

2012 LABOUR HISTORY PROGRAM

NEXT GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 24th June

2.00—4.00pm

“The Rise and Fall of the Labor Herald”



GUEST SPEAKER: PHIL ROBINS

Phil Robins was a journalist at The Advertiser for more than 35 years. He served on the board of The Workers' Weekly Herald from 1976 to 1992, the last seven years as managing editor of the ALP newspaper The Herald. He was the ALP candidate for Bragg in 1985 and for Sturt in 1987.

❖ Labour History **CELEBRATION DINNER** ❖

We salute our Corporate Members

7.30pm Saturday 28th July 2012

❖ General Meeting with special guest speaker ❖

2—4pm Sunday 30th September

❖ Luncheon, Annual General Meeting & Haydon Manning, guest speaker ❖

Lunch at 12.30, 1.30 AGM, guest speaker 2pm

Sunday 28th October at the Box Factory

SA LABOUR HISTORY NEWS

Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

(Adelaide Branch)

Autumn Edition

Newsletter No 4



Well done, SA May Day Collective! - Great celebrations in Adelaide for May Day!

Justice Michael Kirby, outstanding guest speaker (see inside for details).

May Day March, Saturday 5th May.

Inside: Interview with Ged Kearney, ACTU President
Member Profile—Jack Munday
Tribute to the late Elliott Johnson QC
May Day Celebrations—a great program
President's Message—'Can History haunt us?'
Saluting our Corporate Members
National Conference

Message from the President

HISTORY – Can it haunt us?

When does an event of the recent past become an issue for history?

Earlier in the year I attended a Frances Bedford MP Chinese New Year function – the guest speaker at this event was the former Deputy Premier and SA State Treasurer Hon Kevin Foley – it was his first ‘public event’ and speech since leaving politics – interesting, refreshingly honest and many of his comments could ‘well go down in history’ – we will wait and see.



Kevin Foley with Frances Bedford MP (Photo courtesy F Bedford)

I always appreciate functions with round tables– about 14 people sitting at each table – great for social inter-relationship however, on this occasion, one of Labour History’s former members decided to ‘give me a serve’ as it were, – *‘you’re not spending enough time on the history of the past’*, I was told – *‘too much on today’s happenings and not enough time spent on what Labour History is all about’* - she said.

Needless to say I was partly upset by this criticism – did not enjoy the event or the company quite as much as I was expecting and of course it opened up for me the question – *When does an event of the recent past become something of history?* How long after the recent defeat of the Labor Government of Queensland does it take for the issues of the defeat of the Bligh Government to become matters of note for the Historian?

Of course I try to promote membership of Labour History and am somewhat proud of our current Executive in that we have by hard work lifted the membership of the Society to acceptable levels with Corporate membership being a new innovation – just so important.

Last year we had a series of speakers all of outstanding quality, all dripping with the history of the past - and to commence 2012 we were indeed fortunate to have Dr Luke Faulkner speak to members on the subject **“The Accord: did it work and, if so, which bits worked best?”** – surely this was Labour History, history of importance?

Realistically – I can overlook the criticism – I do not believe it is valid - the Society is focused on the history of the Labour Movement be it 100 years ago or just last week – but let our editor Allison Murchie know your views on this issue - *perhaps for some History can haunt us.*



Gary Lockwood, President

Aims and Objectives

The Australian Society for the Study of Labour History was founded in 1961 to study “the working class situation ... and social history in the fullest sense”. The Society aims not only to encourage teaching and research in labour history but also the preservation of the records of working people and the labour movement . It desires to make history a vital part of popular consciousness, a matter for reflection and debate, at a time when it is under attack from prominent conservative intellectuals.

Executive Committee 2011-2012

President: Gary Lockwood **Vice President:** Ian McGlennon

Secretary: Kevin Kaeding **Treasurer:** John Thomas

Editor: Allison Murchie **Layout:** Marlene Fenwick

Committee: Greg Stevens, Ralph Clarke, Marie Lockwood, Albert Lamour.

Except where explicitly stated news, commentary and discussion are provided for educational and information purposes and **do** not represent the official position of the Society.

Meetings are held at the Box Factory in Regent Street South, Adelaide and are advertised through the newsletter, by email and by post to members and friends. Admission is free and all are welcome.

This newsletter is a publication of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History. It is not affiliated to the Australian Labor Party or any other political party.

It is edited by Allison Murchie on behalf of the ASSLH (Adelaide Branch). Articles can be sent to the Editor at murchie52@hotmail.com

Authorised by Gary Lockwood, 5 Walton Avenue, Clearview 5085

General enquiries can be made to the Secretary, Kevin Kaeding on ☎0429 696 324.

Member Profile

Jack Munday

Jack was introduced by Verity Burgmann who co-authored the book "Green Bans, Red Unions: Environmental activism and the NSW Builders' Labourers Federation" in 1989 which told the story of the Builders Labourers Federation and its role in the Green Bans in Sydney under the leadership of Jack Munday, Secretary from 1968-73.

The story of the green bans began in a most unusual way in the very upper crust area of Kelly's Bush in Sydney where a group of wealthy women who lived in the area wanted to stop its destruction for a housing development – they got together with the BLF and stopped the development. The union led green bans brought the working and the middle classes together.

It was the time of the Vietnam War and the Springboks tour of Australia and the anti-apartheid movement, the women's movement, gay liberation - a time of massive social change and upheaval.

Unions had been known for their militancy but a new movement of social unionism developed and Jack, as union Secretary was at the forefront of this movement. It was a social and economic change and Jack led the community through these changes. Throughout this period over 150 historic Sydney buildings were saved, the best known of which are the houses in Victoria Street and the Rocks area. They saved Kelly's Bush, the Botanic Gardens and Centennial Park. They wanted the preservation of open community space and heritage buildings.

Their work led to the redefinition of development of Australia's major cities.

Jack changed the way his union operated and started with internal democracy; he employed organisers from the rank and file to include blacks, migrants and women; he brought dignity to workers and took the workers along with him; he believed that capitalism and socialism had both failed; he considered that we needed to harmonise with nature, not conquer it and what we needed was environmental socialism. He was an inspirational leader.

Norm Gallagher, the Federal Secretary challenged Jack and the NSW branch and history tells us that this was the end of the progressive leadership of Jack and his team. Jack went on to become an ecology socialist and works with many organisations. At the age of 82 his passion is undiminished.

We then watched the film "Rocking the Foundations" which told this story – the story was made by Patricia Fisk, the first female builder's labourer. A key point made early in the film is that it is *developers make a fortune while workers make a living*. In 1970 there was a 5 week strike and eventually the Askin government and the Master Builders' Association gave in. The purpose of this strike was to civilise the industry. In the 1960's 15 dogmen died in one year and by 1971 they had achieved accident pay which flowed through to all industries. By 1974 there were 42 green bans imposed.

I have seen the film many times but it is as inspirational and moving as the first time I saw it. The film has stood the test of time.

Allison Murchie



We Salute our Corporate Members

Since early 2011 a number of organisations have shown their support for the Adelaide Branch by joining the Society as Corporate Members. They are listed below:

SA Unions

CFMEU Forestry Division

Rail Tram and Bus Industry Union – SA/NT Branch (ARTBIU)

CPSU- Public Service Association of SA

United Firefighters Union of SA

Police Association of SA

Finance Sector Union – SA/NT Branch

May Day Collective



During 2011 a number of speakers addressed Branch meetings on topics of interest and concern to the trade union movement.

These included Occupational Health and Safety, Equal Opportunity in the Banking Industry, the Future of South Australian Industry and the effect of the Accord between the ACTU and the Federal Labor government.

During 2012 the Branch plans to commence a Labour History Project of relevance to the Trade Union movement. In this respect, we thank the ARTBIU for their donation to support the project. Further information on corporate membership can be obtained by contacting Greg Stevens on 0429691549.

KEEP THIS DATE FREE

A GREAT EVENT IS ON ITS WAY!!

Labour History *CELEBRATION DINNER*

We salute our Corporate Members

7.30pm Saturday 28th July 2012

WATCH OUT FOR

FURTHER DETAILS SOON!



2011 Canberra National Conference

In September, Executive Committee members Gary Lockwood, Kevin Kaeding, Greg Stevens and Allison Murchie travelled to Canberra to represent the Adelaide Branch at the National Labour Conference to celebrate 50 years of our organisation. The conference was held at the Australian National University jointly with the National Centre of Biography.

We delighted in the beautiful spring days of Canberra and began with an outdoor adventure of a three hour bus tour of historic aspects of Canberra. We began with a visit to St. John's Anglican Church, a building of heritage value but perhaps better known as the site of Kevin Rudd's preferred photo stops. From there we travelled to the historic precinct of Kingston, the Kurrajong Hotel where we were able to see the room that Curtin lived in, past several embassies, the house the Petrovs lived in and a quick stop at Manuka oval, site of the Springboks protests. We stopped at Old Parliament House and felt the urge to re-enact the Dismissal! Perhaps the most impressive visit was our last stop at the Siev X memorial on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in a site at Western Park Yarralumla – who can forget this tragedy when over 300 people died in October 2001 in their attempt to get to Australia? The memorial was constructed by community groups and many school children, with the simple message that all lives are sacred.



That evening we attended the Manning Clark Centre at ANU for the conference launch by Senator John Faulkner in a lecture titled "Proud Past, Bright Future." He spoke of social change and conditions that can and must be challenged to bring about change. It is the life and struggles of individuals that make our history and Australian values have come from the labour movement. He stressed that there is need for a national institution for collecting, preserving and showing our labour history and to show what we value; choosing what to preserve will determine our history and our future. He said that the ALP can rise to its own challenges and if it does we will have a bright future which can be as proud as our past.

This was followed by a presentation by Kim Sattler on the National Museum of Labour. Many will remember meeting Kim when she came to Adelaide in January 2011. Work is progressing steadily in the establishment of the museum and Kim and her colleagues are constantly travelling around the country giving presentations.

The conference had several major themes including the role of biography in researching and recording the history of the labour movement. This was of particular interest to oral historian Allison Murchie as some of her work is now part of the new national on-line biography which can be found on the University of Sydney website. Presentations were made by people from most states, as well as Britain.

Eight of the most active anarchists who were all active union organisers were arrested and charged with conspiracy to murder. They were convicted of murder in a kangaroo court, despite the lack of evidence; they were supported by a hysterical press. Only 3 of them had been at the Haymarket and all were in full view when the bomb was thrown. The jury comprised entirely of business leaders. All eight were innocent. The police fired into the crowd and at least 7 or 8 civilians were killed and up to 40 wounded. One police officer died and another 7 in following weeks, 70 were injured; only one police death was related to the bomb, the others were the result of their own indiscriminate firing. This was used as an excuse to attack the anarchists and the labor movement in general.

of the murders but were found guilty because of their political beliefs. There was world wide protest but this was ignored. On 11.11.1887 four of them were hung, one committed suicide the night before.

It is estimated that the funeral procession was attended by 150,000-500,000. A monument was unveiled on 25.6.1893 at Waldheim Cemetery in Chicago.

The final three were pardoned 6 years later on 26.6.1893 by the Governor of Illinois who publicly attacked the judge for this travesty of justice, saying "...the evidence does not show any connection whatsoever between the defendants and the man who threw it [the bomb]."

These Haymarket Martyrs led to the establishment of May Day as the International Worker's Day.

This is why we celebrate MAY DAY.

MAY DAY MARCH

When: Saturday 5 May

Where: Victoria Square to Torrens Parade Ground (Adelaide)

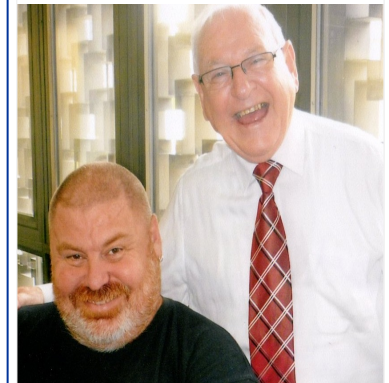
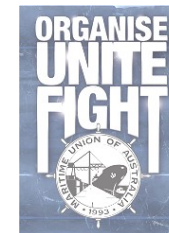
Time: 10.30am Gather Victoria Square, Adelaide
11.00am Commence March down King William Street to Torrens Parade ground)
11.45am: Arrive Torrens Parade ground, BBQ, drinks and kids activities
1.30pm: Conclude event

Port Adelaide Workers Memorial

When: 6 May (Sunday)

Where: Corner Commercial Road and St Vincent Street (Black Diamond Corner) Port Adelaide

Time: 10.00am



Darren Roberts of the May Day Collective with Gary Lockwood

The origins of MAY DAY

Although May Day is celebrated in many countries around the world not many know how and where it started. We can look to the United States of America for that answer.

At the end of the 1800's the conditions of the working class were tough in many parts of the world with long hours, unsafe conditions and many deaths at work. By the 1880's there was a strong push by unions for an 8 hour day. Socialism was becoming popular and offered an alternative to the oppression of capitalism and many socialist organisations came into existence; many thousands broke away from the traditional political parties and embraced the ideals of anarchism with the aim of workers controlling the industrial sphere. Many unions had a large number of socialists and anarchists.

The Federation of Organised Trades and Labor Unions met for their national convention in Chicago in 1884. They declared that the eight hour day would constitute a legal day's work from 1st May 1886. Other unions supported this and if necessary would carry out strikes and demonstrations to achieve it.

In Chicago 250,000 workers became involved and were supported by the Trades and Labor Assembly, the Socialist Labor Party and the local Knights of Labor. It was the beginning of a greater social revolution to change the economic structure of capitalism.

On 1st May 1886 over 300,000 workers in 13,000 businesses across the United States walked off their jobs. This was the first May Day celebration. In Chicago 40,000 went on strike; anarchists led the way and made fiery speeches for direct action, they were accepted by the working class as their leaders. There were parades with bands and thousands of workers but there was no violence on the 1st May.

Two days later there was a meeting at the McCormick plant several hundred demonstrators joined steelworkers on a picket line. Police began beating the protestors – the strikers threw rocks at them – the police responded with gunfire. At least two strikers were killed as well as others becoming injured.

The anarchists called a meeting for the following day, 4th May, in Haymarket Square to discuss the police brutality. The weather was bad and only about 3,000 turned up, including families with children and the Mayor of Chicago. There was no suggestion of violence – the Mayor would later testify that the crowd remained calm and orderly. Towards the end of the speeches there were only about 200 people left and a police column of 180 marched into the square and ordered the meeting to disperse. The police rushed in and reported the use of inflammatory language. As the crowd began to leave a bomb was thrown into the police ranks – it was never discovered who threw it.

Conference (continued)

Another theme was the trans-nationalism and crossing borders of many of our early activists.

Gary Lockwood did an outstanding presentation on Muriel Matters which many considered to be the highlight of the conference, delivered with flair in his usual entertaining style – well done Gary. Dr David Palmer, our AGM speaker talked about the US shipyard organiser John W Brown in the 1930's. It was an insightful presentation that gave us a window into union organising in the USA.

Some of the many speakers and topics covered are included in the article, Conference Highlights. Personal favourite for me was Jack Munday, a long time hero and a personal highlight in being able to meet him. See separate article.



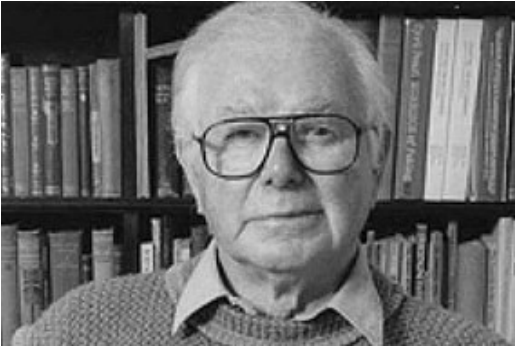
Communist Party Dissolution Act 1951

2011 is the 60th anniversary of the defeat of the Australian Government to ban the Communist Party of Australia. Prime Minister Menzies tried to introduce the legislation to ban the CPA and affiliated organisations such as peace committees and trade unions. The High Court voted 6-1 to strike down the Act but Menzies refused to accept the decision and called on a referendum to ban the CPA and a six month campaign began. Members of the CPA and the Eureka Youth League travelled the country door knocking, holding street corner and factory gate meetings and country towns. They were labelled "traitors" and "Red rats." Dr. Evatt was Leader of the ALP and took up the cause and historian Humphrey McQueen described it":

"What happened next is unbelievable in terms of parliamentary performance today. The leader of the Labor Party. ' Doc' Evatt led the campaign against banning the Communists. He took up this cause with the support of only 12 percent of the population. Where were the focus groups? Evatt won the popular vote after tens of thousands of supporters turned that 12 percent into a slender majority. Where is an ALP leader today with the guts to follow Evatt's example? Moreover, the taking up of an unpopular cause did not harm Labor's popular support. At a half Senate election in May 1953 the Labor vote increased by more than 5 percent on the poll in April 1951.

("Source: "Now and Then" magazine, Spring 2011)

Elliott Johnston



We were all very saddened to hear of the death of Elliott Johnston, a colleague, comrade, mentor, friend, hero and role model to thousands of Adelaideans. His farewell at Elder Hall on 9th September was a fitting send off to the great man. Several spoke but perhaps the most moving was his son Stewart who shared some very personal stories about the private man. Elliott had

friends from every part of society.

Elliott was educated at Unley High – his father took him to the Grand Final in 1926 where the Double Blues won and he was committed to them for life. He won a scholarship to Prince Alfred College, followed by a degree at the Law School at University of Adelaide; he was involved as editor of On Dit, in the Peace Group, debating and all aspects of university life. He married Elizabeth Teesdale Smith in 1941 before being called up to the Army. (See article on Elizabeth in our previous newsletter.)

Whilst serving in New Guinea he was transferred to the Education Services and used the opportunity to share his political views, or as some would say, to preach about Communism.

His son Stewart was born in 1949 and a close life-long bond de eloped; they shared many a good time around sport.

After working in law for several years after the war he became a full time organiser for the CPA travelling to many parts of the state. He was asked by the Party to study in China in 1955 and stayed there for 18 months, being very impressed by what was happening there. He also visited Russia several times. He returned to the law in 1957 and in 1959 established Johnston and Johnston with Elizabeth. They were leaders in the fields of workers' compensation and industrial rights.

Elliott excelled in his legal practice and was held in very high regard by his peers. It was clear to all that he should be a QC and his name was put forward by Chief Justice John Bray. Steele Hall rejected the nomination because he was a Communist and it was not until the Dunstan government of 1970 that the wrong was corrected. He was the first and only communist QC in Australia.

Elliott and his colleagues took on left wing and often unpopular causes such as Vietnam, anti-discrimination, union causes and support for Aboriginal people. Much was done for little or no fee. In 1983 he was elevated to the Bench.

From 1971 until his death, with Lowitja O'Donoghue, he Chaired the Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement.

Ged Kearney

Rob Durbridge recently interviewed Ged Kearney the President of the ACTU and asked her about the changes she has seen in the union movement:

"....it is a continuation of the focus on recruitment and campaigning, building our delegate and activist base and devoting more resources to these activities. However there are two things about that I want to add. First, there has been a rather false debate between 'organising' and 'servicing' models and how unions should operate. In my view there is no 'one size fits all' model. Every member has a right to information and a reasonable expectation that they won't be left to deal with complex issues on their own. They also pay us to achieve results for them. Every union has to service and support their members to some extent.



.... organising and empowering our members is crucial. But we have to organise and campaign around real issues that mean something to workers and that will inspire them – first to become members of the union and then to become active.

In relation to the broader issues of the evolution of the movement I think there are real challenges. One is the feminisation of the union movement and the need to change our image so that it reflects who we are more accurately. Don't get me wrong - the wharfies, the construction workers and other blue collar male unions are vital to the movement and provide a lot of our industrial grunt. But around 50% of union members are now women members – the teachers, shop assistants, nurses, the social workers – and we need to project their voice and needs more as a movement. The other challenge is young people, who are notoriously under-represented in union membership. Some unions have done a terrific job in recruiting and looking after young workers, but much more needs to be done.

Part of that evolution is broadening the agenda. For example young people may not be as interested in what happens in a particular workplace or industry but they are often interested in issues such as the environment and human rights. We should pursue these issues for their own sake but we have an added reason in terms of attracting new members and activists.

.... for every bread and butter industrial issue there is a justice issue that has an impact on our members, their families and our communities. Campaigning on broader issues is also a key to engaging unorganised sectors.

Lastly, we should never forget that despite the gloom and doom we are the biggest member based movement in the country at almost 2 million and that we affect the wages and conditions of around 5 million workers. In my Presidency I want us to re-establish a sense of pride in who we are and rediscover our capacity to use those numbers to influence the outcomes on key industrial, economic and social issues."

Source: Australian Options, Winter 2011 Quarterly, No. 65

VALE—Margaret Amelia Roberts

Edited version of friend, Rod Parkham's eulogy at Margaret's funeral on Thursday 24th March 2012.

Margaret Roberts passed away suddenly in the early hours of the morning on Saturday 17th March, 2012. She was the Vice-President of the AMWU Retired Members Division in South Australia and an Elected Observer to AMWU State Council.

When I first met Margaret, it was at ALP State Convention, many, many years ago. Marg and her late husband Ron would always sit near the middle aisle and would always say Hello.

Year after year and day after day they would be at Convention. I didn't know her very well in those days, but I admire the way she would get up and have a dip at the Pollies, especially Mick Atkinson.

When I met Marg at the AMWU, her first words to me were, "I don't know if I like you very much and you swear a lot." Well she was certainly right on the second count.

Slowly, we built up a friendship where I would do a lot of listening and she would do the talking. She would drop by and pick me up when I lived at South Plympton and I would have to fight my way into her little car past all the elephant walking sticks.

It was Margaret's belief system that impressed me; she was a devout Christian and life long Unionist and ALP supporter.



She saw no conflict whatsoever between her political beliefs and her Christianity.

She was honest to the core and believed everyone should be the same. She was the inspiration for the Retired Members Division pursuing the ICAC resolution at ALP Convention.

Even after we had been bullied by the Labor Party she would not retreat. She was an inspiration and source of strength for me personally.

It is no secret that she was upset over the way the AMWU RMD had been treated in South Australia. The way the Union attempted to prohibit her from attending State Council as our Observer deeply hurt her. It was deceitful, wrong and left her shattered that her union would do such a thing.

I'm happy to know that Marg spent the last night of her life at an ALP St Patrick's dinner with her dear friend Pat and in the company of people like Jim Doyle, Don Jarrett and Gary Lockwood. She had a super time evidently.

Margaret, thank you for the support, the loyalty, the laughter and especially the ice cream!

The Society will honour Margaret on Sunday 15th April at 1.00pm, prior to our meeting at 2.00pm. Members will have an opportunity to remember Margaret's enormous dedication to the Labour Movement over many years. Please fee free to join the Executive for soup and bread rolls at the Box Factory. Tea and coffee also available. For catering purposes, please inform Gary Lockwood on 8262 2812

Elliott Johnston

In 1989, after he had retired, he took charge of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Attorney General John Rau, previously a partner at Johnston and Johnston stated... "the Royal Commission is to this day the point against which everybody measures the success or failure of policy in that area."

In the 1990's Elliott taught legal method at Flinders University. He continued to be active all his life, seeking social justice for all, especially the working people, the poor and the oppressed. He was awarded the Order of Australia in 1994. He was awarded honorary PhDs from Adelaide and Flinders Universities.

At the 2007 Festival of Ideas, which was dedicated to Elliott, Chief Justice Doyle said:

"During his lifetime in the law, as a practitioner, as a judge and as a former judge, Elliott Johnston has striven to realise the aspiration and value that is expressed in the judicial oath to do right to all manner of people according to law, without fear or affection, favour or ill will.

He is and has been recognised as a leader in this respect. He has led by unassuming but powerful example.

... People like Elliott are few and far between. They leave their mark in what they do ... they leave their mark by the impact that they have on those whom they may encounter along the way.

To those who were at his farewell at Elder Hall I say "Excelsior."

I highly recommend that you read his biography "Red Silk" by Penelope DeBelle which was released this year.

COMMENT—Jim Doyle

Taking advantage of the present disoriented state of Australia's economy, bosses of industry have decided to launch an all out attack on the Trade Unions and the working class.(their) aim is a total return to a revamped and extended "Work Choices" and the denial of any democratic rights to the working class to defend living or working conditions.

The only way that these draconian aims and objectives can be defeated is through the organised resistance of the working class led by the Trade Unions.

Unfortunately the Trade Unions at present are not the unified body they once were, when an attack on one by the dominant class oppressors was seen as an attack on all and was responded to accordingly.

The unity of the working class and the Trade Union movement is what the Capitalist class most fears and for this reason have adopted a policy of "knocking off" the Unions one by one.

A re-inspired, reinvigorated and unified working class and Trade Union movement would work wonders on the Labor Party and all political parties of the working people.

From 'The Plod' Vol 15, Issue 2, March/April 2012



Annual General Meeting

On a lovely spring day on 23 October, a large group of members gathered at the Box Factory for our A.G.M. A sumptuous lunch was organised and special thanks to Gary Lockwood and Albert Lamour for their fine efforts. This provided a good opportunity to catch up with friends and make new ones and is something we will continue in future years.

President Gary Lockwood welcomed members and guests. In his report, he detailed the many functions we held in the last twelve months and most importantly the growth and consolidation of our membership. Thank you to all members for your ongoing support. We have had some very good speakers in the last 12 months and it is thanks to them that we have been able to achieve an organisation that members continue to support.

Murray De Laine as Returning Officer declared the new committee elected as follows:

President: Gary Lockwood

Vice President: Ian McGlennon

Secretary: Kevin Kaeding

Treasurer: John Thomas

Editor: Allison Murchie

Newsletter Layout: Marlene Fenwick

Committee members: Greg Stevens, Marie Lockwood, Ralph Clarke, Albert Lamour.

Adelaide recently mourned the death of activist and lawyer Elliott Johnson. Good friend and fellow activist Don Jarrett talked to us about his friend and a few of the many achievements in his long and productive life. Thank you, Don and vale Elliott.

If you would like to subscribe to Australian Options, a quarterly magazine started by Elliott contact Don at Reply Paid 431, Goodwood 5034 or on 8212 7566 (four issues for \$20).

Our guest speaker was Dr David Palmer, Senior Lecturer the School of International Studies at Flinders University. He gave a talk entitled “*Labour History and South Australia's Future: A Mining/Military-based Economy or a Renewable/Labour-based Economy?*” (See separate article on his talk.)

Vice President Ian McGlennon's unexpected illness

Ian recently represented the Society at the ‘Is Social Democracy Exhausted?’ Conference at Flinders but sadly took seriously ill following complications after what was expected to be a routine medical procedure. At the time of going to press, Ian is still in intensive care at RAH and beginning to show some signs of improvement. Please remember Ian and his family at this time—we wish you well, Ian.



David Palmer's talk (continued)

The other use of uranium of course is the cores of nuclear weapons. Australia has been a leader in some respects in its call for nuclear disarmament and other efforts by Rudd and others. How can we make such calls when being one of the world's main producers for the essential core for these weapons.

David believes that jobs could be developed in the area of non-military IT development but especially in renewable energy development. He believes that renewable energy is really crucial. But the renewable energy requires a radical change in government policies. Far more investment is needed in research, particularly that which is going on at CSIRO and universities and in partnership with companies engaged in renewable energy development. Solar energy in particular is the real gold mine for South Australia but it is virtually ignored as a major policy initiative by the Labor government. With mining there is no similar flow on affect. With defence industry jobs and production this involves producing useless things, largely for export that can be used only in time of war or anticipation of war.

Labor or Labour?

I am often asked which is the correct spelling. In the early days of the ALP both spellings were used but from 1912 the common usage for the ALP has been Labor. This change may have been due to the strong influence of the US labor movement, especially the prominent member King O'Malley. “Labour” continues to be used to describe the general labour movement and the “labour” to which our own ASSLH is committed.

The Ballad of Joe Hill

I dreamed I saw Joe Hill last night,
Alive as you or me:
Said I, but Joe you're ten years dead;
I never died said he.
I never died said he.

In Salt Lake, Joe, Great God, said I,
Him standing by my bed;
They framed you on a murder charge,
Said Joe but I ain't dead;
Said Joe but I ain't dead.

The copper bosses framed you Joe
They shot you Joe said I;
Takes more than guns to kill a man,
Said Joe I did not die.
Said Joe I did not die.

Joe Hill ain't dead he says to me,
Joe Hill ain't never died;
Where working men are out on strike,
Joe Hill is at their side,
Joe Hill is at their side.

And standing there as big as life
A-smiling with his eyes.
Said Joe, what they forgot to kill
Went on to organize,
Went on to organize!

From San Diego up to Maine,
In every mine and mill -
Where working men defend their rights
It's there you'll find Joe Hill.
It's there you'll find Joe Hill.
(repeat first verse)

by Alfred Hayes and Earl Robinson

Dr David Palmer's challenging talk on "South Australia's future— A Mining/Military based economy or a renewable/Labour based economy?"

David spoke of the history of the Broken Hill mine in 1885 and how it prospered for many years until the mine was exhausted. The site was completely unionised and the town had a strong union culture. However the pattern of boom and bust can be seen at every mineral site over time everywhere in the world. MIM, Mount Isa Mines Limited in Western Queensland provides parallel example.



David talked about the possible directions of South Australia's economy and the future for jobs and workers here. The present direction that the South Australian government and corporations are taking us is heavily based on mining, especially uranium mining, and military contracts such as those at Port Adelaide and at the Edinburgh Defence Industry Park. However, jobs based in mining and in military-related industries are not stable in the long term. David spoke of the history of the U.S. shipbuilding industry in the last century as one example. The metal mining industry in Australia has followed a similar pattern in terms of vanishing jobs in the long term, but the basis for this has been different. An economy based on these two industries – metal mining and military production – cannot sustain jobs, nor do they contribute to a socially productive economy in the long run.

Industry that is heavily based on mining, especially uranium and military contracts such as at Pt Adelaide and Edinburgh Defence Industry Park have shown dramatic expansion and is core labor government policy. This cannot sustain jobs over the long term or contribute to socially productive economy. The alternative is to concentrate on renewable energy, high technologies and a highly educated workforce, not resource export or war production. This will lead to more jobs and better living standards. History tells us this is the better alternative. BHP Olympic Dam expansion will create the world's largest open cut mine extracting coal and uranium and the world's largest uranium mine. SA has the largest reserves of uranium in the world.

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There are several major problems with uranium - its extreme toxicity and radiation. Then there is the problem of the waste, where it is to be deposited safely, given its toxicity. Another problem is the water required for the operation. At present Olympic Dam uses as much water per day as the city of Melbourne. Finally there is the problem of what the uranium will be used for. Unlike copper which is essential for electric wiring and other industrial uses, uranium only has two uses, fuel for nuclear power plants and the core for nuclear weapons.

National Conference Highlights

Over the two days of the conference there were many sessions with six parallel sessions on the Saturday, so even with 4 of us there it was impossible to attend all sessions, so I have only listed those which at least one of us attended. Most of the papers were presented by academics in the field and often represented years of research.

Fifty Years of Hard Labour – Stuart Macintyre

The Theory Thing: Structure and Agency – included John Shields and Verity Burgmann

Transnationalism – this very interesting session included two speakers from the UK – Don MacRaild and Neville Kirk

Australian Labour History's Infrastructure – this session included the Muriel Matters presentation by Gary Lockwood

Labour Biography Online

Archivists on the Sources for Labour Biography

Tour of Noel Butlin Archives

Gendered Labour Biography

International Locations – Jack Munday

Labour and Ideology

International Labour Biographies – including a paper by Dr David Palmer from Adelaide

War, Class and Labour Biography

Labour Biography and Religion

Biography and Place

Gendered Labour Biography

Politics, Leadership and Associational Life Past and Present

The conference took place at the Manning Clark Centre at the Australian National University and was a very good venue. At lunch we had the opportunity to wander around the university grounds to relax or a quick visit to the bookshop. And yes—Gary and Allison both bought a few books to bring home.



New Federal Constitution

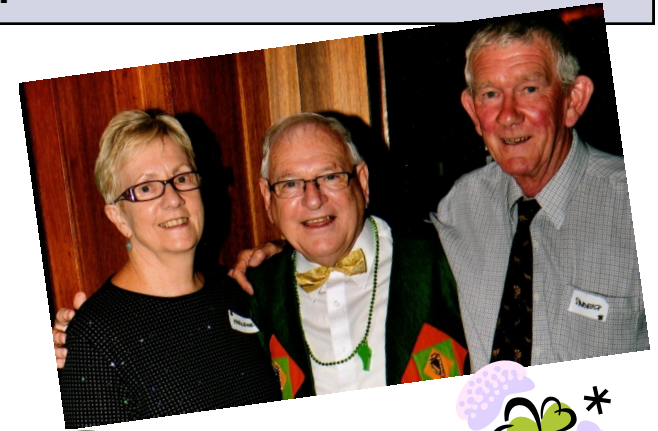
The final steps towards ensuring that the ASSLH is constitutionally National will be taken on Friday 13th April 2012 when the Society holds a Special General Meeting at Macquarie University – to wrap up the final clauses required – with most of the changes having been approved in 2011.

We are the Adelaide Branch of the Society and your local Executive is now operating under the changed Federal Rules – not greatly at variance from our previous Constitution. In future both the President and Secretary of this branch will use the title Adelaide Branch President / Adelaide Branch Secretary – just a minor change.



The National President Nikki Balnaves and National Secretary, Nick Dyrenfurth are pictured at right.

Out and About Labour History members in action



Clockwise from top left: At National Conference in Canberra—David Palmer & Greg Stephens; Leprechaun Gary Lockwood at St Patrick's Day celebrations that turned out to be a Gary Lockwood testimonial put on by Frances Bedford MP ; Marlene and Denis Fenwick with Gary; Allen Harris, Bob Gregory & Ralph Clarke at the St Patrick's Day function; Haydon Manning, Allison Murchie, Gary Lockwood & Brian Howe (former Deputy Prime Minister) at Flinders University City Campus; Allison Murchie, Gary and Kevin Kaeding en route to Canberra; David Palmer, John Shields and Nick Dyrenfurth at National Conference.