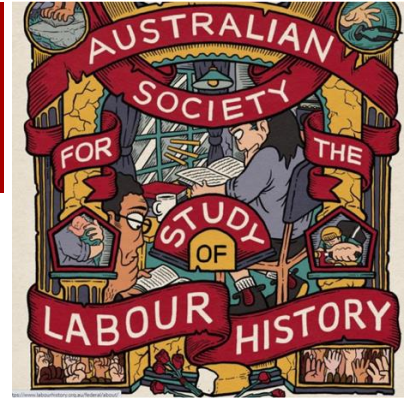


History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future. To try to hold fast is to be swept aside.—
John F. Kennedy



Artwork by Sam Wallman



SA Labour History Society

SA's Street Protest Laws

next LHSSA meeting
Sunday July 9 (2-4.30pm)
NB the change of venue!

United Workers Union training rooms

1st floor

101 Henley Beach Road, Mile End

The SA Labour History Society invites you to a discussion on Labor's Summary Offences (Obstruction of Public Places) Amendment Act. Speakers will include Dale Beasley, Secretary Unions SA, Steph Key and Chris Sumner, Attorney General in the Bannon Labor government.

The event will be opened by Larissa Harrison, UWW Secretary.

SA's protest rights resulted from the Dunstan government's Royal Commission established after the 1970's Vietnam Moratoriums.

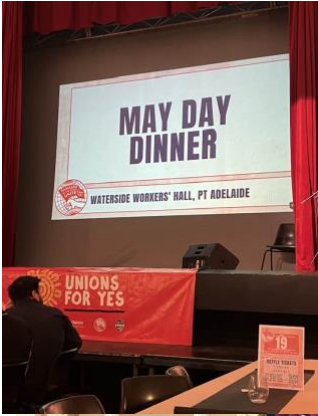


Campaign for peace in Vietnam, Adelaide 1972

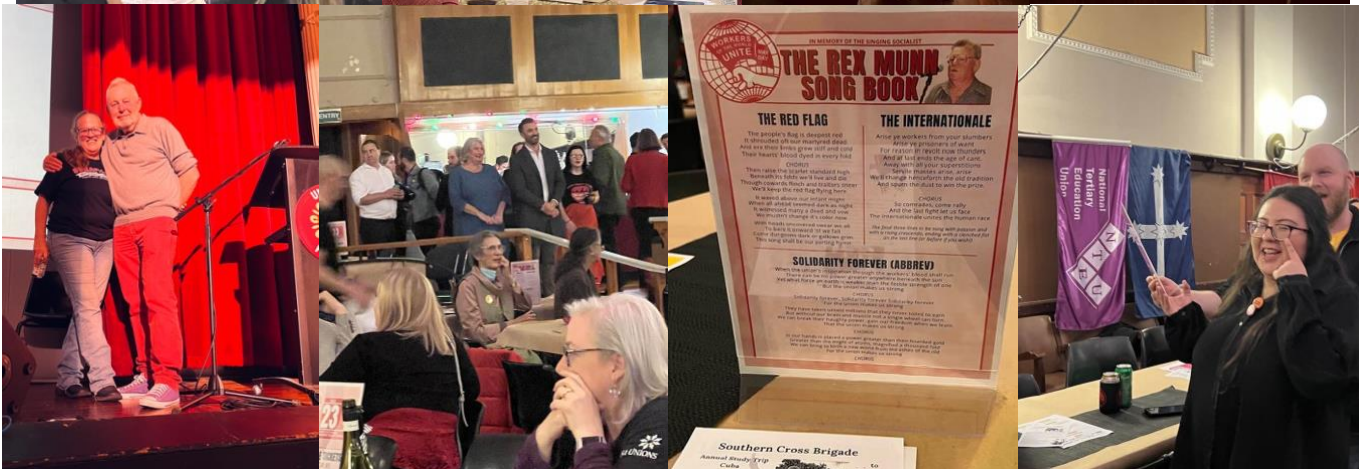
Car parking at rear, entry from Henley Beach Road

All welcome – free event - no bookings necessary. For further information email tevens@internode.on.net or text Society President David Faber on 0488 079 753

MAY DAY Dinner WWF Hall 2023



It was a great May Day Dinner at the WWF Hall in Port Adelaide. That Hall has lots of great memories for me: our high school, Port Tech Girls, back in the day had large concerts there. I've acted there, directed school plays & even sung in an opera. These days the Vitalstatistix company and the Trade Union movement call this place home. Last night we had a great sing along using The Rex Munn Song Book led by Sally Mitchell.
Steph Key



Top row: Rick Newlyn (former Sec MUA South Australia), Sharan Burrow (Gen Sec ITUF 2010-2022, ACTU Pres 2000-2010), Clem Clothier (Hon Dep Sec MUA SA); Alec McKechnie (MUA, 2023 SA May Day Spanner Award); Carol Martinella, recipient of Life Membership of the May Day Collective (with Cath McKechnie OAM, AMWU rep on the Collective); Stephen Spence (Comrade of Ceremonies, Former Sec SAMEAA)

Bottom row: Doug Melvin & Sally Mitchell (Port Choir leader); The Port Choir; The Song Book; Raquel Araya & James Bryan Hancock

The Waterside Workers Federation Hall, Port Adelaide

Emma Webb *Vitalstatistix*

My organisation, Vitalstatistix, resides at the Waterside Workers Hall (*Waterside*). The hall was built by the Port Adelaide Working Men's Association (later the Waterside Workers Federation - WWF) in 1926-27 and was home to them, and then the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), for many decades before Vitalstatistix became custodians in 1989. *Waterside* was built to provide an organising home for the wharves and more dignified facilities for workers' daily pickups. The hall was also established as a picture theatre and included

decorative murals, proscenium arch, stage and curtains, ballet barres and originally even an orchestra pit. Interestingly, there was a custom around the Port of growing red geranium plants in lieu of roses. We have a couple of pots out the front of the hall to this day.

Throughout its history Waterside has been a place for music, dances, plays, media production and cultural action. During the Port waterfront strikes of the 1950s, the hall was a hive of activity for organising as well as a place for mutual aid and culture, with food distributed to striking workers and their families, a workers' credit union, nightly shows coordinated by the Entertainment Committee, and screenings by the newly established Waterside Workers Federation Film Unit.

In 1960, after the WWF fought for the right of American singer and activist Paul Robeson to enter Australia, Robeson held free, by all accounts, deeply moving concerts for workers around the nation from our hall to the building site of the Sydney Opera House. Waterside was a site for other international solidarity and anti-racism work too, such as with the Indonesian and South African struggles and through the famous Magpie Dances which flouted racist anti-consorting laws with "black and white" socials for wharfie and Aboriginal families (recreated in the 2000s by Vitalstatistix and Kurruru, a Port-based First Nations arts organisation).

Waterside is not unique. Many workers halls around the world play this function of combining union organising, cultural work and forms of mutual aid. One of the most well-known examples is the Victorian Trades Hall, the oldest known workers hall in the world. Still home to trade unions and campaign groups, it is also a much-loved arts venue. Victorian Trades Hall is included in the Workers Museum of Denmark's campaign to see a global selection of [workers' assembly halls inscribed as world heritage](#).

In 1987 the WWF/MUA sold the hall to the South Australian government, expressing a desire for Waterside's usage to continue their cultural work including that of the very active Women's Committee. MUA legend, [comrade Rex Munn](#), also known as "the Singing Socialist," was particularly insistent that the hall be provided to Vitalstatistix (Vitals). Our arts company took up residence and fittingly the first Vitals performance in the hall was a play called *A Trip to the Light Fantastic*, based on the records of the WWF Women's Committee.

Emma Webb is the Artistic Director at [Vitalstatistix](#) (this is an extract from her article: *A Union Hall, Communal Luxury and Cultural Activism*)

Anti-protest rally Friday 26th May (words taken from the video transcripts)



Dale Beasley (Secretary SA Unions)

Thanks for being here today to stand on the right side of history. 22 minutes it took for that bill to get through the lower house. You can't get a pizza in 22 minutes, but apparently you can get laws that deliver jail time – **and that's not what democracy looks like!** This amendment bill fundamentally threatens our ability to take action like this in the interests of our members and for the safety of the South Australian community. [*Shame!*] These laws are being rushed through with no consultation, including, importantly, with the workers unions and other community groups who they will impact. Assurances that this bill does not change the operation of the existing law other than to increase penalties, is simply incorrect. It is not the government that chooses who or when to prosecute under this act - criminal charges are the discretion of the prosecutors. Assurances that this bill will not be used to punish workers protesting for a fair go are completely unreliable. **Show me what democracy looks like!**

See the **article** by Dale Beasley on *The Anti - Protest Rally* (below)



Anjali Beames (Student School Strike for Climate)

Already, at 17, I've been to more protests than I can count – many of which the Premier would label as huge disruption. This bill, now and in the future, has direct consequences for the youth who will suffer the consequences of climate breakdowns and social injustices – the youth whose voices this bill wishes to silence.



Craig Wilkins (Conservation SA) Extinction Rebellion, and other climate strikers, take community safety incredibly seriously. This comes from a place of compassion and care, for their family, for their friends, for their community. So this myth that somehow they would block ambulances or fire trucks from getting to places that are required is an absolute lie.



Steph Key (former Labor Minister, Director of Working Women's Centre)

I'm actually very sad to be here, because this is for me, going backwards into the past. When I look around, Some of you will remember the education campaigns that we were involved with, sitting down on the corner of King William Street and North Terrace. Many of you would have been involved in the antidiscrimination and equal opportunity campaigns. Some of you will have been involved in the anti-Vietnam war protests, where there was a lot of obstruction of public places that took place – to stop an unjust war. And many workers here would remember that we had to have really big campaigns for the health and safety legislation that we've got in this state – we filled both sides of North Terrace in front of Parliament House.

Leah Watkins (Secretary Ambulance Employees Association)

On the first of April 2021, members of the Ambulance Employees Association, together with the United Firefighters Union, marched in the streets to demand safe staffing and resourcing. We blocked both sides of North Terrace, supported by thousands of members of the Australian community and our fellow unions. Labor, the Greens, SA Best and many independent MPs stood with us in protest of the dismissive Liberal government at the time. Later that year, on 17 November, we rallied on North Terrace again as we tabled our petition calling for adequate ambulance resourcing and an end to ramping with 44,000 signatures to Parliament. Again, our rallies were huge. They caused disruption. They closed roads and they stopped trams. They obstructed a public place to peacefully protest for a safer community for all. These new laws will criminalize workers right to protest for fair pay and conditions and the ability of a union like ours to fight for our community's safety.



Ross Womersley (CEO SA Council of Social Services)

Let's be very clear. This legislation was drafted hastily by the opposition and then just as hastily seized on by the government. In less than a couple of hours, and the government then tabled it as their own in the Lower House. It then took just 22 minutes to be passed. I say shame! And despite the Premier's assurances, there's an awful lot of people who actually think there's a real problem with this legislation – the legal community, the labour movement, the environment movement, the women's movement, and our friends in First Nations rights. In fact, civil society groups interested in democracy throughout SA and from right across Australia have all said there is a real problem here.

The Upper House will tomorrow consider Malinauskas Government legislation to massively boost penalties for disruptive protest and broaden the offence, after its high-speed passage through the Lower House. **SA Unions secretary Dale Beasley** says the "odious" Bill's wording and intent stands against what the Labor Party has achieved – and how it achieved it.



Rallying against the Labor government's protest penalties legislation on the night of Friday May 26

Photo: Thomas Kelsall/InDaily

Life was tough for working people in the late 1800s. This was a time before the eight hour work day, when many people worked gruelling hours across six to seven days a week. There was no minimum wage, no Medicare or modern medicine, no social security, little education for working people, living conditions were cramped with no modern sanitation. For workers, the stakes were high.

The late 1800s were a time of mass demonstration and protest in South Australia; the Suffragettes, the eight hour day movement, the copper mine strikes for sanitary living conditions in the mid-north. It was in those years that workers and their unions worked out that to win better pay and conditions, better safety at work and security for their families, they needed to be organised. They needed broad community influence and political influence. So in January 1884, 13 unions came together at what is now the Franklin Hotel and formed the United Trades and Labor Council of SA. One hundred and thirty nine (and a half) years later and I am proud to be leading that organisation today.

But we didn't stop there. In 1891, the United Trades and Labour Council of SA helped sponsor the creation of the South Australian Labor Party, beginning an enduring partnership designed to ensure working people had power and influence to win decent conditions in their workplaces, and decent laws in Parliament House. The Labor party was born from the protest movements of the late 1800s, and the impact of those protests remain imprinted on our national consciousness. Every time you whistle Waltzing Matilda, remember that Banjo Patterson wrote that piece while staying at Dagworth Station in 1895, recounting the Great Shearers' Strike of the 1890s.

The shearer's strike began in Queensland in 1891 when employers sought to introduce a reduction in pay rates. They were backed to the hilt by the right-wing government of the day. The shearers stuck together for months. In Barcardine more than 1300 came together to march in Australia's first May Day rally. But repercussions were fierce. The strikers were literally read the Riot Act, and their leaders were arrested at bayonet-point. At Dagworth Station, a swagman was pursued by the authorities. But rather than be captured, he took his own life on the banks of a billabong.

The joint efforts and protests of the union movement and Labor Party has been the basis of the extraordinary social progress and change that's been achieved since those times. In 1916, while war engulfed Europe, Australia grappled with two referendums on whether to introduce conscription for overseas military service. The union movement united with ALP politicians in a massive protest campaign leading up to the referendums. The national secretary of the union campaign against conscription was John Curtin, future Labor PM.

In the 1970s, Australia was again gripped by dissent over our involvement in the Vietnam War and conscription. The resulting Vietnam moratorium protests would be the largest in our history at the time. Dr. Jim Cairns, the prominent Labor MP and deputy to Labor PM Gough Whitlam, was one of the leading figures of the anti-war movement. Dr Cairns

helped to organise giant moratorium marches, like those here in Adelaide where thousands of protesters occupied the streets and brought our city to a stand still. In our democracy, we use our rights to assembly and protest to confront and disrupt injustice. Disruption is the point.

Aside from disruption, protest is also about supporting people who have been wronged. In 1998 when the Howard government were chipping away at our workplace rights and took aim directly at waterfront workers, Kim Beazley visited the pickets regularly and supported the workers, as did other Labor MPs such as Simon Crean. Standing at the Fremantle docks, Beazley told gathered MUA members that he was there “to declare our support for your struggle to get your jobs back”. During the Waterfront Dispute, Labor stood with workers against greedy corporations and the protest crushing Howard government.

Today we take many of our democratic rights for granted, but it’s only by looking back that we are reminded that they did not always belong to us. And in the last fortnight we have been reminded by our own Labor government, that they can easily be taken away. In 22 minutes on the floor of the House of Representatives, no less. With their anti-protest laws, the SA Labor government have put themselves at odds with their proud history of protest and demonstration

Through much of our state’s history, the union movement and Labor have celebrated the ability of people to bring about change and for the passionate engagement of active citizens to strengthen our society. We were the first to legalise the formation of Trade Unions in 1876; the first to sanction the right to vote for women, including Aboriginal women in 1894; the first to decriminalise homosexual acts in 1975; all advances borne out of protest and disruption.

This rich history is what makes the SA government’s recent *Summary Offences Act Amendment Bill* so odious. The Bill seeks to impose fines of \$50,000 and three months gaol time on people who obstruct a public place. The Bill also introduces major changes which broaden the offence and cause what is currently lawful conduct to become unlawful. The fact that this Bill does more than increase the penalties is clear to anyone who takes even a passing look. But don’t take my word for it, ask the Law Society and the SA Bar Association.

In our society we must protect people’s right to safely enjoy public places, but we must also defend those same people’s right to be in those public places to safely protest and demonstrate. I understand the politics of what went down last week when Extinction Rebellion protesters caused disruption in the city. I understand that people were inconvenienced, and some talkback radio callers wanted the government to act. But the government got their response wrong. They responded in haste and created an Amendment Bill which is a mess of overreach and unconsidered consequences. As a result, the rushed laws (due to be pushed through the Legislative Council on Tuesday) would mean workers who stand up and take industrial action to achieve better pay, safety and rights at work risk facing crippling fines and gaol time.

Union members are the driving force in our country behind lifting pay. That job is so important for us to be doing after a decade of stagnant wages and now a cost-of-living crisis. It is mind-blowing that our Labor government is taking action which could stifle a unions’ ability to do that job. A Labor government which made a major pillar of their election campaign out of supporting union workers at rallies and demonstrations, much like Kim Beazley did in the 90’s. That is why unions will be there demonstrating at Parliament House at 9am on Tuesday morning when the laws are to be introduced to the Legislative Council. Workers and unions will be there together with civil society groups, the conservation movement, legal and human rights experts.

Our growing chorus of community representatives and experts do not accept that in 2023, laws which dictate what people can and cannot do in our public spaces can be pushed through the House of Representatives with no community consultation in 22 minutes flat. We want these laws deferred so there can be proper consultation with stakeholders about the impacts. With their anti-protest laws, the SA Labor government have put themselves at odds with their proud history of protest and demonstration. Since coming to office, they have prided themselves on being a government which listens. Are they going to listen now?

Dale Beasley (Sec UnionsSA, *Indaily* 25 May 2023)



SA Labour History Society

ADVANCE NOTICE FOR AGM

Bargaining for a better deal

Enterprise bargaining past and future

Sunday, 20 August

2.30 to 4.30 pm

AGM starts 2pm

Box Factory, 59 Regent St South, Adelaide



How much per hour did you say?

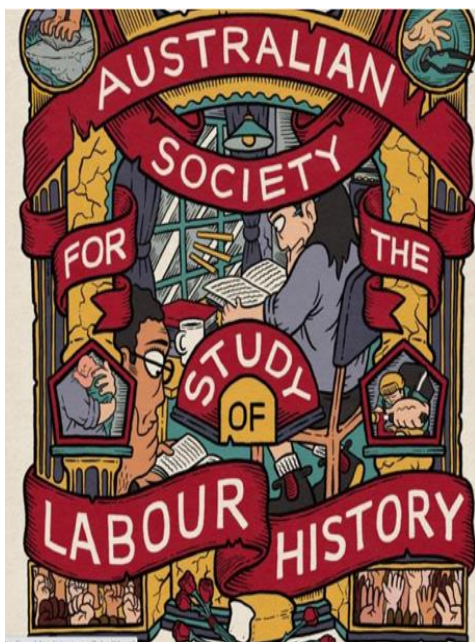
Speakers include

Dale Beasley, Unions SA Secretary

Professor Andrew Stewart

Ralph Clarke, former Clerks Union Secretary

All welcome – free event - no bookings necessary. For further information email tevans@internode.on.net or text Society President David Faber on 0488 079 753



Current LHSSA Executive

President: David Faber

VP Ron Slee

Co-VP (vacant)

Secretary (vacant)

Treasurer (Kevin Kaeding)

Elected Members:

Sue Marks, Ralph Clarke, Pat Wright

Coopted Members: Steph Key, Tony Evans

Membership Secretary: Tony Evans

Union Liaison Officer: Doug Melvin

Editorial Collective: Ken Bridge, Ron Slee

Many of you are aware the Society has had some problems: Grant Banfield, Victoria Fielding, Adrian Graves and Fletcher O’Leary have resigned from the Executive committee in the last 12 months. These have been difficult times for everyone but if we work together things will get better. Along with Steph Key, I was co-opted to join the Executive to help out; progress has been good but there is still work to be done. For those of you who don’t know me, I worked for the labour movement more than 50 years in one capacity or another at a state and national level. The last 15 years of my working life were spent at the AMWU as industrial and economic adviser.



Reforming the Society

I intend to stand for election as your President at the Society’s Annual General Meeting in August, and until then I will work closely with the current president David Faber. My plan to reform the Society aims to meet a number of critical challenges: financial management, communication with members, the membership database and the Society’s online presence. However our most pressing need is to double the number of women on the Executive. Towards this, a number of women’s movement leaders and other activists have been contacted. Meanwhile, new sponsors have been recruited - including the AMWU - and a membership drive is underway.

The Executive will provide more details on my reform plan at the AGM. Anyone wishing to discuss these matters further can text 0409 999 063 or email tevens@internode.on.net.

Tony Evans, LHSSA executive member

Some of today’s important issues

The fate of the **Voice referendum** is uncertain as opposition grows, divisions in the indigenous community threaten the campaign. How this will work out we will have to wait and see. Improved **workplace bargaining rights** are the best way for families to get by. Labor’s legislative changes have helped a bit, but more needs to be done. Further union campaigns are needed. A **threat of recession** hangs over the head of every household in the country. The Reserve Bank says it will continue to raise interest rates until inflation is beaten - but if this comes with a global recession it could mean a deep economic downturn and up to 150,000 job losses. The **threat of nuclear war** is higher than it has been for decades, and AUKUS doesn’t help at all. While nuclear powered submarines, guided missiles, and new surface vessels could create hundreds of thousands of new jobs, increased risks of war with China means none of it may be worthwhile. The AMWU resolution to the August ALP national conference says the union is profoundly disappointed over **Labor’s decision to endorse the AUKUS security pact**. The left union shares the ACTU view that Australia should have a nuclear-free defence policy.

ARTICLES



**RUSSIA NOW AND THEN:
Alhierd Bacharevic Writers’ Week,
6 March 2023**

Jack Cook LHSSA member
*(continued from the first part of his article
in the Autumn LHSSA newsletter)*

To try and appreciate the Russian historical context, we should revisit the year 1223 and the first Mongol invasion of Russia which over-ran Eastern Europe, the Mongol armies reaching as far west as the river Danube. The Mongols sacked city after city including Moscow and Kiev with most inhabitants being put to the sword. The scale of the Mongol's brutality and terror they inflicted had a tremendous impact on the psyche of the Russian people.

In 1812 the Grande Armée led by the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Russia occupying Moscow. The towns and villages in the path of the French Armies all the way to Moscow were decimated and many inhabitants killed. The occupation lasted six months with the French losing over 300,000 men and the Russians some 200,000. Again, the impact on the Russian population was profound and lasting.

In 1904-05 the British supported Japan in its war with Tsarist Russia. Starting in February 1904 and ending in May 1905 this war was mostly fought at sea. It resulted in almost the entire Russian Fleet being destroyed or captured by the Japanese, forcing the defeated Russians to negotiate a humiliating Treaty known as the "Portsmouth Treaty" in September of 1905. The economic effects of the war saw the already recessed Russian economy plummeting into a much deeper recession.

From 1918 until 1921 the Allied intervention in the Russia Civil War saw some 17 nations send troops to fight in support of the White Russian armies against the Bolsheviks: British, American, French, Japanese, Australian, Canadians, Romanians, Greeks, Estonians, Chinese, Czechoslovak, Polish, Finnish, Italians, Indians, South Africans and Serbians. The battle-hardened Allied troops inflicted huge casualties on the Red Armies. At one stage some 90 % of the Trans-Siberian Railway was controlled by the Czechoslovak Legions. However, under the leadership of Leon Trotsky and many others, the Red Armies, against all odds, finally overcame the invaders, eventually winning the war against the Whites and the allied armies.

Frederick L. Schuman the (late) respected American historian who spent much of his working life focused on the period between WW1 and WW2 said the consequences of the Allied intervention in Russia "were to poison East-West relations forever after, to contribute significantly to the origins of World War II and later the Cold War, and to fix patterns of suspicion and hatred on both sides which even today threaten worse catastrophes in times to come."

See also the following extract from an analysis of the current situation by investigative journalist Seymour Hersh (@seymourhersh)

PARTNERS IN DOOMSDAY – as Ukraine begins a counter-offensive and Biden's hawks look on, new rhetoric out of Russia points to a revival of the nuclear threat [Seymour Hersh](#) 15 Jun 2023

Meanwhile, there has been an escalation in rhetoric about the war and its possible consequences from within Russia. It can be observed in an [essay](#) published in Russian and English on June 13 by **Sergei A. Karaganov, an academic in Moscow who is chairman of the Russian Council on Foreign and Defence Policy**. Karaganov is known to be close to Putin; he is taken seriously by some journalists in the West, most notably by Serge Schmemmann, a long-time Moscow correspondent for the *New York Times* and now a member of the *Times* editorial board. Like me, he spent his early years as a journalist for the Associated Press.

One of Karaganov's main points is that the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine will not end even if Russia were to achieve a crushing victory. There will remain, he writes, "an even more embittered ultranationalist population pumped up with weapons—a bleeding wound threatening inevitable complications and a new war."

The essay is suffused with despair. A Russian victory in Ukraine means a continued war with the West. "The worst situation," he writes, "may occur if, at the cost of enormous losses, we liberate the whole of Ukraine and it remains in ruins with a population that mostly hates us. . . . The feud with the West will continue as it will support a low-grade guerrilla war." A more attractive option would be to liberate the pro-Russian areas of Ukraine followed by demilitarization of Ukraine's armed forces. But that would be possible, Karaganov writes, "only if and when we are able to break the West's will to incite and support the Kiev junta, and to force it to retreat strategically."

“And this brings us to the most important but almost undiscussed issue. The underlying and even fundamental cause of the conflict in Ukraine and many other tensions in the world . . . is the accelerating failure of the modern ruling Western elites” to recognize and deal with the “globalization course of recent decades.” These changes, which Karaganov calls “unprecedented in history,” are key elements in the global balance of power that now favour “China and partly India acting as economic drivers, and Russia chosen by history to be its military strategic pillar.” The countries of the West, under leaders such as Biden and his aides, he writes, “are losing their five-century-long ability to siphon wealth around the world, imposing, primarily by brute force, political and economic orders and cultural dominance. So there will be no quick end to the unfolding Western defensive and aggressive confrontation.”

This shakeup of the world order, he writes, “has been brewing since the mid-1960s. . . . The defeat in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the beginning of the Western economic model crisis in 2008 were major milestones.” All of this points toward large-scale disaster: “Truce is possible, but peace is not. . . . This vector of the West’s movement unambiguously indicates a slide toward World War III. It is already beginning and may erupt into a full-blown firestorm by chance or due to the incompetence and irresponsibility of modern ruling circles in the West.”

In Karaganov’s view—I am in no way condoning or agreeing with it—the American-led war against Russia in Ukraine, with the support of NATO, has become more feasible, even ineluctable, because the fear of nuclear war is gone. What is happening today in Ukraine, he argues, would be “unthinkable” in the early years of the nuclear era. At that time, even “in a fit of desperate rage,” “the ruling circles of a group of countries” would never have “unleashed a full-scale war in the underbelly of a nuclear superpower.”

Seymour Myron "Sy" Hersh (born April 8, 1937) is an American [investigative journalist](#) and political writer. He gained recognition in 1969 for exposing the [My Lai massacre](#) and its [cover-up](#) during the [Vietnam War](#), for which he received the 1970 [Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting](#). During the 1970s, Hersh covered the [Watergate scandal](#) for [The New York Times](#), also reporting on the [secret U.S. bombing of Cambodia](#) and the [CIA's program of domestic spying](#). In 2004, he detailed the U.S. military's [torture and abuse of prisoners at Abu Ghraib](#) in Iraq for [The New Yorker](#).

‘Brothers in arms, a long way from home’: the first Australians to fight fascism overseas Paul Daley, *The Guardian*, 30 April 2023

The discovery of a rare photo from the Spanish civil war raises questions about why volunteers from Australia are not commemorated <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/30/brothers-in-arms-a-long-way-from-home-the-first-australians-to-fight-fascism-overseas>



☒ Sydney dock worker Jack Franklyn and New Zealander Bert Bryan fighting in the Battle of Ebro, in the Spanish civil war in 1938. Photograph: Vanessa McNeill

The grainy, sepia photograph shows two men, an Australian and a New Zealander. Sydney dock worker Jack Franklyn is partly obscured by bush, leaning forward, his rifle poised and ready. New Zealander Bert Bryan, bare-chested and wearing a beret, crouches at the edge of a trench while shooting at the enemy. They’re in [Spain](#), the battle of Ebro in 1938, and the fact they are fighting together in one of the Spanish civil war’s most seminal and bloody battles lends a gritty new dimension to the revered legend of Anzac.

The photograph was recently discovered among personal mementoes in the western Sydney home of 80-year-old Vanessa McNeill. Her father, Wollongong steel worker Jim McNeill fought the fascists alongside Bryan and Franklyn at Ebro, which began 85 years ago this July. McNeill was shot by a machine gun at Ebro, his second wounding in Spain. McNeill entrusted the photograph, along with a dusty suitcase of her father’s papers, photographs, postcards, publications, and castanets with ribbons in the colours of the fallen Spanish Republic to historian [Michael Samaras](#). Samaras placed most of the material with the local Illawarra Museum, and now he is offering the photo to the Australian War Memorial.

Despite Australia’s obsessive celebration of overseas military conflicts since colonial days, the experiences of its people who fought and died in the [Spanish civil war](#) rate barely a mention in official military history or commemoration. Their

remarkable stories might be known to their now aged children and, perhaps, grandchildren. And the actions of a few have been chronicled in books. They were certainly covered in contemporary newspapers. But the 70 or so Australians who joined the International Brigades to fight or serve as nurses in support of the Spanish Republic's bitter, failed military resistance to Franco's fascist forces are not acknowledged.

This, despite the fact that all of the volunteers were precocious military opponents of global fascism when many countries – including the conservative Menzies government of Australia – were still set on appeasement of fascist leaders like Franco and Hitler. Indeed, some of the Australian International Brigadiers had previously battled the fascist [New Guard](#) on Australia's streets in the early 1930s. Others, meanwhile, returned from the Spanish civil war and immediately signed up to fight fascist Nazi Germany and Italy in the second world war once Australia joined.

The incredible stories – of why they volunteered, how they reached Spain, their experiences of combat, their unlikely survival and their deaths – deserve formal national remembrance. That most of those Australians who served in the International Brigades were of the sharp left – including many communists and unionists – doubtless contributes to the official amnesia about them. Consequently, most of the personal collections – letters, postcards, journal writings, photographs and ephemera – of the Australians who went and returned have probably been confined to boxes in suburban attics and sheds or worse, to landfill. That's why the discovery of the photograph is so significant; it might be the only known photograph that depicts an Australian fighting in the Spanish civil war. "It is a powerful image," says Samaras. "There they are, an Australian and a New Zealander, brothers in arms, a long way from home, fighting a doomed campaign. The Anzac echoes are strong, however members of the International Brigades did not go to war because their government sent them, they were instead motivated by deeply felt personal convictions. There are a handful of photographs of Australian members of the International Brigades in reserve [conflict] areas, but this is the only photo I've seen of them in action. If anyone has another, it would be great to see it," Samaras says.

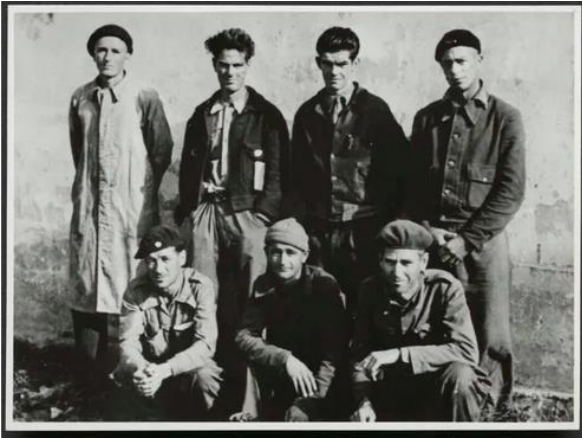
On the reverse side of the photograph, beneath the names of Bryan and Franklyn, is written in McNeill's hand: *Hill 481 near Gandesa [Battle of Ebro] Where Bill Young died.* It is unclear if McNeill took the photograph. But it is invaluable, regardless, for its evocation of the experiences – and post-International Brigades life – of several Australians and the New Zealander, Bryan. A portal into their pasts and futures.



Bill Young, an Australian who died fighting in the Spanish civil war

Bill Young is described in a May 1948 booklet, *Australians In Spain*, as having been known in the International Brigades as "the Big Aussie". He worked in the bush and in construction, and was member of the Communist party (like McNeill and Carter) before stowing away on a coal bunker set for Europe. After he was discovered the ship, two hands short, enlisted him as crew. In a 1974 interview with Wendy Lowenstein for her book [Weevils In The Flour](#), McNeill recounted how "Bill was a marvellous thrower of the hand grenade. In the Ebro fighting he was put in charge of his section when the NCOs [non-commissioned officers] were killed. In the critical attempt to take the hill dominating Gandesa, which was held by Moors and fascist Italians and heavily fortified, Young led an attack – and did not come back. His body was never found." McNeill said Young was killed in a burst of machine gun fire beside the famous British International Brigadier [Lewis Clive](#). Young is listed on a [memorial in Spain](#), along with Clive and two other Australians killed at Ebro.

Another [photo](#) taken after Ebro, late in 1939, depicts a group of survivors including the steelworkers Carter and McNeill, and New Zealanders including Bryan. Bryan apparently wears the same beret he had in combat. They present wiry, proud and hardened though still youthful, combat survivors. There are traces of smiles. Steely-eyes. Ironically they had come through battle with Franco's fascist forces and were preparing to return home while Australia was still appeasing fascism – including Hitler's Third Reich. In July 1939, for example, Australian prime minister [Robert Menzies said](#), "History will label Hitler as one of the really great men of the century."



New Zealand and Australian International Brigadiers awaiting repatriation from Spain. Back row, left to right: Kevin Rebecchi (Australia), Lloyd Edmonds (Melbourne, Australia), William 'Murn' MacDonald (Wellington & Dunedin, NZ), Joe Carter (Sydney, Australia). Front row, left to right: Jack Franklyn (Australia), Bert Bryan (Wellington & Dunedin, NZ), Jim McNeill (Sydney, Australia).

Photograph: National Library of New Zealand

When McNeill and Franklyn returned to Australia they enlisted to fight fascists again in the second world war (McNeill, by then 39, put his age down by six years so he might join on the first day of enlistments in Wollongong). All would have been deeply affected by the brutality of Ebro where casualties and fatalities among the brigades were high. Timaru-born Bryan certainly returned home a damaged man. According to [New Zealand Geographic](#) magazine, "He arrived in Spain in early 1938 and came through the horrific Battle of the Ebro before being repatriated. He was severely affected by his experiences under fire, never fully recovered and died of alcoholism in 1961."

Vanessa McNeill says her father, Jim – 37 when he went to Spain – carried for life the trauma of his Spanish experience: "Some aspects of his health were challenging for the rest of his life, due to his service [in Spain]. He was not a young man when he went to Spain, not young to be involved in something so hideous when the fascists did such terrible things to the people resisting them."

McNeill was stationed in England during the second world war, where he met his English wife, Mabel, who worked for the Committee for Spanish Relief in support of the republicans. He was medically discharged in 1943, due largely to his civil war wounds, and returned to Australia. Both of Vanessa's parents remained committed communists.

In *Australians in Spain*, McNeill wrote " ... it has to be remembered that at the time a man wanting to fight for democracy in Spain was looked on almost as a criminal by the [Australian] 'powers that be' and many Australians had to leave for Spain secretly and furtively without even letting their friends know.

"Just as there were men of all countries in the Brigades so there were men of many different political and religious beliefs. Communists and Labor party men fought side by side with Irish republicans, members of Youth Leagues, Christian Pacifists and men of no particular party." McNeill said the International Brigades represented "something written in the blood of men of all countries who had died together in a new sort of a war. Not a national war, but a war for the liberation of all men and women of all nations. And the International Brigade that fought in Spain is today part of a bigger International Brigade of the millions of men and women – democrats of all lands – who carry on the struggle for human liberation."

McNeill's mate from the Wollongong steelworks, Joe Carter, had earlier been an itinerant bush labourer and "swaggie" in the 1920s. He first joined the Communist party of Australia in 1930 but was expelled in 1931 for being "drunk and not disciplined". He re-joined the party in 1937 and went to Spain "in cahoots" with McNeill where, as a machine gunner, he too fought at Ebro. The International Brigades and the Communist party of Spain made detailed pre-repatriation assessments of every volunteer. It seems Carter had redeemed himself in the party's eyes: "This comrade has had a good record ... and is one of the most sober of all the comrades. Indications seem to show that he has definitely overcome the weaknesses for which he was expelled in 1931."

Before he went to Spain, Young was, according to his mate McNeill writing in *Australians in Spain*: "A good man with his fists when fists were needed, he helped to defend workers' meetings against attacks from the fascist New Guard in the Depression days." Long before he fought in Spain, McNeill was himself violently clashing with members of the New Guard – a fiercely pro-monarchist, anti-communist, secretive pro-fascist organisation – on the streets of Sydney. In *Weevils in the Flour*, McNeill recounts almost being shot dead in the "conservative, well-to-do suburb" of

Drummoyne on the western shores of Sydney harbour: “A New Guard shot at me at a [Communist party] council meeting in Drummoyne . . . I felt a bullet whistle past my ear. I was hit once or twice in Spain, in the International Brigade, but I never felt one come closer than this without actually hitting me.” The incident was confirmed in a contemporary [newspaper report](#). Jim McNeill died at the Concord Repatriation hospital in 1976.

Jack Franklyn, the Australian pictured in combat in Spain, did not have such a long life. But then as *Tribune*, the official paper of the Communist party of Australia, mused upon his death, “few men have packed so much adventure into 50 years as did Jack Franklyn”. Born in Lancashire, England, he fought on the European western front for four years during the first world war. He then came to Australia via the United States during the Great Depression, worked on the docks and became a militant, strike-leading unionist. He was deported from Darwin to Fremantle due to his militancy, and from there sailed to England en route to Spain. After fighting in Spain where “he showed the fearlessness in the face of danger that had been his characteristic” he returned to the Sydney docks. He signed up for the second world war but due to the physical toll of the Spanish conflict, he was medically discharged without seeing action. After Franklyn died in a 1945 Sydney waterside industrial accident, 400 trade unionists marched in a procession in front of his coffin at the [funeral](#).



According to the [Australian War Memorial](#), 66 Australians served in the International Brigades. This excludes several people of Spanish descent who went home to fight. About a quarter were killed. While the precise number of Australians who went remains unclear, there is an unofficial [memorial](#) in Canberra’s Lennox Gardens, dedicated to what it says were the 70 Australian men and women (women mostly served as nurses and support and supply workers) who participated in the civil war on the side of the Spanish republic. Only one Australian, [Nugent Bull](#), is known to have served in Franco’s forces.

Vanessa McNeill believes official acknowledgment of Australian volunteers to the International Brigades is long overdue: “The [Australian] War Memorial has not really commemorated or had anything much to do with those who went to the Spanish civil war. The country as a whole has not given appropriate recognition to those who went and fought and often died. That’s because the government of the day was set on appeasement and did not condone what the volunteers were doing,” she said.

While the war memorial has a small collection of photographs, manuscripts and memorabilia of Australians who fought in Spain, those who died there are not on the roll of honour which records Australian service deaths. Samaras believes the lack of acknowledgment is “partly due to the enormity of the second world war which followed so closely – it overshadows everything. But it is also true that the men and women who went from Australia to help the Spanish Republic resist the fascists are an awkward and uncomfortable reminder that not everyone followed the official policy of appeasement. The Australians who fought for the Spanish Republic were of the broad left. The Communist party was strongly represented and there was a handful of ALP members, but most were not formally party affiliated. But perhaps any association with communism, especially during the cold war, was sufficient to suppress the recognition they were due as the first Australians to fight fascism.”

The Communist party was banned in Australia under national security laws in June 1940 because it stood with Stalinist Russia’s opposition to the second world war on the grounds that it was an imperialist conflict. This changed after the Nazi invasion of Russia in 1941. Regardless, communists like McNeill and Franklyn ignored official Communist party stricture and volunteered immediately to fight in the second world war.

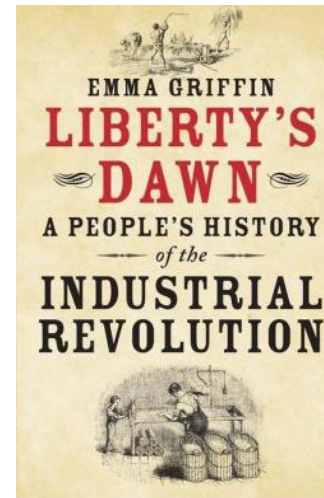
Further reading: [Top 10 neglected books about the Spanish civil war](#)

REVIEWS

Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution, Emma Griffin, Yale University Press, 2013



Working-conditions-in-the-industrial-revolution (History Crunch)



This is a fascinating look at a different side of the industrial revolution in Britain. The book is based on hundreds of autobiographies penned between the mid 1700s to 1900. It offers a unique account on how the Industrial Revolution was experienced by the British working class.

While many of books and studies argue that the industrial revolution brought an increase in poverty, poorer living stands and an environmental disaster, this book shows how it actually help raise incomes, led to improvements in literacy and an increasing opportunity for political action, including the formation of worker societies – leading of course to the formation of the trade union movement.

The autobiographies show how with the growth on new towns and new forms of transport, new job opportunities started to evolve and allowed male workers to move away from the drudgery of factory work to better paid jobs as labourers, navvies, learning new skills and far better pay than a mill worker. Meanwhile with the war with France in the early part of the 1800s until 1814, opportunities arose for workers to earn good money - up to 38 shillings a week - working at the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich.

Also, the experiences of families with young children working in factories at the time sheds a light on just how important the income they generated was to keep the family with a roof over their head and food on the table. An interesting factor described by the writers was the importance that the church played in increasing literacy by setting up reading and writing classes after Sunday school, the teachers often being wives of the local clergymen. Even this small introduction to education started to have a positive effect on the families of the poor.

A good example of individual progress is that of Samuel Bamford, born in 1788, who worked for a brief spell as a sailor then as a warehouse worker and eventually as a traditional weaver. In the mid-1800's he became involved in local politics, emerging as a key figure in the working class Radical movement. He was jailed for being one of the organisers of the St Peters Field reform meeting (*Peterloo*), and after developing writing skills became a journalist later in life.

In no way does *Liberty's Dawn* excuse or support the working conditions of what we know as the industrial revolution nor the powers of the few who controlled the politics of the day, but it provides an encouraging overview of people's lives in their own words.

Doug Melvin

The following extract from a Guardian review of the same book add focusses on the harshness of pre-industrial (rural) work, and also the work of women and children.

Complaints about injurious levels of noise and stink, deforming toil and abnormal rhythms can all be found in the memoirs Griffin looks at, especially those written by activists in the factory-reform movement. **However it is the harshness of childhood that is most often recalled.** "Writers tended to remember their adult years in the mine, mill or forge in a much more positive light": this time was characterised by regular employment, fuller bellies, easier access to skilled work without apprenticeship, a vibrant labour market – and therefore some independence from the tyranny of employers.

Griffin seeks not to "deny the crushing poverty and suffering" of plebian existence in the early 19th century, but she differs from the grim school in her unromantic assessment of rural existence before the factories. **Starvation wages, a shortage of winter employment and merciless exploitation characterised the fields of Merrie England. Industrial workers rarely romanticised the rural world they had lost.**

The benefits for women look slighter, but are harder to weigh, since female voices are muted.....Griffin has unearthed a mere dozen women's memoirs, and doubts that there are many more to find. Instead she recreates female experience from the uneven testimony of fathers, sons and brothers. Eighty per cent of female employment was concentrated in just five areas: domestic service, agriculture, textiles, needlework and retailing. Only in Lancashire and Yorkshire, where new factory work could be found, did unmarried women enjoy expanded opportunities, though in Griffin's sample most left the factory on becoming mothers, and only re-entered the paid labour force if crisis struck: widowhood, for instance.... In fact, the prevalence of married women's work underscores one of Griffin's most arresting findings. Her auto-biographers cite a surprising number of young mothers with one or two illegitimate children, who managed without a breadwinner by going out to the mill and parking the babies with relatives. Fulfilling the worst fears of Victorian moralists, factory work seems to have widened younger women's options in altogether unintended ways.

Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution by Emma Griffin – review [Amanda Vickery](#), *The Guardian*, 26 Dec 2013

TRIBUTES



The passing of Bruce Childs

23 August 1934 – 4 May 2023

It is with sadness that the Evatt Foundation received news of the passing of our former President (1998–2006) and Life Member, Bruce Childs on 4 May 2023, whose contribution to the labour movement has been nothing short of extraordinary.

The Evatt Foundation

An etcher by trade, Bruce became a giant of the Australian labour movement, and has both inspired and instructed the generations that followed him with his time, his wisdom, and his grace to become active in political life. His commitment to promoting social justice, equality, democracy, and human rights was unwavering. Whether agitating on the shop-floor, advocating for workers as a union leader, building the Socialist Left as a powerful, progressive force within the Australian Labor Party, serving as a Senator for NSW, or throughout his post-parliamentary career, when he was active in the Evatt Foundation — as President and a long-term member of the Executive — he brought his intellect, patience, and faith in humanity to his many years of service.

Above all, he brought both a principles-based approach and commitment to collectivism and democracy to his politics. He was a quiet achiever and didn't put his own self-interests first, but elevated others around him whom he admired and thought would do a good job of creating positive change for the working class.

A long-standing advocate for peace, he played an integral role in the Australian peace movement as convenor of the Nuclear Disarmament Co-ordinating Committee and organiser of the Palm Sunday peace marches throughout the 1980s. And he was active again in organising the 2002 Palm Sunday peace marches to protest against the Second Gulf War.

He was a pioneering advocate for encouraging young women to become actively involved in politics and the labour movement, and gave his time to mentor a number of young activists. One of whom, Tanya Plibersek MP, cites Bruce as her hero and in her tribute to Bruce at the event marking 40 years of the Evatt Foundation, Tanya told a fitting collection of stories as testament to the kind of person Bruce was.

As President of the Evatt Foundation for eight years, he continued the legacy of Doc Evatt — both Bruce and the Doc were internationalists and intellectuals. Bruce was instrumental in shepherding the Foundation through a period of transition at a strategic level, and he also got his hands dirty with the work that needed to happen to continue the Foundation's mission of upholding the highest ideals of the labour movement: from stuffing envelopes and proofreading publications to providing sage counsel on strategy, Bruce made an unmatched contribution to the Evatt Foundation. In recognition of his contributions over 21 years — eight of which were serving as President — Bruce was voted a life member of the Evatt Foundation: a rare honour in our Foundation's history. Bruce will be dearly missed, and our thoughts are with his wife, Yola, his family, friends, and all those who had the honour and pleasure of crossing paths with this giant of the labour movement.

** Bruce's entry in the Biographical Dictionary of the Australian Senate — authored by former President of the Evatt Foundation, Christopher Shiel— is available [here](#).*

*** A copy of Tanya Plibersek MP's speech at the event celebrating 40 years of the Evatt Foundation, at which she pays tribute to the legacy of Doc Evatt and Bruce Childs, is available [here](#).*



SIMON CREAN
26 Feb 1949 – 27 June 2023
Gentleman and Giant of Labor
David Crowe

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has remembered Simon Crean as a man of great political courage and conviction as tributes poured in for the former Labor leader, who died suddenly aged 74. Crean, a key figure in the union movement and the Australian Labor Party over four decades, died on Sunday morning during a visit to Europe for meetings on business and trade, one of his long-standing interests as a federal minister. The PM yesterday confirmed Crean would be given a state funeral, saying his passing was a “great loss for the labour movement but a great loss for our nation, as well. This news came as a great shock and the entire labour movement is saddened by the loss of Simon Crean far too early.” He is remembered as president of the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), as a minister under former prime minister Paul Keating, as Labor leader from 2001 to 2003, and as a cabinet minister from 2007 to 2013 under prime ministers Kevin Rudd and Julia Gillard.

Born in Melbourne in 1949, Crean was raised on the core beliefs of the labour movement thanks to his father, Frank, a state and federal Labor MP who rose to treasurer from 1972 to 1974 under prime minister Gough Whitlam. Crean entered the union movement in the 1970s before rising to ACTU vice president in 1981 and being elected ACTU president in 1984, vaulting him into a key position during the reforms led by Bob Hawke as prime minister and Keating as treasurer. By 1990, he was in federal parliament as the member for the Melbourne seat of Hotham and was soon in the ministry as minister for science and, later, as minister for primary industry.

Crean was elevated to cabinet as employment minister under Keating after Labor's 'True Believers' election victory in 1993. He served in the shadow cabinet after Labor's defeat in 1996, was elected deputy leader in 1998, and rose to the leadership when Kim Beazley stepped down after the 2001 federal election, when the al-Qaeda attacks on the United States brought national security to the forefront of politics.

With US President George W. Bush ordering the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and then-prime minister John Howard committing forces under the ANZUS alliance, Crean made a rare decision for an opposition leader in countering the case for Australian support: "You say that the US alliance requires you to respond to all requests from the US. It does not." Crean told Howard in parliament in 2003, "We believe that Australian troops should not have been sent in advance of a UN mandate. We believe the weapons inspectors are still doing their job and should be given the chance to finish it." While the US mounted the offensive on the argument Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was amassing weapons of mass destruction, those weapons were never found. Crean later stood by that decision and said it highlighted the need for a greater role by parliament in any decision to send troops into battle.

The Labor caucus replaced Crean before the 2004 election, named Mark Latham as leader in his place and later turned to Kim Beazley as leader, before returning to power under Rudd in 2007, launching a second phase for Crean in the ministry and cabinet. Given the senior post of trade minister, Crean committed Australia to removing trade barriers and emerged as a key figure in the Cairns Group of countries that sought to break down barriers for farm exports at the World Trade Organisation. With the Labor caucus split by personal enmities and factional tensions while Rudd sought to return to the top position, Crean made a fateful decision in March 2013 to call for a vote on the leadership in the hope of resolving the matter. Rudd chose not to challenge then but mounted one in June that year, becoming leader before losing the subsequent federal election to then-Liberal leader Tony Abbott.

Opposition Leader Peter Dutton expressed admiration for Crean's intellect and decency: "Simon was a gentleman to deal with and a giant of the Labor movement." Tony Abbott praised Crean as "a thoroughly admirable man. If he said something, you knew he believed it, and if he said he would do something, he tried hard to get it done."

David Crowe SMH June 27, 2023

Simon Crean - an engaged post-parliamentary life

Mark Kenny (*The Conversation*: June 26)

A true believer in the Australian Labor Party and in the labour movement, Crean, like Beazley, was Labor royalty. Both men had been around parliament as children. Their fathers, Frank Crean and Kim Beazley Sr., had been frontbenchers and eventually ministers in the Whitlam Labor governments of 1972-75. That pedigree may explain his commitment to remain in parliament as the member for the Melbourne seat of Hotham, becoming the only minister to serve in the cabinets of the Hawke, Keating, Rudd and Gillard governments. His post-parliamentary life involved ongoing representation of Australia's interests abroad, primarily as chair of the European Australian Business Council. Crean remained deeply engaged in the issues facing the world, and fiercely committed to the protection of working people and the vulnerable.

In his dealings with others he was unfailingly polite, generous with his time and good-humoured. Where other ex-leaders carried the scars of their removals, Crean exuded a kind of upbeat forward focus, his tendency was always to the analytical. I remember meeting him for a drink in Brussels in 2018, where the main subject was the ongoing debacle of Brexit, at that stage nowhere near its final form. Crean was across every detail, simultaneously mystified by the political basis of such an egregious act of national self-harm on the part of the UK, yet also fascinated by its underlying socio-economic wellsprings.



Daniel Ellsberg speaks to the media in 1971.

Daniel Ellsberg, Pentagon Papers whistle-blower, dies aged 92

Martin Pengelly

Daniel Ellsberg, a US government analyst who became one of the most famous whistle-blowers in world politics when [he leaked the Pentagon Papers](#), exposing US government knowledge of the futility of the Vietnam war, has died. He was 92. [The Pentagon Papers](#) covered US policy in Vietnam between 1945 and 1967 and showed that successive administrations were aware the US could not win.

By the end of the war in 1975, more than 58,000 Americans were dead and 304,000 were wounded. Nearly 250,000 South Vietnamese soldiers were killed, as were about 1 million North Vietnamese soldiers and Viet Cong guerillas and more than 2 million civilians in North and South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

The Pentagon Papers caused a sensation in 1971, when they were published – first by the New York Times and then by the [Washington Post](#) and other papers – after the supreme court overruled the Nixon administration on whether publication threatened national security. In 1973, Ellsberg was put [on trial](#). Charges of espionage, conspiracy and stealing government property adding up to a possible 115-year sentence were dismissed due to gross governmental misconduct, including a break-in at the office of Ellsberg’s psychiatrist, part of the gathering scandal which led to Nixon’s resignation in 1974.

[Born in Chicago](#) on 7 April 1931, Ellsberg was educated at [Harvard and Cambridge](#), completing his PhD after serving as a marine. He was married twice and had two sons and a daughter. After the end of the Vietnam war he became by [his own description](#) “a lecturer, scholar, writer and activist on the dangers of the nuclear era, wrongful US interventions and the urgent need for patriotic whistleblowing”. Ellsberg contributed to publications [including the Guardian](#) and published four books, among them an autobiography, [Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers](#), and most recently [The Doomsday Machine: Confessions of a Nuclear War Planner](#).

In recent years, Daniel Ellsberg publicly supported [Chelsea Manning](#), the US soldier who leaked records of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan to WikiLeaks, [Julian Assange](#), who published Manning’s leaks, and Edward Snowden, who leaked records concerning surveillance by the National Security Agency.

Martin Pengelly, *The Guardian*, 17 Jun 2023

Peter Love – teacher, activist, scholar, and friend

6 May 1947 - 18 May 2023



Peter Love leading the Peter leading a cemetery tour during the 2015 ASSLH conference.

Julie Kimber (ASSLH Melb) writes: Our dear friend Peter Love is no more. His involvement with the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History spans fifty years – and countless meetings, conferences, symposia, editing and printing of newsletters and journals, and so much more. For the last thirty-five of those fifty years, Peter has been president of its Melbourne Branch. His dedication to the Society personified his belief in active republican citizenship and represented just one of the many civic engagements of his life. Another that he was especially proud of was as a Trustee of the Trades Hall and Literary Institute, Melbourne.

Peter was born in 1947, at a time of acute housing shortages. His earliest memories were of the crowded but happy living arrangements at his grandmother's house in Newstead Street, Maribyrnong. His father had been in the air force with John Gorton during the war, and his admiration for and interest in that generation 'that copped the lot' was key to his later scholarship.

As a young man, Peter was perpetually on the move, a sometimes mug lair, keen sportsman, and passionate musician. His working-class origins and keen eye and ear for the condescension around him provided the spur to his radicalisation in the 1960s. Trained as a primary school teacher, Peter spent several years as a chalkie and several more as a bureaucrat in the Education Department. A period of soul-searching while reading Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* and a chance meeting during a smoke break while on a lobbying trip in Canberra would prove decisive.



Simon Kneebone's wonderful cartoon of Peter Love when he was President of the Swinburne Branch of the NTEU.

That chance meeting was with a young, spirited Joan Kirner. Their 'fellowship of the fag' led to an animated discussion of the roting of education funding by Bjelke Petersen's government. Sufficiently enraged, they conspired to make a public statement against this when their meeting resumed. Their intervention embarrassed Peter's boss, whose opprobrium - coupled with Peter's fear of becoming one of the 'grey cardigans' of the Department - was the final straw. Peter walked away from the job and into postgraduate study.

At La Trobe University, Peter found refuge, as others had done, in the 'great encourager' Peter Cook, and inspiration from La Trobe's innovative narrative approach to history championed by Rhys Isaac, Inga Clendinnen, and Greg Denning. Peter's 'galloping interest' in radical political economy led to the publication of *Labour and the Money Power: Australian Labour Populism 1890-1950* – and this scholarship of left-wing populism in Australia propelled his shift to the Australian National University, where he undertook a biographical study of Frank Anstey (1865-1940) under the supervision of Eric Fry and Les Louis. Anstey's role as a 'popular theorist' most engaged Peter, especially his influence on the Chifley government's attempts to nationalise the banks. Here we come back to Peter's preoccupation with citizenship and political economy and how his father's generation tried to reimagine a new Australian polity.

Peter's biographical study of Anstey was almost derailed by a flood that saw his work float from the house he shared with his second wife and the love of his life, Susanne Provis. Supported by his best mate, Andrew Moore, and with the aid of John Arnold from the National Centre for Research and Development at Monash University, Peter managed to piece his research back together.



Peter Love at his last lecture

By 1990, when Peter submitted his thesis, he was ensconced in the then-supportive environment of Swinburne University. His contributions to the university during his twenty-seven-year career are too many to list, but include his history, *Practical Measures: 100 Years at Swinburne*, his long-term union activism – including a stint as President of the Swinburne Branch of the NTEU between 1994-1997 – and his legendary status as a teacher. He set a high bar for himself and those silly enough to try and emulate him. Frequently proclaiming that 'notes are for amateurs', he was delighted that he delivered his last lecture without one.

After his retirement in 2015, Peter lamented the direction of the university as it shifted away from its early collegiality into its current diminished form. It was this collegiality that set Peter apart. His disdain for personal promotion made him a generous and supportive colleague, and his capacity to engage and nurture the curiosity – and crap detectors – of a generation of students was renowned. His capacity to listen, what he called his ‘good ear trick’, made him a go-to person for students and colleagues alike.

Throughout his career, Peter continually honed his thoughts about citizenship and what it meant to be an Australian. He railed against the greed-is-good mantra of the Kennett years and the public choice theorists who viewed us all as ‘egoistic, rational, utility maximisers’. The connections between these obsessions, his vision of what a good public education could do, and his fascination with the Chifley government’s aims of building a ‘new Jerusalem in Australia’ tell us much about the man and his mission.

It also helps to understand why Peter dedicated fifty years to an association that, from its inception, characterised much of what Peter embodied. The society’s aims to be a bridge between the academy and the labour movement, which later – thanks to the efforts of Ann Curthoys, Susan Magarey, Lyndall Ryan, Rae Frances, Carmel Shute, Janet McCalman, among many others – expanded its remit to incorporate the home and social history, were ideals that he practised in his own life, as a worker, activist, fundraiser, volunteer, citizen, academic, and a great encourager.

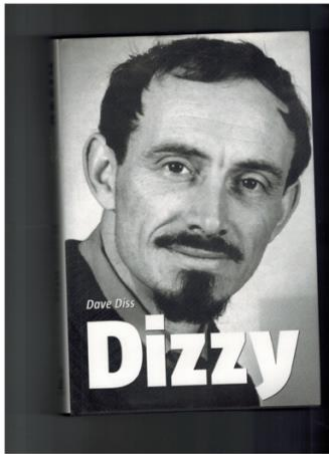
Above all else, Peter personified his own ‘communitarian civic ideal’. His description of what that embodies can be equally applied to Peter with his ‘unassuming nationalism, simple decency and a willingness to place the public good before private benefit’. Befitting a man who operated according to the ‘Old Mates Act’ and practised noncontractual reciprocity, his friendship circles were large. He will be sorely missed. We send our heartfelt condolences to Peter’s wife, Susanne, and his extended family and friends, and we grieve with them in their loss.

Julie Kimber, Australian Society for the Study of Labour History (Melbourne Branch)

A personal note from David Faber, President LHSSA:

The passing from the scene of distinguished historian Dr Peter Love represents the loss of a great contributor to progressive scholarship and the labour movement. His life and career will be celebrated by all who knew him and his work. Works like *Labour & the Money Power: Australian Labour Populism 1890-1950* remain landmarks in the field. After retiring from academic employment, Peter remained a stalwart of the Victorian Branch of our Society and a participant in its National direction. His was a decidedly active retirement; his amiable personality enabled true comradeship and fellowship, above and beyond mere ego and sectarianism. His disposition was always constructive. Peter Love was an industriously cheerful soul.

Peter could be quite unassuming, as I had occasion to note at a National Labour History Conference. Peter had acted as an assessor of my doctoral thesis. I had nominated two assessors, one of whom had once praised my biographical researches on an Italian émigré to Australia for including enquiry into his background in his homeland. I thought I had reason to suppose he might understand my thesis, which developed this approach in accordance with the principles of historical materialism. Not a bit of it. A liberal democrat, he mistakenly faulted my spelling of a key term, and gave me the nod on the basis of faint praise. Peter was another kettle of fish. He did the work of understanding what I was driving at, and respected the intellectual labour involved, like a true labour historian. When I thanked him, he modestly suggested that no thanks were required merely for reading. Vale Peter Love.



DAVE DISS: ACTIVIST, ORATOR, ARTIST AND AUTHOR

DAVID MAURICE DISS
11 October, 1930 – 26 May 2023

Throughout his life Dave was an idealistic activist, strong family man, Speakers' Corner Orator, press letter writer, broadcaster, autobiographical author and visual artist – all aimed, in one way or another, at the creation of a better world. In so doing he was not afraid to confront authority, with others, in a good cause when needed.

Born in London's East End (Barking) and growing up in Sussex, Dave experienced the Great Depression and WW2 – and at the end of the war served for a time in the Royal Navy. Back on land he later became radicalized by his experience of an unfair employment dismissal, and disillusioned by worker oppression and the wider British class system, he emigrated to Australia with his family in the 1970s as a 'Ten Pound Pom'. Here in Adelaide, together with his adored wife Pauline, and their beloved children - Simon, Melanie and Tim - they remained a tightly knit family. Dave worked first for Chryslers, then the PMG, and finally Telecom. He was strongly active at the grass roots level in the labour movement here in Adelaide over a long period of time. He was, for a time, mentored in his protest activities by the late philosopher and activist Professor Brian Medlin.

His interest in street corner oratory began in his youth in England when he used to attend a Speakers' Corner at London's Tower Hill during his lunch break. Here in Adelaide he was one of many local orators who spoke at Adelaide's own Speakers' Corner over several decades. (A revival of public oratory began in 1986 at the old Speakers' Corner - now known as the 'Speakers' Ring' - in Adelaide's Botanic Park before it moved on to various other venues such as folk festivals right up to the present day.)

Dave was a quiet, reflective orator preferring this to the much more demonstrative histrionics practiced by other speakers. He also broadcast a couple of programmes for Radio Adelaide 101.5 FM, and until his death Dave was a valued participant in the casual group discussion of the topical issues of the day which occurs every Thursday lunch time in the *Aces Bar and Bistro* in the Adelaide Central market.

Art and writing were passions of Dave's over a very long period of time. He was a fine visual artist (again mentored by Brian Medlin), and a prolific writer of press letters for local and overseas papers. Pride of place in his visual art collection is a life class painting he did at Worthing Art School in the mid 1960s, which together with several landscape paintings were on display at his wake held recently.

Later in his life Dave wrote and published a three volume autobiography describing his life experiences both as a youngster in England, and then here in Adelaide. These volumes cover his childhood in England during World War 11 when he was a displaced child sent away from his home to avoid Nazi bombing, his years of service in the British navy during the Cold War in the 1950s, and his life in Australia when he migrated here with his family.

Dave maintained his quest for a better world to the end of his life. His causes were many and varied. He opposed Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, Apartheid in South Africa, and the sacking of Whitlam in 1975, for example. In all of this he managed to get some of the way forward in learning to communicate in French.

Au revoir Dave. Yours was (to quote another friend of ours) 'a life well lived indeed'. The world is a better place for you having been here.

Terry Hewton (LHSSA member)

Dave and I first met up at a rally to support Will Heidt, who was a shop steward at the Tonsley Park Chrysler car manufacturing plant in 1975. Will belonged to the Rank and File group at the plant which was pushing for better working conditions against the wishes of the leadership of the major union, the Vehicle Builders' Employment Federation (VBEF). Dave had been a worker at Chrysler for some time and was the editor of the Rank and File newsletter, so got involved with the protests over the sacking of Will Heidt by Chrysler - along with his arrest and bashing by police, and imprisonment. Will and I became good friends and later became members of the CPA.

Dave was always a fighter for the rights of workers at home and abroad and an activist for peace, human rights and social justice - many of his letters of protest appeared in *The Advertiser*, *The Guardian Weekly* and other newspapers around the world. They were a delight to read because Dave had a very clever turn of phrase which was devilishly funny - which he used as a weapon infighting for social justice.

Andy Alcock (LHSSA member)

A note on the Speakers' Corner @ Botanic Park Dave Walsh (blog)

No loudspeakers here! Imagine a world without TV and mobile phones - a time when access to radio and newspapers was limited. The spread of news must have been very slow, and even major changes in the world would take some time to percolate to the population. Life in Adelaide until the 1950s was pretty much like this. Much of the news about happenings in Australia and overseas would have come from newsreels at the movies, or from the radio, as not everyone was able to read or access newspapers. Local news must have come by word of mouth while socialising, shopping or working.



© 280/1/18/70
A Large Crowd at Speakers' Corner in Adelaide ca 1918 (Courtesy SLSA PRG 280/1/18/70)

But there were many political and religious groups who wanted to spread their message to the wider population, and one of the few places in Adelaide to spread the word was at Speakers' Corner in Botanic Park. From 1880 people gathered under Moreton Bay Fig trees in the centre of Adelaide's Botanic Park to hear speakers, and today a stone in the centre of the park marks the place where the first Salvation Army meeting was held in Adelaide. This leafy spot soon became popular also for those with political views to espouse, as the nineteenth century was a period of great social change.

While many of the speakers were from political groups that were forerunners of the Labor Party, others promoted [temperance](#) or debated other important issues of the day such as conscription and our involvement in wars. [One debate in 1915](#) grew very heated when a speaker from the Australian Peace Alliance was attacked by a group of soldiers and had to be escorted from the park to the police barracks for his own safety. Not long after that incident the Botanic Gardens by-laws were altered to make it an offence to speak in the park without first obtaining a permit from the Board. While there was considerable freedom of speech in the park, a speaker in 1939 promoting fitness took things too far when he called a police sergeant in the crowd [big and fat](#), and was fined 2 pounds (a week's wage for some). The location became known as Speakers' Corner, and many diverse groups came to spread their views to a wider audience on a Sunday afternoon. In 1951 Speakers' Corner was relocated west (close to Frome Road) in Botanic Park to a spot near the bridge over First Creek.

[Speakers' corners](#) have traditionally offered a place for open air debate and entertainment. By far the most famous is at Hyde Park in London, but in Australia the Speakers' Corner in Sydney was established in 1878. You can read a pictorial story from 1918 about our own Speakers' Corner [here](#), and another story from a [1938 newspaper here](#).

Before you go...



The yolk's on you: a brief history of throwing food and drink on people as protest

Evan Smith
(Flinders University)

In March this year, anti-trans campaigner Kellie-Jay Keen-Minshull, better known as Posie Parker, arrived to speak at a rally in Auckland, which was surrounded by supporters of trans rights. During this rally and counter-protest, Keen-Minshull was [doused in tomato juice](#), while [other reports](#) claim eggs were also thrown at her. Many people made connections with other incidents where controversial (often racist or homophobic) figures were hit with food in public. This included when American anti-gay campaigner Anita Bryant was [hit in the face with a cream pie on television](#) in 1977, Australian far right politician [Fraser Anning was egged](#) in 2019 and the Brexit Party's [Nigel Farage was "milkshaked"](#) while campaigning in the UK during the 2019 European Union Parliament elections. The juice tipped over Keen-Minshull is part of a long legacy of politicians and controversial public figures being hit with food stuffs during protests against them.

[As Ekaterina Gladkova has written](#), food has long been a potent symbol for protest. Writing about food riots in the 18th century, [social historian E.P. Thompson suggested](#) that food formed part of the "moral economy" and food prices were central to lower class protest in England. Food is also used in protest as a symbol of moral rejection, with eggs, tomatoes and other soft and sticky food stuffs thrown at public figures. Often soaking or staining the figure in question, the purpose of throwing food is not to hurt them, but to humiliate them. To make disagreeable figures into those of ridicule and to demonstrate people's moral objection to their presence in public.

Throughout the 20th century, many different groups flung food at people in protest, particularly at politicians. In 1910, the British suffragette [Ethel Moorhead threw an egg at Winston Churchill](#) when he was home secretary. This was in response to the treatment of suffragettes in prison, including the [force-feeding of hunger strikers](#). In 1960, then-US Vice President Richard Nixon was pelted with eggs and tomatoes [while campaigning in Chicago](#). In Britain during the 1970s and 1980s, visits by right-wing politicians on university campuses saw several incidents of food stuffs hurled. Sir Keith Joseph, one of Margaret Thatcher's earliest supporters, had [flour bombs and eggs thrown at him](#) at Essex University in 1977. Home Office minister David Waddington was covered in beer in December 1985 when he visited Manchester University. The following year, Enoch Powell was [hit with a ham sandwich](#) during a speech at Bristol University. 'They blew whistles, let off stink and smoke bombs and at one point threw a ham salad sandwich at him...' as reported in BACUS, the Bristol Student Newspaper.



Australian politicians have also fallen victim to [eggings over the decades](#). One of the most infamous eggings was of Prime Minister Billy Hughes in 1917 in Queensland. Hughes, campaigning to introduce conscription during the first world war, [responded by calling for the launch of the Commonwealth Police Force](#) (the predecessor to the Australian Federal Police). This cartoon by Jim Case lampooned Prime Minister Billy Hughes in light of his public egging at Warwick, by conflating the egg with the Australian response to his conscription proposals. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, then-Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser was egged on several occasions. In 1979, [activists protesting against unemployment threw eggs at Fraser](#), reportedly shouting, "Feed the rich!" In 1981, [students protesting against fees launched tomatoes and eggs at him](#) when he arrived at Macquarie University.

Throwing food stuffs has been a particular means of protesting the far right over the years, too. In Britain during the 1930s, anti-fascists threw various foods at Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists at different meetings. At the legendary [Battle of Cable Street in London](#) in 1936, there are [various accounts](#) of eggs, flour and rotten food being chucked at fascists and the police. After the war, Mosley still attracted protests involving food. [When speaking at the Cambridge Union in 1958](#), he was hit in the face with a custard pie. Speaking to the same union two years later, [Mosley was slapped with a jelly across the face](#). The Cambridge student newspaper, Varsity, reported the protester shouted, "have a jelly my friend", as he thrust the green jelly towards the fascist leader.

In more recent times, the British National Party's [Nick Griffin was egged](#) as he tried to hold a press conference in 2009. In France, the Front National's Marine Le Pen, once a close ally of Griffin, has been egged several times on the campaign trail, including in [2017](#) and [2022](#). In 2019, former English Defence League leader Tommy Robinson, UKIP candidate (and YouTuber) Carl Benjamin and Nigel Farage all become casualties of [milkshaking](#), with [the milkshake briefly becoming an anti-fascist cultural symbol](#).

Australia's far right has also been of the receiving end of food being thrown by anti-fascists. When National Action attempted a public action in the Melbourne suburb of Brunswick in 1994, [protesters heaved eggs, tomatoes and horse manure at them](#). It was reported that their leader, Michael Brander, was [hit in the mouth with an egg](#), leading to Channel Nine to replay footage under the caption "hole in one". And, of course, former far right Senator Fraser Anning had an egg cracked over the back of his head [by a teenage boy in 2019](#).

[Some in the past have complained](#) that eggings and milkshakings are a form of political violence. However, defenders of those who have thrown food at public figures [have argued](#) that these are non-violent forms of protest. As numerous incidents demonstrate, the flinging of food is designed to humiliate, not injure. Compared with the prospect of violence from the far right, immersing political opponents in sticky and smelly food is relatively minor. The tossing of food at politicians and other controversial figures is symbolic of a moral objection to their politics and presence in public spaces. After the egging of Nick Griffin, Gerry Gable, the long-time editor of the UK anti-fascist magazine Searchlight, [wrote](#) that while seeing foodstuffs being dumped over Griffin's head "certainly brought a smile to many people's face," it was "going to take more than a few well-aimed eggs and worthy placards to finish the BNP for good". This is certainly the case, but the throwing of food is an act of protest that demonstrates disgust at the target. In the age of social media, where protest actions can be shared by millions, lobbing an egg, tomato or milkshake can be a feat of defiance against politicians, bigots and other objectionable characters.

Evan Smith, *The Conversation*, March 30, 2023