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Obituary: Ted Harvey (1915–1997): A dedicated working class stalwart passes on

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Obituary: Ted Harvey (1915–1997): A dedicated working class stalwart passes on

Abstract

The death occurred recently of a fine person and Trade Union stalwart Edward James Harvey affectionately known as 'Ted' to us. He was cremated at the Berkeley Crematorium on May 1 where a large crowd of people attended his funeral. Ted was born at Gilgandra, New South Wales, on May 9, 1915 where his dad had a small farm. As the years went by, the family had to move from place to place as the depression years became harder to exist and people moved around looking for a bit of work to survive. Ted had to face many adversities—he saw people carrying their swags and families thrown into the streets with their bits of furniture and scant belongings. It was all these injustices against the people that made Ted the militant man he was throughout his lifetime.

TED HARVEY (1915–1997)

A dedicated working class stalwart passes on

The death occurred recently of a fine person and Trade Union stalwart *Edward James Harvey* affectionately known as 'Ted' to us. He was cremated at the Berkeley Crematorium on May 1 where a large crowd of people attended his funeral. Ted was born at Gilgandra, New South Wales, on May 9, 1915 where his dad had a small farm. As the years went by, the family had to move from place to place as the depression years became harder to exist and people moved around looking for a bit of work to survive. Ted had to face many adversities—he saw people carrying their swags and families thrown into the streets with their bits of furniture and scant belongings. It was all these injustices against the people that made Ted the militant man he was throughout his lifetime.

Eventually he arrived in the Wollongong area (over 60 years ago) where once again he was faced with the undignified position of having to be herded with others like cattle on the hill at the steelworks to try and get a few days work where the men and boys sat sometimes in freezing weather and pouring rain as there was no shelter. They had to sit out in the open in all weathers, day and night, hoping to get picked for a few hours work. If they were lucky enough to get a start they went to work sopping wet and cold. There was no bathhouse or change rooms, so after working all day or night they would head home filthy dirty. In most cases they never had a decent meal for the full shift or any sort of transport so they walked miles, or at best rode a push

bike, through the mud and slush back to the Dale Camp. Sometimes they slept under a bridge or where ever they could get a dry spot. Having come from the bush to be placed in this position was a bad enough environment, but when Ted saw the awful conditions the workers and unemployed had to endure at places like Flinders Street, Spoonerville and the Camps in this area, he was appalled.

Ted took it so hard that when he did get a bit of work in the steelworks it wasn't long before he became a union delegate on the job, which started him off to become an active member and delegate of the Ironworkers' Union. After many different jobs Ted eventually became a crane driver on the waterfront on Number One Jetty and then a delegate on the South Coast Labour Council representing the FEDFA.

Around 1954 he became a full time State Organiser with the FEDFA and from there he became a full-time Secretary of the South Coast Labour Council, helping to bring that organisation to one of the most militant labour councils—if not the most militant labour council—in Australia. At all times, Ted insisted that *unity* must be maintained at all levels whatever the issue or dispute the Labour Council was involved in. Ted was always a very dedicated and loyal person who looked after the interests of workers at all times and never once did he let them down. He was an internationalist working for, and believing in, a better way of life through our aims of socialism and the brotherhood of workers throughout the world.

Ted had a great involvement with all people and was very involved in the setting up of the South Coast Labour Council Aboriginal Advancement League which was set up to improve the quality of life for Aboriginal people who were living in shocking conditions on the fringes of Wollongong and in the South Coast area. Along with the Aboriginal people the League became a very powerful organisation with slogans of 'Equal Citizenship Rights' and 'Equal Rights for Aboriginals'. The League pushed their grievances and ill treatment to all levels to win them justice and better housing. This was achieved by breaking down all racial and discriminatory laws in the community and Government statutes.

Ted was very supportive of the May Day Committee and always portrayed it as the International Workers' Day—the great traditions of solidarity with the workers of all lands at all times. Ted, and his loyal members of the South Coast Labour Council, organised and pushed back many harsh laws against the workers such as mass sackings and the penal penalties of the ruthless

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Menzies Government, where they attempted to murder the unions financially with heavy fines and costs. Ted never wavered in his trust of the workers' involvement when organised for a principled issue. Ted and the Labour Council at all times had the backing of the workers. Ted's down to earth logic and ability to make workers think as well as act, was his great asset and never once did he let them down.

The Internationale was played as the curtain closed on a loyal comrade who had given so much to the class struggle.

Fred Moore