

*Study history, study history.
In history lies all the secrets of statecraft
Confucius, Chinese teacher and philosopher (551-479 BC)*

SPECIAL ISSUE THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE FAR RIGHT

IMPORTANT NOTICE

LHSSA AGM 2pm Sunday 18 August, 2024
The Box Factory, Regent St South, Adelaide

- Election of President and Executive
- Panel Discussion: **The Rise of the New Far Right**
(Speakers: John Cook, Richard Stone, Katie Watkinson)

Contents:

- **Reports on events of interest to LHSSA members:**
 - 140th Trades and Labour Council anniversary (summary note)
 - The release of Julian Assange (Andy Alcock)
 - Aukus - Greens protest at Port Adelaide (Charlie Gilchrist)
 - Flinders Uni gallery: *If you don't fight you lose* (Anna Zagala)
 - Adelaide launch of *The Radical Jewish Tradition* (Andy Alcock)
- **Articles – the re-emergence of the Far Right:**
 - Blast from the Past – The Australian League of Rights (Richard Stone)
 - Between the bomb and the ballot box – Far Right history in Australia (Evan Smith)
 - Project 2025: a wish list for a Trump presidency, Mike Wendling BBC News [with link to ABC 4 Corners]
 - *Shooting aids Trump campaign*, Stewart Sweeney's letter to the AFR (LHSSA member)
 - A grim atlas – NZ's right wing politics (Lucy Hamilton)
 - The UK election result
- **Reviews:**
 - American authoritarianism – a review of *The Forever War* (Emma Shortis)
 - Peter Duncan memoir *A view from the Horizon* (Ron Slee; Doug Melvin)
- **Tributes:**
 - Lyndall Ryan (AM, FAHA)
 - Bill Hignett (OAM)

STOP PRESS – CFMEU CORRUPTION CHARGES (p26)

REPORTS

140th anniversary of Trades and Labour Councils in South Australia

A very successful meeting of the LHSSA to celebrate the 140th anniversary of Trades and Labour Councils in South Australia was held on Sunday 16 June, 2024 at the Box Factory. **Doug Melvin** chaired a panel discussion which included speakers spanning several decades of the Trades and Labour Councils and its predecessors: **Dale Beasley**, current secretary of SA Unions (unable to attend due to illness, his talk was read by **Aileen Croghan**); previous secretaries of the UTLC: **Janet Giles (2002-2013)**, **John Lesses (1982-1997)**, and **Bob Gregory (1975-1982)**; **Greg Stevens**, previously Industrial Relations Commissioner in SA; and **Tony Evans**, union activist. **The LHSSA will publish the full proceedings in a booklet later in the year.**

See p2 for photos taken at the event by Steph Key





On 23 June 2024, Julian Assange was released from the UK's notorious Belmarsh Prison – finally free, following nearly 15 years of persecution, five years of imprisonment and inaction by Australian governments. The actions against Assange were perpetrated by US leaders who persecuted him for exposing war crimes and human rights abuses via Wikileaks, the organisation that he founded. As a condition of release, Julian was required to sign a plea deal in a US court in Saipan in the Northern Marianas, a US territory, pleading “guilty” to the crime of espionage - although what he did was to do what any progressive and ethical journalist would do and that is to expose criminal behaviour.

Millions around the world who participated in the solidarity movement demanding Julian's release are sending their warmest greetings to Julian Assange and are congratulating those who have played an outstanding role in fighting against his persecution and for his release, including Jennifer Robinson his lawyer, Stella Assange his wife, John Shipton his father, Gabriel Shipton his brother, and Nils Melzer a Swiss human rights lawyer and academic (the former UN rapporteur on torture who wrote *The Trial of Julian Assange*). It is sad that the fearless Australian journalist John Pilger, and the courageous American whistle-blower Daniel Ellsberg, who both fought tirelessly for Assange's release, did not live to see this happen.

The Saga: Julian Assange founded WikiLeaks in 2006, following the illegal US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan in the so-called “war on terror.” WikiLeaks was very audacious in its effective use of information technology to do what serious journalists are supposed to do - expose illegal acts that powerful interests want to keep hidden.

In October 2010, Julian Assange published on WikiLeaks a series of documents revealing rampant war crimes by the US military, provided by Chelsea (previously Bradley) Manning, a former US Army intelligence analyst. The *Iraq War Logs* and the *Afghan War Diary* were the most comprehensive exposures of imperialist criminality since the Pentagon Papers of the 1970s. The *Iraq War Logs* detailed the killing of 66,081 civilians by US forces as part of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. WikiLeaks also published the *Collateral Murder* video, which showed the massacre by US forces in Iraq of over a dozen unarmed civilians, including two Reuters journalists.

In November 2010, WikiLeaks also began publishing excerpts from hundreds of thousands of US diplomatic cables. These “[Cablegate](#)” files exposed the daily illegality of US politics, including the plotting of coups, the cultivation of foreign politicians as secret US assets, and other attacks on democracy all over the globe. In response, the US intelligence agencies instigated a campaign against Julian Assange on the grounds that the release of these files threatened the lives of Americans and allies – [without any evidence for this impact](#). In fact, the attack on Assange has been part of a systematic effort to purge independent media outlets and to make them more accommodating to the interests of the US national security apparatus.

Assange was targeted in a US state-operated frame-up, blackening his reputation in order to justify his extradition and persecution. The means by which this was initiated are of particular importance. In 2010, [Swedish prosecutors opened a case against Assange](#) alleging that he had committed a number of sexual offences while in Sweden. In 2012, efforts by Swedish authorities to extradite Assange to Sweden - from where he could be extradited to the United States - forced him to seek refuge in Ecuador's London embassy. [In 2019 the Swedish charges were eventually dropped because facte "the evidence has weakened considerably due to the long period of time that has elapsed".]

In June 2016, during the US presidential election campaign between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, Assange released many Clinton emails on Wikileaks, [hoping to weaken her campaign](#) - and triggering an investigation by the FBI. During Trump's presidency, the US Justice Department charged Assange for the 2010 leak, claiming a conspiracy with Chelsea Manning to hack Pentagon computers. Assange faced up to 175 years in prison, and the US sought his extradition from the UK.

In 2019, the Ecuadorian government withdrew Assange's political asylum and handed him over to the British police. The authorities accused him of violating UK bail conditions by fleeing to the embassy and he was sentenced to 50 weeks in prison and was transferred to London's notorious Belmarsh high-security prison. While in Belmarsh, Julian was kept in isolation for 23 1/2 hours a day in a 2m X 3m cell and lost 15 kg in weight. During this time, he developed serious health problems and many thought that he might not survive - he suffered a mini-stroke in 2021 and there were fears he might suicide if the extradition to the US was successful. In February 2024, a legal tug-of-war over Assange's extradition began again, this time between the US and Assange's lawyers in the UK. They appealed several times and in June 2024 the US finally backed down for fear of losing.

Australian Governments: Australian governments were very slow to take a stand on Assange's behalf. When he first came under scrutiny by the US, former PM Julia Gillard accused him of having broken the law and being a greater terrorist threat than David Hicks (allegations contradicted by the Australian Federal Police). LNP governments made no effort to support Assange and the Albanese Government was originally slow to move, but with the widening of the Assange solidarity movement in Australia and abroad, non-partisan political support in the Australian Parliament eventually played an important role in negotiating his release.

In South Australia, there were many who supported Julian Assange. During the early days, the Stay Human Project – associated with the late Sr Janet Mead's Romero Community - organised weekly protests in Rundle Mall and several protests – one of which included Julian's father, John Shipton. The *Adelaide for Assange* group led by Jodie Sard and Stephanie Tremaine, in association with *Amnesty International SA/NT*, for years held pickets outside the office of Senator Penny Wong in Gouger Street, as well as several demonstrations on the steps of SA's Parliament House. The latter involved the whistle-blower David McBride – now sadly imprisoned, Frank Pangelo, an independent MLC, the Greens members of the SA Legislative Council, John Shipton, Stephen Kenny – a member of Julian's legal team based in Adelaide - and many others.

Epilogue: Assange's persecution has been a disgraceful campaign of lies and defamation on the part of the US and its allies, however he will forever be seen by future generations as a fighter for freedom of speech and democratic rights, and his persecution will be viewed as one of the most vindictive witch-hunts in modern history.

Greens call for anti-Aukus movement at community forum Charlie Gilchrist, InDaily, Apr 22, 2024



On Saturday 20 April, a very successful public meeting was held in Semaphore to oppose the AUKUS nuclear reactor submarines being built in Port Adelaide. SA Greens MLC Tammy Franks called for the creation of an anti-AUKUS coalition at a weekend meeting in Semaphore, while other speakers were worried about provoking China.

Photos: Charlie Gilchrist/InDaily

More than 100 people attended Saturday's meeting, with Franks joined by former South Australian senator and submariner Rex Patrick and Greens senator David Shoebridge. Other speakers included UniSA business school Adjunct Research Professor Al Rainnie, environmental campaigner David Noonan and Dr Amanda Ruler from Medical Professionals for Prevention of War. The meeting was called to discuss the AUKUS alliance between Australia, the United States and United Kingdom, and its centrepiece agreement for nuclear-powered submarines to be obtained by Australia and eventually built at Osborne in Adelaide.

Australia will gain [eight nuclear-powered submarines](#) by the mid-2050s under the AUKUS pact, which is projected to cost the Australian taxpayer between \$268-\$368 billion. The Australian government has said that the AUKUS deal will create [20,000 direct jobs](#) over the next 30 years and create stability in the Indo-Pacific region.



Forum speakers raised various concerns about the defence pact including a potential conflict with China, a loss of sovereignty to the United States, nuclear waste, and a potential nuclear accident. SA Greens MLC Tammy Franks said: “What we have here is the start of a movement, and I would love to be able to make sure that any time AUKUS is discussed, we actually have a crowd in the gallery so democracy doesn’t die in the dark”.

Former South Australian senator Rex Patrick said he backed “a modern flexible defence force” but opposed AUKUS because it put “all our eggs into one basket. There’s huge performance risk in this program as well – there’s a huge economic risk,” he said. Patrick said AUKUS was born out of concerns of a potential future war with China but meant ceding national sovereignty to the US. “One of my objections to what’s happening is that AUKUS is central to that loss of sovereignty, the loss of decision making, and the direction of money, lots of money, into a plan that I don’t think the government has the approval from the Australian public to carry out. The majority of funding that is being directed towards our defence force is actually being directed for a conflict in the northern hemisphere, and I object to that.” Writing previously in *InDaily*, Patrick argued that the planned shipbuilding program in Osborne was “a loss for South Australia. We have been sabotaged by incompetent Defence leadership and the inability of successive governments to rectify the leadership,” he said.

Greens’ defence spokesman David Shoebridge said: “We’re told that this is going to make us safer, you know, there’s this rising threat from China – the idea that this is some kind of existential threat to Australia, I think we should challenge at the outset. Building nuclear submarines doesn’t avoid the next war. It doesn’t defend Australia, it’s actually designed for us to be involved in the next war, to take us thousands and thousands of kilometres away from our shores, to put nuclear submarines literally off the doorstep of China with a force that is not any kind of strategic threat to China. The only way it’s a credible force is if it’s a tiny part of a U.S-led war machine.” Dr Amanda Ruler from Medical Professionals for Prevention of War said that AUKUS risked a regional arms race and “Australia following the US into a catastrophic and potentially nuclear war against China, which is also our largest trading power”.

If you don't fight ... you lose: politics, posters and PAM **Anna Zagala Artlink 27 May 2024**



As university campuses across the globe once again become sites of placard-waving protest and student sit-ins, Flinders University Museum of Art’s exhibition of political posters couldn’t be more timely. Flinders University has deep connections with the history of student activism. Fifty years ago, this campus spawned Adelaide’s Progressive Art Movement (‘PAM’, 1974–1978). The display at FUMA (now concluded) captured the vibe of this dynamic period in its remarkable collection of historic political posters.

Andrew Hill, *Management deliberately employ women*
1984 Screenprint, ink on paper, Flinders Uni Museum of Art

The exhibition curators, art historians Catherine Speck and Jude Adams, have drawn on the museum’s extensive collection of posters to celebrate the legacy of this political group. *If you don't fight ... you lose: politics, posters and PAM*, is a compelling, tightly focused display of screen-printed posters and ephemera, documenting the activities and political concerns of these seventies art activists. Composed of students and lecturers associated with the Arts

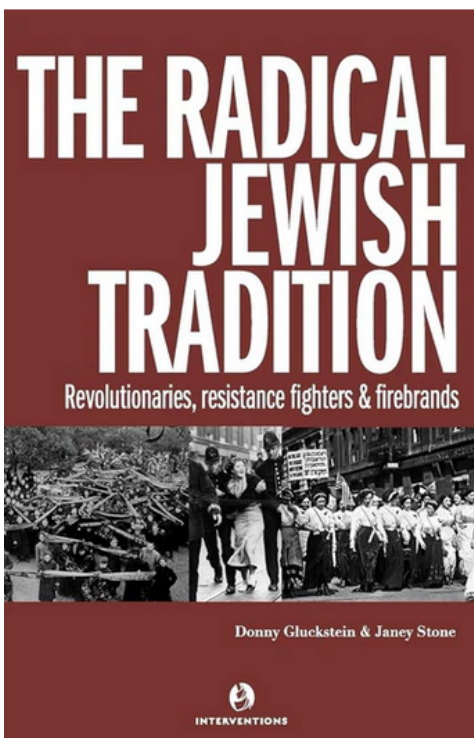
In Jude Adams and Catherine Speck's excellent curatorial essay the authors outline how internal disagreements around foregrounding feminism and issues facing women fractured PAM in its later years. What is abundantly clear is that posters by Newmarch and Harris addressing gender, the representation of women in the media and their oppression in patriarchal societies remain eviscerating. Newmarch's *We must risk unlearning* and *Two versions* (both 1975) for instance are richly textural and forceful, as though issuing a corrective to the prevailing culture. Harris' works *Living Doll*, *Whores no. 1* and *Whores no. 2*, along with *Working Woman and child* (all 1981) grapple with issues still affecting women's lives, economic disadvantage and access to childcare. Regrettably not included in the exhibition, though identified by Julie Ewington in her catalogue essay as the key poster from PAM is *Women Hold Up Half the Sky* (1978), Newmarch's ironic interpretation of the Maoist slogan. Two of the most moving posters are by Harris: *Adelaide Railway Station 2* (1973) and *Women (lesbian mothers are everywhere)* (1984) made a decade apart, powerfully affirm women's lived experience. The strong focus on feminist issues continued through later projects such as the decentred Women's Art Movement in 1976, which had chapters in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.

Many will associate political posters of the 1970s and early 1980s with Earthworks Poster Collective at the Tin Sheds Art Workshops at Sydney University who were active in the same period. Characterised by psychedelic colours and pop sensibility the posters from the east coast are generally less strident in tone than their South Australian counterparts. In addition to sharing imperatives and friendships, collaborative cross-pollination occurred between PAM members and feminist artworker Toni Robertson who was a founding member of Earthworks. In 1977, *Walls sometimes speak: an exhibition of political posters* was key in bringing together posters from across Australia, and touring between the east coast capitals and South Australia.

The substantial catalogue that accompanies *If you don't fight ... you lose* historicises and amplifies the conditions, circumstances and complex institutional and interpersonal dynamics of that time. Under researched until now, together the publication and exhibition make a significant contribution to art historical scholarship and highlights the work of university galleries: FUMA and the curators have invested in an exhibition that repositions PAM and Adelaide as a significant site of a larger, national story.

Anna Zagala is a writer living on Kurna Yerta

The April 27 Adelaide launch of Donny Gluckstein & Janey Stone's book *The Radical Jewish Tradition*



There was a very positive outcome from this event that showed very clearly that there are "righteous" Jews who oppose Zionism and the crimes it has committed against the people of Palestine over many decades.

77 people attended the event. which raised over \$1200 for emergency medical and food aid for Gaza through *Human Appeal (Australia)* - the aid group recommended by AFOPA SA.

The event was officially supported by the following groups:

- Australian Friends of Palestine Association SA (AFOPA SA)
- Women's International League for Peace & Freedom SA (WILPF SA)
- Graham F. Smith Peace Foundation
- Independent & Peaceful Australian Network SA (IPAN SA)
- Stay Human Project

NB: This book was reviewed in the Autumn edition of the LHSSA newsletter

The key person of the afternoon was Janey Stone – one of the authors of *The Radical Jewish Tradition* – who gave a very compelling speech about the book which also demonstrated her compassion for and solidarity with the Palestinian people. Mike Khizam and Ibrahim Farran also spoke (the latter on screen because of a medical issue) and

we had a great musical contribution from Helen Lawrie and Phil Davies of the *Stay Human Project*. The afternoon event was ably chaired by Christa Christakis.

The key messages of the afternoon were:

- There are many progressive Jews who have a history of fighting for social justice and freedom.
- Progressive Jews do not approve of Zionism.
- Criticising genocide is not antisemitism!

Ibrahim Farran – our very dear Palestinian friend who couldn't be with us because of surgery on that day –made a generous donation to help support the event. We are very grateful for all those who from the various peace and solidarity groups who assisted to help set up for the event & stack furniture and clean up afterwards.

The whole event was a very positive action in solidarity with the people of Palestine. Thanks to our intrepid photographer Aussie Kanck whose photos of the event have been sent to members (a few of which appear below). A modest 28 copies of the book were sold, because many of those who had attended had already bought elsewhere.

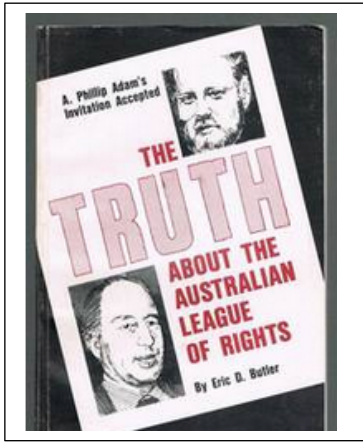
Andy Alcock ***From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!***

Copies of the book are still available from John Scott at New Morning Books, 155 Frome St, Adelaide Phone: 08 83953266 Email: calypsop@bigpond.net.au





Photos: Aussie Kanck



The far-right Australian League of Rights (ALOR) played a prominent part of the previous Cold War, quietly behind the scenes, with all the hallmarks of shadowy connivance from inside the corridors of power. Following the death of leading members and the end of the Cold War it quietly slipped away from notice. Recent studies, however, have revealed the ALOR has re-grouped and been allowed to manoeuvre itself into a strategic position for the present Cold War, using all the tradecraft of its previous heyday. Some of those associated with the present-day ALOR might like to consider their sordid and squalid political past. The League of Rights was established in South Australia shortly after the end of the Second World War and became the ALOR in 1960, with a national network of small groups. Internal ALOR documents in 1977 revealed the organisation had established over 150 Voters' Policy Associations and Electors' Associations, many in small rural communities. (1)

The ALOR possessed an extensive constitution and state and federal committees, with a membership composed of a two-tier structure: full or foundation members who paid \$3 p.a. and were allowed to hold executive positions, and associate members who paid \$2 p.a. and could only achieve full membership by being sponsored by two full or foundation members. (2) Studies of the ALOR found the bulk of those associated with the ALOR were only associates, with no voting rights. (3) Despite the relatively large number of party bodies, ALOR only had 300 formal members. (4)

Those associated with the ALOR, nevertheless, played an important part in the maintenance of the national organisation; they used a policy of elite penetration and infiltration of mainstream right-wing parties and related organisations. (5) From their vantage point their designated role was to 'influence people who are in a position to influence others ... it concentrates its attention on opinion builders, particularly the clergy, teachers, those connected with the press and business-classes'. (6) The term useful idiots springs to mind.

References to ALOR political activities drew attention to 'church organisations continue to be a fruitful field and some valuable work is being done in this sphere ... the demand for ALOR speakers from church groups, Rotary Clubs, and similar organisations continues to keep the League panel of speakers under heavy pressure'. (7)

This chosen method of operation enabled the ALOR to escape the notice of the mass of Australia's population, and to pull the strings inside influential organisations. An ALOR noted speciality was operation through 'front-type' organisations which included: The Christian Institute for Individual Freedom, Ladies in Line Against Communism, The Institute for Economic Democracy, The Australian Heritage Society and Conservative Speakers' Clubs, which were formally linked into the ALOR Organisational Structure. (8)

It was, however, the role of its leader Eric Butler (1916-2006), who was responsible for linking the ALOR into international networks of similar counterparts including the Rhodesia Candour League and the notorious US John Birch Society. (9) One of the most insidious international organisations, of which the ALOR is the Australian chapter, is the former World Anti-Communist League (WACL), re-named in 1990 as the World League for Freedom and Democracy (WLFD). (10) Reliable and well-informed studies of the organisations have concluded they remain composed of 'a collection of fringe ultra-rightists, religious nuts, aging ex-Nazis and cranks'. (11) The ALOR fits comfortably.

A declassified CIA intelligence report about the WACL actually noted it was "a neofascist umbrella organisation that assisted US intelligence operations in Latin America during the Reagan years". (12) References in the report to the 'killing fields of South America', had, therefore, direct significance for those involved with the ALOR; it was noted they had direct involvement with the Australia-Chile Society, which supported the 'Pinochet regime in Chile as a bulwark against communism', while pursuing the notorious Operation Condor program. (13) While the membership list of the Australia-Chile Society has never been made available it is, perhaps, not coincidental to note studies of the ethnic minority have concluded "there are believed to be at least four hundred Chileans in Australia wanted for crimes under the Pinochet regime". (14) Extradition, to date, has proved problematic.

In fact, it is not particularly difficult to establish other ALOR intelligence connections; in the late 1960s, a Victor Harbour ALOR meeting was addressed by Patrick Walsh, a former Canadian undercover agents for the RCMP who was

investigating supposed 'communist' penetration of churches. (15) During the same period, the emerging Anti-Apartheid Movement attracted numerous leading religious figures who were regularly targeted by supporters of the Apartheid regime. (16) The Apartheid regime in South Africa, however, also used churches as 'front organisations' to peddle far-right white supremacist political positions. (17) Studies of the notorious Christian League of South Africa, for example, revealed it was paid R340,000 with a secret contract for covert operations; financial support later rose to over R1 million. (18)

And Eric Butler was certainly no stranger to Apartheid South Africa and its supporters. (19) While undertaking extensive speaking tours Butler visited Rhodesia in 1966 for four weeks and was responsible for addressing 28 meetings in the white supremacist governed country. (20) The overseas visits to South Africa also included Butler training the South African Security Police, while being financed by the secretive Friends of Rhodesia organisation. (21) Studies of the role of the South African Security Police have provided a chilling picture of systematic use of torture and killings "to eliminate meaningful opposition to the white supremacist Apartheid rulers". (22) It is important to note, therefore, that Butler, as an Australian citizen, possessed expertise which was highly regarded by the South African government and its intelligence services, to such an extent he was allowed access into the inner workings of sensitive and restricted state power structures.

Elsewhere, those with similar connections into the shadowy world of the intelligence services, also gravitated toward the ALOR. During the 1990s, retired Brigadier-General Ted Serong, for example, became conspicuous within the organisation as an "expert consultant on matters of defence". (23) Serong was, furthermore, active during the period with involvement in the WACL/WLFD and as an advocate of unofficial armed militia networks 'to volunteer assistance to Australia's armed forces against subversion from within and against invasion from countries to the north', modelled upon South Africa. (24) Serong is also quoted as stating to supporters that "the enemy without, had become the enemy within", leaving little to imagination about who his armed militia personnel had targeted. (25)

While the older age of leading members and the end of the previous Cold War saw the ALOR quietly slip from too much scrutiny, a new generation had been groomed to ensure the continuation of the organisation into present times; such networks tend to be self-perpetuating. While their Melbourne bookshop closed, the main part of the ALOR re-convened in Adelaide, and now lurk behind websites to peddle far-right publications and re-sell many older publications from their bookshop based in Happy Valley, South Australia. They still sell books by Ivor Benson, a notorious apologist and advocate for Apartheid.

Studies of the official ALOR websites reveal little has changed, or their chosen method of operation over the decades. Their 'Our Policy' forum has been slightly updated although the content has not changed; they continue to offer League Training Services on various subjects including 'Social Dynamics', which can be taken to be the development of organisational abilities. They have a weekly newsletter, *On Target*.

The ALOR publishing company, likewise, The Veritas Publishing Company, has continued to produce large numbers of publications. The historical links of the organisation also reveal some sinister connections. It, historically, maintained links with their British counterparts and those based in Apartheid South Africa. (26) In keeping with their chosen method of operation historically, Veritas Books is now, however, based in spacious office space inside the main building of the South Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry. While representatives of the chamber publicise their training facilities for Human Resources, Occupational Health and Safety and Industrial Relations on Level One, the shadowy ALOR publishing organisation operates from upstairs.

In the present-day world of security concerns it is almost inconceivable the South Australia Chamber of Commerce and Industry did not know about the origins and role of the ALOR amongst the present day far-right. A far more likely explanation is that the former recognised the latter form part of the most aggressive side of the forces of capital and have sought to not only accommodate them, but also use their services, if, and when, required; the latter have also always placed great importance on contacts, often within the corridors of power, to lend a cloak of respectability, from their origins to the present day.

Richard Stone, journalist 5950028 richard.stone83512685@gmail.com.au

Endnotes

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 171-81.
3. "Voices of Hate, a study of the ALOR and its director Eric D. Butler", *A Dissent Pamphlet*, (Melbourne, 1965), page 36.
4. "Obituary, Eric Butler", *The Australian*, 13 June 2006.
5. "Right Wing Extremism", *The Conversation*, 21 March 2019.
6. "Voices of Hate", *op.cit.*, page 37.
7. *Ibid.*, with reference to their publication, *The New Times*, 26 August 1960.
8. ALOR., Campbell, *op.cit.*, Appendix B, ALOR., Organisational Structure, page 169.
9. *Ibid.*, Appendix C, Links with Parallel Organisations in Other Countries, page 170.
10. *Inside the League*, Scott Anderson & Jon Lee Anderson, (New York, 1986), Appendix: The League List, pp. 275-85.
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12. *The Beast Awakens*, Martin Lee, (London, 1997), page 189.
13. "A fight against the right", *The Weekend Australian*, 22-23 September 2007.
14. "Fugitive nanny boasted of torture", *The Australian*, 21 February 2019.
15. "Australian League of Rights", *The Victor Harbour Times*, 22 August 1969.
16. See: *Inside BOSS, South Africa's Secret Police*, Gordon Winter, (London, 1981).
17. "The Gospel Defence League", Roger A. Arendse, *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, Number 69, Dec 1989), pp. 95-105.
18. *Ibid.*, page 96.
19. The ALOR, Campbell, *op.cit.*, Appendix C.
20. Eric Butler addressing ALOR lunch, *The Port Lincoln Times*, 14 July 1966.
21. Efforts of an Australian Anti-Red, *The Star (South Africa)*, 15 July 1967.
22. See: *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, Volume 2, Chapter 3, Sub-section 14, 126, (Reference Alfredo Astiz, one of four torturers, Argentine Embassy, Pretoria, and, The Spy in the Newsroom, Australian Playboy, June, 1982, pp. 111-16, which has provided a list of favoured tortures used by the Security Police.)
23. Ted Serong, *The Life of an Australian Counter-Insurgency Expert*, Anne Blair, (Melbourne, 2002), page 189.
24. *Ibid.*, page 176, page 183, page 189.
25. *Ibid.*, page 191.
26. *Out of Uniform, The dangers of neo-Nazi terrorism in Australia*, Denis Freney, (Sydney, 1984), Veritas Publishing Co, page 45.

'Between the bomb and the ballot box': the history of the far-right in Australia

[Evan Smith](#) Guardian Australia 16 Aug 2016 (Last modified on Wed 19 Feb 2020)

Since the 1960s, the far right in Australia has oscillated between movements that contest elections, such as One Nation, and a 'direct action' approach

The arrest of an [individual allegedly connected to Reclaim Australia on anti-terrorism charges](#) made headlines last week, but it is not the first time that the Australian far right has been accused of acts of political violence. For example, Jim Saleam, then of National Action, was jailed in 1991 for his part in a shotgun attack upon African National Congress representative Eddie Funde, while Australian Nationalist Movement leader Jack van Tongeren spent 13 years in a Western Australian prison for arson offences. At other moments in time, far right groups have swung the other way, seeking to build "mass parties" and contest elections. Thus since the 1960s, the far right in Australia has oscillated, as the saying goes, "between the bomb and the ballot box", often with the same individuals involved, merely jumping from organisation to organisation.

In the 1960s, the Australian National Socialist Party and the National Socialist Party of Australia both came into being, mainly to organise against the growing radicalism of the period, calling for the continuation of the "white Australia" policy and rallying against communism. With the rise of the anti-Vietnam war movement between 1965 and 1975, both organisations rallied small numbers to counter these demonstrations, often leading to fights with the police. These minute groups were monitored by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (Asio), but were considered

not much of a threat due their tiny size and “poor quality” membership. The NSPA gained notoriety in the media due to its announcement that it would run candidates in the 1970 half-Senate election, but [a 1972 Asio report](#) noted it still relied on “provocative baiting and counter-demonstration action as a means of gaining publicity”.

On the back of the infamy of the National Front in Britain during the 1970s, a small group of young and old nationalists met in Melbourne in 1978 to form the National Front of Australia. The NFA attempted to seize the initiative presented by the British NF, creating an antipodean version of the UK organisation, aimed at “controlling the streets” and then eventually contesting elections. Looking to the situation in the UK, [Asio believed](#) that violence between the NFA and left-wing protest groups was likely, partly because of the NSPA background of some involved in the NFA and also because, “[r]ightwing extremist groups have tended to attract violent elements whether the leadership welcomes them or not”. However, the NFA never fulfilled its ambitions and was quickly wound up after contesting two Senate seats in Queensland in the 1980 federal election. A number of those disillusioned with the short-lived NFA defected to the National Alliance, a rival organisation than looked more to the US radical right than the UK. From the National Alliance, Jim Saleam and a few others formed National Action in 1982. This group was much more confrontational and eschewed electoral politics in favour of “direct action”.

[Academic Troy Whitford has shown](#) that this direct action attracted the attention of Asio and the special branch of the NSW police force, who both took extensive measures to monitor and infiltrate the organisation. By the late 1980s, National Action had grown a reputation for racial violence, with [a 1991 national inquiry into racist violence in Australia noting](#) that members of the group had been involved in intimidation of public figures that opposed racism.

A breakaway group led by Jack von Tongeren in Perth, the Australian Nationalist Movement, took this violence further, with attacks upon those who challenged the ANM’s racist posters and evolving into arson of Asian business in the Western Australian capital. With both Saleam and Van Tongeren jailed in the 1990s, their groups faded away even further, but many who were within the orbit of the far right were buoyed by Pauline Hanson’s One Nation in the late 1990s. One Nation represented a shift for many on the far right towards electoralism and populism, with a chance of success, but while gaining a number of seats in Queensland and NSW between 1998 and 2001, the party quickly imploded. By this time, One Nation had also shed most of its supporters from the hardline far right in a relationship of mutual distrust.

[Many have argued](#) that the shift by the Liberals after 2001 towards the right in terms of the discourse on “boat people” and the “war on terror” co-opted the rhetoric of the far right (and the appeal of One Nation) and toned it down for mainstream consumption. This, in turn, robbed the far right of its traditional support base. Attempts to build on the sentiment seen on the streets of Cronulla in 2005 by Saleam’s newest venture, the Australia First Party, and the rival Australian Protectionist Party, were unsuccessful. Over the last decade, the AFP have again chosen the electoral path, contesting elections at state and local level. While most candidates have only attracted a handful of votes, in 2006 and 2012, AFP candidates have won seats in local council elections, although in both cases, these councillors have left the AFP shortly after gaining their seat.

[Inspired the English Defence League and the German anti-Islam movement, Pegida](#), Reclaim Australia (and its breakaway the United Patriots Front) have, until recently, looked to buck the trend of the Australian far right since the 1960s, building a (relatively small) social movement that neither pursued a programme of “direct action” nor electoral politics. With provocative street demonstrations held across Australia in 2015 and 2016, Reclaim Australia could have been considered the most “successful” far right movement in Australia since the New Guard in the 1930s, but organised anti-racist resistance to them, as well as media scrutiny, has stalled its momentum for now. However the recent election of four commonwealth senators (including Pauline Hanson) to a revived [One Nation](#) might present the far right with a more promising parliamentary vehicle for the foreseeable future.

Success at the ballot box may stave off pushes for “direct action” for the moment, but judging by the history of the far right in Australia, failure to build on One Nation’s recent electoral victories may shift the pendulum to the other extreme.

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A proposed Republican Party platform is expected to be approved at the party's national convention next week, but a much more detailed think-tank proposal Project 2025 has drawn attention for some of its suggestions. Project 2025 was created by the Heritage Foundation think-tank and runs for nearly 900 pages. Led by former Trump administration officials, it calls for the sacking of thousands of civil servants, expanding the power of the president, dismantling the Department of Education, sweeping tax cuts, a ban on pornography, halting sales of the abortion pill, and a whole lot more.

There is substantial agreement between many parts of the official Republican Party platform and Project 2025, although the think-tank document is much more detailed and in some policy areas goes much farther than the party line. There is a sharper contrast between the two when it comes to the issue of abortion, with Heritage urging much more aggressive anti-abortion policies. Meanwhile, Democrats have highlighted Project 2025's more controversial proposals and called the document a blueprint for a second Trump term in office. However, Trump and his campaign have denied or downplayed its influence.

What links Project 2025 and the Trump campaign?

It is common for Washington think-tanks of all political stripes to propose policy wishlists for potential governments-in-waiting. The conservative Heritage Foundation first produced policy plans for future Republican administrations in 1981, when Ronald Reagan was about to take office. It has produced similar documents in connection with subsequent presidential elections, including in 2016, when Trump won the presidency. A year into his term, the think-tank boasted that the Trump White House had adopted nearly two-thirds of its proposals.

The Project 2025 report was unveiled in April 2023, but liberal opposition to the document has ramped up now that Trump has extended his polling lead. Recent US Supreme Court decisions that have strengthened presidential immunity and curtailed the power of federal agencies have further worried Democrats about what Trump might achieve if he returned to the White House. With Mr Biden's age increasingly a key election topic, the party has aimed to refocus their supporters' attention in an effort to mobilise voters against Project 2025 - which Mr Biden recently said would "destroy America".

In response, Trump has disavowed the document. "I know nothing about Project 2025," Trump posted on his social media website, Truth Social. "I have no idea who is behind it. I disagree with some of the things they're saying and some of the things they're saying are absolutely ridiculous and abysmal." But the team that created the project is chock full of former Trump advisers, including director Paul Dans, who was chief of staff at the Office of Personnel Management while Trump was president. Russell Vought, another former Trump administration official, wrote a key chapter in the document and also serves as the Republican National Committee's 2024 platform policy director. More than 100 conservative organisations contributed to the document, Heritage says, including many that would be hugely influential in Washington if Republicans take back the White House.

In early July, Heritage president Kevin Roberts further stoked the ire around Project 25 by raising the prospect of political violence during a podcast interview. "We are in the process of the second American revolution, which will remain bloodless if the left allows it to be," Mr Roberts told the War Room podcast, founded by Trump adviser Steve Bannon. In response, the Biden campaign accused Trump and his allies of "dreaming of a violent revolution to destroy the very idea of America".

[The Project 2025 document](#) sets out four main policy aims: restore the family as the centrepiece of American life; dismantle the administrative state; defend the nation's sovereignty and borders; and secure God-given individual rights to live freely. Here's an outline of several of its key proposals.

Government: Project 2025 proposes that the entire federal bureaucracy, including independent agencies such as the Department of Justice, be placed under direct presidential control - a controversial idea known as "unitary executive

theory". In practice, that would streamline decision-making, allowing the president to directly implement policies in a number of areas. The proposals also call for eliminating job protections for thousands of government employees, who could then be replaced by political appointees. The document labels the FBI a "bloated, arrogant, increasingly lawless organization". It calls for drastic overhauls of this and several other federal agencies, as well as the complete elimination of the Department of Education. The Republican Party platform includes a proposal to "declassify government records, root out wrongdoers, and fire corrupt employees", pledges to slash regulation and government spending, and also suggests eliminating the Department of Education. But it stops short of proposing a sweeping overhaul of federal agencies as outlined in Project 2025.

Immigration: Increased funding for a wall on the US-Mexico border - one of Trump's signature proposals in 2016 - is proposed in the document. Project 2025 also proposes dismantling the Department of Homeland Security and combining it with other immigration enforcement units in other agencies, creating a much larger and more powerful border policing operation. Other proposals include eliminating visa categories for crime and human trafficking victims, increasing fees on immigrants and allowing fast-tracked applications for migrants who pay a premium. Not all of those details are repeated in the Republican platform document, but the overall headlines are similar - the party is promising to implement the "largest deportation programme in American history".

Climate and economy: The document proposes slashing federal money for research and investment in renewable energy, and calls for the next president to "stop the war on oil and natural gas". Carbon-reduction goals would be replaced by efforts to increase energy production and energy security. The paper sets out two competing visions on tariffs, and is divided on whether the next president should try to boost free trade or raise barriers to imports. But the economic advisers suggest that a second Trump administration should slash corporate and income taxes, abolish the Federal Reserve and even consider a return to gold-backed currency. On this and many other topics, Project 2025 is more detailed and goes further than the official Republican platform, which talks of bringing down inflation and drilling for oil to reduce energy costs, but is thin on specific policy proposals.

Abortion and family: Project 2025 does not call outright for a nationwide abortion ban. However, it proposes withdrawing the abortion pill mifepristone from the market, and using existing but little-enforced laws to stop the drug being sent through the post. The document suggests that the department of Health and Human Services should "maintain a biblically based, social science-reinforced definition of marriage and family". On this issue at least, the document differs fairly substantially from the Republican platform, which only mentions the word "abortion" once. The platform says abortion laws should be left to individual states and that late-term abortions (which it does not define) should be banned. It adds that that access to prenatal care, birth control and in-vitro fertilisation should be protected. The party platform makes no mention of cracking down on the distribution of mifepristone.

Tech and education: Under the proposals, pornography would be banned, and tech and telecoms companies that allow access would be shut down. The document calls for school choice and parental control over schools, and takes aim at what it calls "woke propaganda". It proposes to eliminate a long list of terms from all laws and federal regulations, including "sexual orientation", "gender equality", "abortion" and "reproductive rights". Project 2025 aims to end diversity, equity and inclusion programs in schools and government departments as part of what it describes as a wider crackdown on "woke" ideology. Its proposals are broadly reflected in the Republican platform, which in addition to calling for the abolishing the Department of Education, aims to boost school choice and parental control over education and criticises what the party calls the "inappropriate political indoctrination of our children".

Project 2025 is backed by a \$22m (£17m) budget and includes strategies for implementing policies immediately after the presidential inauguration in January 2025. Heritage is also creating a database of conservative loyalists to fill government positions, and a programme to train those new workers. Democrats led by Jared Huffman, a congressman from California, have launched a Stop Project 2025 Task Force. And many of the proposals would likely face immediate legal challenges from Trump's opponents if implemented.

See also the ["The Plan for Power" ABC Four Corners program from July 15, 2024:](#)

Shooting aids Trump campaign

Donald Trump now has perfect pictures of trickles of blood and defiant fist-pumping to add to his campaign narrative after the reported shooting incident. ("Whizzing sound": Trump 'fine' after assassination attempt", July 14). The Trump supporter base will be mobilised, and the money will pour in.

Frankly, it would be hard to script a more advantageous assassination attempt in the lead-up to the Republican coronation of Trump this week as their presidential candidate.

Mr Trump is lucky to be alive. The US and the rest of the world now face the ever-increasing probability of his second term as US president.

Stewart Sweeney
Adelaide, SA



LHSSA member Stewart Sweeney's letter in The Australian Financial Review 15 July, 2024

A grim atlas guides NZ's right-wing politics, [Lucy Hamilton](#), Pearls and Irritations, Feb 22, 2024



The coalition that took power in New Zealand late in 2023, after a campaign centred on attacking the country's founding Waitangi Treaty, has been exposed as hosting considerable Atlas Network infiltration.

One of the key researchers into the [Atlas Network](#), Lee Fang, observed that it has "reshaped political power in country after country." In America, every Republican president since Ronald Reagan has begun office with a Roadmap provided by the [Heritage Foundation](#), primary Atlas Network partner. The "Mandate" for 2025 puts America on a hard path to fascism should a Republican win in November. Britain's economy and standing have been savaged by Atlas partners' impacts on the Tories. In New Zealand, the recently-elected right-wing coalition government is aping the new "Atlas president" of Argentina, aiming to privatise national assets, but is increasingly also imitating Atlas strategies recently seen in Australia, inflaming racial tensions and harming the wellbeing of Māori people.

Dr Jeremy Walker called Australia's attention to the local Atlas partner organisations' impact on the Voice to Parliament referendum and is now helping draw together the focus on the New Zealand partners' very similar distortion of their national debate. There is a deep racism at the heart of this ultra-free market ideology that has licensed the international right to exploit resources and people around the globe untrammelled, largely in American corporate interest, but more broadly for any corporation or allied sector big enough to be a contender. (They do not, by contrast, fight for the renewable energy sector's interests, as a competitor to their dominant fossil fuel donors; this shapes their climate crisis denial and delay, and colours their loathing of First People's capacity to interfere with

their profits by environment-driven protest. A sense of Western Civilisation as the apex of human existence and deep disdain for non-Western cultures also pervade the network.)

The coalition that took power in NZ late in 2023, after a campaign centred on attacking the country's founding Waitangi Treaty, has considerable Atlas infiltration. There is concern about Atlas fossil fuel and associated tobacco interests perverting policy in parliament. The government has promised to repeal Jacinda Ardern's ban on offshore gas and fuel exploration, plans to sell water to private interests, not to mention planning to enable the selling off of "sensitive" NZ land and assets to foreign corporations, just as Argentinian Milei is intending.

One of the government members, [the ACT Party](#), began its existence as an Atlas partner thinktank and continues that close connection. It was founded by former parliamentarian Denis Quigley with two members of the Mont Pelerin Society, the Atlas Network's inner sanctum. One, Roger Douglas, was responsible for Rogernomics in NZ which has been described as a "right wing coup" that worked to "dismantle the welfare state." The other, Alan Gibbs, who has been characterised as the godfather of the party, and a major funder, argued ACT ought to campaign for government to privatise "all the schools, all the hospitals and all the roads." This may not be surprising since he made much of his fortune out of the privatisation of NZ's telecommunications.

The ACT Party is currently led by David Seymour who functions as a co-deputy prime minister in the government. He has worked almost his entire adult life within Atlas partner bodies in Canada and boasts a (micro) MBA dispensed by the Network. In Seymour's 2021 Waitangi Day speech, he acknowledged his "old friends at the Atlas Network." In light of that, his recent disdainful and absolute dismissal of the party's connection to Atlas in an interview was telling: he clearly felt the association was damaging enough to lie outright.

Seymour is also deeply antagonistic to policies dedicated to repairing the disadvantage suffered by Māori people, disingenuously describing provisions that work cooperatively with Māori people as the "dismantling of democracy." He appears antagonistic to Māori culture.

Another Atlas partner that has been key to distorting debate in NZ is the Taxpayer Union (TPU) which is emblematic of the production of metastasising bodies central to the Atlas strategy. Its co-founder and executive director is another graduate of the Atlas (micro) MBA program. Jordan Williams (currently "[capo di tutti capi](#)" of the Atlas global alliance of anti-tax 'junktanks') laughably depicts Atlas as a benign "club of like-minded think tanks." He created, however, a body called the Campaign Company which helped radicalise the established farmer power base in NZ politics, planting sponsored material in the media. Williams claimed to grant the farmers "world-class campaign tools and digital strategies." He also co-founded the Free Speech Union (FSU), which is unsurprisingly fighting regulation of the damaging impact of internet disinformation as well as fostering culture war battles.

A further spin-off of the bodies illustrates the increasing ugliness of the populist strategies. A former ACT Party MP has founded the New Zealand Centre for Political Research which is fomenting civic division against Māori interests, including placing hate-mongering advertisements in the media.

The ACT Party (alongside the populist New Zealand First party) is at the heart of the coalition government's intention to destroy NZ's admirable efforts to promote Māori interests for the betterment of the commonwealth, including the co-governance innovation. Efforts to undo disadvantage and programs that have promoted the distinctive NZ democratic experiment are set to be dismantled. A massive unravelling of Māori rights is at stake.

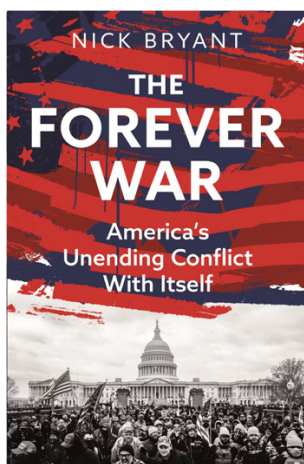
Lord Hannan (one of Boris Johnson's elevations to the peerage, and a 'junktank creature') recently spoke in NZ, welcoming "all the coalition partners around this table" to hear his oration. There he celebrated the small percentage of GDP that NZ's government spends on its people, cheering on the TPU's power. He also disdained the "tribalism" that has dictated recognition of First Peoples' suffering. There is grand (but unsurprising) irony in a graduate of three of Britain's preeminent educational institutions dictating that humanity's essential equality is all that can be considered when devising policy, particularly in settler-colonial nations.

Amusingly the weightier debunking of the Atlas connections has come from: [Chris Trotter](#), formerly centre left, now a council member of Williams' FSU; [Eric Crampton](#), chief economist of the New Zealand Initiative, NZ's leading Atlas

partner and [Sean Plunkett](#) whose “anti-woke” vanity media platform, *Platform*, is plutocrat-funded and regularly platforms the NZI talking heads.

While Atlas’s system largely functions to connect and train operatives, as well as acting as an extension of American foreign policy, this modest-seeming program must not be ignored. We have a handful of years to achieve a monumental shift from fossil fuel towards renewable energy: Atlas partners aim to ensure this does not take place. And Atlas partners will push us at each other’s throats while we procrastinate.

REVIEWS



American authoritarianism has a long history. What can it tell us about Trump and the battle for America’s soul?
[Emma Shortis](#), [The Conversation](#): July 2, 2024

If you select “virtually any date in US history, it would be possible to find the same poisonous ingredients [... that] percolated violently to the surface on January 6th, 2021,” writes journalist and historian Nick Bryant in his new book, [The Forever War: America’s Unending Conflict with Itself](#).

Over two centuries ago, in 1787, Thomas Jefferson, America’s third president and principal author of the [Declaration of Independence](#), wrote: “The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure.” The quote has been repurposed by Donald Trump’s supporters: you can even buy [a MAGA T-shirt emblazoned with it](#).

[According to Pew](#) Research Center “Republicans and Democrats are more divided along ideological lines – and partisan antipathy is deeper and more extensive – than at any point in the last two decades”. This often leads to the conclusion that Trump, especially, is [uniquely unprecedented](#) in US history – as is the particular threat he poses to American democracy. It seems contradictory, but this is both true and untrue.

Trump, and the movement behind him, is both new and old; times are unprecedented but also, to historians of America, frighteningly familiar. Bryant, a historian by training, meticulously makes sense of these contradictions, methodically unpicking the mythology of US history to clearly argue that Trump – and his support – is the product of that history.

President Joe Biden has repeatedly said this election cycle is nothing less than a “battle for the soul of America”, and that this is why he’s compelled to run again, aged 81. But as Bryant so clearly outlines, that battle has been raging for centuries. In the context of its divisions and inherent violence, is it even possible to argue America has one “soul”? The battle is, and perhaps has always been, over *which* soul – [which version of America](#) – should reign supreme, and who gets to decide.

In that sense, the attempted insurrection on January 6, 2021 was not a departure from America’s history, but a continuation of it. “All politics is history. All history is politics,” Bryant writes. And that is the only way, really, to understand modern America and what is at stake in the November elections. The dismal spectacle of the [first presidential debate](#) last week – in which democracy did not appear to be a priority, Biden stumbling dramatically and Trump lying constantly – certainly highlighted what is at stake. For Biden and his entire political career, and for US democracy.

Bryant is one of few commentators who saw, early on, what Biden's age meant – beyond shallow observations that he is just too old to be president. In one of many illuminating anecdotes, Bryant recalls an image of Biden's 2021 inauguration ceremony that has stayed with him. In a city overtaken by troops “dressed in full combat fatigues, with M16s, the military version of the AR-15, strapped diagonally across their flak jackets”, all in the expectation of more violent attacks on the democratic process, Bryant is struck by a cardboard cutout of Biden in the lobby of his hotel. The one-dimensional image of the future president, he writes, made him look like “he had already been embalmed”.

In his definitive article, written in January 2020 when Biden was still the outside candidate for Democratic presidential nominee, Irish writer [Fintan O'Toole called him](#) “the most gothic figure in American politics”. In perhaps some of the more prescient analysis of Biden's presidency and career, O'Toole observed:

He is haunted by death, not just by the private tragedies his family has endured, but by a larger and more public sense of loss.

That “public sense of loss”, in the immediate sense, is an enduring, collective grief for the “murdered Kennedys” – President John F. Kennedy, assassinated in 1963, and his brother, Robert F. Kennedy, killed five years later. Their mythology endures, and has even been reignited by Biden's debate performance – worse even, some [commentators have claimed](#), than when a sweating Richard Nixon was obliterated by a made-for-TV JFK in the first televised debate 60 years ago.

The enduring problem of US politics, as Bryant identifies, is that it continually attempts to revive a mythical past, while eschewing the messiness of history. Nowhere is this clearer than in the ever-present mythology of the Kennedys. It's reflected directly in this election race too: RFK's son [Robert F. Kennedy Jr](#) is running as an independent candidate for president, [attempting to repurpose](#) his uncle's original campaign for the presidency while his family instead supports Biden. For Bryant, Biden and the broader myths of US history are focused on “American absolution”, at the expense of addressing the deep, historical divides that keep the US locked in its “forever war”.

The desire for that absolution is both political and personal. One of the most important aspects of Bryant's work is its unflinching self-reflection. What sets his book apart from so much contemporary analysis is its recognition of the continual pull of “self-validating folklore”, even as it simultaneously recognises that pull – and insists on resisting it. Bryant suggests this is something that many who cover modern America, particularly the Trump phenomenon, fail to do.

The first failure, according to Bryant, is a lack of historical understanding. An inability, or perhaps unwillingness, to “properly excavate the past” was, and arguably still is, “an analytical shortcoming of the media as a whole”. Bryant seems to include himself in this. But his historical training compels him to do that excavation, making him relatively unusual. He recognises:

Rather than being an aberration, Trump's victory in 2016 was the culmination of political, sociological, economic, technological and cultural shifts that went back decades. His presidency had almost become historically inescapable.

Bryant's work of history is as unflinching as it is accessible. It traverses the history of the “imperial presidency”, the “original sin” of enslavement (and how its legacy is [enshrined](#) in the living Constitution). It also covers the cyclical white backlash to any non-white or non-majority advancement – or even, often, to the perception such advancement might be possible. Reading *The Forever War*, you can sense the inescapable, contradictory nature of US history and power.

Bryant seeks to understand, too, how that power has been used. From the nation's founding, he writes, “The question of presidential power was inadequately addressed.” The presidency, he demonstrates in a particularly important analysis, has always had extraordinary powers. These have been tested, stretched and expanded by most of the men who have occupied the White House. This allowed for the most egregious cases of “abuse” of the powers of the office by presidents such as [Andrew Jackson](#), who oversaw the ethnic cleansing of Native Americans, and Nixon, who famously attempted to influence an election outcome. Bryant shows, while skilfully avoiding the temptations of false equivalence, that the “imperial presidency” existed long before Nixon came to office.

Even the most revered of presidents, including Abraham Lincoln, “expanded the powers and prerogatives of the executive branch”. Lincoln raised an army (when that should have been the role of Congress) and negated *habeas corpus*, allowing the government to hold people indefinitely without charge. This in turn “paved the way for the arrest of as many as 15,000 Americans, some of whom were apprehended simply for singing Confederate songs”.

The presidency, Bryant argues, “was always open to abuse”. The failure to adequately define and constrain presidential power allowed for it. But more than that, the fairly consistent reaction to this abuse – or lack of reaction – shows how “Americans could live with a president who violated the rules, especially if he embodied positiveness and national strength.” In that sense, Bryant argues with signature flair, “when it comes to authoritarianism in America Trump walked through a half-open door”. And that door may be widening. Just yesterday, in a decision that is sending shockwaves through US politics, [the Supreme Court ruled](#) that former presidents, including Trump, are entitled to some degree of immunity from criminal prosecution. The presidency, as Bryant observes, has always been uncomfortably close to a monarchy. This decision brings it ever closer.

The stakes for US democracy keep on rising. The second failure of the media in this regard, Bryant argues, is that it has not quite understood, and perhaps more importantly, not adequately covered, the particular nature of Trump’s “authoritarianism”. “We were covering an abnormal presidency while trying to abide ourselves by normal rules of journalistic engagement,” writes Bryant. (Of course, others have noted this, too.) This problem led to adverse findings by the BBC’s complaints unit against Bryant himself. It found his coverage of Trump was “not offset by the limited, and relatively restrained, criticism of the Democrats, Joe Biden and Congress”. In one case, Bryant had simply observed that Trump was engaged in “mind-bending truth-twisting” – something the former president of course did again just last week, in a nationally televised debate watched by [51 million Americans](#).

The now widely caricatured insistence on “both-sides” coverage led to a perverse situation: “in trying to remain normal, we normalised him”. That is, they reported him as “a rogue president rather than an aspiring autocrat or, as he later became, a fully-fledged authoritarian”. This normalisation, long a point of contention both inside and outside the US, has not shifted – or certainly not enough. At least partly, Bryant argues, this is due to what he labels a “better America bias” held by much of the media, which indulges in the very myth-making Bryant so carefully deconstructs. The US is, after all, as Biden put it – even as he crashed and burned on stage – “the most admired country in the history of the world”.

For Bryant, the deconstruction of the myth of America is not so much a criticism as an observation. He too found it “journalistically thrilling” to follow “the road to the White House” during election years, he writes. And it *is* thrilling. In newsrooms across the West, including in Australia, that thrill is professionally as well as personally rewarding: the job of US correspondent is highly sought after.

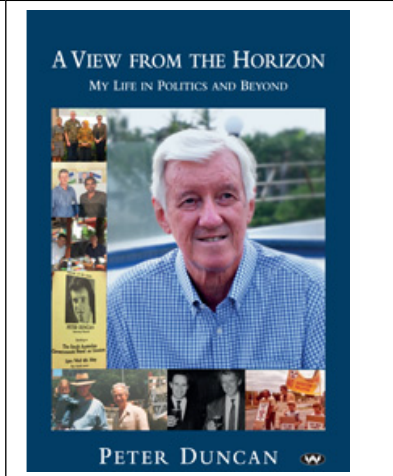
Bryant’s great contribution is that he clearly shows there is no such thing as that “better America”. In fact, [American exceptionalism](#) – the enduring belief, to put it crudely, that the US is the best country in the world – “has blinded it to the ways in which it is unusually bad”. America, does not, as Bryant shows, hold some claim to “unique goodness”. It only is what it is: a terrible, sometimes beautiful mix of a contradictory and violent history. A place forever at war with itself.

Making sense of that is an ongoing political – and often personal – struggle for those of us who follow along, however closely, from the outside. Bryant’s own journey is punctuated by moments of particular intensity in that regard. Like many of us who have spent time in the US, he was often confronted by the particular horror of school shootings – not least because his own children attended US schools and participated in lockdown drills. “In the back of our minds – and too often in the forefront – was the unsettling thought that our son and daughter’s classrooms could be targeted.”

Though Bryant acknowledges “that might read like hyperbole”, it most certainly is not. Twelve children are killed by gun violence in the US every single day. “Since Columbine in 1999,” Bryant continues, “it has been estimated that more than 356,000 students have experienced firsthand gun violence at school.” Living with that gut-wrenching fear alongside the apparently unshakeable “better America bias” remains fundamentally inexplicable and irreconcilable. Simultaneously, it explains so much about the America Bryant reveals.

America is haunted by death, to once again return to Fintan O’Toole. It is no wonder Bryant, like so many of us, is compelled to understand it, is drawn continually back to it – while at the same time needing, often, to “get out”. History, though, is inescapable.

Review of Peter Duncan’s *A View from the Horizon My Life in Politics and Beyond* Ron Slee



Despite its faults, this is an intriguing and revealing autobiography. Detailing his life over seven decades - from schoolboy to university student to politician to business entrepreneur (from Melbourne to Sydney to Adelaide to Canberra to Lombok) - but with its main focus on his career as a Minister in the Dunstan, Corcoran and Hawke Governments, this book will attract readers with a special interest in Labor politics in SA during the 1970s, ‘80s and ‘90s.

It will particularly appeal to those who relish memoirs of former politicians who lead with their chin when staking claims for political recognition. Peter rarely holds back from making character judgements about political friends and enemies. This will both infuriate and titillate those with long memories because in addition to defaming former colleagues he frequently discloses his own character and motives. For example, he reveals that while on the Hawke Government backbench (along with his good friend, Frank Walker) he felt no commitment to caucus solidarity - “I had little to lose, so at every opportunity we highlighted and emphasised the government’s failings and missteps”. This brazen caucus disloyalty sits uncomfortably with the many accusations Peter makes against colleagues about their disloyalty to him.

However, this book would be better if it had been written with more care (too many spelling and factual errors), more modesty, less revenge (most Labor colleagues he dumps on are dead!) and a more nuanced appreciation of what drives political change. It lacks an historical framework or political theory that recognises the impact of economic and cultural circumstances on the capacity of Labor governments to implement legal and social reform.

And yet, as Peter says “I was involved in all the great social and political issues of my generation, from opposition to the Vietnam War and conscription, to action on global warming ... struggles for women’s rights ... rights for Aboriginal people ... judicial freedom ... prison reform ... rights to euthanasia ... saving the Franklin River” among others. He says he was a leader “when it came to ideas” – but it is disappointing that he devotes so little space to the intellectual influences that informed his political and social views. In fact, he comes across not so much as someone with ideas and ideals but more as a political and factional operator.

Peter also damages his own reputation by an unrelenting hostility to John Bannon, Mike Rann, Jay Weatherill and Bob Hawke. His assertions about them and their governments are unbalanced and often incorrect. He also maligns other ALP colleagues, including Mick Young, John Lewin, Nick Bolkus and Frank Blevins. An attack on Keith Plunkett is particularly mean-spirited and motivated solely by personal vendetta.

Launching the book, Lynn Arnold said Peter’s autobiography is different: “Gone is the self-congratulatory and smug tone usually associated with the memoirs or autobiographies of past politicians.” Lynn is wrong. Its heavy on self-congratulation and smugness, often claiming personal credit for collective achievements, failing to properly acknowledge the role of others in building reforms. Some of it will make even Duncan supporters cringe and for other readers it just stretches credibility. Especially in relation to homosexual law reform, a more modest memoir would admit the significant contributions of other governments, non-parliamentary players as well as cabinet colleagues in achieving political change, often incrementally over decades.

It seems that Peter laments he's been granted insufficient individual recognition, perhaps because his work as Attorney-General was overshadowed by Dunstan's overall legacy for what became known as the Dunstan Decade, or because no one has yet come forward to write him more prominently into history. With no political biography on the horizon and cognisant of his own declining health, he has decided to write his own. I would like to see more political autobiographies but to stand the test of time they are best written with balance and modesty.

While the revenge theme will be greeted by factional warriors eager to pounce on new revelations or to claim character assassination, the more important point is that historical truth rather than political payback should be the motivation when politicians write their memoirs. We can concede that memory will often be fraught especially when recalling events 50 years ago, but readers should contest all views that give an incorrect or partisan interpretation of what actually happened.

Peter writes "while I am somewhat sad about no longer being a member of the Labor Party, I am now in a position to criticise without restraint some elements of policies that have developed across the past 30 years and more". It's not just policies but also individuals who cop it, but criticism should be based on evidence not retribution.

In the chapter summarising his life in politics he writes "I spent the period of the COVID-19 pandemic ... reflecting on my own life ... I believe that the attainments of my lifetime are worth recording in the context in which they occurred and I sought to achieve (it) by writing this autobiography ... I believe I was ahead of the times ... I think in response to the question: What did my political career amount to? I am entitled to answer, 'A significant amount'." I, too, think he's entitled to give that answer, but a lot of his book is devoted to making far more exaggerated claims. It's also sad that he felt the need to dump on so many former Labor colleagues, state and federal, who assisted in making those achievements possible but are no longer able to contest Peter's recollections.

Political reform is far more historically nuanced and complex than simply the idea or zeal of an individual. In puffing up his own legacy, it's ironic and quite preposterous that Peter, a proud leftist, downplays the importance of collective action in achieving social change. This book should have been better.

A View from the Horizon - my life in Politics and Beyond, Peter Duncan (Doug Melvin)

This is a very interesting book on the world of politics and his life outside of politics through the lens of Peter Duncan himself. The book covers his achievements as a member for Elizabeth in the SA Parliament holding the seat of Elizabeth in Adelaide's northern suburbs especially during his time as Attorney General in the progressive Don Dunstan government (1975 – 1978), his disastrous relationship with then opposition leader and later long-serving SA Premier John Bannon, Peter's move after resigning his State seat in 1984 to contest and win the newly created federal seat of Makin (which covered much of his old state seat of Elizabeth) and his subsequent appointment to various federal ministries in the Hawke /Keating governments.

Intermingled with the political coverage Peter provides quite an in depth view of his personal life, including his sadness at the death of his second wife Julie Badcock of cancer in 2005, his breakdown in 2002 which he went to Bali and Lombok to move on in life and of course Lombok where he now resides and owns and runs a very successful hotel business.

The book is quite open about his involvement in a couple of controversial business ventures in Australia which both failed. He is honest about his confirmed diagnosis in 2019 of Parkinson's disease.

Amongst the serious side there are many humorous tales. The one I found funny was when he and Julie rented out a property and they found out that the renter held, once a month at the house, jelly-wrestling which incorporated a large plastic swimming pool filled with jelly (one's mind boggles at how you could fill a pool with jelly!), and to quote the book (page 149) 'a few fat Sheilas' were brought in to wrestle in the jelly. The event apparently pulled in about 400 drinkers each month. Peter and Julie soon ripped up the tenant's agreement only to sell the house to the tenant!

For me one of the most interesting chapters in the book is The Keating Ascendancy (page 156). In this chapter the story of what the author describes in detail the splits in the left caucus decision of who to support in the first leadership ballot in June 1991 - to support Keating over Hawke or not; subsequently the left split with the Duncan

faction voting for Keating and the Howe/Hand faction supporting Hawke - Hawke won the ballot 66 to 44. The Hawke government was in crisis and a further leadership ballot was called in December 1991 which Keating won narrowly 56 – 51. The splits continued and ended with Peter not being offered a Cabinet position in the first Keating government due to an agreement between the Victorian left and Keating. **An excellent honest chapter 13.**

My biggest criticism of 'A View from the Horizon' is that Peter has taken his disastrous relationship with Bannon to put down the wide range achievements of the Government across a range of portfolios including, workers safety, the arts , consumer protection, the environment and do not forget the Grand Prix. For Peter to say on page 129 'Dunstan had awoken South Australia. Sadly, Bannon sent it back to sleep' is bull-crap Peter. (I have taken this matter up directly with Peter who I have counted as a friend since the early 1980s but I guess it is something we will not agree on).

In conclusion, just like Peter himself, the book is controversial, and I know from talking to others who have read it there are a lot of different opinions out there. My suggestion is read the book and make your own mind up.

TRIBUTES

**Vale Lyndall Ryan: pioneering feminist scholar, teacher and friend,
*Flinders in Touch, May 14 2024, Emily Kessell***



Emeritus Professors Susan Sheridan and Lyndall Ryan at their first graduation 1988

It is with great sadness that we acknowledge the recent passing of Foundation Head of Women's Studies at Flinders University, Professor Lyndall Ryan AM FAHA. Emeritus Professor Susan Sheridan remembers her colleague and friend, and shines a light on the important legacy she has left behind.

Emeritus Professor Lyndall Ryan, who died in Newcastle on April 30, 2024, was a pioneering and influential historian, whose work has recast the historical experience of Aboriginal people in colonial and post-colonial Australia and contributed significantly to women's and gender studies. She was Professor of Australian Studies at the University of Newcastle. From 1986 to 1998, Lyndall held the position of Reader and Foundation head of the new Women's Studies Unit at Flinders. She set about the difficult task of establishing this unit with admirable efficiency, wisely choosing to locate it in the School of Social Sciences, home of her own discipline of History. This decision gave it some distance from the earlier student-initiated women's studies course which had been hosted by the Philosophy Department between 1973 and 1983.

When I was appointed to join her as Lecturer in 1987, we had the exciting task of designing a program of women's studies topics for second and third-year, and Honours. Within three years we also had a Coursework Masters program, taught cooperatively with colleagues at the University of Adelaide. Later we were joined by Yvonne Corcoran-Nantes in a .5 appointment (shared with Politics), and she extended our course offerings into the area of Women and Development. We had some wonderful students, whose work Lyndall supervised. The first contingent of Honours students, for example, included Jackie Huggins (now internationally recognised for her continuing work for Reconciliation and social justice for First Nations people), who had come to Adelaide specifically to study with Lyndall. As well, there was Elspeth McInnes, who stayed to do her PhD at Flinders, and has been active in such bodies as the

National Council for Single Mothers and their Children and National Child Protection Alliance. A while later, there was Jenny Baker, winner of a Flinders Distinguished Alumni Award for her work in Indigenous Health.

Barbara Baird, who was appointed to Women's Studies at Flinders when I retired in 2006, was another of that cohort of outstanding postgraduates. Lyndall supervised her PhD about SA women's experiences of abortion before 1970, which grew from an oral history project for which Lyndall and colleague Judith Dwyer had received state government funding – one of several projects about abortion with which Lyndall was involved.

Adelaide in the late 1980s and early 1990s was the centre of exciting advances in the provision of abortion services and Lyndall was spokesperson for the Right to Choose Coalition, which was the driving force. She worked with Flinders colleagues Margie Ripper and Barbara Buttfield on a commonwealth-funded research project which investigated abortion politics and provision, and women's experience of abortion in three states. It produced *We Women Decide* in 1994, a landmark study that rejects the idea that abortion is fundamentally a moral issue but is instead a matter of health care. Lyndall was a member of the pioneering Adelaide-based National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) expert committee about abortion, which set out to create guidelines for the provision of abortion services. The committee's report was, however, withdrawn shortly after the Howard government came to power, marking a bitter defeat for feminist abortion advocacy.

Lyndall was a great enabler of others' work. Women's Studies was like a magnet for women wanting to pursue postgraduate research, who could find no welcoming home elsewhere in the university. We had several postgrads from Nursing, one from Accounting, others from Art History. As Flinders was the first university in Adelaide to offer PhD-level supervision in Women's Studies, we had feminist colleagues from the Colleges of Advanced Education completing their theses with us. Lyndall also co-supervised a number of History students working in Aboriginal studies. Our commitment to inter-disciplinarity was constantly challenged, but always expanding.

As the most senior appointment in Women's Studies in Australia at the time, Lyndall did much to strengthen the area as an academic discipline, most importantly by initiating the formation of the national Women's and Gender Studies Association, which met for the first time in July 1989 in Adelaide, with about 200 registrants. The keynote address at the conference, where the association was formed, was by University of Western Australia Vice Chancellor-designate Fay Gale, the first woman in Australian to occupy such a senior position. Within Flinders University, Lyndall served on the Equal Opportunity Committee for seven years, developing policies and procedures on affirmative action, sexual harassment and research mentoring for women. It was truly a multi-skilled job.

As well, we had to establish a strong research profile for Women's Studies. In addition to pursuing our own research work – Lyndall updated her influential 1981 book, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* in 1996, and continued publishing in this field – we agreed that we should enter the fray of national competitive research funding. Lyndall had been working hard on abortion and policy-related research projects. She and I also wanted a project that could draw on both Lyndall's skills as a social historian and mine as a cultural critic. Out of this was born the *Australian Women's Weekly* project, analysing the iconic women's magazine over the 25-year period between the end of World War Two and the advent of women's liberation.

We won two Large Australian Research Council (ARC) grants and scored some funds from Australian Consolidated Press to do the research, and we were fortunate enough to have Barbara Baird as our research associate. I spearheaded the writing of *Who Was That Woman? The 'Australian Women's Weekly' in the postwar years (2002)*, with chapters by Lyndall, Barbara and research assistant Kate Borrett. It was truly a joint effort, and an original contribution to Australian women's history.

Lyndall's immensely significant achievements in Aboriginal and colonial history, and the ongoing work that she initiated in the '[Massacre Map](#)' are being rightly lauded in current tributes to her. Flinders University can be proud of appointing her and supporting her leadership of that innovative women's studies unit established almost 40 years ago.



**Australian
Education
Union** SA Branch



Australian Education Union (SA Branch) motion on the passing of Comrade Bill Hignett OAM

The Australian Education Union honours the memory of our comrade Bill Hignett OAM, a dedicated activist and advocate whose life epitomised the union values of service and solidarity.

From his early days at Wattle Park Teachers College to his service in South Vietnam, Bill's commitment to social justice never wavered. As a teacher and union leader with SAIT, then Australian Education Union, Bill fought tirelessly for fair treatment and representation for educators, particularly in rural areas. His unwavering dedication led to significant victories, including securing housing for teachers in remote communities.

Beyond education, Bill was instrumental in reconciliation efforts and Aboriginal rights, advocating for cultural recognition and representation in schools.

Today, we honour Bill's legacy of activism and service, which continues to guide us all. May his passion for justice continue to inspire future generations. **Vale comrade Bill Hignett OAM (1949-2024)**

Motion

“That the Australian Education Union (SA Branch) Executive acknowledges the immense contribution that Bill Hignett made to unionism, education, and the world. We extend our deepest sympathies to Bill’s loved ones at this sad time.” Monday, 13 May 2024

South Australian Institute of Teachers (SAIT) North West Organizer, based at Whyalla, 1979-81.

Australian Education Union (AEU), Coordinator, Organizers’ Group, 1982-2018.

Member, Reconciliation (SA) Committee, 2000-2024.

Manager, Returned Veterans (SA) Welfare Centre, based at Plympton-Glenelg RSL, 2020-2023.”

LHSSA Executive Committee

President: David Faber

Vice President: Vini Ciccarello

Vice President: Ron Slee

Secretary: Lyn Longo

Treasurer: Kevin Kaeding (& Ralph Clarke)

Elected members: Ralph Clarke, Doug Melvin, Jim Phillips

Coopted member: Greg Stevens

Branch representative National Exec: David Faber

Public Officer: Greg Stevens

Trade Union Liaison Officer: Doug Melvin

Labour History News is produced quarterly

By [Ron Slee](#) & [Ken Bridge](#)

Contributions by members welcomed

STOP PRESS

CFMEU CORRUPTION CHARGES (p26-27)



Australia's construction industry has long been plagued by alleged corruption - which has been the subject of several enquiries. Successive Labor and Liberal governments have tried to stamp out corrupt elements - seemingly with little success. Amid fresh allegations against the CFMEU, workplace relations experts say the federal government must avoid repeating past mistakes.

Norm Gallagher was convicted for receiving commissions between 1974 and 1981. Before allegations against John Setka and the CFMEU, there was Gallagher and the Builders Labourers Federation - the most powerful construction union of the day. The former union general secretary was jailed for taking kickbacks from property developers. In 1986 the Hawke government permanently deregistered the Builders labourers Federation. University of Sydney industrial relations expert John Buchanan says in that power vacuum the CFMEU's construction division was born. "The CFMEU was formed to try and stamp that problem out, but the problems have re-occurred in the last ten years or so". Again, Australia's most powerful construction union –the CFMEU - is facing allegations of criminal ties.

Australia National University political historian Frank Bongiorno says it's the latest iteration of the long-running issue of alleged corruption in Australia's construction sector: "This isn't something that you can just kind of wish away - it's a long-standing problem within the building industry, and one that previous Labor governments have had to grapple with. The construction industry and trade unions have been scrutinised by several commissions going as far back as the 1980s - the most recent of which was the 2015 Hayden commission looking at trade union governance and corruption. It was set up by Tony Abbott's government and led by former judge Dyson Hayden - so why didn't it dig up the dirt that investigative journalists now allege?"

John Buchanan: The Hayden Royal commission had millions, millions of dollars at its disposal and didn't have anything like the impact that *The Financial Review*, *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald* have had. You've got to ask yourself why?" John Buchanan says previous crackdowns on the Unions seemed more about ideology than investigation, and he points to their focus on industrial election and union power rather than the criminal elements alleged to be hiding within: "What the Hayden Royal Commission showed was that where your primary focus is on trying to destroy unions as an industrial force, you miss the main game, and when the institution of a democracy weakens it creates the kind of dark spaces where these kinds of corruption flourish" – lessons John Buchanan hopes a new generation and government will learn from. The Labor Party's national executive will meet today to discuss its future ties with the embattled CFMEU in the wake of allegations the union has been infiltrated by underworld figures. The government has appointed an independent administrator to overhaul the union in a move that the CFMEU Queensland branch has described as opening the gates of hell for tens of thousands of workers - but some construction industry leaders believe the crackdown is a watershed moment.

Lexie Jeuniewicz reports from Parliament house: Claims of bribery and bkie gangs have rocked the foundations of the CFMEU, triggering the appointment of an independent administrator, the request for an AFP probe and the suspension of its construction and general division from the Australian Council of Trade Unions. ACTU secretary Sally McManus: "This is the very best way building workers can get to a situation where we can be confident that the union is free of criminal elements". Today Labor's national executive will meet to discuss the federal government's ties with the CFMEU and whether it continues to accept donations from the Victorian branch of the union. While he's not part of the national executive, former union leader and cabinet minister Bill Shorten expects donations will be blocked: "If I was as sure of a horse that I could pick on Saturday at the races as I would be of the national executive I'd bet on it". Australian National University Professor Mark Kenny believes there's only one option in relation to the allegations: "I don't think you can condemn a union and condemn a whole lot of criminality in the union as appears to be the case, and at the same time take donations from that union to finance your electoral campaign." Workplace relations minister Tony Burke has so far ruled out the opposition's called to deregister the union labelling it as ineffective, but Professor Kenny says the government must act decisively to reassure voters it is unified in response to the accusations ahead of the next election: "The defection of Senator Payman a few weeks ago was also a bit messy, I think there'd be

many voters who think one way and some the other way on the issue that brought that about – but it does look a bit untidy. I think here again we see a story of murky dealings within the labour movement.” For the Australian Construction Industry Association’s CEO [John Davies](#) the cleanup of the CFMEU has been a long time coming. He’s hoping it will lead to increased productivity and collaboration within the construction industry: “There will be some unavoidable disruption in the short term but I think this is the watershed moment that many in our industry have been absolutely hanging out for - we need to reform how our industry operates.”

Now read this for an interesting and contrary perspective on the CFMEU issue:

Time to stand with the CFMEU against a cooked-up scandal, Guy Rundle, *Crikey* Jul 19, 2024

Victorian infrastructure is a predators ball. The CFMEU made sure workers got their share, against the violence of capital.



John Setka at a rally in 2023

***Who built the seven gates of Thebes?
The books are filled with names of kings.
Was it the kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone?***

(— sigh, yes Bertolt Brecht, *A Worker Reads History*)

What’s interesting about the current pile-on is how little interest there is in making some sort of assessment as to how well or otherwise the construction section of the CFMEU has actually represented its members. The lack of interest in this, the lack of discussion — as much from people on the left, especially those in non-manual work — is the most striking thing about this issue. It’s particularly striking because CFMEU Construction has only managed to achieve this — for its members, and then dragging up the sector as a whole — by working outside the industrial system created by Labor in the Rudd/Gillard years.

Thus, a mythology of what occurred is being played out. In this telling, CFMEU Construction (remember also this is simply the Victorian and Tasmanian branches) was gifted a huge field of organising by Victorian Labor, and became violent and corrupt from thereon, feeding off the fat. The truth is that the CFMEU carved out territory, which required the major developers and Labor to deal with them and to carve out some good deals.

That, in an ideal world, is not the best way to do the redistribution of capital and wages. It’s better done on a whole sector basis. But we don’t have a separate, militant union movement. We have a compromised one, incorporated into state apparatuses, and with one of its largest sectors dominated by the SDA, controlled by the right, whose self-appointed job for decades has been to discipline labour on behalf of capital.

This is an extract from a longer article. [For the whole article, read here.](#)