit <https://www.labourhistory.org.au/2019-conference/> for details.

Deadline for Abstracts (Refereed and Non-Refereed):
1 May 2019. The details for the abstracts are:

Non-Refereed Abstracts should be about 200 words, outlining the central argument of the paper and including brief biographical details of the author. Format in Microsoft Word (not PDF) using Times New Roman 12-point font, single line spacing. Please ensure that your contact details are included. Abstracts should be sent as an attachment (not part of the message) to: bobbie.oliver@uwa.edu.au

Refereed Abstracts that could later be shaped into an article for publication should be a maximum of 1,000 words (not including footnotes). When submitting an abstract for refereeing, please include an unidentified copy and a separate document with author's name, contact details, brief bio and paper title. Please email these two documents as attachments to: bobbie.oliver@uwa.edu.au

Early bird registrations close on 1 August (\$350 for waged; \$250 for retired professionals; and \$70 for those unwaged/or on a low income (including pensioners) and/or students.

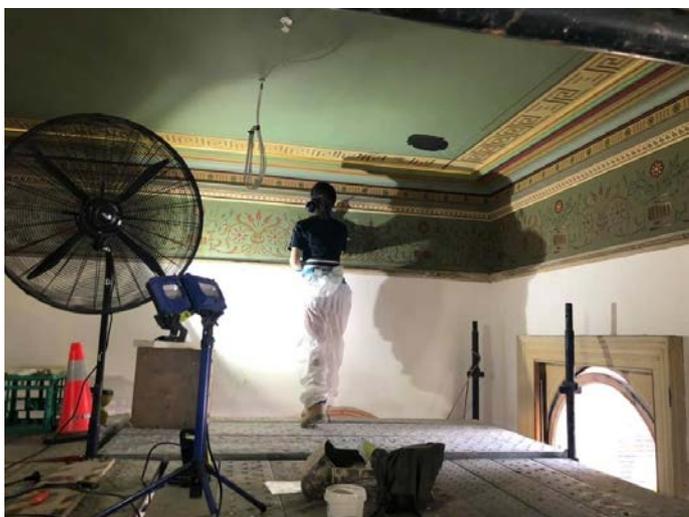


Perth Trades Hall. Photographer unknown.

Trades Hall Restoration Update

Peter Love

We have been following the progress of the renovations for over a year now and it is very pleasing to report that they are moving along very swiftly and are likely to be completed later this year. Some of the major sections of the building are substantially complete. The Old Council Chamber's walls have revealed their splendid artwork from the second half of the nineteenth century. The New Council Chamber, which had the most extensive renovations is rapidly approaching the fit-out stage. The installation of contemporary amenities, such as the lift that will make it easier for people to access the second floor, is almost finished. We are looking forward to the grand occasion when this magnificent work is formally opened for us all to see and celebrate.



Photograph: Luke Hilakari

The Federal Society

Members of the Melbourne Branch are no doubt aware that the Federal Society, which publishes the journal *Labour History* has had a difficult couple of years. After losing its long term institutional funding from Sydney University the Society was fortunate to secure a short term grant from Monash University, in addition to some funding by the Department of Social Science at Swinburne Uni.

This year the Society trialled a new initiative to raise funds through the Australian Cultural Foundation. We are immensely grateful to the number of people and organisations who donated during this fundraiser, and who now help to continue the work of the Federal Society.

Paralleling these developments, the Society found a new publishing home for the journal, which will now be published (still under the auspices of the ASSLH) by Liverpool University Press. We hope that this move will provide a more solid foundation for the Society and for the journal. Some teething problems with the subscription company that LUP uses aside, the May edition is on track and looks to be a ripper.

The Federal Society has also seen a few personnel changes with both our longstanding President (Nikki Balnave) and Treasurer (Anthony McLaughlin) standing down. Nikki and Anthony served the Society for almost a decade and we are grateful to them both.

In their stead, we welcome Stuart Macintyre as our new President, and Phillip Deery as our new Treasurer. Our thanks to all of our friends, subscribers, and members. And our special thanks to our editorial staff, Carl Power and Yasmin Rittau.

2019 Annual Dinner



Some of the Labour History mob at the annual dinner in December 2018. Photo by JK.

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