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Illawarra Unity: Editorial 1996

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Illawarra Unity: Editorial 1996

Abstract

The Illawarra Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History was formed in October 1995, at a meeting at the Ironworkers' Building in Wollongong. The meeting was addressed by Tom Uren, who attracted a strong attendance of about forty people, including a number of union and political activists, as well as academics and teachers. Greg Patmore, the national president of the Society, also addressed the meeting, which adopted a constitution, set a membership fee of \$5 for 1996/7, and elected the following executive: President: Ray Markey Vice President: Andrew Wells Secretary: Stuart Svensen Treasurer: Gai Warner Committee members: Margaret Bronneburg, Debbie Graham, Shirley Nixon. Robert Hood has since replaced Stuart as secretary as a result of Stuart's shift to Melbourne.

ILLAWARRA UNITY

Volume 1, No. 1, 1996



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Journal of the Illawarra Branch of
the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History

ILLAWARRA UNITY

Volume 1, No. 1, 1996

Illawarra Unity is the journal of the Illawarra Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History and is named after the 1930s South Coast District Unemployed and Relief Workers' journal, *Unity*.

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President: Ray Markey
Vice-President: Andrew Wells
Secretary: Robert Hood
Treasurer: Gai Warner

EDITORIAL

The Illawarra Branch of the Australian Society for the Study of Labour History was formed in October 1995, at a meeting at the Ironworkers' Building in Wollongong. The meeting was addressed by Tom Uren, who attracted a strong attendance of about forty people, including a number of union and political activists, as well as academics and teachers. Greg Patmore, the national president of the Society, also addressed the meeting, which adopted a constitution, set a membership fee of \$5 for 1996/7, and elected the following executive:

President: Ray Markey

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Committee members: Margaret Bronneburg, Debbie Graham, Shirley Nixon.

Robert Hood has since replaced Stuart as secretary as a result of Stuart's shift to Melbourne.

On 11 November 1995, the Illawarra Branch commemorated the 20th anniversary of the Dismissal of the Whitlam government at the Master Builders' Club in Wollongong. A vigorous discussion ensued amongst the thirty-five people who attended. The main speakers included:

Mike Dwyer—President of the South Coast Labour Council, and young(er) militant teacher in 1975;

George Petersen—ALP member of NSW parliament in 1975; and

Fred Moore—Miners' Federation Central Councillor and CPA activist in 1975.

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A special meeting on the 'History of Wollongong' was held on 14 April, in conjunction with the Illawarra Historical Society and the University of Wollongong Labour History and Industrial Relations Centre. The History of Wollongong is being funded by the Wollongong City Council, and undertaken by members of the University's Labour History Centre, who wished to solicit input and contributions from the local community, as well as discuss with them the broad parameters of the project. The meeting was addressed by Andrew Wells, Glenn Mitchell, Josie Castle, and John McQuilton from the University Labour History Centre, and a number of incisive insights were made by those present, to the eventual benefit of the History project.

On 25 February 1996, the Branch held another very successful meeting to commemorate the 1938 *Dalfram* or Pig Iron dispute at Port Kembla. The main speakers were:

Rowan Cahill—teacher and author (with Brian Fitzpatrick) of the Seamen's Union history, who spoke on 'Japanese Espionage and 5th Columnists in Australia', and paid tribute to Rupert Lockwood;
Gary Griffiths—teacher, spoke on 'The Industrial Background to the Dalfram Dispute', emphasising the pivotal organisational role played by Ted Roach;
Ted Roach—Secretary of the Port Kembla Branch, and subsequently Assistant national Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation, spoke on 'The Significance of the Dalfram Dispute', emphasising the political nature of the conflict, which was more significant than the Eureka Stockade, he argued.

On 29 September 1996, the Branch organised a third forum on IS LABOR HISTORY? at the Wollongong Town Hall and Community Centre. The main speakers were:

Ray Markey—University of Wollongong on 'Broad Sociological Trends and Labor'
Rob Castle—University of Wollongong on 'An Electoral Analysis of the ALP'

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Robert Tickner—former Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on ‘Past Achievements, Future prospects’
Marcel van der Linden—International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam, on ‘The Situation in Europe’.

Vigorous discussion ensued amongst the thirty or so people present.

As these activities indicate, we have enjoyed a fruitful and prosperous first year, and it is fitting that we should mark the occasion of our anniversary with the long-awaited first issue of our Branch journal. In this issue we have included a selection of the speeches given at our early forums. Each of those included here is an important historical document in its own right. It is likely that we will include further articles based on speeches given at our forums. However, it is not the intention to confine our journal to formal papers of this kind. We welcome shorter items of historical interest, biographies of local activists, descriptions of events such as strikes, short stories concerning labour and the working class in the Illawarra, songs, poems, and photographs, reviews of books, music and films, as well as news of forthcoming events of interest for members.

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE!

Send any contributions to:

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