



# **Labour History Project**

BULLETIN 68 - NOVEMBER 2016

**Renter Activism in New Zealand, 1916-2016**

**Elijah "Jack" Carey: Union Organiser and Soldier**

**Industrial relations under Rogernomics: An Analysis  
of Parliamentary Debates 1987-1988**

**Helen Kelly, 1964-2016**

**LHP Bulletin 68 - November 2016**

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For more information on LHP membership,  
activities, publications and news, check out our  
website: [www.lhp.org.nz](http://www.lhp.org.nz)

COVER: An eviction in Norfolk Street,  
Ponsonby, 1931. *Auckland Star*, 13 October 1931.

DESIGN: Jared Davidson

## BULLETIN 68 - NOVEMBER 2016

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FROM THE SHOP FLOOR

## Editorial

It has been another productive year for the LHP. The *Bulletin* continues to receive excellent submissions of original research, spanning a diverse range of historical periods and actors.

In this issue, Elinor Chisholm chronicles the history of renters' activism from 1916 to the present day. With vertiginous property prices posing a formidable barrier to home ownership for many people today, and rents commandeering the lion's share of household incomes, the history of renters' organising is an important resource which offers instruction and hope. Whether it be lobbying for rent controls and stays in eviction as the Unemployed Workers' Movement did during the Depression, or struggling against urban renewal as some did in the post-War period, Chisholm argues these tactics remain eminently relevant and she points to a number of groups organising today who are trying to make use of similar stratagems.

In October a sign was unveiled on the corner of Carey Street and Holloway Road in Wellington commemorating Elijah "Jack" Carey, a trade unionist who died on 14 October 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. Peter Clayworth examines the life and career of Carey, who served for many years as the secretary of the Wellington branch of the Cooks' and Waiters' Union.

James Conner analyses the parliamentary debates on industrial relations during 1987-88. He powerfully juxtaposes the political context against his own life story—involving part-time study, precarious work, and raising a family—during those tumultuous years, highlighting just how deeply the changes of that period penetrated into the quotidian existence of ordinary New Zealanders. The results of his analysis also remind us of the profound displacement of the locus of power in the Labour Party from the left to the right during the 1980s.

Finally, I would like to thank Ross Webb and Barry Pateman for their continuing work as the Research Editor and Reviews Editor respectively, and Deb Farquhar for her assistance with proofreading.

*Ciaran Doolin*  
Editor

## Chair's report

Over the past year or so, the committee has been talking about the importance of bringing together discussions of the past and present, and this approach was very much in evidence in a seminar we ran in early November in conjunction with the Wellington Museum and Alexander Turnbull Library. This year was the 25th anniversary of the Employment Contracts Act, which changed so much about the working environment in New Zealand. At the seminar, talks were given by a range of speakers including academics who have studied insecure work in various industries, people who have lived through the changes to work, people in insecure work, and people fighting against current working environments (and many people fell into more than one of these categories). It felt like a really productive and hopeful way to relate past and present experiences. Thank you so much to everyone involved in organising the seminar.

In order to bring our work more closely into current discussions, we've decided to give each year a focus. We will select an issue that people are currently working on—and see what we can bring to it with knowledge of the past. This will culminate in a special issue of the *Bulletin*. Our plan for 2017 is to focus on insecure work. So if you are interested in organising events, talking, researching or writing about insecure work, do let us know.

The other exciting development in our work is the appointment of Emma Kelly to run the Labour 100 archive project. The purpose of this project is to ensure that material related to the Labour Party that is currently in people's garages and attics makes its way safely to the archives. You can see her work on the Facebook page Labour 100. Ensuring that individual archives as well as institutional archives are saved has brought out the social and cultural history of the Labour Party. Minutes can tell us what the Labour Party did, and individuals' personal archives can tell us what that meant to people.

*Grace Millar*  
*Chairperson*

## Helen Kelly, 1964-2016



Helen Kelly, Ports of Auckland, 2012. Image from [www.munz.org.nz](http://www.munz.org.nz)

I worked with Helen Kelly at the CTU for about seven years from 2008. I went through my 30s as she went through her 40s there. We were under the Nats, so it was a tough time for the union movement, human rights and justice.

She was my boss, and she was a good one. She obviously had a vision that guided all her work. I did some of the slog work on health and safety, and she kept investing in me, encouraging me, and getting me to back into law school. She believed in me. She believed in lots of working-class people.

Helen was not a power freak. Power freaks are everywhere; I can usually spot them a mile off, and I can't work with them. Helen liked the Labour Party, and that was a difference between us, but she never played power games with me. I felt free and trusted, so I naturally wanted to do a good job.

We unravelled complex legislation together, appeared at select committees, on picket lines and at protests together. We both agreed that fascism is on the rise. We could talk reasonably while being straight-up and honest. She was a woman of her word.

A letter or campaign plan was always half-written in her head. At the hospice she told me about the next letter to be penned, on quad-bike safety.

We were mates who could get obsessed with our work. We enjoyed being geeky—she gave me stick about the methyl bromide campaign.

She was super-intelligent and her sense of humour was very special. A few years ago, she visited me while I was flatting at an anarchist house, and when she arrived she said, “Oh, this is appropriately bohemian.”

She bought my daughter presents from France, and she came to my birthday party. She talked about her favourite time at teachers' college, doing pottery and dance classes. She took French language lessons.

Sometimes her wit was very dark and cheeky as hell. I appreciated this.

During our health and safety work, we were mourning the dead while fighting for the living. We had to live like this.

The last time I saw her in the hospice I said, “See you later”, and she said, “See you”, and flashed me a cheeky smile. We both knew what that meant.

*By Tina McIvor*

## News round-up

### **Labour 100 Project** *By Emma Kelly*

Tēnā koutou—my name is Emma Kelly and I am the archivist for the Labour 100 project from September 2016 until September 2017. This is a collaboration between the Labour History Project and the New Zealand Labour Party. My task is to encourage past, present and future members of the Labour Party to rummage through their attics and cupboards in search of photos, papers and stories that relate to the oldest political party in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is to mark the centenary of the Labour Party, hence the reference to Labour 100.

I have worked as a digital and physical image archivist at the *New Zealand Herald*, as a paper records archivist at KPMG, and I wrote my PhD on Jonathan Dennis and Ngā Taonga Sound & Vision (formerly the New Zealand Film Archive). That work was published as a book *The Adventures of Jonathan Dennis: Bicultural film archiving practice in Aotearoa New Zealand* (UK: John Libbey Press, 2015). Most recently I have been working as the Women's and Education Officer for the Tertiary Education Union, and have been an active union member since my days at the *Herald* when Andrew Little was EPMU Secretary.

The Labour 100 project does not intend to create a new archive, but instead seeks to promote an understanding of archiving practice to encourage the deposition of appropriate materials in archives, museums, ngā puna o maumahara or libraries in each region. My role is to support people's learning about archiving processes, to talk about what they have and ensure things go to the right places, and to liaise with repositories on behalf of people who would like to deposit materials. The focus is grass-roots and branch-level records and we hope to encourage people to continue seeking materials, even after my role has finished, by advising them about archiving practice and process. I will be travelling the regions over the coming year to teach the basics of archiving and processes of deposit.

Our aim is not to create expectations that everything people find will be archived, but to encourage an understanding of the basics of preserving various photos, recordings, papers and ephemera. Part of my job is to liaise between the public and the repositories to ensure that staff within the institutions are not overwhelmed with duplicates, mouldy photos and materials which are of little interest to future archive users.

I will also create an umbrella digital record on The Community Archive:  
<http://thecommunityarchive.org.nz/>.

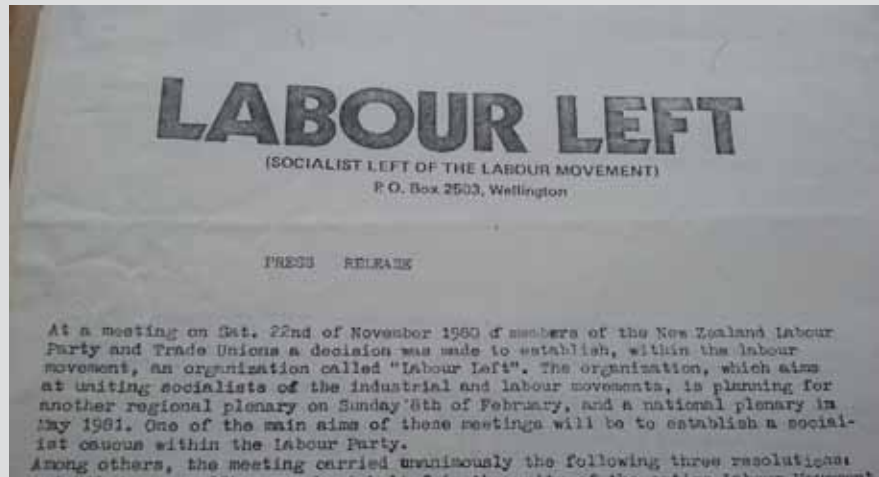
My own background means I am well suited to this project. For instance, I created the Mickey Savage image below after the style of Andy Warhol not only because I thought it would be eye catching, but also because I come from a Labour Party family. I distinctly remember my seven-year-old self drawing a picture of David Lange's face while lying on the living-room floor watching the election results in 1984. That close-up picture of Lange's face was akin to the image of Savage which my Dad remembered on his family's living-room wall. But I also remember a few years' later my mother's friend giving me a lecture about why I shouldn't support Labour because they were going to sell all our state assets.

*"Today we went to Mission Bay then I took the kids up the Michael Joseph Savage memorial on Bastion Point. He was the first Labour Prime Minister and was worshipped by many people. We had a photo of him on the wall in the living room. In 1940 when he died, he was taken to Auckland by train. Mum took me down to the station to see the coffin. I remember it was in a wagon with the side open so people could 'pay their respects'. Many thousands of people were there (I have learned since)".*

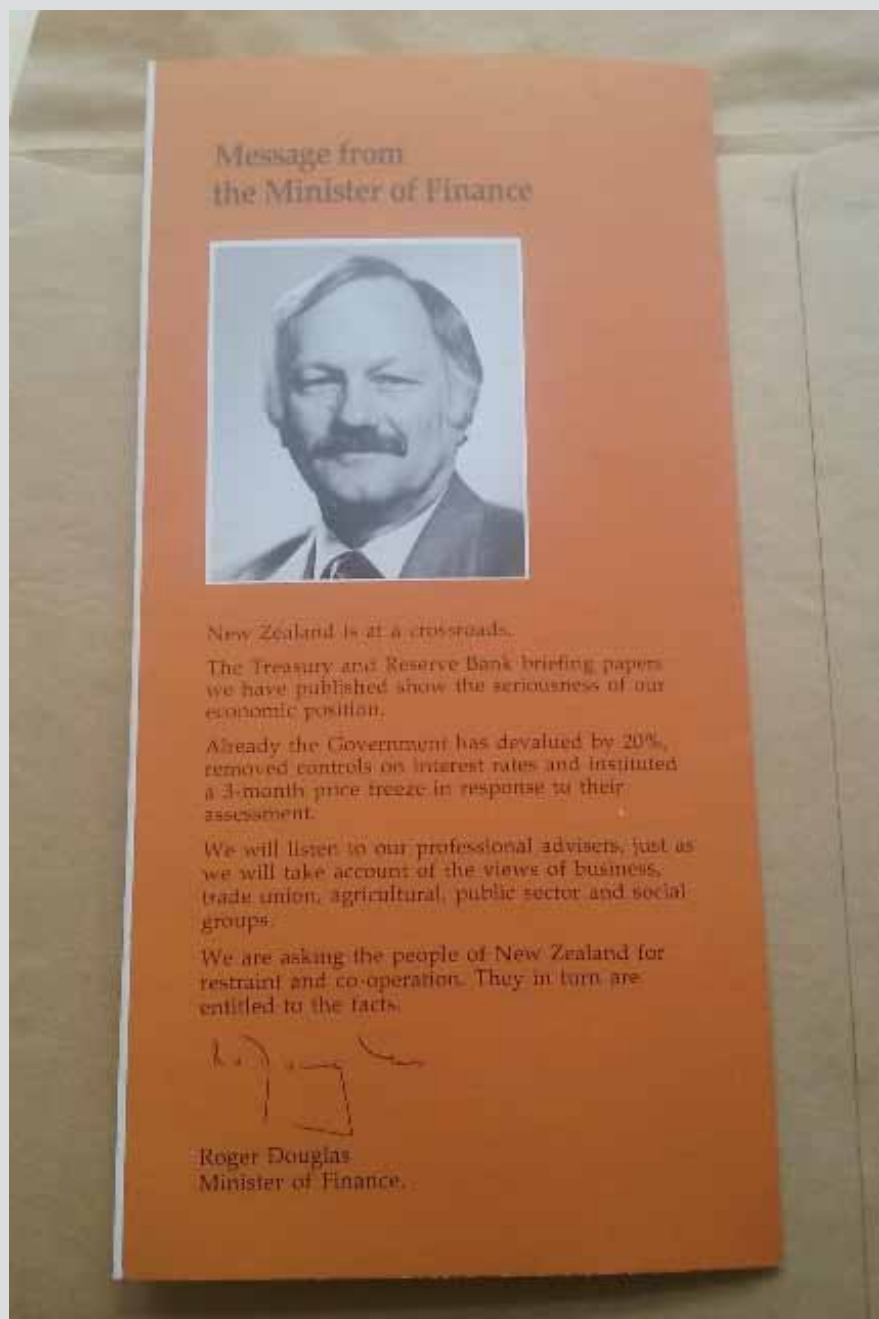
—John Kelly (born 1936), Auckland, New Zealand



Left-leaning New Zealanders lament the move away from social democratic ideals after the 1984 election, but the archives reveal people who were already alarmed well before Labour got back into government about the direction in which the party was heading. The Trades Hall records of the 1980s in Vivian Street contain minutes of meetings in which trade unionists were petitioning the Labour government to address their concerns. The *Labour Left* press release from 1980 (opposite) represents one of many documents in the grass-roots and branch-level records raising concerns with the public and Labour leaders.



Top: *Labour Left* press release 22 November 1980. Collection of Richard S. Hill.  
Right: "Opening the Books", Labour Party pamphlet 1980s. Collection of Richard S. Hill



The rise of neoliberal economics under Roger Douglas with the support of Richard Prebble and to a certain extent David Lange has long been debated, and for many younger people it's hard to understand the fuss. It's the past, right? However "ka haere whakamua, ka titiro whakamuri"—we walk into the future facing the past—therefore learning lessons from history could well inform a more progressive Aotearoa today. And it's the task of the archivist to collect the raw materials for that examination of history.

Most people would argue an objective history is not possible, so an archivist should avoid taking sides in factional discussions, and should be open to receiving all materials available and making them accessible. Adopting that approach, this project intends to support the collection of all Labour Party-related materials, whether they tell a story of victory or disappointment.

The history of workers is tied inextricably to the early story of the New Zealand Labour Party. The fact that a number of unions are still affiliated with the Labour Party suggests there are narratives to be told here. Tensions between grass-roots struggles and parliamentary activities have been present since the birth of the party. This continues in some circles today, and the importance of workers' struggle in the history of the Labour Party is worth honouring by pulling out our boxes of clippings, photos, articles, letters and emails to share for the Labour 100 project.

Please contact us if you are interested in attending a workshop or want to discuss materials you have in your possession. Hei konei rā.

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### **Pay Equity for Caregivers** *By Linda Hill*

In 2013 caregiver Kristine Bartlett lodged a claim against discriminatory pay under the Equal Pay Act 1972. With 20 years' experience in caring for the elderly, she was paid \$14.43 an hour—less than a living wage. At the time of writing, she is still waiting for a pay rise, but court judgments in her favour have opened the way for other pay equity claims for work predominantly done by women.

A 1986 judgment against the Clerical Workers' Union, together with the passing and later repeal of the Employment Equity Act 1990, had given rise to a belief by some that only equal pay for women and men in the same job was adequately covered by the 1972 Act. Kristine's union thought differently, and the courts agreed.

After examining considerable historical evidence about legislative intentions, the Employment Court clarified that section 3(1)(b) required equal pay for work done predominantly by women by reference to what men would be paid for similar levels of skill, responsibility, conditions and degrees of effort, free from "any systemic undervaluation of the work derived from current or historical



Kristine Bartlett

or structural gender discrimination.... If a comparator that is uninfected by gender discrimination cannot be found within the workplace or sector it may be necessary to look more broadly to jobs to which a similar value can be attributed using gender neutral criteria”.<sup>1</sup>

The Appeal Court confirmed this interpretation and the right of the union to ask the Employment Court to issue guiding Principles for Implementation (section 9).

This case was about questions in law, not Kristine’s substantive claim. Her employer Terranova Homes and Care Ltd provides care under contract to district health boards; that is, Kristine’s work is state-funded from our taxes. The Ministry of Health declined participation in the Employment Court, and the Attorney-General sided with the employer in the Appeal Court.<sup>2</sup> The government’s response to the court judgments was to set up two joint working groups, facilitated by the State Services Commission. One developed its own Principles for Implementing Equal Pay, which the government has been considering for three months. The other is still trying to reach a settlement on a fair pay rate for Kristine. Her union says \$26 should do it. The government has stated that settlement will be extended to all forms of residential care work. However it allocated no additional funds in its 2016 Budget for this; nor is there any allocation to cover similar claims now lodged for social workers, education support workers and midwives.

This case drew heavily on historical evidence—from the Commission of Inquiry whose recommendations were enacted, the Hansard speeches of politicians

from both parties, review reports following implementation, reports from the International Labour Organisation and Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women regarding New Zealand's international obligations, and other sources.<sup>3</sup> It is also a landmark in that the courts were used to progress pay equity policy in New Zealand in the absence of political opportunities.

1. Employment Court, Auckland. Judgment of the Full Court in the matter of Kristine Bartlett and Service and Food Workers Union Nga Ringa Tota Inc. v Terranova Homes and Care Ltd ([2013] NZEmpC 157 ARC 63/12, [44] and [46]).
2. The intervening parties were New Zealand Council of Trade Unions and Pay Equity Challenge coalition, Campaign for Equal Value Equal Pay, Human Rights Commission, New Zealand Aged Care Association and Business NZ.
3. The arguments of all parties are summarised in Linda Hill, "Equal pay for equal value: The case for care workers," *Women's Studies Journal* 27, no. 2 (2013): 14-31.

## **Social Movements, Resistance and Social Change Conference**

*By Thomas Roud*

From 1-3 September this year I and some likeminded friends had the opportunity to attend the Third Annual Social Movements, Resistance and Social Change Conference held at Victoria University in Wellington, hosted by the journal *Counterfutures*. It was with particular interest that we attended the LHP panel on the Saturday morning, expecting a sober analysis of some historic conditions and developments in the workers' movement at a conference where so much emphasis was on the new and the novel.

A modest but enthusiastic audience gathered for the "Struggles of the Past; Struggles of the Present" panel which sought to connect historical struggles and historical consciousness in the workers' movement, adeptly chaired by *Bulletin* editor Ciaran Doolin. The first speaker Anna Green, an academic from Victoria University and LHP committee member, presented some reflections on her oral history research into work on the waterfront in New Zealand during the first half of the 20th century. Of particular interest were the ways that workers would engage in industrial action in an attempt to improve safety conditions. Some of the audience, myself included, had not heard of the tactic called "spelling" (as in, "off for a spell"), where work would be split up and done by one group, while others would take a break—often leaving the worksite completely. The success of this tactic, along with others such as the "go slow", reminds us of their ongoing relevance for control in the workplace—not merely for better hours, conditions and pay, but over the labour process itself which today is so often dictated by managers who may have no experience at all of doing the work.

The second speaker was Victoria Hopgood, President of Unite Union, who spoke about the struggles Unite has been involved in, and the way that Unite has in many ways led the world when it comes to organising fast food workers. We learnt about how even though they could not speak each other's languages, Victoria found a sense of solidarity with other McDonald's workers at an international fast food workers conference due to their shared "McDonald's Tattoo"—a burn mark on the same part of every fry cook's arm. We were reminded that while the struggle against zero-hours contracts was a real success, workers are still very

much on the back foot today and any rebuild of the union movement will be an arduous task against hostile employers, and government policies which give the former undue bargaining power.

The final speaker, Chair of the LHP, Grace Millar, spoke on inter-generational activism and the way that reminiscence about political movements can often sound like nostalgia or arrogance to those who weren't there. Conversely, those who were involved in important political movements may identify with them closely and be frustrated by younger generations dismissing said struggles. As such, Grace argued that when remembering our history we must emphasise that it is a legacy that all workers share. I found Grace's motto "we will remember what they have done to us" particularly powerful. Whether it be the infamous figure of loom workers' average life expectancy of 26 during the Lawrence Textiles Strike, or more recent statistics on the rate of serious injury and death in the forestry and meatworks sectors, the message was poignant.

Even for post-graduate students like myself, academic conferences can be quite challenging at times. One wonders how the increasingly esoteric and self-referential elements of academic theory regarding politics can inform or be applied to the lives of ordinary people striving for social justice. The LHP panel exhibited optimism in the ability of the working class to achieve great things, but tempered this with the sobriety and wisdom that comes with historical contextualisation. If we know where we have been, we can better know how we got to where we are—and may know better what to do, and perhaps what not to do, to move forward. The panel reminded those in attendance, and hopefully those who the attendees spoke to afterwards, that movements of enormous social significance can happen when ordinary working people realise their power and seek to change the conditions of their lives.

### **Research Grants Awarded to LHP Members Jared Davidson and Grace Millar**

Copyright Licensing New Zealand (CLNZ) and the New Zealand Society of Authors have awarded research grants to LHP member and *Bulletin* designer, Jared Davidson, and LHP Chair, Grace Millar. Their applications, according to the judges, have great potential and stood out even amongst many other promising applications. They were each awarded grants of \$5,000.

Jared Davidson's project is *A War of Words: Censorship & Dissent on the New Zealand Home Front*. Jared, who lives in Waiwhetu, Lower Hutt, has authored two books on similar topics. Grace Millar's project is *Five Months without Wages: Families and the 1951 Waterfront Dispute*. Grace, who lives in Wellington, has had work published in a number of journals.

The research grants are funded through the CLNZ Cultural Fund, which derives its revenue from a two per cent share of domestic licensing income and from overseas revenue that is non title specific. The judges on the panel for 2016 were Paddy Richardson, Susanna Lyle and David Veart.

## **United We Stand, Divided We Fall: 100 Years of Labour at Runanga**

*By Peter Clayworth*

On the Sunday of Labour Weekend, 23 October 2016, a group of about 30 people gathered at the Runanga Workingmen's Club for a seminar marking the centenary of the Labour Party's formation. In addition to people from the Grey Valley area, participants came from as far afield as Reefton, Westport and Christchurch. The seminar was organised by Labour Party Grey branch member Angela Stratford and West Coast historian Brian Wood. Discussions ranged over the broader history of the labour movement, including the role of the Labour Party. The prominent role that West Coasters, particularly the residents of Runanga and Dunollie, played in New Zealand's labour history was a central feature. (It should be noted that throughout this article the name Runanga is used as shorthand for the twin towns of Runanga and Dunollie, both of which were once occupied by the families of the Runanga State Mine workers.)



100 Years of Labour at Runanga seminar attendees.

Brian Wood kicked off the presentations with a paper on mining disasters and community social cohesion. Brian, now resident in Hokitika, has written histories of the 1896 Brunner mine explosion and of the 1908 Blackball strike. He is currently working on an account of the 1967 Strongman mine disaster. In his seminar paper, Brian argued that four key factors should be examined when trying to understand a mine accident. These factors are technology, the economics of the mine operation, the application of mining regulations, and the social/cultural context of the events. He noted that mining disaster inquiries have seldom looked into the economic background. The Strongman inquiry, for example, had ignored the mine's financial situation. Cases such as the recent Pike River tragedy clearly showed that under-capitalising a mine could be a major factor in reducing safety standards, including management pressuring workers to speed up and cut corners. Brian noted that inquiries generally focused on technology and the degree to which regulations have been complied with. They also tended to concentrate on identifying someone, usually among the mine workers, who could be blamed for the disaster.

Brian argued that cohesion within mining communities was a factor influencing the working relationships between mine workers. As transport systems improved, miners tended to travel in to a mine from scattered locations, rather than the earlier practice of living in close-knit communities near to the workplace. Brian asked whether group cohesion among workers was reduced by this scattering of the workforce—if cohesion between workers was reduced, could this in turn have an impact on safety standards and practices within the mine?

I spoke on “‘Red Runanga’: Runanga, the Red Feds and the Labour Party 1908-1920”. My paper covered the early years of the Coal Creek State Mine Industrial Union of Workers. In the 1910s the union controlled the Runanga Borough Council, leading the Greymouth newspapers to assert that Runanga was a disloyal stronghold of secessionists, run by a “red clique”. I discussed the ways the working people of Runanga had attempted to control the administration of their borough and the functioning of their workplaces. Further, I examined the role of the union and local community in the evolution of the New Zealand Federation of Miners, which later became the New Zealand Federation of Labour, or the “Red Feds”. For about a year, from 1911 to 1912, Runanga was the headquarters of the Federation of Labour, before the head office was moved to Wellington. My paper also looked at Runanga’s role in the Great Strike of 1913, when miners from the Grey Valley mining communities descended on Greymouth and for almost a month had virtual control over the town.

I discussed Runanga’s contributions to the growth of the New Zealand Socialist Party and the eventual birth of the New Zealand Labour Party. Notably, of the thirteen members of the first Labour Cabinet in 1935, three were former Runanga residents. I described the role Runanga residents played in campaigns against militarism and conscription both before and during WWI. Their own Labour MP, Paddy Webb, was imprisoned twice during the war—for secession and then for refusing to be conscripted. Webb was forced to resign his seat, which was then won for Labour by Harry Holland. My paper covered prominent labour movement figures, such as Bob Semple, Paddy Webb, Pat Hickey, Tim Armstrong and Jim O’Brien, who lived at Runanga. My emphasis was, however, on the role of ordinary people in the union, the towns, the political parties and the activist groups.

Lunch was followed by a series of short presentations by local people. Among these was an entertaining visit from former Premier Richard John Seddon, “King Dick”, or at least Hokitika’s local historian David Verrall in the guise of the great man himself. In a charming Lancashire accent, King Dick held forth on a range of subjects, such as votes for women, the alcohol issue and the Liberal Party’s reforms, including the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

King Dick was followed by Paul Thomas of the Runanga Miners’ Hall Trust, who gave an update on the hall restoration project. The Trust has successfully raised a considerable amount of funding, which includes a major lotteries grant. The hall remains closed at present but the restoration work is ongoing.



David Verrall as “King Dick”



Runanga Miners' Hall.

Laura Mills of the West Coast History Project spoke about the website West Coast New Zealand History [www.westcoast.recollect.co.nz](http://www.westcoast.recollect.co.nz) which is run by volunteers. The site has a large collection of historic photos. It also contains written recollections contributed by the public, often in response to the photos. Laura illustrated her discussion with some fine examples of the site's photos, prompting some interesting commentary.

Angela Stratford spoke on a very interesting research project being carried out by the Grey branch of the Labour Party. It is based on a document—the application for incorporation made by the Greymouth branch of the New Zealand Labour Party in April 1931. The application was signed by fifteen applicants, five women and ten men. The project aims to identify all of the signatories and find out as much information about them as possible. The researchers have already collected considerable information about some of the signatories, such as Mary Anderson, secretary of the Greymouth Labour Party for 38 years, and the two MPs Jim O'Brien and James Begg Kent. (O'Brien was a Runanga stationary engine driver and Red Fed activist, while Kent was the signwriter who painted the slogans on the original 1908 Runanga Miners' Hall.) Other signatories still wait to have their stories revealed.



Angela Stratford talks about the Grey branch of the Labour Party.

The last speaker was Jim McAloon, labour historian from Victoria University and a former chairperson of the Labour History Project. Jim's talk was based on the recently published history of the Labour Party, which he co-wrote with Peter Franks. Jim's talk ranged back into the history of the establishment of craft unions in 19th century New Zealand. He then proceeded to look at the formation of the party by a combination of "militant" and "moderate" union activists and politicians. Jim devoted some time to defending the reputation of Harry Holland, the leader of the Labour Party from 1918 until his death in 1933. Throughout this time Holland was the MP for the Runanga area, at first as the MP for Grey and then, following boundary changes, as MP for Buller. Jim discussed the Labour Party's years in power and in opposition. He commented on the roles of leaders such as Peter Fraser, Norman Kirk and Helen Clark, and of course the controversial subject of the David Lange/Roger Douglas years of "Rogernomics".



Jim McAloon speaks on the history of the Labour Party.

Throughout the Runanga seminar the enthusiastic audience was actively participating, making informed contributions through questions and comments. Once the seminar was over the participants were taken on a guided tour. This started at the Runanga Miners' Hall, where the latest stage of the restoration scheme was discussed. The group then drove to the Brunner Mine Memorial, where Brian Wood explained the background to the site's industrial relics and told the story of the 1896 disaster. The tour finished at the Blackball Museum of Working Class History. Paul Maunder spoke on the progress the museum has made since it was opened in 2010. A number of the seminar participants later enjoyed a convivial dinner at a venue formerly called the Blackball Hilton.

## Recent and current research



Helen Bollinger

### **Life on Denniston Plateau Documentary** *By Helen Bollinger*

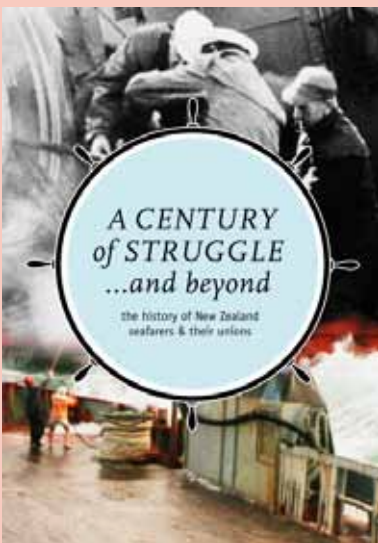
Today, “life” on Denniston Plateau may sound like an oxymoron, but for around a hundred years life abounded there, even though the ground was too hard to dig a garden or a grave.

In the late 19th century, rich seams of high quality coal were discovered 600 metres above sea level on this inhospitable plateau 20 kilometres north of Westport. The Westport Coal Company developed collieries and began building houses for miners and their families.

In search of a better life in a new land, skilled British, Scottish and Welsh mineworkers and their families arrived to work the coal and to establish a number of vibrant communities. As well as their engineering skills, these immigrant miners brought the radical concept of unionism as a vehicle for social change, and through their activism they paved the way for New Zealand coalmining unionism.

Although a small amount of mining continues, all the communities are gone now. However, the fellowship and good times remain in the memories of those folk who lived and worked on “The Hill”. These memories, coming from such chipper old folk, are what inspired me to take a team of three cameras and interviewers to a “Friends of the Hill” reunion on Denniston Plateau in 2004. Editing the footage was a pleasure, and the result is 43 minutes of heart-warming interviews inter-spliced with archival footage and still photos.

DVDs can be purchased from [hillfriends@hotmail.com](mailto:hillfriends@hotmail.com) and cost \$25 including postage. You will receive a reply with internet banking details and then the DVD will be dispatched. The proceeds of sales go to Friends of the Hill Trust.

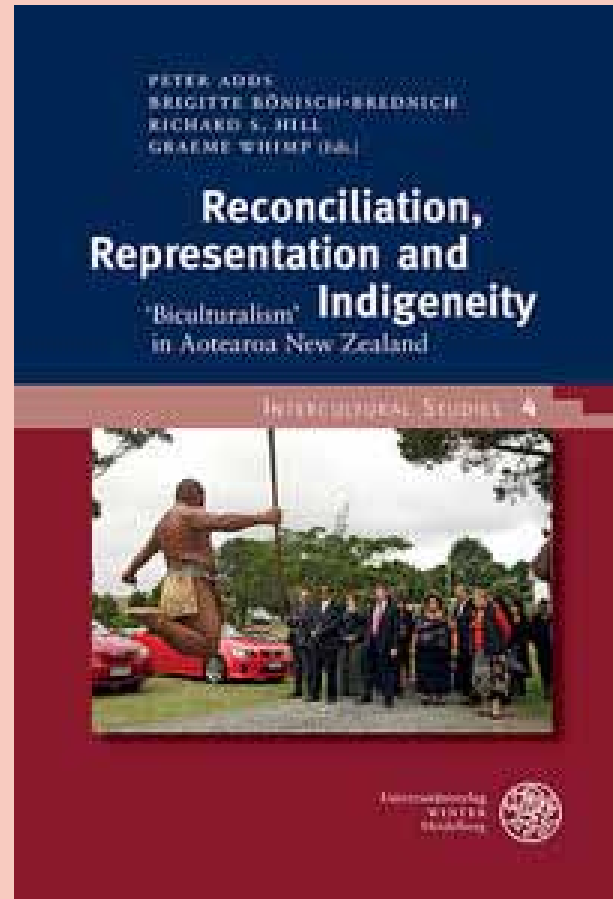
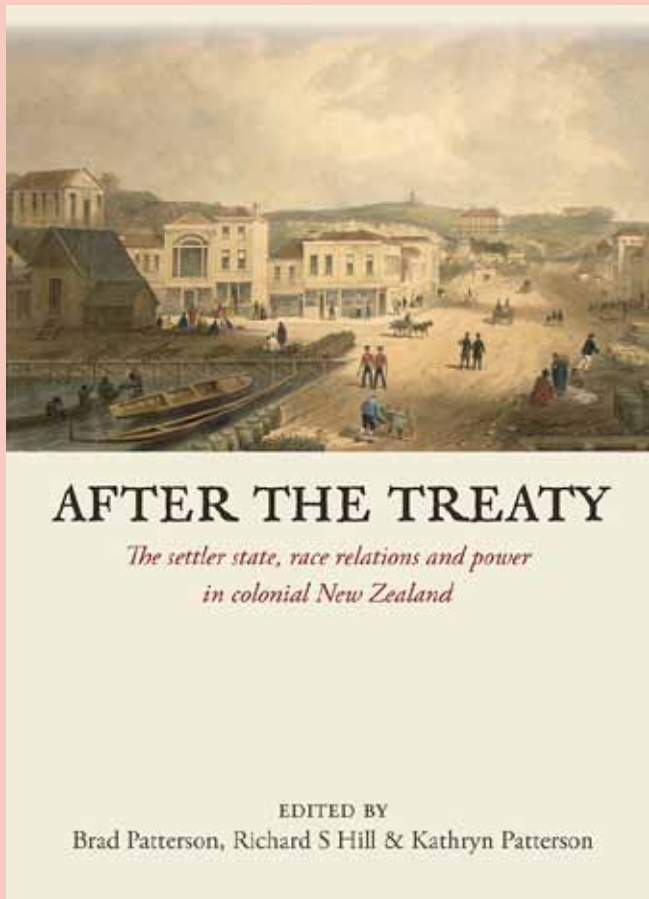


### **DVD Edition of A Century of Struggle**

The DVD edition of *A Century of Struggle*, with a lot of additional material, was launched at the Maritime Union of New Zealand conference on 7-8 November.

The film was first released in 1979 when the Seamen’s Union celebrated their centenary. The film was made by Vanguard Films trio Russell Campbell, Alister Barry and Rod Prosser, and documented the history of the Seamen’s Union.

This DVD release is accompanied by excerpts from interviews conducted with long serving seafaring unionists in 2003-2005 and 2016. These extend the story to recent times, with the union’s amalgamation with the Cooks and Stewards’ Union to form the Seafarers’ Union and to the merger in 2002 with the Waterside Workers’ Union to form the Maritime Union of New Zealand. The DVD cover was designed by *Bulletin* designer, Jared Davidson.



### Two New Edited Collections

Labour History Project committee member Richard Hill has been involved in the publication of two new books:

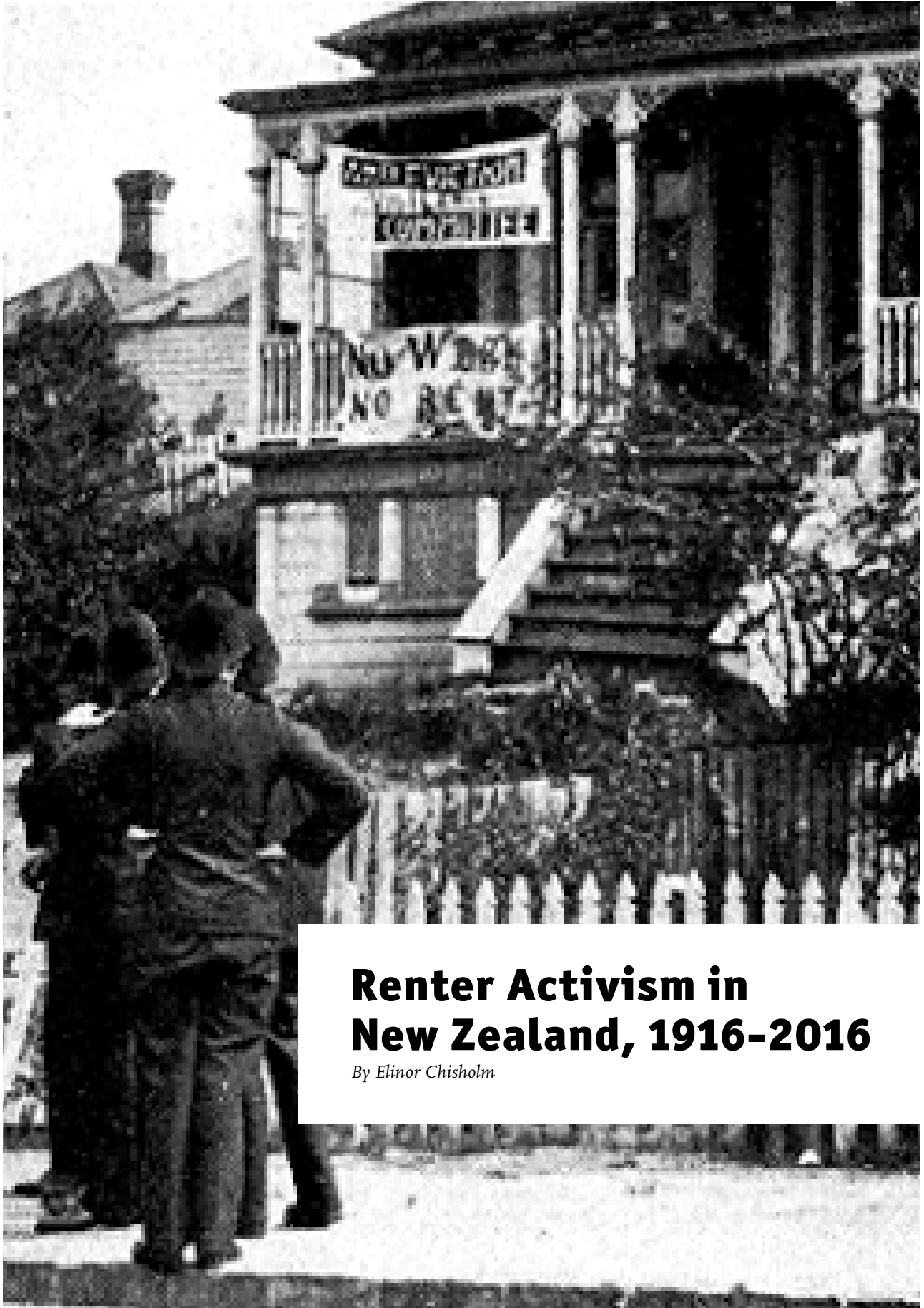
Brad Patterson, Richard S. Hill and Kathryn Patterson, eds, *After the Treaty: The settler state, race relations and power in colonial New Zealand* (Wellington: Steele Roberts Aotearoa, 2016).

This book is in tribute to Ian McLean Wards (1920-2003), who as researcher and writer, civil servant and cultural activist, contributed greatly to promoting awareness of New Zealand history. The authors explore themes dear to Wards' heart, providing new insights into vital issues in 19th century colonial history.

Peter Addy, Brigitte Bonisch-Brednich, Richard S. Hill and Graeme Whimp, eds, *Reconciliation, Representation and Indigeneity: 'Biculturalism' in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Intercultural Studies 4 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2016).

This book offers an up-to-date analysis of the reconciliation processes between Māori and the New Zealand Crown.

*Ross Webb is the Research Editor of the Bulletin. If you have research you think would be of interest to our readers, please contact the Research Editor at [rosswebb12@gmail.com](mailto:rosswebb12@gmail.com)*



## **Renter Activism in New Zealand, 1916-2016**

*By Elinor Chisholm*

Life isn't good for many people who rent their home: renters move often; problems of cold and damp housing are widespread; low income households are often crowded; and many people spend more than half their income on rent.<sup>1</sup> Poor quality housing, crowding, and a lack of security and affordability, have major consequences for health.<sup>2</sup>

In thinking about how to make renting a better experience, people have proposed that collective action could make a positive difference, whether through increasing the bargaining power of renters or through influencing policy. For example, Auckland Council chief economist Chris Parker has suggested that council should “support the collective bargaining power of tenants... to make improvements as they see fit”.<sup>3</sup> Activist Robert Whitaker wrote that “we need to challenge those with the power over renters and housing, we need renters demanding change directly”.<sup>4</sup> Columnist Deborah Hill Cone, in reviewing the problems experienced by renters, recently wondered, “Why are renters not rising up? Why is there not a more vocal and activist tenants’ lobby group?”<sup>5</sup>

The idea that collective action could make a difference to New Zealand’s abysmal rental conditions has a long history in New Zealand. This article outlines five key phases of renter activism over the course of the past century and discusses some of the achievements and challenges of renter activist groups.<sup>6</sup>

A renters’ group first appears in the historical record in 1916, when the Rentpayers’ Association in Wellington successfully pushed for the institution of rent controls. Three years’ later, activists gathered again in Wellington to discuss what a renters’ organisation could do to respond to the problems of poor quality and high rents in the rental sector. Proposals included setting rents, blacklisting bad landlords, organising rent strikes, resisting evictions, and maintaining dwellings. The organisation that resulted from these meetings—the New Zealand Rentpayers’ Association—founded an information service to support renters who were threatened with eviction or rent increases. It also organised a march of several thousand people on Parliament in 1920 and, in response, the government announced the extension of rent controls. In the following years, the organisation continued to push for the extension of rent controls and an increased supply of rental housing, as well as legislation to license tenement houses, protect renters from unjust eviction and limit capital gains. The organisation disappears from the historical record after 1922. Conditions are likely to have improved in this period, as record numbers of people took advantage of cheap government loans to buy homes.

# RENTPAYERS' PROTEST.

## MARCH ON PARLIAMENT.

(By Telegraph—"Times" Special.)

WELLINGTON, Last night.

Two thousand Wellingtonians organised by the Rentpayers' League, marched to Parliament from a public meeting to interview the Premier on the housing difficulty. A brass band enlivened the march, and a good force of police participated in the Parliamentary reception, but there was no disorder. A small body of deputationists interviewed the Premier and Sir William Herries, Minister of Labour. They declared that the position was extremely bad in Wellington and serious in other centres. They asked for an assurance of legal protection for tenants against the exorbitant rents, that evictions should be prevented, and that landlords and house agents be brought under the anti-profiteering law. They suggested that Trentham camp be utilised temporarily, and that the Government should say what it is doing to build houses. One speaker quoted a Wellington case of fourteen living in one room, a widow and five children in another room having no cooking facilities.

Mr Fraser, M.P.: And they are threatened with eviction!

Mr Massey assured the deputation

Renters march on Parliament in 1920. *Manawatu Times*, 8 July 1920.

Renters' issues again came to the fore during the Depression. High unemployment and insufficient relief meant that many renters struggled to pay rent. Alongside a better deal for unemployed and relief workers, the Unemployed Workers' Movement demanded a reduction in rents, stays in eviction and heating for the homes of the unemployed. Support committees offered advice to renters. Instances of resistance to eviction, sometimes spontaneous and sometimes supported by unemployed workers' organisations, are recorded at least in Christchurch, Wellington, Wanganui and Auckland. These sometimes delayed eviction or helped evicted renters find alternative accommodation. Renter and unemployed protests died down after the election of the First Labour Government in 1936, with many involved being satisfied by social security measures, higher wages and the start of a state house building programme.



An eviction in Norfolk Street, Ponsonby in October 1931. The house was barricaded by the tenants to avoid eviction by the police, who arrived in force and made numerous arrests. From top: *NZ Herald*, 13 October 1931; *NZ Herald*, 14 October 1931; *Auckland Star*, 13 October 1931.

The post-War period was marked by a number of struggles against urban renewal. However, the next phase of protest specifically focused on rental housing covers the late 1960s, 1970s and into the early 1980s. These groups were often associated with the student anti-racist and anti-war movements and included some branches of the Progressive Youth Movement, the Ponsonby People's Union, and tenants' unions and tenants' protection associations in a number of cities. The groups experimented with different methods to improve the housing conditions for renters in their community, including picketing or blacklisting landlords, rent strikes, squatting in government-owned dwellings, and supporting renters to confront landlords at home or in court. In addition, several organisations contributed towards the Residential Tenancies Act, which, several amendments later, continues to govern the relationship between renters and landlords. Some of these organisations continue to exist, providing vital support for renters experiencing difficulty accessing their rights.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, state tenant protest responded to changes in state housing policy. Since 1961, state housing rents had been set in relation to tenants' income. In 1987, the Labour government instituted a policy that tenants who could pay market rent without it taking up more than 25 per cent of their income, were obliged to do so. As Graeme Clarke recalled in the 2015 Rona Bailey Memorial Lecture, this meant that some people "were forced to pay much more for their housing".<sup>7</sup> In response to the new policy, state tenants in Porirua organised a rent strike. However, this failed to move the government on the issue. In the 1990s, state housing policy was reformed under a new National government. As part of the reforms, all state tenants were obliged to pay market rents. This increased housing costs for state tenants, and many were forced to move or to live in crowded situations. Community groups agitated in response to the changes. One group, the State Housing Action Coalition, was particularly visible, protesting against state house sales and organising tenants in a partial rent strike. The resistance of Len Parker to his eviction for rent arrears resulting from the rent strike in 1999 drew nationwide attention to the issue of market rents. A few weeks later, the Fifth Labour Government was elected. This government placed a moratorium on state house sales and returned state tenants to income-related rents.

The early 2010s have seen a return to protest by state tenants. Communities in Maraenui, Pomare and Glen Innes have agitated against the redevelopment of their communities by Housing New Zealand. In the process of redevelopment, homes are demolished, people are displaced and some properties are sold to private owners. State tenant activist groups have drawn attention to the costs to health of displacement. They have also raised concerns about social housing reforms, including: the promotion of community housing providers as an alternative to state housing; the institution of reviewable tenancies, which means that people who are able to pay market rent may have to move out of state housing; the narrowing of eligibility criteria to enter state housing; and the closure of Housing New Zealand offices. State tenant activist groups have organised a number of protests and marches. For example, in 2012, groups from the three communities met with supporters in Wellington and marched on Parliament. In response to the petition they presented, the Social Services



Demonstration against mass evictions of Housing New Zealand tenants in Glen Innes in 2011.  
<http://socialistaotearoa.blogspot.co.nz/2011/11/families-pledge-to-stay-put-in-glen.html>

The archives show that renter activist groups have experienced challenges. Across the past century, they have worried about their lack of funding, members, and allies. Groups that worked to assist renters in need were often overwhelmed by the demand. Private renters move often, and sometimes into homeownership, which has worked against building the links that can support collective action. Finally, governments over the past century have often responded to problems in the rental sector not by improving conditions there, but instead by supporting renters to buy their own homes if they are able to.

Despite these challenges, renter activism over the past century has helped to improve housing. Eviction resistances sometimes gained renters more time to find a new home, or resulted in the household being offered another home or money towards rent. Support from renter activist groups sometimes convinced landlords to make improvements to the home or to reduce rents. In addition, renter protest has contributed to policy change. Rent controls in the 1920s, state housing in the 1930s, the Residential Tenancies Act of 1986, and the return of income-related rents to state housing from 1999, all followed periods of renter activism.

Renter activism in New Zealand continues to develop. As noted above, the current decade has seen protest by state tenants in response to redevelopment and social housing reform. Student union groups, the Living Wage campaign, and Wellington Renters United campaigned for better conditions in the private rental sector in the recent local body elections. Wellington Renters United has made submissions on legislation on rental housing quality, and recently partnered with the union movement to launch a petition for better security in the rental housing market. In Auckland, groups including Save Our Homes and Student Housing Action Group have worked to draw attention to a number of issues, including empty homes and high rents. Like their predecessors, these groups provide a crucial voice and can contribute towards a better deal for renters.

*This is a version of a seminar given by Elinor Chisholm at the 2016 Labour History Project AGM. It is based on archival research she conducted for her PhD thesis at the University of Otago, Wellington: "Individual and collective action for healthy housing: an historical and contemporary study" (2016). Elinor currently works on housing and health projects at the Department of Public Health at the University of Otago, Wellington. In her spare time, she is writing a history of housing in New Zealand with a particular focus on renting, renter activism and the ideology of homeownership. Contact: elinor.chisholm@gmail.com*



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## **Remembering Elijah “Jack” Carey: Union Organiser and Soldier**

*By Peter Clayworth*

On the evening of 14 October 2016, a group of local residents and supporters gathered at the corner of Carey Street and Holloway Road for the unveiling of a sign commemorating Elijah “Jack” Carey. Carey Street was named for Jack Carey in 1917, marking his death on 14 October 1916 during the Battle of the Somme. Carey was a well-known trade unionist, serving for many years as the secretary of the Cooks’ and Waiters’ Union Wellington branch. The Carey Street sign was erected as part of a wider scheme of marking the streets around Wellington with links to WWI. The scheme’s organiser, Wellington City Councillor Andy Foster, spoke at the unveiling, along with local Labour MP Grant Robertson and John Ryall of the E Tū union. E Tū represents workers in the hospitality industry, as the Cooks’ and Waiters’ Union did in the early 20th century.

Like many of New Zealand’s early union activists, Elijah John Carey was an Australian who came to New Zealand after an itinerant working career. Carey was born in Gympie, Queensland, on 20 August 1876, to Catherine Carey (née Newman) and Elijah Carey senior, a miner. Elijah junior, who became known as Jack, began his working life as an apprentice printer. When still in his teens Carey’s urge for adventure led him to abandon printing for a job as a ship’s steward. This seafaring occupation took him to Britain, Europe, the USA and South America, with stints working ashore as a hotel waiter. On returning to Australia in the 1890s, Carey tried his hand as a gold miner in Coolgardie. He did not make much money, but his involvement with the Coolgardie Trades Council began his lasting career as a labour activist.

At some time in 1904 Carey moved to New Zealand, where he settled permanently. In early 1905 he married Ellen “Nellie” Goss. Jack and Nellie did not have any children of their own, but adopted a daughter, Sarah.

In New Zealand Carey resumed his occupation as a waiter. Hospitality workers generally endured long shifts (often between 70 and 100 hours per week), received low pay and were often housed in poor conditions. The majority of workers in restaurants, tea-rooms, hotels and boarding houses were women. In 1905 the Wellington Amalgamated Society of Cooks and Waiters, with only 21 members, was the only active hospitality workers’ union in New Zealand. Carey became actively involved in recruiting new members, including women workers. Following his blacklisting by employers as a consequence of his union activities, Carey was elected, in 1907, to be the full-time secretary and organiser of the Wellington Cooks’ and Waiters’ Union. The union had grown to a membership of 800 by the end of that year. Carey also helped set up a branch of the Wellington



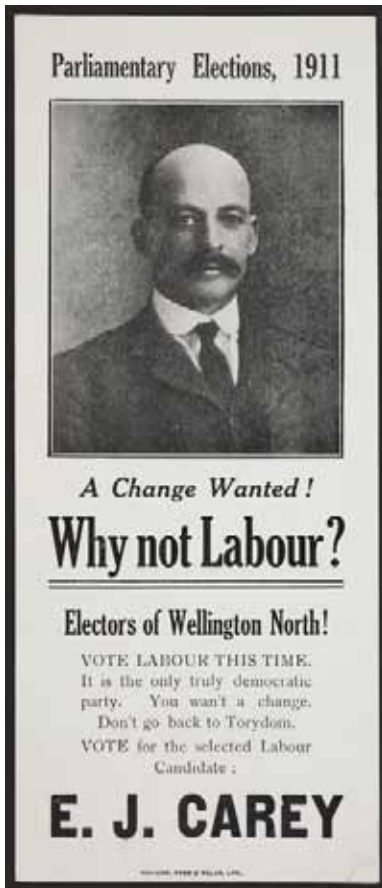
Councillor Andy Foster speaking at the unveiling of the Private Carey street signs on the corner of Holloway Rd and Carey St.

union in Palmerston North and helped revive defunct branches in Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin. In 1909, Carey was elected to the position of national secretary of the newly formed New Zealand Hotel and Restaurant Employees' Union.

Carey was a strong believer in New Zealand's conciliation and arbitration system. He carried out a series of campaigns to improve wages and conditions for hospitality workers and was an early advocate of equal pay and conditions for women workers. Carey worked by representing the union at Arbitration Court hearings and by lobbying politicians. His major campaign in the 1910s was a struggle to get the six-day week for hospitality workers, providing them with one day's guaranteed holiday a week. This demand was at first rejected both by Parliament and the Arbitration Court, but Carey continued to argue the case. In 1914 the Arbitration Court finally handed down awards establishing the six-day week for employees at public houses. A similar award was made in 1915 extending this condition to workers at private hotels, restaurants and tea-rooms.

In addition to his advocacy for hospitality workers, Carey was made Secretary of the Wellington Grocers' Union. He was active on the Wellington Trades and Labour Council (TLC), serving as vice-president in 1909 and president in 1910-1911. Carey was involved in the production of the TLC's newspaper, the *Weekly Herald*. He also wrote a weekly column on labour issues for the *Evening Post* under the pen-name "Unionist". It is notable that in the early 1900s a number of mainstream newspapers had regular columns written by moderate unionists.

Carey supported arbitration and had faith in the parliamentary system. In 1914 he was elected as deputy workers' representative on the Arbitration Court. Carey opposed strikes, believing in co-operation with employers rather than the doctrine of class war. These views set him at odds with the militant unionists of the New Zealand Federation of Labour, the Red Feds. The radical journalist



Above: Carey's campaign advertisement for the Wellington North seat in the 1911 general election. Below: Private Carey's grave in the Etaples Military Cemetery, France.



William Pierpont Black labelled Carey as “a lying, contemptible traitor” to the labour cause in a 1910 article in Black’s own newspaper, the *Leader*. Carey successfully sued Black for libel. It was ironic that Black himself later became a notorious labour traitor, responsible for organised scab unions at Waihi in 1912. The Waihi Strike brought further conflict between Carey and the Red Feds. As an executive of the Wellington Trades and Labour Council he supported the TLC’s decision to refuse any financial aid to the Waihi strikers and to advise the Sydney TLC to do the same.

Carey supported moderate labour political parties, opposing the New Zealand Socialist Party as too militant. He stood unsuccessfully as a labour candidate in several Wellington local body elections. He also failed to win the Wellington North seat in the 1911 General Election, when he stood as a candidate for the New Zealand Labour Party (NZLP). This was the first party of that name, formed in 1910, rather than the Labour Party formed in 1916. Carey was an executive member of the United Labour Party (ULP), formed in 1912 from the first NZLP. He attended the Unity Congress of 1913, which was called to try and organise a coalition of moderate and militant unions. The United Federation of Labour was formed at this conference, but Carey opposed it on the grounds that the new federation continued to advocate use of the strike weapon. He also opposed the formation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) at the same conference. Carey led a group of ULP members who were determined to maintain that party as a separate entity in opposition to the new SDP.

Carey’s disagreements with the Red Feds were not confined to the issue of strikes. While the Red Feds were usually anti-militarist, Carey was a patriot and imperialist who supported compulsory military training. When war broke out in 1914, he wholeheartedly supported the war effort. This did not, however, mean he was prepared to accept workers putting up with poor conditions because there was a war on.

In December 1915, Carey enlisted for military service, leaving New Zealand as part of the 13th Reinforcements. He left New Zealand with the temporary rank of sergeant, but reverted to a private’s rank once he was on active service. Newspaper articles continued to refer to him as Sergeant Carey, despite his more lowly rank in the field. In September 1916, Carey joined the 2nd battalion of the Wellington Infantry Regiment as it moved to join the Somme battle. He was wounded during the offensive at Flers-Courcelette, dying of his wounds on 14 October 1916. The flags at Wellington’s Labour Day ceremonies at Newtown Park in 1916 were flown at half mast in his honour. Heaton Terrace, off Holloway Road, was renamed Carey Street in 1917 to honour Elijah John Carey.

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## **Industrial Relations under Rogernomics: An Analysis of Parliamentary Debates 1987-88**

*By James Conner*



This article is a synopsis of an MA (Psychology) thesis that I completed in 1991 through the University of Canterbury. It gives a historical account and window of insight into the country's highest office and its actors, during a period of radical economic and social transformation.

In the 1980s and 1990s my focus was family, work and study—in that order of priority. From 1982-98 I worked full time and studied in the evenings, weekends and during any downtime, such as travel on buses and Hercules aircraft when commuting for several years from Waiouru Military Camp to Christchurch. I studied for 16 years non-stop, whilst going through several job changes: promotions, lateral career steps involving reductions in salary, losing my job several times due to restructuring, and sometimes holding down two or more jobs to make ends meet. During this time I completed BA and MA degrees in Psychology and a PhD degree in Political Science as well as a Diploma in Freelance Journalism. I also had a wonderful time with my family.

Family, study and surviving at work were the three constants in my life during the period of unprecedented economic, social and workplace change that the reforms of the Fourth Labour Government wrought. The aftermath of that period is still felt, for better or worse, to this day in every city and rural community throughout New Zealand. Every whānau has a story of a parent or grandparent, aunt or uncle or relative whose life chances were impacted upon during the economic reforms and the 1987 share market crash.

#### *Fourth Labour Government and Reforms*

The Fourth Labour Government was the government of New Zealand for six years (winning two general elections—in 1984 and 1987 respectively) from 26 July 1984 to 2 November 1990. It enacted major social and economic reforms, moving New Zealand with the speed and force of a tsunami from a highly protected and regulated economy to an extreme position at the open, competitive, free-market end of the economic spectrum.

The reforms were far reaching, spanning the whole of government: constitutional, economic policy, taxation, foreign policy, social policy (encompassing health, housing, social development and welfare, and education), environmental policy, Treaty of Waitangi and Māori policy, and industrial relations.

In the industrial relations sphere, the original statute governing employment relations in New Zealand was the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act 1894.

*Opposite:* Finance Minister Roger Douglas and Prime Minister David Lange celebrate Labour's re-election in 1987. Evening Post Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, ref: PAColl-7327-2.

It remained in force for 80 years from 1894 to 1973. In 1973, the Third Labour Government brought in the Industrial Relations Act 1973. In 1987, the Fourth Labour Government brought in the Labour Relations Act 1987 and amendments in 1988. On a parallel front, The State Sector Act 1988 came into force on 1 April 1988 and was pivotal in the reforming of state sector management and public sector culture. Through successive First Past the Post (FPP) and Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) governments, it remains in place, with amendments, to this day.

The Labour Relations Act was replaced in 1991. The Fourth National Government brought in the Employment Contracts Act 1991 that was in force from 15 May 1991 to 2 October 2000, when it was repealed by the Fifth Labour Government and replaced with the Employment Relations Act 2000 and subsequent amendments.

The speed and impact of the economic reforms led by the Minister of Finance Roger Douglas, and exacerbated by the October 1987 share market crash, created divisions and fractures in the Labour Government, especially between the Prime Minister David Lange and Roger Douglas, but also between their respective supporters both outside and inside Parliament. These fractures continued in 1988, eventually leading to David Lange's resignation and replacement by Geoffrey Palmer, who in turn was replaced by Mike Moore shortly before the 1990 general election.

#### *Why Content Analysis?*

Since I was working full time, I needed a research project for my Psychology MA thesis that was self-contained, cloistered and required little travel and disruption to work, and that I could study in the evenings after quality family time. I was interested in politics and labour relations so decided to study how contemporary New Zealand politicians portrayed industrial relations. I also wanted to better understand the enormous changes that were taking place at the macro and micro social and economic levels across New Zealand society. This would eventually lead me to complete a PhD in Political Science.

Given my circumstances and timeframe, I concluded the best approach was to analyse in detail the content of industrial relations language as spoken by politicians in the New Zealand House of Representatives. On the downside, content analysis is notorious for being labour intensive and time consuming. On the upside, this was a self-sufficient method of study, insulated from the vagaries of job insecurity, allowing me to work multiple, low paid jobs without disrupting my studies (I have never forgiven the Labour Party for their mean secondary tax regime—it really hurt hard-working families—which continued well into the next century). Content analysis, I felt, would suit me perfectly.

#### *Hansard*

Luckily there was an ideal document source for this type of cloistered, nocturnal scholarly endeavour: Hansard, the official reporting source of parliamentary debates in New Zealand (and also other parliaments throughout the world). Hansard is a written report, usually in direct speech, of speeches made in the House, but not necessarily of all the business transacted there. A full record of

all the business transacted by the House is made by the Clerk for inclusion in the House's journal. If an item of business does not elicit any debate or words spoken about it, it may not be noted in Hansard at all, as happens, for example, with the presentation of some petitions and papers.

I was a very welcome recipient of the Hansard "pinks": they were in my category of a "book not to be put down". It is with no small sense of embarrassment that I would read every weekly serial with the diligence of Socrates and the enthusiasm that the *War Picture*, *Commando* and *Battlefield* comics elicited in my childhood days: grim and glory stories of winners and losers fighting right and wrong, where the characters leapt from every page—heroes, villains, mates, pals, scallywags, and gung ho stereotypes.

#### *Sample Period*

A content analysis was performed on a sample of Hansard issues over a one-year sample period from October 1987 to September 1988. It was also decided to select two bills from the sample period that dealt specifically with matters of an industrial relations nature but were not included in the business of the House for the selected sample sitting days. It was considered that these would make a useful comparison with the results of the larger sample. The two bills selected for study were: the State Sector Bill, first reading, debated 8 December 1987, and the Labour Relations Amendment Bill, third reading, debated 22 March 1988.

The August 1987 general election saw the governing Labour Party, led by Prime Minister David Lange, re-elected for a second term. Both the Labour and National parties increased their number of seats partly due to the Democrats (previously Social Credit) not winning any seats.

#### *Politicians, Mass Media and Industrial Relations*

In modern society, people come to perceive a great deal of the world through the eyes of others. Verbal messages have considerable impact on our daily lives, whether it be reading a book or newspaper, listening to the radio, watching television, or multimedia communication such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (forums that were not available when I did this study).

The language of politicians is of prime importance because, like that of the mass media, it has the ability to shape public consciousness and create "reality" across a wide range of issues and at a variety of levels: individual, whānau, community, national and international. This ability becomes even more potent when the narratives of the media and politicians coincide. Politicians in particular are aware of the power of this consensus and work to maintain it.

Another area of paramount importance in our daily lives is the activity of work; work in the sense that it produces something of value in our lives, in particular a degree of economic self- and family sufficiency, social interaction, social status and identity, and physical and mental wellbeing. It is within this context, especially within Western industrial democracies, where the industrial relations process involving interactions between workers, employers, government and industry becomes important. Here too the language of politicians and the mass

media has the ability to shape public consciousness around notions of work and the perceived intrinsic and extrinsic value of particular jobs and careers according to age, education and gender.

At the time of writing my thesis, the area of industrial relations and the mass media had produced only a small number of studies in New Zealand and I covered these as part of my literature review. Moreover, there had been no in-depth study of how politicians portray industrial relations matters in this country. Although there was a substantial body of research on the impact of the mass media at all levels of civil society and in international bodies such the United Nations, there had been very little published research on the verbal behaviour of politicians in Parliament. I say published, because intelligence and diplomatic communities worldwide know the value of analysing speeches as a tool for predicting future behaviour and ascertaining coded messages.

#### *Aims and Methodology*

The aim of my study was to analyse in quantitative and qualitative terms the content of industrial relations language as spoken by politicians in the New Zealand House of Representatives. The analysis was directed at the amount of coverage and type of industrial relations language appearing in parliamentary debates or business, the manner in which it was presented and by whom, as well as to whom in the wider public and industrial relations arena the Members of Parliament (MPs) were actually referring.

The study used both a quantitative and qualitative approach to content analysis, termed the hard and soft approaches. The hard approach used quantifiable, precision measures, namely the amount of industrial relations subject matter, in column centimetres, found in each Hansard, compared to the overall business of the House. The soft approach evaluated the debates across a number of dimensions, such as the tone of a speech (eg. Conflict Creating, Conflict Moderating, Generally Mixed, Not Ascertainable, or Neutral).

Items were coded according to their subject matter (e.g. Industrial Action, Negotiations and Communication, Economic Context, Political Action, State Agencies, Union-Employee Actions, Employer-Manager Actions, Work and Conditions, Industrial Development/Change, and Other). These were further broken down into subcategories.

#### *The Findings*

For the purpose of this article, I will only give a snapshot of the findings as they relate to the Hansard issues and not the two sample bills. The appendix outlines and describes the industrial relations categories used for the coding of items. I have not included sub-category tables or tables of a quantitative nature.

#### *Amount of Coverage*

In terms of space (column centimetres), industrial relations subject matter accounted for nearly 17% of the total business of the House. The amount of industrial relations content for each political party was 56.7% for National and 43.1% for Labour.

The amount of industrial relations content spoken by each politician (or in some cases, not spoken) was also recorded. For the Government, Roger Douglas accounted for the highest industrial relations content, followed quite a long way behind by William Sutton, then a considerable drop to Phil Goff, Patricia Tennet, David Butcher, David Caygill, James Sutton, Annette King, Trevor de Cleene, and Richard Northey respectively. Of the women Labour MPs, three members, Patricia Tennet, Annette King and Lowson Fraser scored above the median. Eleven Labour MPs, including the Prime Minister, were recorded as having not spoken on any industrial relations subject matter.

For the Opposition, the Associate Spokesperson on Overseas Trade, Transport, William Storey, recorded the highest score, followed by Philip Burdon, William Birch, Douglas Kidd, Winston Peters, Warren Cooper, Jennifer Shipley, Denis Marshall, Ian McClean, and the Leader of the Opposition, James Bolger, respectively.

#### *Subject Matter Categories*

Items of an Economic Context were the most prominent category (44%), followed by Work and Conditions (22.6%), Industrial Developments (11.5%), Political Action/Statements/Views (8.2%), Negotiations and Communication (4.4%), Union-Employee and Employer-Manager Action/Statements/Views (3% each), and State Agency (2.5%). Industrial Action was the least prominent category (0.5%) with initiators of such action being equally spread between union-employees and employer-manager subcategories.

In the Negotiations and Communication category, the employer/management-government subcategory accounted for the highest number of items covered, followed by union, employer/management, and union-government respectively. Topics of negotiation included third-party negotiations, collapse of negotiations, items mentioning favourable progress or successful outcome, wage and allowance negotiations, and disputes of rights.

In the Economic Context, unemployment was the highest sub-category, followed by the economic wellbeing of a particular sector or group, state-owned enterprise or government entity, private companies, and cost of living respectively.

In terms of Political Action/Statements/Views the Opposition made the most statements (30 items) followed by the Government (16 items).

For Union-Employee Actions/Statements/Views, unions were the highest sub-category referred to, followed by the Federation of Labour.

For Employer-Manager Actions/Statements/Views, employers' associations were referred to the most, followed by state-owned enterprises or government departments.

In the category of Work and Conditions, matters of a personal nature accounted for the highest number of items (45 items), followed by procedures and rules (29), employee-employer work skill/performance (13), employers-management

performance-effectiveness (12), work skills and activities (11), powers and responsibilities (7), health and safety(4), job satisfaction/morale (3), and hours of work (2).

Those items which were coded within the category of Negotiations and Communication were also coded according to political party and politician. The Opposition recorded 15 items compared to the Government's 10 items. In the Opposition, William Birch recorded four items, followed by Ruth Richardson (3), Philip Burdon and Ian McLean (2 items each), and James Bolger, Paul East, Warren Kydd and Winston Peters (1 item each). For the Government, Richard Northey and William Sutton recorded three items each, followed by Roger Douglas (2), and David Butcher and Richard Prebble (1 item each).

Each time an MP's comment was recorded, the attitude and tone of the comment was noted. Comments that were Generally Favourable accounted for 41.6% of the items, followed by Generally Unfavourable' comments (18.5%). About 40% were in the Mixed, Neutral, Not Ascertainable category. Of the 234 Generally Favourable comments, 85% were made by the Government and 15% by the Opposition.

Of the 265 Conflict Creating comments, 73% were attributed to the Opposition and 27% to the Government, whereas of the 40 Moderating comments, 75% were noted by the Government and 25% by the Opposition.

#### *Participant Types*

In terms of Participant Types, a total of 1,330 items were recorded. The public featured the most prominently (10.1%), followed by Opposition members (8.9%), employees (8.5%), ministers (7.2%), employees-managers (6.9%), unemployed (6.5%), employers (5.9%), Government general (5.3%), and managers (4%). Less obvious (under 3%) were employers-managers, employers' associations, trade unions, boards, and local bodies.

Of the 1,330 participant items recorded, only 77 (5.8%) were either directly or indirectly quoted. Ministers were quoted the most, followed by unions/associations/guilds, the news media, Prime Minister, and employers' associations/representatives respectively.

In terms of the way participant types were named and described, in most cases they were referred to respectfully, but there were some colourful descriptions. Some examples are outlined below:

Boards: fire the board.

Cabinet: betterers, masters.

Employers-Managers: farmers facing collapse, damaged, taking their own lives, not bludgers, dying; struggling; captains of industry; plight; distressed; embarrassed; Dear John; in trouble; honest wealthy and dishonest wealthy; political appointments.

Employees-Managers: old, tired and boring; working class, lowly paid, ordinary workers, young men and women, young Māori people, struggling, down trodden, poor, city slickers, women down at the factory, diligent, dedicated; good, loyal and faithful people.

Government (general): pack of unethical and incompetent swaggerers, bunch of wimps, Pontius Pilate, bipartisan, supportive, proud record, fair, had the guts, laid the groundwork, encouraged innovation, panic, will not listen, economic simpletons, incompetent, lack intellectual grasp, driving people to bankruptcy, negligent, secret deals, failed sunset policy, destroyed opportunities, short-sighted, lunatics.

Government members: doormat for Rogernomics, scab, scoffing and laughing.

Ministers: well-known Cabinet dry, unconvincing, gross error, incompetence, purist, propaganda, hopeless, class traitor, Minister of Unemployment.

Opposition: bleeding all over the place, political interference, patronising, incapable, irresponsible, sweeping allegations, headed for the gutter, Jeremiahs, Tories, pleading, ugly face that wants voluntary unionism.

Trade Unions/Associations/Guilds: gangsterism, tyranny mates, holding the country to ransom, illegal, solidarity, conflict, no consultation, obstruct flexibility, suspicious of change.

Unemployed: victims, disadvantaged, dole queues, real suffering, young unemployed, illiterate, inadequate education, young are hurting bad, squashed by the system.

#### *Discussion*

It was apparent from the study that industrial relations received a great deal of attention from MPs in the House of Representatives. As an indication of the public and political value attached to industrial relations, 17% of the sample Hansard space was concerned with such matters. This is the equivalent of about 111 Hansard pages over the sample sitting days or an average of around nine pages each day. This amount of coverage would have been greater had all the business of the House been included in the study, especially Questions and Answers which accounts for a substantial amount of business.

Considering that the proceedings of the House were broadcast by radio and covered by the parliamentary press gallery who supplied regular information to the news media outlets, the likelihood of audience contact with at least some industrial relations rhetoric from politicians, on a given day, is reasonably high.

The results of the study indicated that sufficient amounts of industrial relations statements delivered by MPs in Parliament and elsewhere reached the general public daily for such information to be an important factor in the shaping of public consciousness. Moreover, the results indicated that politicians attached

high public and political value to industrial relations. Although the amount of industrial relations coverage varied on a given day, ranging from one-third of a Hansard page to about 23 Hansard pages, there was in all sampled cases at least some time or content devoted to industrial relations issues.

However, the results showed a marked difference between those industrial relations topics considered of high public value by politicians in the House, and those considered of high public value by the news media. Whereas industrial action was the most prominent topic covered in the news media, in Parliament it was hardly mentioned. When it was mentioned, the initiators of such action were equally distributed between union-employees and employers-managers.

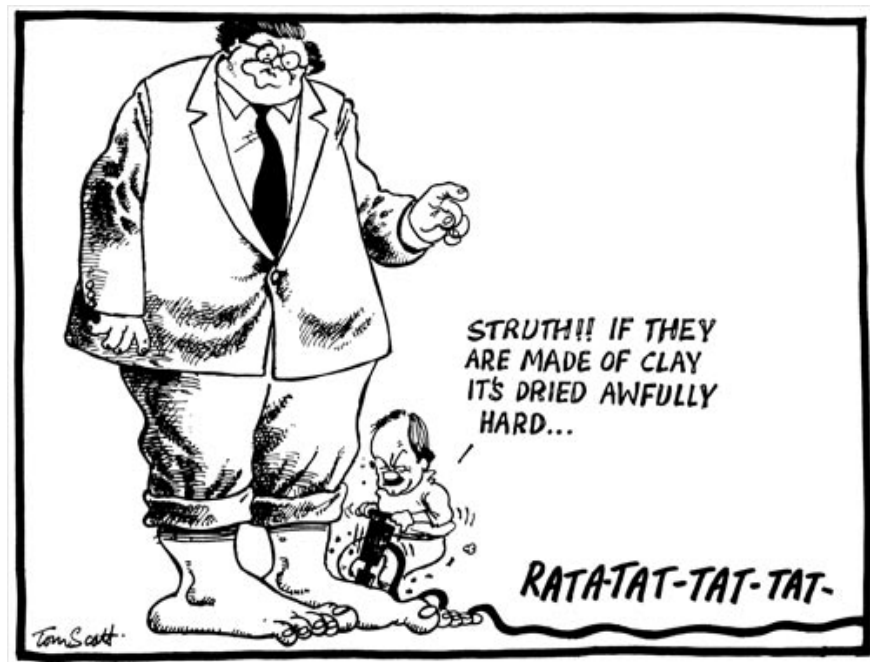
The Economic Context of industrial relations was the most prominent category, accounting for 44% of all items. This was in direct contrast to the news media presentation of this topic where previous studies showed that the economic context was hardly mentioned. It is interesting to note that this situation now seems to have been completely reversed in the news media. From the late 1980s to the present time, economic factors have dominated the news media, with the health and safety context of industrial relations only occasionally challenging the economic context in terms of news coverage.

The pattern of non-speakers in the House in relation to industrial relations is interesting. Eleven Government members, including David Lange, were recorded as not speaking on industrial relations compared to five Opposition members. (This is in stark contrast to today's National Government, where the leader John Key speaks as first Government responder on nearly every public issue.) On the other hand, the leader of the Opposition, James Bolger, featured high in the sample Hansard issues.

Although factors like role expectation could account for David Lange's non-contribution (e.g. James Bolger, in a previous National Government, held the post of Minister of Labour), the most likely reason is the considerable, and unprecedented, Government infighting between the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, Roger Douglas, and their respective supporters. The strong influence that Roger Douglas had in the economic sphere and its overlap with industrial relations is highlighted in this study, which shows him recording the highest industrial relations content. Moreover, Economic Context was recorded as the most prominent category.

The Prime Minister's non-contribution in this context, therefore, may have reflected a deliberate policy or decision not to participate and thereby be seen to be lending support to Rogernomics. This unease may have also been behind the non-participation of two Government backbenchers with backgrounds in the grass-roots trade union movement—Sonja Davies and Peter Simpson. On the other hand, the Minister of Overseas Trade and Marketing, Mike Moore, although spending considerable time overseas on trade missions, recorded a small but substantial amount of industrial relations comment in the sample Hansard issues. He too had strong grass-roots trade union experience.

Top: 1989 cartoon by Tom Scott, showing Finance Minister Roger Douglas attempting to demolish David Lange's "feet of clay", illustrating the tussle between the two after Douglas pushed for more radical economic reforms in the wake of the 1987 stock-market crash. Alexander Turnbull Library, ref: A-312-4-019.



The results also showed that the politicians were more likely to engage in conflict creating discourse and less likely to engage in negotiating behaviour. They were willing to spend considerable effort in perpetual conflict, seeking no quarter. Moreover, they were unwilling to negotiate or compromise publicly on matters of principle or policy or where their leadership or strength of character, particularly amongst their parliamentary colleagues, could be perceived as weak. The fact that at least some negotiating behaviour was recorded reflects, to some degree, the need to maintain a productive, interactive climate within the debating chamber. An atmosphere of some decorum and politeness, combined with the procedures and rules of the House, guarded against unbridled narcissistic and negative discourse.

The political, economic and social landscape of New Zealand has changed considerably since this study was undertaken. In particular with electoral reform and the referendum in 1993, the election of MPs changed from FPP to MMP (introduced in 1996). My instincts are that a content analysis of the verbal behaviour of politicians in an MMP Parliament would lead to quite different results.

I often listen to, or watch on television, parliamentary debates, or sometimes attend the parliamentary gallery to watch the House in session. In my view, the quality of debating and the ability of MPs to adhere to the subject under debate is but a shadow of what it was when I did this study.

Of the members of the First Session–Forty Second Parliament 1987, seven MPs remain in Parliament as at July 2016.

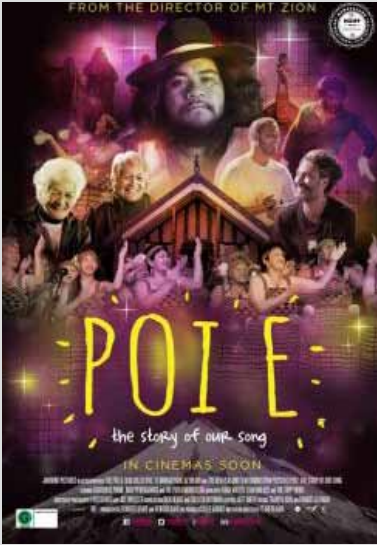
*James Conner lives at "Blackstairs", Lowry Bay, New Zealand, with his wife Hinemoa. He is of Scottish and Irish descent. In his spare time he walks the coastline and bush, and kayaks the surrounding bays and ocean.*

## APPENDIX: Industrial Relations under Rogernomics

Category	Description
1. Industrial Action.	Items about employee-employer and collective-individual forms of industrial action such as strikes, lockouts, stopwork meetings, work to rule, go slow, the ban, labour turnover, industrial accidents and sabotage. Includes past and impending action.
2. Negotiations, Mediation, Conciliation, Arbitration, Communication.	Items on negotiations of awards and agreements, tripartite wage conference, wage bargaining, and all negotiations over industrial matters. Includes items on industrial democracy. Excludes items where industrial action is taking place or being planned.
3. Economic Context.	Items on the cost of living, balance of payments, unemployment and general economics in which industrial relations form an explicit and substantive part. Excludes those items dealing with specific instances of industrial action and negotiation.
4. Political Action/ Statements/Views.	Items on the actions, statements, and views of Government, politicians, and party representatives in which industrial relations form an explicit and substantive part, excluding those to do with specific instances of industrial action and negotiation.
5. State Agencies.	Items on the actions and statements of state agencies involved in industrial relations matters (e.g. Ombudsman, Human Rights Commission, Tribunals). Includes proposed agencies. Excludes those items dealing with specific instances of industrial action and negotiation.
6. Union-Employee Actions/ Statements/Views.	Items on the actions, statements, and views of the Trade Union Movement, Trade Unions, and their officials. Includes individual employees who are not necessary members of a union. Excludes items to do with industrial action or negotiation.
7. Employers-Manager Action/ Statements/Views.	Item on the actions, statements, and views of employer associations, employers, company directors, and managers, other than those to do with industrial action or negotiation.
8. Work and Conditions.	Items on the nature and conditions of work, work performance, procedures, rules, and regulations, job satisfaction, and personnel management (e.g. planning, job analysis, recruitment, job selection and placement, job evaluation and appraisal, motivation, compensation, training and development), in which industrial relations form an explicit and substantive part. Excludes items to do with industrial action or negotiation.
9. Industrial Developments.	Items on restructuring, redundancies, mergers, technology and technological changes in which industrial relations form an explicit and substantive part. Excludes items to do with industrial action or negotiation.
10. Others.	All items that do not fit into the other categories.

\* Adapted from Hartmann (1976) and Cordery (1978).

## Reviews



### ***Poi E: The Story of Our Song***

Directed by Tearepa Kahi (Jawbone Pictures and Patea Film Collective, 2016)

Reviewed by Grace Millar

In 1982 the Patea Freezing Works closed. For a century the freezing works had provided the economic base of the community, and then it was gone. Two years' later the Patea Māori Club had a number one hit with *Poi E*, touring the world and performing on shows that were bastions of British culture like Blue Peter and the Royal Variety Show.

*Poi E: The Story of Our Song* is a brilliant joyful documentary that tells the story of Patea, the Patea Māori Club, the song *Poi E* and many of the people involved in making it. Using contemporary footage, interviews and re-enactments, the movie puts the song in context and shows why it was so important that a hip-hop-influenced Māori song from Patea went to number one.

The documentary acknowledges the wide range of work that went into making the song a success. It emphasises the life of Dalvanius Prime—the co-author and producer—but it also illustrates how many people contributed in their different ways to the writing, performing, recording and releasing of the song. The filmmakers are very effective interviewers and deliver a huge range of perspectives. They use group interviews to illustrate relationships and community dynamics incredibly effectively.

The song was made right at the beginning of decades of economic destruction. The shots of David Lange and his cabinet colleagues cheering the song's success I found quite hard to stomach. The one area I would like to have seen investigated further was the long-term damage done to the community by removing its economic base. One Kuia makes an off-handed comment that indicates the size of the toll taken over the last decades.

Taika Waititi (man of many talents and director of *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*) and Stan Walker (musician and actor) are part of the documentary with a conversation about their experiences of growing up Māori fifteen years apart. Taika explains what this song meant to him as a young Māori boy, and Stan's interest and engagement with Taika's experiences gives those stories weight. The dialogue between the generations is funny and it is also a testament to the importance of knowing your own history.

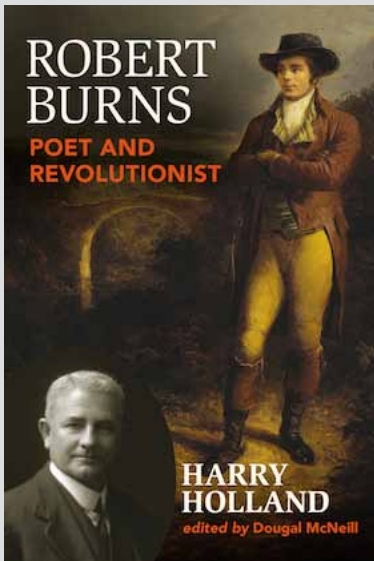
If you haven't seen *Poi E* already, make sure you do.

### ***Robert Burns: Poet and Revolutionist***

By Harry Holland, edited by Dougal McNeill (Wellington: Steele Roberts Aotearoa, 2016).

Reviewed by Barry Pateman

Working class autodidacts, the self-taught, have played an important role in the formation of radical movements and ideas that is still under acknowledged and not



really understood. These men and women who had little formal education essentially educated themselves. Following no prescribed syllabus, no professorial authority, they embraced the written word with breathtaking enthusiasm and, in doing so, created their own paths and patterns of reading and understanding. Many accepted the classic tradition of literature but they offered readings of the “greats” that differed in many ways from the accepted thinking. Those differences can still be puzzling to us as they challenge all sorts of ideas about what is “left” or “radical” that we have inherited over the years. They used literature to make sense of their lives. It was a way of understanding themselves and their communities while providing comfort in times of economic and emotional hardship. To many it was as important, or more so, than any political philosophy. Consider Vanzetti and his love of Dante or Emma Goldman’s embrace of Chernyshevsky’s *What Is To Be Done?* as a radical template to live by.

This book is a most welcome addition to this field of study. Holland had left school when he was ten and took on full time work as a compositor. He became a ferocious reader and, as a radical journalist, would write regularly about literature and ideas. The introduction by Dougal McNeill gives us a brief biography of Holland, including his militancy in Australia, his visit to New Zealand at the request of the Waihi branch of the Socialist Party, his editorship of the *Maoriland Worker* and his eventual leadership of the New Zealand Labour Party until his death in November 1933. His reading and writing about literature remained a staple of his life, and in 1924 he published a collection of his verse *Red Roses on the Highway*—some of those poems are included at the end of this volume.

All evidence suggests that Holland had been working on a study of Burns for many years and McNeill has done an exemplary job of meshing Holland’s published and unpublished work into a seamless and convincing narrative. The finished product is a well argued and forceful piece of writing that succeeds in challenging the de-fanged Burns of Burns Night, Hogmanay and haggis. It’s also clear that it was important to Holland to emphasise that Burns was an autodidact. He takes great pleasure in listing some of Burns’ early readings (as we might expect they’re wide and free-flowing) and we could certainly construct a similar type of list for Holland himself.

The similarities between the two men don’t end there. McNeill suggests that what Holland saw as the radicalism of Burns was exactly the socialism Holland wanted to see in New Zealand and elsewhere. Burns “sounds the march of human brotherhood” with his attack on hypocrisy and false morality. For Holland the work of Burns reflects an inter-relationship between humanity and nature, a strong antipathy towards censorship and, perhaps most importantly, the latent possibilities in humanity. Like Burns, Holland felt we were “marching to liberty” —no matter how long and winding that march may be.

McNeill’s editing is worthy of praise. It is sympathetic and precise, bringing to light influences on Holland’s thinking that we might otherwise have missed. We see the traces in his writing of Lenin’s *The State and Revolution*, Marx’s *Capital*, the Bible and Thomas Carlyle. This allows us to see the gestation of Holland’s ideas and influences as well as demonstrating that Holland is knowledgeable about scholarship on Burns.

It strengthens our understanding of Holland (as well as Burns) and opens up further avenues for the reader to explore, both with regard to Holland and other autodidacts.

This is a book of the highest quality. Extremely well presented by the publisher, carefully constructed and edited, it introduces us to a self-educated radical and his ideas on Burns and radicalism in literature. As I suggested earlier this is a major contribution to the field of radical autodidacts and should stand alongside T. A. Jackson's *Dickens: The Progress Of A Radical* (London: International Publishers, 1937) and *Old Friends To Keep* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1950)—two similarly impressive books on literature by a self-educated, communist militant.

A short selection of Holland's poetry appears at the end of the volume. It's touchingly honest and open in its propaganda for socialism. It can be rather wordy (the curse of the autodidact)

“She bears the promise of the morn  
That herald's Day's gold orb of fire”

Holland writes in *The Spirit of May Day*, but it's worth battling through that. It's rhyming fare but is also meant to be understood and remembered. Holland is writing poems that try to explain what a socialist world could be, as well as trying to beat back against sadness and despair,

“See! Just beyond the Vale of Ill  
The Sun is shining on the hill” (*Rewanui: A Sonnet*)

You can find hints of Shelley if you dig around, but what you are primarily reading is one man's effort to connect with others in an attempt to bring about a life where

“Sped are the years of hate and strife,  
The world's a-throb with joy of life-  
The Sun is on the hills” (*Socialism*)

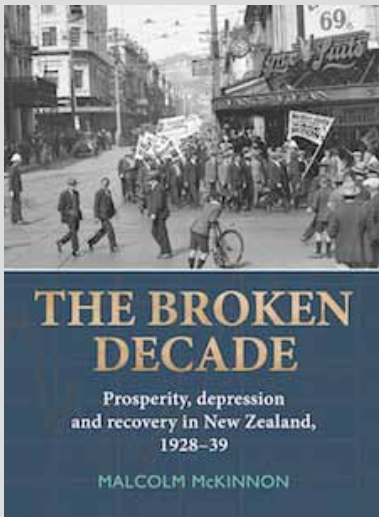
If we find it awkward and embarrassing we might want to stop and consider where all the passion in this poetry has gone to. Certainly, as Jack Common observed, socialism will not be built book by book. But it won't be built by manifestos and sound bites either.

### ***The Broken Decade: Prosperity, depression and recovery in New Zealand, 1928-39***

By Malcolm McKinnon (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2016)

Reviewed by Ross Webb

Reading Malcolm McKinnon's *The Broken Decade: Prosperity, depression and recovery in New Zealand, 1928-39*, one wonders why such a book had not already been written. The 1930s were a defining period in New Zealand history, although eclipsed in many ways by the world wars before and immediately following. Apart from Tony Simpson's *The Sugarbag Years* (Wellington: Alister Taylor, 1974), and his lesser known *The Slump* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1990), there are no book-length accounts of



the Depression in New Zealand. While there are many oral histories and studies of the hardship of people during the Depression, the political and economic context is often lost, and McKinnon aims to address this gap. In doing so, McKinnon aims to challenge what he sees as the orthodox and popular view, which he describes as treating the Depression as:

... a conflict between the rich and poor, the powerful and powerless, in which the “little guy” finally wins, or appears to. That win draws a line not just under the Depression but under the era of conservative or “not very liberal” government since 1906, when Seddon died. It is reinforced by the belief, as strong in 2015 as at the time, that the Depression was a turning point in world history, as a result of which many governments and voters rejected a laissez-faire political economy in favour of a more collectivist and interventionist one.

This is a view that McKinnon sees as being popularised by Simpson’s *The Sugarbag Years*, a study that is “cited by contemporary New Zealanders when the ‘Depression of the 1930s’ is mentioned”. At the same time, McKinnon claims that his book doesn’t “replace Simpson’s, but is rather in conversation with it”. The studies that challenge what McKinnon calls the “orthodox view” appear mostly in university theses and scholarly publications and have not “unsettled the popular view”. But this orthodox view is not only associated with the Depression, but rather spans the story of the New Zealand labour movement and political change before 1935 more generally. It’s an interpretation that sees all events prior to 1935 (whether it is the maritime strike of 1890, or the onset of the Depression) as culminating in the victorious election of a Labour government in 1935 and the beginning of a social democratic nation. It is a view that sees the years since the death of Seddon as the “dark times”. When Labour came to power, it emphasised the contrast between the government before and after, even evoking “God’s Own Country”, a term used during Seddon’s premiership. This view became history. Subsequent historical accounts followed this view, focusing as McKinnon puts it on the moment of crisis, in 1932, followed by the moment of transformation, in 1935, which marks “the beginning of the end” of the Depression.

The narrative McKinnon follows is different, and the subtitle of the book—“prosperity, depression and recovery”—broadly follows both McKinnon’s theme and structure. The first Chapter, “An Indian Summer, 1928-1930”, introduces the prosperous pre-Depression economy and the period of Joseph Ward’s premiership. The Wall Street crash did not hit New Zealand immediately, and the downturns felt in the economy were thought to be minor, like those of the mid-1920s. The response, then, reflected this sense that things might soon get better. The images reproduced show something of the cultural and social history of the period. The Depression really started to be felt in New Zealand in 1930-1932, as Ward became Prime Minister, and his Reform Party was in power. They maintained power with votes by Labour, until Ward pursued austerity. Reform and United parties fused to become the Coalition Party, and Labour became the official Opposition. Of particular interest for readers of the *Bulletin*, is McKinnon’s discussion of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act Amendment Act 1932, which coincided with street disturbances in Auckland. Although it is mentioned, McKinnon doesn’t address how this impacted wages and conditions for organised workers. Chapter 3 tells a “parallel story” of the political response in 1930-1932: the crisis of unemployment. In terms of the political response, this is

one of “inaction, not of action”, McKinnon writes. “From December 1930 to March 1932, the government scrambled (when it thought about the issue at all) for new directions, new policies”. In addressing this issue, Prime Minister Forbes stated that “sustenance would not be paid other than in exchange for work” and furthermore the focus was on rural work, though most of the unemployed were in the cities, and the government plan was to move unemployed men to public work camps in the country. While the disturbances or “riots” in Auckland and Wellington are the major focus of most accounts, they did not “trigger a severe or protracted crisis in politics and law enforcement”, McKinnon writes, and the government remained wedded to the “rural solution” to the unemployment crisis. The following chapters focus on the attempt by the government to raise prices and stimulate the economy. Unemployment peaked in 1933, but thereafter the economy picked up with a rise in commodity prices (most strongly felt in the agriculture sector).

Skipping ahead to Chapter 10, McKinnon’s assessment of the Labour Party’s time in office follows the argument described above. In challenging the “orthodox” view described above, McKinnon argues that the political response to the Depression is a story as much about “a struggle to restore a world as it is a story of building one”. Thus, when Labour won the election in 1935, it did not begin where Seddon left off in 1906, but rather where Ward had in 1930, with state-led development and recovery. McKinnon writes that Ward’s “combination of state-directed expansion and wage-earner and other kinds of sectional welfare was a potent mix that Labour replicated—even if it did not acknowledge this—when it gained power in 1935”. McKinnon is not suggesting, however, that the election of Labour was not a significant departure, but he does see it as part of a political continuum of the state attempting to address the issues brought about by the Depression.

In this way, it is largely a political history of the Depression, that attempts to address two questions that McKinnon sets out in the preface: “How did the Depression play out politically? What range of interests and lobbies contested for influence and power through these years and how were these contests characterised?” But it is not exclusively political. McKinnon weaves in the narratives of ordinary people. The images throughout the book also give a sense of the social and cultural history. Overall, this is a detailed study, sometimes too detailed, and it challenges the way we think about the Depression and in particular its political and economic context.

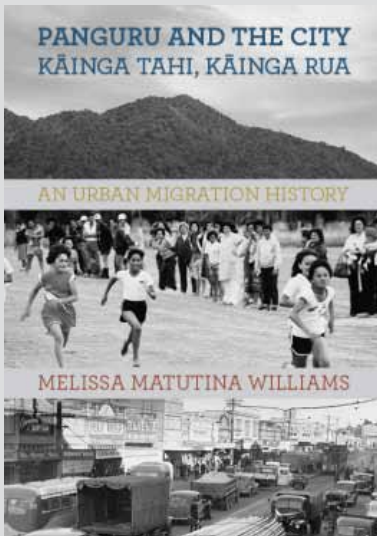
### ***Panguru and the City – Kāinga Tahī, Kāinga Rua: An Urban Migration History***

By Melissa Matutina Williams (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015)

Reviewed by Grace Millar

*Panguru and the City* was the deserving and outstanding winner of this year’s Bert Roth Award. Melissa Williams explores Māori migration in the second half of the 20th century from Panguru in Hokianga to urban Auckland.

Williams studies the migration of a small community in depth to challenge the prevailing belief that Māori came to the city and the city changed them. *Once Were Warriors* still dominates popular understandings of Māori life in cities, and Williams’ work is part of a wider project by Māori researchers to demonstrate how limited this



viewpoint is. She tells a story of continued connection between Panguru and the city, one in which Māori change the city as well as the other way round.

The seventh chapter is called “Workplace-whānau” and is absolutely vital reading for anyone interested in labour history. Williams uses two case studies: a small factory that employed Māori women, and the Auckland power board, which hired a large number of men from Panguru. In her discussion she shows the gendered ways that Māori changed their workplaces to meet their needs and cultural practices. She contrasts this with other Pākehā-dominated workplaces where this was not possible.

Williams’ understanding of work is not limited to workplaces—she puts homes at the centre of her analysis of migration. She emphasises and explores the different way her interviewees discuss home—both Panguru and Auckland remained home for many people. She also discusses homes in the city in detail, including the difference between living in the inner city and later moving to the suburbs. She includes the social, cultural and relationship work that took place within Māori homes.

Williams values the experiences of Māori who moved from Panguru to the city by placing oral history interviews at the centre of her narrative. She interviewed more than 40 people for this project and she allows people’s voices to come through in extended quotation. Her use of photographs also stands out—the book has 116 images. These photographs greatly enrich the work by providing us with a vivid glimpse of the material life she is describing: clothes, cars and streetscapes. While some photographs are from the press or other Pākehā sources, others convey how Māori migrants viewed the world in a very literal sense.

Williams successfully shows how complex people’s lives are—and allows many different things to be true at the same time. In a beautifully written conclusion, she affirms Māori agency and resilience, while at the same time emphasising that Māori migration was a response to government policy, economic conditions and ultimately to colonialism and capitalism. Her ability to hold these two things together throughout the book make it such an important and informative read.

*Barry Pateman is the Reviews Editor of the Bulletin. If you have material you think we should review, or are interested in reviewing for us, contact the Reviews Editor at [reviews@lhp.org.nz](mailto:reviews@lhp.org.nz)*

# What is the Labour History Project?

The struggle for workers' rights has a long history in Aotearoa New Zealand. Trade unions and the fight for a fair society are important strands of our national story. Many major historical events have their roots in labour-related issues. These have also been key influences on national politics and the evolution of New Zealand society. Labour history connects New Zealand to the world. Work has been a prime factor in our migration history and local unions (and related groups) have important links overseas.

Much of New Zealand's labour history, however, remains undocumented and unpublished. The social history of work in New Zealand has been relatively neglected by historians. Without a more accessible labour heritage, we overlook important ways of understanding New Zealand's past and present, and vital perspectives on where we are heading.

In 1987 the Trade Union History Project (TUHP) was formed by historians, trade unionists and political activists to help document New Zealand labour history. Initially established with state funding, since 1991 the organisation has relied upon volunteer resources, donations, and occasional publishing grants. In 2008 the TUHP changed its name to the Labour History Project (LHP) to better reflect the range of member interests. The LHP is an energetic and independent incorporated society. It has over 150 individual and institutional members and maintains links with affiliated organisations such as the Auckland Labour History Group, trade unions, libraries, museums, academics, and counterpart groups overseas. It is the only national organisation dedicated to fostering New Zealand labour history and cultivating an important part of our collective memory. The Labour History Project has no affiliation with the New Zealand Labour Party or any other political party.

## Membership form

Yes, I want to become a member of the Labour History Project. Inc.

**Name:**

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Individual subscription      \$30.00

(inc. GST)

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**Please send cheque for total amount, with this form to:**

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Labour History Project Inc.  
P O Box 27425  
Marion Square  
WELLINGTON 6141

**Or, credit LHP Bank Account No. 38 9012 0672630 00**

and email contact details to: [treasurer@lhp.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@lhp.org.nz)

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