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MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

*Ecoso exchange newsletter : ecological, sociological  
and political discourse 2/49; Sept. 1998*

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# **Ecoso Exchange Newsletter**

## **Crow Collection Association**

**ECOLOGICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL and POLITICAL DISCOURSE**

**Ecoso 2/49, Sept. 1998**

**Incorp No.A0022696P**

### **ABOUT THE CONTENTS OF THIS ECOSO**

The articles in this Ecoso raise issues about finding common ground between the union movement and the community movement. The enclosed Supplement can assist with promoting this aim. **Extra copies of the supplement are available** (see enclosed leaflet,)

*The community has much to learn from the history of union association and its support for others. The challenge to community of global capital is just as profound as it is to workers, and how community is to stabilise and organise socially is very much an open question. New coalitions of this kind are potentially a way of renewal for a new unionism too. Imagination is needed to strengthen the relations between community and unions if an opportunity is to be turned into practical political and ethically sustainable forms of existence.*

*(Quote from John Hinkson's article on the MUA, Arena No 35, June 1998.*

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Leaflet about **Frayed Nerves or Freight Centres**

### **NEWS FROM THE CROW COLLECTION**

The 1998 Annual General Meeting. After eight years the Crow Collection Association is re-appraising how it fulfils its aims and objects. Seven main issues were discussed at its 1998 AGM (held on June 17th) :-

1. The widening gap between rich and poor and the significance of the Community Summit (People Together)
2. The relevance of "Seeds for Change" after 20 years
3. Linking Trade Unions and local community organisations.
4. Combatting conservative political strategies (One Nation).
5. The affect of economic rationalism on rural areas.
6. The loss of Rainbow Alliance, (curtailment of People's Ctte)
7. The need to re-examine theories and practices on community development.

Information about Crow Collection Association, ph. 03/9329.8685.

## **Twin Problems in the Twin Towns**

### **TRANSPORT ISSUES IN ALBURY AND WODONGA**

*In fact all the freight now carried by trucks on the Hume Highway could be carried on just over 10 extra freight trains per day.* (quote from Public Transport User Association Newsletter, July 1998)

Albury residents are campaigning for the withdrawal of plans for a freeway which threaten to cut the town in half.

Wodonga residents are campaigning against a proposal to close their rail station.

The *Save our Cities Group* recognises that Albury's most pressing problem is the increase in heavy freight traffic that roars through the city day and night. It believes that incentives to move freight by rail would solve this problem, emphasising that rail offers a far more energy-efficient, quieter and safer solution than road freight. The freeway proposal is estimated to cost \$200 million.

The *Wodonga Train Group* are campaigning against the State Government spending \$45 million to take a railway crossing out as this will really mean closing the Wodonga station. The Trains Group is advocating using the \$45 million to rehabilitate the standard gauge line to Melbourne.

## **B-Double and B-Triple.**

**TRUCKS MEASURING 36.5 METRES ON FREEWAYS AND COUNTRY ROADS ??**

"B Doubles" have already been trialled, and "B Triples" are about to be trialled. NO ! these are not the names of new actors in the ABC's *Bananas in Pyjamas*, they are the names given to out-sized trucks. Maybe you, already, have met a "B.Double" monster on a freeway or country road - a "B.Double" is one prime mover pulling two trailers (about the length of one and a half semi-trailers.- a "B.Triple" will be 36.5 metres in length, twice as long as semi-trailer.

Environment Victoria and the Australian Railway Association (ARA; the peak industry body for the rail industry in Australia and NZ) have joined forces and are keen to work with other groups to influence government policy on a wide range of transport policies both urban and non-urban, both freight and passenger. For more details of B-triple see the RACV magazine.. of course the RACV is enthusiastic about their use. (For more information about how the community is campaigning against B Double and B Triples phone or call :- *Environment Victoria* at 19 O'Connell Street, North Melbourne 3051, phone 9348.9044 and/or call or phone the *Public Transport User Association*, ground floor, Roos House, 247 Flinders Lane Melbourne0

Don't miss out on ordering your copy of *Frayed Nerves or Freight Centres*, a publication from 1979 but still relevant. (Order form enclosed)

## Linking the Unions and the Community

Contributed by Peter Gibbons (Chair of Crow Collection and Organiser AMWU)

A lot has been written about the broad support for the Maritime Union of Australia and the waterfront dispute against Patricks.

Throughout the history of trade unions in Australia major disputes have been supported by broad community alliances with the union members who are directly involved in the dispute

Circumstances vary in each dispute but the common factor is the recognition that the particular dispute has some, or will have some broader effect upon the community in general.

Various support bodies have come and gone over the years, for example the Women's Auxillaries of the Miners' Federation, the Waterside Union and the Railway Union, direct support from Credit Unions, Co-operatives for food and finance, broad based support fund organisation.

In the past these movements have had particular strength in well defined localities. These types of alliances are reappearing and new, broader-based alliances are forming for the first time.

The political and industrial change, we have seen in the past 20 years, is the major factor for this development. Large areas of provincial Australia have seen both jobs and state services disappear. Strong campaigns have developed to retain jobs and services in these rural localities.

Coupled with this, the decline of manufacturing industry in major metropolitan centres has increased the pressure on job availability and flowed through to the down-grading of service industries such as public transport, port services and so on. There is no planned replacement of the jobs lost.

We must continue to foster the alliance between workers in the trade unions and the broader community because workers are the community.

### ECOSO SUPPLEMENT

*Included with this Ecoso is a four-page Supplement. It includes a chart on Relationships Between Social Movements, and an article On the Waterfront: Lessons from the Waterfront Dispute (republished from Nexus).*

*The chart shows that although different movements represent a diversity of social interests, goals and political approaches there is a profound convergence and complementarity of the basic concerns, precisely because they represent responses to different aspects of the undesirability of existing social structures. Note :- Potentially, the labour movement has some common ground with every other social movement on the Chart.*

"Overland" 151, Winter 1998, features songs, poems, stories and interviews on the MUA Strike... a wealth of on the spot reportage... ph 03/9687-9785

## Retrieval of Bits and Pieces

### VANCE PALMER ON MULTICULTURALISM - A VOICE FROM THE PAST

*From the beginning, the Australian community has easily assimilated the small freshets of European migration that came to it and they have left no distinguishable marks on its character. In some respects it would have been better if they had. It is true that government can be carried out more efficiently with a homogeneous population, speaking one language and having one tradition of law; but the smooth working of laws and institutions is not the only thing to be taken into account. Australian life today would be richer if it had been able to draw on a greater variety of immigrants; on the different cultures of people who would have each been able to contribute something of its own to the national being. ...Although Australia has not benefited by the migration of groups who might have brought with them their communal arts and crafts, it has undoubtedly had its creative energies quickened by individuals of foreign blood. To realise this, one has only to glance at a list of people who have shown distinction in the arts and sciences from Lawson to Hans Heysen from Baron von Muller to General Monash. (Quote from "The Legend of the Nineties by Vance Plamer published by MU Press 1954. Emphasis added by Ecoso,)*

### SPEAKING OUT ON MATTERS OF CONCERN TO WESTERN REGION

*The Chancellor of the Victoria University of Technology has written to the Minister of Planning expressing concern over the lack of recognition given to views of local Western Region residents regarding the proposed toxic landfill.*

AND

*VUT Deputy Vice Chancellor, Paul Clark, has publicly expressed concern over the same issue. Speaking at a graduation ceremony in May he said :-*

*Victoria University considers that if a community is so clearly opposed to a development of this kind on its doorstep, it should have the right to say no to that development.... the University has an important role to play in serving the local community and this means sometimes being obliged to speak out on issues of concern to people of the Western Region ... We agree with the people of Werribee that the Western Region must no longer be regarded as a dumping ground for Melbourne refuse. ... the University has made these views clear to the Government and would continue to do so as long as the community of Werribee is threatened. (Front page article in "Nexus" published by Victoria University of Technology).*

### MORGAGES - A CRITICAL FACTOR FOR PRIME MINISTER HOWARD

*It was not the mortgage that domesticated the 1950s but the growing sense of certainty that a mortgage could be paid. For John Howard hoping to emulate Menzies achievements, this is a critical factor that is no longer his to deliver. (from David Glanz "The Paper House" by David Glanz "Eureka Street" Vol 8, No 6, July/Aug. 1998,)*

#### More information about the Crow Collection :-

Telephone 03/9688.4754, 03/9329.8685, Fax 03/9688.4324

E-mail :CROWCOLL@VUT.EDU.AU.

or on Internet WWW.VUT.EDU.AU/LIBRARY/COLLECTIONS/CROW.HTML

NOTE :- There is a squiggle after .. AU/ ..

Ecoso typewriter can't squiggle. so please excuse handwritten squiggle

See back cover for history of Ecoso and Crow Collection.

Subscription \$10 for 5 issues.



## **Radical Politics**

### **THE FALTERINGS OF A THIRD WAY**

The last **Ecoso** (No 2/48, June 1998), included an article about the final meeting of the **Rainbow Alliance** and another one on the launching of **The Reds**. In this **Ecoso** we are complementing these two articles by reprinting some paragraphs from an essay by **Boris Frankel** entitled **Radical Politics.. The Falterings of the Third Way**. (published in **Arena** 35, June/July 1998)

Boris was one of the foundation members of the RA. He states :-  
*The RA was not a traditional left party cross-dressing in green or in other new social movement clothes. Yet it too failed, even though it had absorbed valuable lessons from the earlier struggles of both the old working class parties and the new social movements originating in the 1960s.*

He states one of the aims of his essay ... *It is appropriate to examine why radical organisations such as the Rainbow Alliance died and what the possibilities are for a new radical political force emerging in contemporary Australia.*

Referring to the recent MUA strike. .. *Despite the encouraging display of union and community resistance, what is overlooked is that beyond the wharves, in contrast to militant unionism of earlier decades, there are no large radical organisations capable of mobilising people to challenge the major parties*

In his conclusions he states... *The survival of a strong union movement is vital. But it should not be confused with the development of a political movement which breaks the economic rationalist framework which still governs ALP policies.*

He expresses his pessimism about the current situation... *In contrast to widespread calls for a new radical politics in the early to mid-1980s, the 1990s saw radical politics reduced to defensive anti-economic rationalist policy demands that barely articulated alternative socio-economic and political cultural visions and strategies.... any illusions about their effectiveness in the face of ruthless governments such as Kennett's has long been dispelled.*

He then presents some of reasons for being pessimistic... *Future historians will debate whether economic rationalist politics could have been stopped during the 1980s or whether global forces and domestic neo-liberal zealots were inevitably going to triumph. Similarly, historians will evaluate whether more patience, political insight and co-operation could have surmounted the combination of personalities, divisive agendas and unfavourable socio-cultural conditions that all prevented a third political force from breaking the mould of party politics in contemporary Australia.*

He calls for a different way of being political... *The new market rules of the game require a different type of political response not yet seen in Australia.* (Emphasis added by **Ecoso**.. its crucial to heed this challenge !)

There are glimpses of hope in his final paragraph, but only glimpses .. *Perhaps there is still an outside chance that the new spirit of resistance and forthcoming federal election may prove to be a catalyst for the survival of a third force... Perhaps in the aftermath of the waterfront dispute there will be less hostility between the "greens" and the "reds". Needless to say, any such electoral success would be short-lived without the subsequent development of a broad-based grass roots movement which tackles domestic political economic, cultural*

*and ecological problems within the context of globalisation... it is the level of extra-parliamentary activity in between elections that ultimately defines the difference between alternative political movements. ... Regardless of where one thinks the new agents of social change will come from, one can be certain that despite globalisation and the needs for new political responses there can never be an entirely new political wheel. Most likely a certain number of the old spokes will need to be re-invented. In this respect both the negative and positive experiences of the Rainbow Alliance will continue to be relevant. (Ecoso emphasis).*

.....  
**Shaping Victoria's Future**  
**COMMUNITY SUMMIT - PEOPLE TOGETHER PROJECT**  
**Resolution on the Widening Gap.**

In Australia the gap is widening and it does not have to be this way. A freeh message needs to be spread widely.

Our Message is :-

Australia is a community not a market. Our governments are trustees of the common wealth, not vendors of it.

We acknowledge markets as one part of how a community thrives. If the rules of the market alone govern a community they will destroy it.

A community looks after its own. Markets, through competition set each of us against the other. Winners take all and losers despair.

Insecure, we become fearful. Fear makes us reluctant to defend what we sense is slipping away; that vague notion that Australia is a place that gives everyone a fair go.

Despair and insecurity are not economically rational. Fear stymies prosperity.

Every person can legitimately expect food and shelter, care in sickness, defence at law, dignity at work, and the opportunities and pleasures that education opens.

The land that abounds in natures gifts can afford to provide at least these basic needs for all of us. To this end tax, equitably reckoned is legitimately sought from us all.

The shared business of citizens, directly and through elected representatives is to debate with tolerance the best way to shape events together to meet every person's basic needs.

Before events shape us and our country into something we hardly recognise, and find difficult to love.

**WE MUST ACT TOGETHER TO BRIDGE THE WIDENING GAP.**

(Emphasis added by Ecoso)

The people Together Project is a community effort which works to promote a caring society, It is chaired by Jean McCaughey and Ben Bodna (03.9347.0022)

# INFORMATION ABOUT THE CROW COLLECTION ASSOCIATION

and

## ECOSO EXCHANGE NEWSLETTER

Eco - ecological, Soc - sociological, Exchange -non authoritarian

The Crow Collection Association (Incorporation Number A0022696P) has the aim of enhancing the comprehensiveness of and accessibility to the books and manuscripts in the Collection at the Victoria University of Technology (Footscray). The *Ecoso Exchange Newsletter* is one way this aim is implemented.

Since 1990 the *Ecoso Exchange Newsletter* has been the newsletter for the Crow Collection Association. However, the forerunner of *Ecoso* was first published in 1967 as a follow-up publication to the trade-union based Living Standards Convention which was held that year. Until 1973 it was called *Irregular* but then this was changed to *Ecoso Exchange* and four guidelines were adopted :-

### THE ECOSO EXCHANGE GUIDELINES.

Adopted 1973 and Endorsed by Crow Collection Association 1990.

1. The promotion of community participation
2. Popularising changing life styles which combat consumerism
3. Advocating restricted use of non-renewable resources
4. Achieving these objectives through participation.

The Crow Collection Association is administered by a Committee of Management. Currently the C.of M. members are :- Mark Armstrong-Roper (VUT Library Rep.), Sheila Byard (Hon.Sec.); Christine Carolan, Ruth Crow (C-ordinator), Audrey Davies (Treasurer), John Dick, Peter Durkins, Peter Gibbons (Chair), Louise Glanville, Michael Hamel-Green, Susan Kyte, Jenny Lane (Public Officer), Colin Long, Angela Munro, Val Noone, Julius Roe, Jos van den Berg.

The main funds for the Crow Collection Association come from subscriptions to *Ecoso* - \$10 for 5 issues. More information by phoning (03)-9329.8685.

Postal address :- Crow Collection, C/o Ms Sheila Byard, Victoria University of Technology, (F.003) PO Box 14428 Melbourne. CMC, Australia 8001.

Archives Librarian  
~~Sarah Brown~~ (C)  
VUT  
ST ALBANS





# All in a day's work ?

## The high cost of economic rationalism

By Elsa Underhill, Senior Lecturer, Department of Management

Few of us remain untouched, either in our own working life or in events going on around us, by the dramatic changes in the economy since the 1980s. The internationalisation of our economy has left sectors, particularly manufacturing and commodities, increasingly vulnerable to market forces. Government policies, such as Compulsory Competitive Tendering and Privatisation at the State level, and National Competition Policy at the Federal level have, when coupled with labour market deregulation, introduced vulnerability to large segments of the workforce. Eventually, we are told, as consumers we will share in market-driven efficiency gains from these developments. But what of our role as producers?

As producers our prospects for lifetime employment are greatly diminished. Unemployment levels have oscillated around 8-10 per cent this decade, with little likelihood of short-term improvement given the probable impact of the Asian crisis. Regions most affected by the decline in the manufacturing sector continue to endure higher levels of unemployment and lower incomes years after those manufacturing jobs have disappeared. Those who hold jobs are likely to have less secure tenure, to start their working lives later and finish earlier.

What is happening to the quality of jobs? Together with Hubert Fernando, Department of Applied Economics, I recently completed a study of worker complaints to Job Watch, the independent State-funded organisation which advises workers how to remedy problems at work. Job Watch approached the University's Workplace Studies Centre to analyse the changing nature of complaints after they experienced a massive increase in the number of people complaining to them during the 1990s - from approximately 1,500 in 1991 to 7,500 in 1996.

Workers complaining to Job Watch in the 1980s had typically been caught in employment scams and misleading job advertisements. We found that by the mid-1990s, however, not only were workers approaching Job Watch from a wider spectrum of industries and occupations, but they were being disadvantaged in ways which formerly would have been unallowable under industrial awards. The incidence of unfair treatment by employers, typically expressed through unilateral decision-making without regard for the impact on employees, had increased substantially.

Another area of concern was the growing incidence of harassment - verbal, physical and sexual - experienced by workers. This can take the form of bullying with

unintended extreme consequences, as shown in the recent Workcover campaign, but more often consists of persistent verbal abuse which puts workers in a stressful working environment. In part, our analysis of Job Watch complaints highlights problems flowing from a work environment where competitive forces in product markets are making employers more desperate. But it also demonstrates the way deregulation of the labour market allows employers to 'nibble away' at those terms and conditions of employment which were once seen as fundamental to maintaining a good quality of working life, with fairness and equity accepted as legitimate workforce concerns.

Other research has highlighted similar trends across the Australian workforce. The Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (1995) of 17,000 employees, found half of the respondents had experienced increased stress, 59 per cent increased effort and 46 per cent an increased pace of work over the 12 months prior to the survey. Similarly, the Australian Council of Trade Unions surveyed 10,000 workers in 1997 and found a majority were experiencing an increased level of stress in the workplace. The three most commonly cited causes were management issues, including a lack of communication/



Elsa Underhill

consultation, increased workloads, and job insecurity or lack of career opportunities.

Wage increases have not compensated for these changes. Instead, income distribution has become increasingly dispersed. Real wages for low-income earners have remained relatively stagnant since the mid-1970s, whilst the highest paid wage earners have received significant real wage increases over the same period. In a labour market characterised by downsizing, work and organisational restructuring, longer hours of work - often unpaid as paid overtime becomes an anachronism - increasing casualisation and part-time employment, these results come as no surprise. Yet they must be of concern. Work plays too

important a role in peoples' lives for it to be degraded in this way. Research is beginning to reveal the rippling effect of labour market change evidenced through employment degradation and precariousness, but we have yet to understand its longer-term implications.

Ms Underhill's research with Hubert Fernando, analysing worker complaints to Job Watch has been reported in the *Australian Financial Review*, *The Age*, and been the subject of an ABC Radio.

If you would like to contribute a Nexus commentary, please contact the Media and Communications Branch. Commentary authors take responsibility for the views expressed in this column.



## Ecoso Exchange Supplement

### LINKING UNIONS AND THE COMMUNITY

Republished article from Nexus, June 1998 and chart from Economic Strategy for Social Change, March 1968. (More information Crow Collection 9329.8685)

# On the waterfront: Lessons from the docks dispute

*The recent waterfront dispute provoked debate around the nation and Victoria University was no exception. Many of our academics actively participated in the debate and others were sought out by the media for expert comment. Below are some of the lessons they learnt from the dispute.*

episodes. In the 1928 waterfront dispute, played out mostly in Melbourne, the police were so blatantly partisan that the local VFA football club refused for many decades to allow any policemen or ex-policemen to play in the Port Melbourne colours. (They take these things seriously down at the Borough!)

In 1998 the police, the journalists and the general public somehow understood that these wharves, no matter how culturally distant, were victims of a wider malaise in employment relations that was characteristic of the era. Their plight made the wharves objects of sympathy.

*Professor Robert Pascoe is Dean of the Faculty of Arts.*



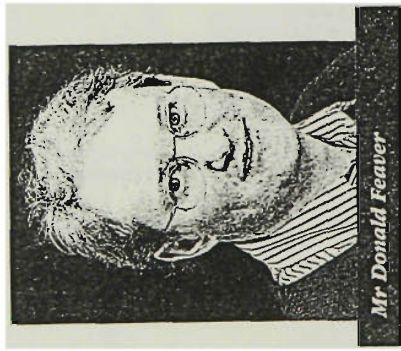
**Professor Robert Pascoe**

**Robert Pascoe: On culture**  
The technicalities involved in the dismissal of the waterside workers by Patrick Stevedores were not of interest to the vast majority of Australians, even though it was through a literal reading of the Workplace Relations Act, ironically, that the Maritime Union of Australia successfully pressed its case in the courts.

The great majority of Australians also accepted the Government's version of the need for waterfront reform, and the Government's caricature of wharves as overpaid from the *MIA* that they had already been working on the

Now that the weaknesses have been identified and publicised, how about getting on with the task of reforms?

*Mr Sukei Bhaskaran is Executive Director of the Australian Food Marketing Centre.*



**Mr Donald Feaver**

**Donald Feaver: On international trade**

The issue of microeconomic reform on the waterfront is not solely about competition or the cost of labour, it is about the cost of using the wharves by Australian businesses and consumers. In order for Australian businesses to be competitive in international markets, it is imperative that infrastructure industries, such as the stevedoring industry, support Australian business by providing a fast, reliable and low-cost service.

However, the cost of using the Australian wharves is, allegedly, among the highest in the

In spite of the dissimilarity, the lesson to be learned from Singapore's port authority is that efficiency is derived from well-designed management and operating systems. It would appear from recent events that unless waterfront reform begins to take a very different direction, all that will be achieved is damage to Australia's reputation as an international trading nation.

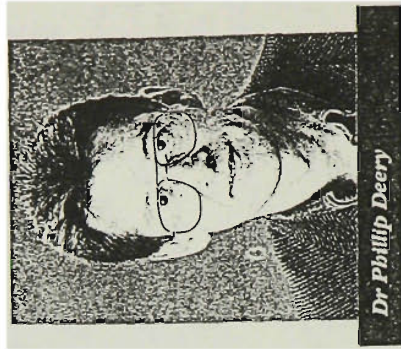
*Mr Donald Feaver is Lecturer in International Business in the Department of Applied Economics.*



**Ms Santina Bertone**

**Santina Bertone: On the workplace**

From a broad humanitarian perspective, it was wonderful that so many Australian working people were able to see beyond the details of the maritime dispute to the broader human rights issues. It was a relief to belong to a union, to protest, to defend one's job against



**Dr Phillip Deery**

**Phillip Deery: On history**  
One of the central lessons of the battle on the docks will, most likely, be disregarded by John Howard. It is a lesson illuminated by the long shadow of history. Both the conservative Bruce-Page Government in 1928 and the Chifley Labor Government in 1949 were convinced, as the Howard Government apparently is, that an unyielding stand against disruptive strikers would yield much political fruit. Yet both discovered that tough, strike-breaking action against waterside workers and coalminers was not rewarded by voters at election time.

Stanley Melbourne Bruce won the battle on the wharves in 1928. Soon after, however, he was defeated in his seat of Flinders, the same seat, coincidentally, as that won by Peter Reith. He was replaced by the Labor leader, W.J. Hollway, whom the



reform, and the Government's caricature of wharves as overpaid and underworked. Any suggestion from the MUA that they had already been working on the process of reform for the past decade was dismissed as simply untrue.

And yet public opinion was overwhelmingly against the government's handling of the dispute. In part this was to do with the image of armed men in balacavas leading guard dogs around the wharves. But it was deeper than this.

It was a profound sense of widespread anxiety that explained the public reaction. In earlier disputes on the wharves, such as at Fremantle in 1919 or Sydney in 1891, only the people living on "the hungry mile" became involved. The 1998 dispute will be remembered for the way it connected with a broader sense of unease about the casualisation of labour relations. More and more Australians understand the uncertainties created by local bargaining, and sympathised with the plight of the wharves.

The media were surprisingly more balanced in this dispute than is usually the case in industrial aspects. They had more time to reflect on the issues and seemed captivated by the notion that this was "a defining moment" in Australian history and thus had to be scrutinised carefully.

Finally, this broader cultural perspective cannot ignore the police. Their role was exemplary, and very different from earlier



Mr Suku Bhaskaran

### Suku Bhaskaran: On exports

The biggest "fall-out" from the waterfront dispute could be ~ Australia's image as a destination for export-oriented investment and as a reliable source of food imports. The events, debates, publicity and the handling of the dispute seem to have portrayed a country beset with poor work practices, labour militancy, an inefficient rail system, powerful "interest" groups and a government that is more interested in political point scoring than in the management of change. The reality maybe and does seem to be different. For a start, Australia's major "food" exports are grains, sugar, live cattle and live sheep. These are exported through bulk handling facilities and were not affected by the waterfront dispute. The dispute was also confined to the smaller of the two stevedoring companies and it seems that, generally, container movements were not badly affected. Millions of dollars have been spent in promoting Australia as a "clean and green" country and positioning it as the "supermarket to Asia". However, in a competitive global environment, buyers are unlikely to switch their sources of purchase nor will investors channel funds to a destination that is beset with high levels of uncertainty.

stevedoring firms by providing a fast, reliable and low-cost service.

However, the cost of using the Australian wharves is, allegedly, among the highest in the industrialised world. What is unclear is, why? On one hand, the stevedoring firms argue that it is because of the Maritime Union's monopoly, and hence, the high cost of labour. On the other hand, there is also a notable absence of competition among the stevedoring firms operating on Australia's waterfront. Allegations of restrictive trade practices and collusion among existing stevedoring firms to bar entry by competitors have been raised, but are ignored or overlooked. Furthermore, the Australian industry has been slow to make the necessary investment in new equipment and state-of-the-art technology that would also contribute to increasing efficiency.

The Federal Government's one-sided approach toward achieving efficiency gains on the waterfront are flawed and appear destined to fail unless reform in a much broader context is pursued. Should any reduction in the cost of labour or improvement in efficiency be achieved by the stevedoring firms as a result of recent events, unless these are passed through as reduced costs, instead of increased profits, nothing will be accomplished.

Although injecting "competition" is not necessarily the answer, it is the regulatory path the Australian Government has chosen to pursue. By contrast, Singapore, the world's most efficient port, is a state-owned monopoly and operating with a unionised (albeit weak) workforce.

so many Australians working people were able to see beyond the details of the maritime dispute to the fundamental human rights issues at stake – such as the right to belong to a union, to protest, to defend one's job against unlawful attacks, to participate in legal industrial action and so on. At a time of conservative governments, when union membership is falling rapidly, those values are being sorely tested every day in our society.

Also revealing was the way the dispute exposed the extreme ideological motivations of the two major players – the employer and the federal government, and their willingness to bend laws to pursue their own ends. From an industrial relations perspective, it highlighted the bankruptcy of a "crash or crash through" approach to workplace reform; and the extent to which Australia is moving closer to the American model, where union busting, anti-worker tactics and prolonged crippling disputes are the norm; where governments rarely take a neutral stance. Further, it exposed the weaknesses in the enterprise bargaining system we've adapted from that model, where legal stratagems can be used to avoid being accountable to the umpire, the industrial tribunals, whose power has in any case been seriously weakened. Finally, at a time of rampant individualism and consumerism, it showed there is considerable support for grassroots collective action in support of issues people feel passionately about.

*Ms Santina Bertone is Executive Director of the Workplace Studies Centre.*

harm on the waterfront, however, he was seen after, his seat of flinders, the same seat, coincidentally, as that now held by Peter Reith. He was beaten by a trade union leader, E.J. Holloway, whom the government had jailed during the dispute. This defeat entered political history: on no other occasion has a Prime Minister lost both the election and his own seat.

Twenty years later, Ben Chifley also made history. Until 1949, the Australian Army had never been used in peacetime against striking unionists. "Fire low and lay them out", the infamous order from the great maritime strike of 1890, had not been forgotten. But for two weeks in 1949, 2000 troops – "scabs dressed in military clothes", according to one striker – mined coal. Four months later, Chifley lost office. Voters tended to associate the crippling effects of the strike with the government rather than applaud the firmness of Chifley's response.

The lessons of these earlier, equally divisive confrontations are not lost on the union movement whose often belligerent behaviour has been moulded by memories of the past. But these lessons should also be studied by John Howard. For he would find that the path on which he is travelling, the path that excludes conciliation and compromise, can lead towards electoral defeat and even political oblivion.

*Dr Phillip Deery is Senior Lecturer in History in the Department of Asian and International Studies.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT MATERIAL IN THIS SUPPLEMENT

"Nexus" article :- Phone the Media and Communications Branch of the Victoria University of Technology, (03) 9688.4613.  
Ecoso Exchange Newsletter :- (03) 9329.8685



# RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN S

Potential for Disunity

Potential for Unity

	<u>LABOUR</u>	<u>FEMINIST</u>	<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>PEACE &amp; ANTI-NUCLEAR</u>	<u>ENVIRONMENT</u>	<u>ABORIGINAL</u>
<u>LABOUR</u>		Women workers' interest in overcoming economic exploitation	Mutual interest in community development and well-being	Worker interest in demilitarisation & peaceful development	Worker interest in health protection, socially useful production & sustainable economy	Mutual interest in resistance to economic exploitation and political oppression
<u>FEMINIST</u>	Patriarchal dominance & hierarchical organisation		Mutual interest in increased access to social resources & community control	Resistance to violence & destructive technologies	Mutual interest in safe technology, healthy environment & increased community control	Mutual interest in resisting economic exploitation & political/social oppression
<u>COMMUNITY</u>	State/private services with paid labour vs co-operatives with volunteers			Mutual interest in development of peaceful way of life	Mutual interest in socially useful production, healthy environment & community control	Mutual interest in social justice, community control and affirmation of community identity
<u>PEACE &amp; ANTI-NUCLEAR</u>	Employment versus disarmament/anti-nuclear conflict				Mutual opposition to social costs & human & ecological threats of militarism & uranium industry	Resistance to uranium mining, military bases & weapons testing
<u>ENVIRONMENT</u>	Employment versus environment conflict		Social justice versus environmental conservation			Mutual interest in protection of environmental heritage & increased community control
<u>ABORIGINAL</u>	Land rights versus jobs from mining, etc.	Patriarchal aspects of aboriginal culture		Aboriginal support for uranium mining	Conflicting priorities for land management	
<u>HUMAN RIGHTS</u>					Conflict over proposed limits on family size	
<u>INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</u>	National self-interest versus international equity	Patriarchal aspects of traditional cultures				
<u>COMMUNAL CO-OPERATIVES</u>	Potential ghettos for unemployed					
<u>ANIMAL RIGHTS</u>	Employment vs protection of animal rights				Opposition to culling of wildlife	Conflicting attitudes to treatment of animals
<u>SPIRITUAL/RELIGIOUS</u>	Emphasis of spiritual alienation vs class conflict	Patriarchal aspects of religions				

Chart Prepared by Conserver Economics Group

The Conserver Economics Group of the Conservation Council 1980s with the aim of trying to implement the vision in *Seeds for the Energy Crisis* which was published in 1978. *Seeds for the Energy Crisis* and the working papers which were used during the preparation of the *Collection at the Footscray Campus of the Victoria University*

# SEVEN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

for Unity →

ABORIGINAL	HUMAN RIGHTS	INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT	COMMUNAL CO-OPERATIVES	ANIMAL RIGHTS	SPIRITUAL/RELIGIOUS
Mutual interest in resistance to economic exploitation and political oppression	Defence of workers interests, resistance to job discrimination and oppression of basic political rights	International solidarity against economic exploitation & support for increased self-reliance	Opportunities for non-alienating labour based on co-operative production for social needs	Opposition to dominance of agribusiness	Mutual interests in social justice and political liberties
Mutual interest in resisting economic exploitation and political/social oppression	Resistance to economic exploitation & political/social oppression of women	Solidarity to overcome oppression of women & promote co-operative developments	Opportunities for development of a co-operative, fulfilling way of life	Opposition to animal exploitation for "feminine" consumerism	Mutual interest in developing personal/spiritual awareness, social justice & political emancipation
Mutual interest in social justice, community control and affirmation of community identity	Resistance to political, economic & social oppression	Solidarity to overcome economic exploitation & promote co-operative, self-reliant development	Mutual interest in self-reliant, co-operative development, using appropriate technology	Mutual interest in a more caring way of life	Mutual interest in social justice and political emancipation
Resistance to uranium mining, military bases & weapons testing	Resistance to militarism & political oppression	Mutual opposition to the political & economic dominance of militarism and associated industries	Mutual interest in a more peaceful way of life	Mutual interest in non-violent, caring way of life	Mutual interest in a more peaceful way of life
Mutual interest in protection of environmental heritage & increased community control	Support for improved living environment & increased self-reliance & community control	Mutual interest in production for social needs using appropriate technology, on sustainable basis	Mutual interest in production for social needs using appropriate technology, on sustainable basis	Mutual interest in nurturing attitude towards nature	Mutual interest in appreciation and protection of nature
	Resistance to political, economic and social oppression	Solidarity to overcome economic exploitation & promote co-operative self-reliant development	Mutual interest in development of viable community structures affirming values and identity	Opposition to pastoral interests	Affirmation of aboriginal religious/cultural traditions; support for social justice
		Interdependence of political, economic and social oppression	Shared emphasis on necessity of respect for individual autonomy	Mutual interest in a more caring way of life	Support for religious freedom & political rights
			Mutual interest in self-reliant co-operative development to meet social needs	Opposition to agribusiness	Mutual interest in social justice & affirmation of cultural identity
				Mutual interest in non-violent, caring way of life using appropriate technology	Mutual interest in developing personal/spiritual awareness & affirming community identity
					Mutual interest in a more caring way of life

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Conflicting attitudes to treatment of animals

## Conservation Economics Group

The Victoria Council of Victoria came together in the early 1970s in *Seeds for Change - Creatively Confronting Seeds for Change, The Nunawading Energy Study, West Melbourne, Economic Strategy for Social Change* the preparation of these reports, are in the Crow Collection at the University of Technology, phone 03.9329.8685.



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