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Members of the BLHA who are not already receiving Labour History are encouraged to subscribe. The full rate for individuals is $70.00; the concession rate for students/unwaged is $40.00. Rates are kept relatively low as ASSLH is a non-profit organisation. New subscribers to Labour History receive the current year’s journals and a free back issue of their choice.

Labour History, 107, November 2014

The 11 articles in the latest issue of Labour History exemplify the journal’s aspiration to foster and publish scholarship on the broadest possible range of labour-related aspects of the Australasian historical experience: on work and protest in peace-time and war; on industrial action by workers on the state as a locus of employment, political contestation, and social and cultural control; on varieties of labo(u)r ideology and political action; on the workings of electoral politics at all levels; on media-based struggles for workers’ hearts, minds, agency and votes; on the linages and prospects of Australian republicanism; and much more. Building on the theme of labour, war and resistance canvassed in depth in our May 2014 special issue (Labour and the Great War. The Australian Working Class and the Making of Anzac, Nathan Wise draws on the written records and oral testimony of Australian soldiers to explore the nature of the work of ‘digging’ during the 1942 Kokoda campaign. Phoebe Kelloway’s article investigates the underlying motives and industrial and ideological dynamic of strike action taken by textile workers in Melbourne and Launceston against a wage cut in late 1932. Pauline Curby’s account of the trial, conviction and subsequent execution in 1936 of Edwin Hickey for the apparently unprovoked murder of New South Wales conciliation commissioner, Montague Henwood, illustrates the journal’s commitment to publishing fresh insights on Australian social and cultural history. Other contributions canvass matters that fall more neatly within the traditional mainstream of labour historical scholarship, dealing as they do with the overarching theme of Labor, Laborism and the Left. For instance, the article by John Sebesta, Douglas Fullarton, Stephen Morrell and Lyn Smith provides a new perspective on the ideological and institutional interplay between Laborism and varieties of revolutionary socialism during last century. Issue 107 also offers a rich and diverse suite of book reviews as well as extended research notes on topics of interest to our readership, including an edited version Geoff Gallop’s 2014 Manning Clark Lecture: “A Republican History of Australia”.

The term *historic* seems appropriate to the result of the Queensland election on 31 January 2015. Many expected the ALP to regain ‘core’ electorates lost in the wipe-out from 51 seats to 7 in 2012. There was a good chance, and a lot of hope, that Premier Newman would lose in Ashgrove. But, not many thought that the ALP would defy the published opinion polls which had a lead to the Liberal National Party of 52-48 per cent on two-party preferred. It also defied the bookies who gave the LNP an 80 per cent chance of winning. One of the most credible commentators on polls predicted the LNP would have an absolute majority of 52 seats out of 89, Labor would have 34, Katter Australia Party 2 and independent Peter Wellington.

If the conservative forces contemplate their history, the result might add to their worries. This is the third time in 100 years that a right-wing party has lost government after one term. Table 1 shows that right wing parties have won government from opposition on four occasions since 1915. Only in 1957 did they keep office for more than three years following the initial victory. After 1957, the split between the ALP and the QLP probably kept the Coalition in government until well into the 1970s when their position was maintained by the gerrymander and the lack-lustre of the ALP.

Table 2 shows the state-wide primary votes for the last three state elections. In 2015, there was a swing to the ALP of 10.8 percentage points and a swing away from the LNP of 8.4 percentage points. The vote of the Katter Australia Party fell 9.6 percentage points and this appears to have gone to PUP and the LNP. The LNP has an almost identical primary vote to 2009 and the ALP is nearly 5 percentage points less.

Antony Green estimates that the 2-party preferred outcome in 2015 is ALP 51.1 per cent to the LNP 48.9 per cent, representing a swing to the ALP of 14.0 percentage points since 2012. The ALP received around 20 per cent stronger preference flows from the Greens in 2015 compared with 2012; this converts to an extra 2-3 percentage points to the swing to Labor after preferences.

The left should savour that a majority, on primary votes, rejected privatisation
Table 1 Changes of Government in Queensland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First elected</th>
<th>Time in government</th>
<th>Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>Country and Progressive National Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>15 years</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>32 years</td>
<td>Country Party/National Party- Liberal Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>6 years</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>National Party-Liberal Coalition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>LNP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-</td>
<td></td>
<td>ALP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Primary Vote at three elections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LNP</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KAP</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greens</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUP</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(or so called asset leasing) which was opposed by the ALP, the Greens, PUP and KAP. The electorate also rejected the crude bribery of making new spending in each electorate conditional on electing an LNP candidate. Unions led the opposition to privatisation and cuts to public services throughout the term of the LNP government. The ETU’s Not4Sale, the Queensland Council of Unions ‘Stand for Queensland’ and the Together Union’s Working for Queenslanders were all prominent. Perhaps the Newman government was prescient, in its own interests at least, when it introduced legislation in July 2013 to control and restrict political spending by unions. The QCU responded with a High Court challenge and the legislation was withdrawn in June 2014 in the face of a separate High Court decision rejecting similar NSW legislation because it limited free speech.
While the unions can be rightly pleased with their efforts, it is less clear that the election is a categorical rejection of ‘austerity’ despite claims from some commentators. The Commission of Audit, with Peter Costello and a seemingly LNP friendly University Vice-Chancellor, was a patently political exercise to justify the usual bundle of policies of cutting public spending, reducing taxes, privatising and contracting out. The public service cuts, savage in extent and execution, were an early part of the same logic. However, the reaction against the cuts might be more about how they were done (and because they contradicted explicit promises) than a demonstration of support for public services.

There is still a big task of building a positive agenda about the public provision of services. The campaign against privatisation was successful but there has been little public protest about the more general encroachment of market relations. Moreover, it is highly unlikely that the clamour of the neo-liberals will relent. Similarly, the mainstream media in Queensland are likely to pounce on any suggestion about increasing Government revenue to fund better public services. Maybe the next lot of ‘grassroots’ and social media campaigning by unions needs to be about getting the community to treat these services as collective assets.

The 2015 election will be fertile ground for future historians. One of the areas for investigation is how so-called conservative Queensland now has a woman as Premier and a woman as Deputy Premier. A majority of the Cabinet are women and there are two Aboriginal people elected to Parliament in the ALP caucus with one a Minister. 39 per cent of the ALP members are women — better than the quota of 33 per cent in winnable sets and almost up the 40 per cent target.

Such matters are more than chance. Yet, and by luck rather than judgement, the interview with Senator Claire Moore in this issue of the journal covers the recent history of the struggle within the ALP to increase women’s representation. Claire is a foundation member of Emily’s List and a major player in getting mandatory quotas for women in winnable seats. She also recognises that some unions in the 1980 and 90s were real leaders in requiring gender balance on union executives and delegations. Indeed, this was how she started going in the late 1980s as a delegate to the monthly Wednesday evening meetings of the full Trades and Labour Council. Those meetings are long abandoned because of lack of quorum.

The interview with Claire continues the series of interviews with current history makers and follows on those with Alex Scott, Beth Mohle and Dick Williams all of whom, and their organisations, deserve mention in election despatches. John Spreckley
writes on the changes to industrial law made by the LNP that were, as he says, directed at unions and at weakening the independence of state institutions.

Queensland unions took up the stolen wages issue in the early 2000s and the matter remains to be concluded satisfactorily. Valerie Cooms writes about how the labour of two generations of her family was actively exploited under the Queensland Government’s ‘Protection Policy’. It is a poignant and gripping story.

We are also pleased to publish the article by India Anderson on Green Bans in Queensland in the 1970s. This is the second article from student scholars at the Centre for the Government of Queensland at the University of Queensland. Vince Englart is one of the protagonists in India Anderson’s article. He is also the author of the story about how the sundial in the Brisbane Botanic Gardens came to tell the correct time — thanks to a BLF member and not an architect. We have two obituaries; David Peetz reflects on his time with Gough Whitlam and we reprint a tribute to Terry Hampson a stalwart of the ALP left and of the battle to stop sand mining on Fraser Island.