

THE WHITLAM LEGACY

A SERIES OF OCCASIONAL PAPERS
PUBLISHED BY THE WHITLAM INSTITUTE

VOL 1 | OCTOBER 2011

GOUGH WHITLAM AND THE
'GROUNDS' FOR A UNIVERSITY
OF WESTERN SYDNEY

'A riveder le stelle'

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Authored by

Dr Mark Hutchinson

Mark Hutchinson took a PhD in History at the University of NSW (1989), with a thesis on the development of 19th century Australian historiography. He has been particularly interested in Australian cultural and intellectual history. From 1990-91, he was senior researcher (with Professor Bruce Mansfield) on the Macquarie University 25 Year History Project, which resulted in the book *Liberalism of Opportunity: A History of Macquarie University 1964-1989* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1992). At the completion of that project, he took up the position as founding Director of the Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity at Robert Menzies College (1991-1999), a research centre which produced numerous books, articles and working papers, and which attracted significant interest internationally. From 1998-2002, in addition, Mark was Assistant Director of the Currents in World Christianity Project at Cambridge University. From 2000-2010, he was Dean, Graduate Studies (later Dean of Academic Advancement), and Reader in History and Society, at Alphacrucis College, Sydney.

Mark is currently University Historian at the University of Western Sydney in preparation for the celebration of the University's 25th Anniversary in 2014, a position which he feels may best be viewed as helping one of Australia's great universities reflect upon its own nature, mission and heritage. The author and/or editor of 10 books and over 80 research articles, Mark has been a prolific contributor to conferences, research projects and media. He is a firm believer in the value of understanding the 'social location' of ideas, their origins and functions, in providing a basis for contemporary debate in the public sphere. He lives in Sydney with his wife, Alfonsa, and their three children.

The Whitlam Legacy

The Whitlam Legacy is a new series of occasional papers published by the Whitlam Institute offering contemporary insights on matters of public interest inspired by Gough Whitlam's public life and the legacy of the Whitlam Government.

About the Whitlam Institute

The Whitlam Institute within the University of Western Sydney at Parramatta commemorates the life and work of Gough Whitlam and pursues the causes he championed. The Institute bridges the historical legacy of Gough Whitlam's years in public life and the contemporary relevance of the Whitlam Program to public discourse and policy. The Institute exists for all Australians who care about what matters in a fair Australia and aims to improve the quality of life for all Australians.

The Institute is custodian of the Whitlam Prime Ministerial Collection housing selected books and papers donated by Mr Whitlam and providing on-line access to papers held both at the Institute and in the National Archives.

The other key area of activity, the Whitlam Institute Program, includes a range of policy development and research projects, public education activities and special events. Through this work the Institute strives to be a leading national centre for public policy development and debate.

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Foreword

The Whitlam Prime Ministerial Collection lies at the very heart of the Whitlam Institute's mission and its character. At one level the Collection embodies the life and times of Gough Whitlam, his achievements and those of his Governments. At another level, the Collection is a source for understanding modern Australia and of inspiration for addressing the challenges confronting our nation in the 21st Century.

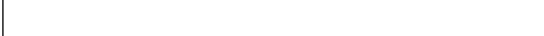
Dr Mark Hutchinson's paper, *Gough Whitlam and the 'grounds' for a University of Western Sydney - A riveder le stelle*, is the first in a new series of Whitlam Institute occasional papers that explore the historical legacy of Gough's more than six decades in public life.

Hutchinson delicately weaves a tapestry that draws together the modern University of Western Sydney, Gough's philosophical roots and his vision for 'liberating the talents and uplifting the horizons of the Australian people': none more so than his own constituents across Sydney's greater west. He describes his paper as an 'act of remembering' in which he approaches Gough Whitlam's contribution to the founding of the University of Western Sydney as a 'process of intellectual archaeology'.

His archaeological dig has proved to be a rich and rewarding one!

I am confident that you will find, *Gough Whitlam and the 'grounds' for a University of Western Sydney - A riveder le stelle*, written with a gentleness that allows its insights to reveal themselves to you and leave you with a renewed sense that the great, enduring reforms are those built on firm grounds.

Eric Sidoti
Director
Whitlam Institute within the
University of Western Sydney



GOUGH WHITLAM AND THE ‘GROUNDS’ FOR A UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY.

*‘A riveder le stelle’.*¹

Australians have a strange way of looking at themselves. Part of our difference to great imperial cultures is that while, say, Americans are largely locked into a struggle about how they see themselves, Australians (at least until the 1990s) were largely locked into concerns as to how others saw us. (And just when we think that we are over our colonial cringe, along comes Oprah). Living on this side of Paul Keating and the debate about Fortress Singapore, we can forget that there was a time when the Prime Minister of this country took most pride in his title as ‘Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports’. We can easily forget both the debt that we owe to the Whitlam years, and the need to understand Whitlam in the light of Menzies.

This paper is an act of remembering, approaching Whitlam’s contribution in the foundation of a University of Western Sydney as a process of intellectual archaeology. By uncovering the ‘grounds’ laid down by Whitlam’s background and political life, it is possible to come to a clearer understanding as to some of the key reformist contributions to the university’s foundation. These personal, philosophical, political and social grounds, it is suggested, are misremembered in many accounts of Whitlam’s career, due to their embedded nature and their appropriation by others after Whitlam’s decline in public visibility after 1975. Two intellectual ‘lenses’, however, make the contribution clear. The first – suitably enough for the young litterateur that Whitlam never quite became but who was never far below his more prosaic public image – is Gough’s fascination with culture and the arts. For this reason, the paper adopts the ‘emergence’ themes which resonate with Gough’s reading of Dante. Gough’s humanist agenda is well captured in his choice of Canto XXXIV at the Dante conference in 2000, in which the Poet reemerges to ‘rebehold the stars’. The second is social movement theory which, in the last section of the paper, provides a useful framework for understanding Gough’s continuity of influence.

The process of forgetting and creative remembering is well demonstrated in the tension between, say, Graham Freudenberg’s memories of the 1960s, and those of Val Noone. For Noone, the key event of the 1960s was the Vietnam war, his account of which is the attempt of a lay Catholic to redeem his Church’s conscience in the present by depicting the ability of its laity to take a public moral stand even against the machinery of the Church. For Freudenberg, Catholics were not the solution, but an opportunity wrapped in a problem. The Democratic Labor Party (DLP) had split the Catholic vote for over a decade: “in close elections, such as those of 1961 and 1969, the DLP was instrumental in denying Labor office, despite the latter’s gaining a plurality of the first-preference vote.”² To win the 1972 elections, the Whitlam government had to overcome generational and cultural entrenchment, and capture the new generation of Catholic lay voters on a platform of morally-charged reform. Here there are two distinct ways of seeing history: the one capturing a moral imperative elevated to the level of symbol in order to redeem history, the other engaged in pragmatic memory, interested in the meaning which the particular context gives to the facts. For one, Vietnam was the big issue; for the other, the key issue was the funding of Schools:

It’s now almost unimaginable how bitter the dispute over state aid to Catholic schools was. Especially in the 1960s and early 1970s the great divisive dispute was not about Vietnam – although it was a big issue – but about state aid. All Whitlam’s battles with the Labor Party’s executive and Conferences of those years one way or another all impinged upon this question of State Aid.³

The importance of the latter for the writing of Australian history, as well as the construction of a post-Imperial Australian identity, cannot be overstated. It is well that we do not forget that the Whitlam period was more than another list of partially successful reform proposals: it was an attempted coming of age.

1 ‘We went out and rebeheld the stars.’ Dante, *Inferno* Canto XXXIV, l. 139, quoted in Whitlam, E.G., ‘Dante 2000’, - Great Hall, University of Sydney, 16 April 2000, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

2 Penniman, Howard R. (1977) *Australia at the Polls: The National Elections of 1975*, American Enterprise Institute. Washington. p164.

3 Freudenberg, Graham., 18 February 2011, Interview with Mark Hutchinson, UWS Archives.

Shape of the Paper

This observation is central to understanding Whitlam's influence on higher education policy, and in particular on the founding of the University of Western Sydney (UWS). It is rare for Australian Prime Ministers to be directly involved in the foundation of universities. The top role is not nearly as closely linked to the "ivy league" as it is in the United States or Britain, partially because Australian politics has not been to the same extent the preserve of entrenched class privilege, partially because the Commonwealth government did not become involved in university support until after World War II, and partially because universities in Australia have not played such a dominant role in producing social leadership as they have in other countries. Chifley's interest in the Australian National University (ANU) is a rare example, and germane to Whitlam's role with UWS. Whitlam's interest therefore needed to 'converge' on universities from a number of directions. It is the following of this 'convergence' which gives the present paper its shape. There are the personal grounds, which flow from Gough's own experience at Sydney and St Paul's College, and the role of international universities in the education of his family (Harvard for Nicholas, Yale for Freda, etc). There are the philosophical grounds based in his learning: his Latinate, classical education in the Christian humanist tradition would enliven his conversation and shape his views of the learned individual and the fulfilled society for the rest of his life. (It would also, as with so many others, render him self-consciously a non-believer.)

It is in this sense, then, that universities formed the context for the educated generalist which Whitlam became, acting as the location for many of his speeches and addresses. There is the university as a tool of socio-personal transformation, something he experienced as pre-war personal realization, and (after the War) as mass social service provision through the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme (CRTS). He came to view the university as an extension of the social economy, and as the means for delivery of services, a function which interacts with education/ higher education as a political tool. What became the University of Western Sydney was thus to be an extension of Whitlam's vision – both as a local member and as a Federal leader interested in harvesting the support of the burgeoning outer suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne – for increased services, 'growth centres', regional organisations of Councils, extended health, transport and sewerage services, and 'gap' funding for schools, community arts and other cultural organisations. Playing off the subterranean themes provided by Gough's own occasional reading of Dante, we might say that these were the *grounds*, both hidden and visible, which made him an effective influence on the emergence of a university in Western Sydney. These *grounds* were successful precisely because they were tied to an effective social enablement strategy which survived the events of 1975. It is the interaction between 'grounds' and 'mechanisms' which, this paper argues, establishes the Whitlam legacy as an effective foundation stone for the University of Western Sydney.

Personal Ground

Like many of those whose interests he would later advance, Gough Whitlam was the first generation in his family for whom the university was a natural sphere of action. His father's father came from a relatively footloose background, disciplined through later-life conversion and marriage into a rigorous Baptist family. This 'redemption and lift' factor mainly came into action with his father, Fred, who topped his school, and then (in the absence of the sort of family finances which could have supported him through university) the Victorian Public Service examinations, just in time to be coopted into the fledgling Commonwealth Public Service. Under the tutelage of Sir Robert Garran, Fred went on to a brilliant career in Canberra as Crown Solicitor and barrister to the High Court. His legal career, however, was the result of night study during his early years as a public servant, rather than through university attendance. He provided for his son a family life exposed to politics, to core values which were internationalist, reformist and moderate, the tempo of which is typified by Hocking as 'ordered, disciplined, and centred on the pursuit of knowledge, education and the practice of their faith.'⁴ Hocking notes Fred's preference for the Presbyterian church in Wahroonga, a church which had a central role, under its "new wealth" commercial oligarchy, in the support of Samuel Angus during the modernist debates of the 1920s. This group represented the more 'university' and internationalist culture of Presbyterianism, which influenced such characters as HV Evatt at St Andrew's College, rather than the Free Church, parochial cultures stronger in other parishes.⁵

4 Hocking, J. 2008 *Gough Whitlam: A Moment in History Volume 1*, p27.

5 See my analysis of this community in *Iron in Our Blood: A History of the Presbyterian Church of NSW, 1788-2001*, Sydney: Ferguson, 2001, chapter 8.

Fred's university connections may be seen, first, in the model of Sir Robert Garran (a university medallist in philosophy, and graduate in law from the University), and secondly in the movement to 'enculturate' the raw bush capital, Canberra, where Fred was president of the University Association and a 'driving force in the Canberra branch of the Institute of International Affairs'.⁶ He was deeply involved in Evatt's United Nations forays, serving on the Australian delegation to the Paris Peace Conference (1946), arguing for the (then unsuccessful) Evatt plan for an International Human Rights court, and later as a United Nations Human Rights Commissioner.⁷

All of these would shape Gough's convergence on the idea of the University. While sharing in his father's classical culture, Gough was sent off to the metropolis (Martha's "place of freedom") to reside at St Paul's College while attending the University of Sydney. Not very active or interested in sport (though he did 'row' at St Paul's), he revelled in the 'frenetic' social life of a University college: unlike his father, he was 'popular, busy and outgoing', given to glorying in self-confident displays of knowledge, being found in the middle of every magazine, revue or debate on the College calendar.⁸ In short, he was the very model of an upwardly-mobile, modern university student of the 1930s, his social life ruling out the sort of results which would have enabled him to become (as he originally intended) a classics professor. Instead, he followed the pathway of professional influence, and went into law. Like Dante, it might be suggested that the 'university as lost opportunity', and the 'university as the doorway to professional vocation' were ever intertwined in his life, and perhaps underlay his inclusion of higher education in what might be portrayed as the unfinished work of Bob Menzies, and the seminal work of Ben Chifley. When he began to think about what services the West might need in the pursuit of an equity agenda, a university occurred to him as a natural extension of services in a way that had escaped other Australian governments for nearly three decades. Unlike many of his contemporaries, he was not fooled into thinking that 'the simple people of the West' needed only simple solutions. Certainly, when he came to give instructions to the inter-Commission enquiry which was to lay the basis for extension of higher education to Western Sydney, he made it clear that the Australian Universities Commission (AUC) and Advanced Education representatives needed to consider more adventurous forms for a University, combining technical, professional and humanities elements in new ways suitable for the West.⁹

Philosophical Ground

Whitlam's classical education and "unswerving belief in the power of the intellect in general - and *his* intellect in particular" [my emphasis] led to "a diligent pursuit of good policy based on careful research and sound values." His was a "Fabian-inspired approach to policy development", with its "application of the intellect to human affairs and stubborn faith in human ability to solve the problems of human life through the application of human reason".¹⁰ In a sense, then, the Whitlam reforms need to be seen as part of the contention between the 'three humanisms' which were even then framing the purpose of Australian university life.¹¹ The first, the platonic humanism of *Ashby's Kingdom of the Mind*,¹² saw universities as essentially ivory tower exercises for boffins, symbolic excrescences of the body politic which acted as the litmus markers of a cultivated society. The second humanism – typified by the organisation DOGS (the acronym used for the Council for the Defence of Government Schools) – was picketing private schools in the suburbs and petitioning government to maintain a 'separation of church and state' which never existed in Australian law, and was really the projection of enlightenment presuppositions in the hands of 'new knowledge class' activists influenced by Dewey-ite visions of America.¹³

6 Hocking, J., *op.cit.*, p39.

7 *Ibid.*, pp126-7.

8 *Ibid.*, p65.

9 Whitlam, EG., as quoted in Bull, FB., and Swanson, TB. *Report on the location, nature and development of institutions of tertiary education in Sydney, Melbourne and the Albury-Wodonga region* (Canberra: Government Printer, 1973), p8.

10 Lawrence, Carmen. 2009 'There's Something About Gough (2)', *Overland*, no.194 p83.

11 It would be useful to note that these were not the total range of humanisms available – in constructing his own philosophical stance, Gough draws on his father's liberal Protestant humanism, as well as on Catholic 'great tradition' humanism. The former is comparatively weak in Australia, though influential in the humanities programs of the Universities from Woolley at Sydney to Judge and Mansfield at Macquarie. The latter is better represented in the development of the Australian Catholic University in 1991, and the later establishment of Campion College in Sydney's west.

12 Quoted in O'Brien, John. 'Universities, Technology and Academic Work: A Reconsideration of the Murray Committee on Australian Universities (1957) in the light of Dawkins (1987-1988)', *Journal of Tertiary Educational Administration*, vol. 12, no. 1 (May 1990), p256.

13 Puls, Joshua. 'The Goulburn lockout' *Australasian Catholic Record*, vol. 81, no.2 (Apr 2004), pp179-80.

Whitlam's was a third humanism, a form of renaissance holism which attempted to draw a middle line between the other two, maintaining an activist (in the Labor terms, 'radical'), humanist reliance on reason without attempting to solve the problem of secularity through exclusion. In the negative, his own partly church school background (which included the private 'church' schools, Knox Grammar School from 1925, and Canberra Grammar School from 1932) and the presence of Baptist, Presbyterian and Anglican streams in his own formation, meant that his humanism could not be either platonic and unengaged, or sectarian and exclusionary. The sources of this are obvious in his reading of classical humanist sources such as Dante, his self-admitted philo-hellenism, and his exposure to Evatt's legal internationalism which held that human rights were 'genuinely universal and fundamental... neither divisible, nor tradeable, nor contingent.'¹⁴ All of these would later be seen in Gough's work to extend cultural and arts organisations into Sydney's West.

Whitlam's *third humanism* caused him to be positive about the expansive possibilities of human nature. In his Chifley lecture of 1975, Gough contrasted the carping, defensive tone of Australian governments after World War II with what he called 'the great tradition':

The great tradition which links the American and French revolutionaries of the Age of Reason with the modern Parties of social reform is the tradition of optimism about the possibility of human improvement and human progress through the means of human reason.... What we aim at is the achievement of the classic liberal idea of the career open to the talents – equality of opportunity – in a vastly expanded form... the removal or reduction of basic fears and insecurities, far from being a limitation on individual incentive, represents a liberation for human creativity.¹⁵

He echoed this tradition in his 1972 campaign Policy Speech, when he said: 'We want to give a new life and a new meaning in this new nation to the touchstone of modern democracy – to liberty, equality, fraternity.' This was not 'storm the Bastille' egalitarianism, but a rational recognition that 'in modern communities, even the wealthiest family could not provide its members with the best education, the best medical treatment, the best environment unaided by the community.'¹⁶ A democratic state thus needed to be in many senses an egalitarian one, an egalitarian state in *every* sense a democratic one. Whitlam would thus have agreed with the statement of a spokesman for the Goulburn Catholic Parents during the lockout of 1962: support for State Aid was not 'a sectarian argument', but 'a protest by Australian citizens against the denial of a basic democratic right.'¹⁷ In opening a federally-funded science block at a Catholic school in Tasmania shortly after his election in 1972, Whitlam expressed this agreement: 'the choice for all parents', he told the gathering, with the UN declaration of human rights in mind,¹⁸ 'should be one between systems and philosophies of education, not between standards and opportunities.'¹⁹ His success lay not in valuing values in the sort of theoretical sense that many public commentators do when they use phrases such as "Of course, X (say, Barnaby Joyce or Bob Brown) has the right to hold the opinions that he does, *but...*" Rather, Whitlam developed a methodology for solving the problem of contending values in a plural secular society by building a strong centralized federalism, coopting the right to define a balanced, positive, post-colonial nationalism, and dealing with Australian society as it was and it could be in the future rather than proposing what it *must* be in the present. "Labor's approach can be summarised as follows", Gough noted in the 1993 Curtin lecture:

whenever a social or community need is identified, public money should be allocated where needs and priorities demand it, and always consistently with the requirements of overall economic management. The basis of Labor's approach is fairness and equity—not an attempt to accomplish everything overnight, but to move steadily towards our social goals, ensuring that the areas of greatest human need have the first claim on the community's resources.²⁰

14 Hocking, J., *op.cit.*, p127.

15 Whitlam, EG. 'The Chifley Memorial Lecture 1975'.

16 Whitlam, EG. 'Launch of Social Justice and Social Change Centre'. University of Western Sydney, 6 November 2003, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

17 Puls, J., *op.cit.*, p169.

18 Article 26(3) reads: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children."

19 Whitlam, EG. 'The National Government's Role in Education', Speech by the Prime Minister the Hon. E.G. Whitlam, QC MP, at the opening of the M.B. Flood Science block of St. Patrick's College, Prospect Vale, Tasmania, 18 March 1973, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

20 Whitlam, EG. 'New Federalism or National Unity?' The 1977 Curtin Memorial Lecture delivered by the Hon. E.G. Whitlam, QC, MP at the University of Western Australia, Perth, 30 June 1977, tss in Whitlam Collection, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

Education in particular was “a national problem and a national challenge... education is the key to national development, national prosperity and national survival”.²¹ It was a belief he carried with him into his involvements in PNG sovereignty, and his membership of the UNESCO Education Committee (1985-1989). Nation-making required a national approach to education.²² It “should provide for individual Australians the key to a successful life in modern society”. In short, to entertain a mild disagreement with that greater wordsmith, Graham Freudenberg, Whitlam was not “the exemplar of *the* humanist heresy” so much as “the exemplar of *a* humanism in the process of becoming a received orthodoxy”, not only because many of the older orthodoxies (Catholic, Right, Left, populist etc) had failed, but because none of them could possibly succeed as the basis for an identity which was simultaneously contemporary, unitary and national.²³

A national humanist orthodoxy required a ‘bigness’ to it, a large vision carried by a large character. Gough partially was, and because of what he was came to *be*, that character.²⁴ “Our approach to education has never been based on elitist, regional, sectarian or other discriminatory grounds”, Gough noted:

Our concern is for all children in all schools, whether Government, Catholic or otherwise independent... Only three out of every 10 pupils at Government and Catholic schools reach the final year of secondary education, whereas at other non-government schools eight of every 10 reach the final year. No democratic government can accept this disparity. It is morally unjust, it is socially wasteful. To sell our children short today is to sell Australia short tomorrow.²⁵

Whitlam’s ability to create a strong central federalism in part flowed from this personal ability to engage, energise and lead. This came from Gough the Poet, the ‘third humanism’ he had absorbed from ‘the great tradition’, energised by his personal charisma in the context of the well-attested tradition of ‘social messianism’ which Labor inherited,²⁶ temporarily occluded through the inwardly turned, defeatist days which followed Chifley. If Menzies (from his lay Presbyterianism) called people (by example) to a form of established belief, Gough sought to establish through his personal example and the extension of social and cultural services the power of Australian self-belief. Though not a religious believer, he understood the power of performed public profession: in 1959 he took his sons to see the massive crowd performance of Billy Graham at the Sydney Cricket Ground. (He also took them to see Bob Hope.) Twenty years later, Graham returned to a much more muted reception: by then, Gough’s forensic, humanist, futurist gospel of Australian possibilities was firmly entrenched in the Australian psyche, and the ‘primacy’ traditional churches on the wane.²⁷ One might argue that while the 1950s were the ‘Time’ for Billy Graham, the 1970s were ‘It’s time’ for Gough. Rational but not a rationalist, committed to the material but not a materialist, and though ‘not a believer and rarely [an attender at] churches’, in 1974 he wrote for the *Australian*:

I retain the humanist’s belief in progress, in man’s innate tendency to self-improvement. ... Real poverty is a poverty of the spirit; real riches consist in the enjoyment of non-material rewards, in the intellectual, artistic and cultural opportunities available to free minds cultivated by a rational system of education. I believe, therefore, that party politics in the next 10 years will be increasingly concerned with improvements in social and living standards... I believe the next 10 years will bring a fuller sense of national pride and purpose, a determination to preserve the national estate and maintain Australian control of our industries and resources.

21 Whitlam, EG. ‘Labor’s Approach to Education’, Address delivered on behalf of Mr. EG Whitlam, QC MP, at the meeting of teachers and parents, Paddington Town Hall, 5 May 1969, tss in Whitlam Collection, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

22 Whitlam, EG. ‘The Decolonisation of Papua New Guinea’, University House, Canberra, 3 November 2002, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

23 Freudenberg, Graham. 2009 (revd.edition) *A Certain Grandeur: Gough Whitlam’s Life in Politics*, p29.

24 There is an extensive literature on the social construction of charisma: see for instance, Platow, Michael J. et. al., ‘A special gift we bestow on you for being representative of us: Considering leader charisma from a self-categorization perspective,’ *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 45, no. 2 (June 2006), pp303-320.

25 Whitlam, EG. ‘The National Government’s Role in Education’, *loc.cit.*, p1.

26 Stretching back to radical worker messianism in the English Civil War, and forward through the utopianism of Robert Owen and the Christian socialism of Edward Bellamy, to the Methodist influences on Labor founders such as William Guthrie Spence, and Catholic social justice influences on Labor-led Welfare legislation, the ‘true believers’ of the Labor tradition believed (with Chifley) that Labor members were ‘evangelists for a great cause’, regarded by its members ‘in the same light as the heads of the great religious organisations regard their faiths.’ (quoted in Day, Chifley, p495) See also Linder, Robert D. *The Methodist Love Affair With the Australian Labor Party, 1891-1929*, *Lucas* 23 & 24 (1997-1998), 35-61; Molony, John. *The worker question: a new historical perspective on Rerum novarum*, North Blackburn, Vic.: Collins Dove, 1991.

27 Whitlam, EG. ‘Primacy Lost’, Speech at the Launch of Babbage, SB., *Memoirs of a Loose Canon*, at New College within the UNSW, 7 December 2004, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney. Gough quotes his son Nicholas’ account of the event, noting that while he himself was ‘utterly unmoved’, he found it ‘fascinating to see Graham’s performance and his influence on some’.

I believe we will cultivate a more mature and distinctive Australian identity, a more vigorous climate in the arts and a generation of young Australians determined to reject all that is shoddy and spurious. It may well be that these hopes for a sound democracy, for a proud people equipped to lead their lives to the full in security and peace, will not be realised in my lifetime. I cannot believe, however, that such a goal is beyond our means or beyond our abilities or that the creation of a model society, an example to the world, is too lofty a vision for a strong and united people.

I believe, I believe, I cannot believe... It was Gough's ability to identify his own belief (the great tradition), and his ability to *not* base his public positions on his unbelief (regarding the substantive positions of the Catholic Church, for instance), which (combined with an extraordinary physical presence which, particularly in his groundbreaking tour of China, drew comment wherever he went) caused his message to be received by a generation in ways which were thoroughgoing and profound. He was prepared to privately clip the wings of the 'Savonarolas in Sydney' when it seemed wise, but he deliberately sought breadth of religious representation in government instrumentalities and positions, and on moral issues more often than not allowed conscience votes.²⁸ He was, in a line also used of Menzies, 'not so much a pillar' of the churches as a 'flying buttress', a 'fellow traveller' who stood outside, but supported 'the structure and those within'.²⁹

This was a gospel which only oriented itself towards the future, but which was very much concerned with ways and means. *Meritocracy* did not, as Gough noted to the inaugural meeting of the National Commission on Social Welfare in Canberra on 3 May 1973, intend *technocracy*. He was aware that the best policy was seen from the future looking back through the organic growth of implementation to careful and coherent thinking:

My government does not aim to present to the Australian people an amalgam of the best available policies of all those countries which we have acknowledged as being more advanced in the social welfare field than ours – that task we could assign to a group of researchers to be achieved by mechanical means, perhaps with the aid of a computer or two. That is not what we are about. Our aim is to do much more. We want to know what is the best that we can do. This involves knowing a great deal about Australian society, its needs, its wants, its capacities, its restrictions, its peculiarities. There is no point whatsoever in having the best social welfare system in the world if, because of the social circumstances in Australia, aspects of it could not be implemented in this country. What we are concerned about are the social needs of Australia. These you have to determine.

Then comes the question of means. Your expertise encompasses both these areas. We have not approached you to write a utopian program. We have not sought from you a political program (whether you might be capable of writing a better effort in that regard than we is a different matter – we are not going to argue, or discuss that). We do want to know what are the needs and by what means you recommend to meet them, given the social and political circumstances.³⁰

His balance would, in the longer term, be reaffirmed by his continuing influence. Gough's was not an influence which rested *only* on personal charisma (the 'blokeyness' of the self-described High Priest of Reconciliation, Bob Hawke) or on technocratic capacity backed by spectacular rhetoric (both key elements of the success of his fellow Western Suburbs MP, Paul Keating). Directing people on a multigenerational campaign for social amelioration takes more than a good vision, personal capacity or charisma. It takes all of these things wrapped in an effective, socially-rooted program of ways and means, and empowered by second-level, non-exclusive values which capture people at a critical time in their lives and which allow them to incorporate their own value sets into the larger vision. There are very few Keatingites or Hawkites, but everywhere one looks in the foundations of an institution such as UWS there are Whitlamites.³¹ An inclusive humanist agenda of his type, not surprisingly, most comfortably converged on that place which was co-formed with Western humanism: the institution of the university.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Hocking, J., *op.cit.*, p142.

³⁰ Whitlam, EG. Text of Speech by the Hon Gough Whitlam QC, Prime Minister of Australia on social welfare issues to the inaugural meeting of the National Commission on Social Welfare, Canberra, 3 May 1973, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

³¹ As Ros Bye in Health Sciences at UWS notes, there was a real vocational drive for many who came to UWS: 'I would fit into that Left Wing view of the world. That is part of the attraction to [working at UWS]. You hear Geoff Scott, he stands up at every major event and talks about the 'moral imperative' and why we are all here, and that it is 'bigger than all of us.' ... You can think about the students for whom you know that this degree has changed their lives for ever... You wear it like a badge.' Ros Bye, Interview, 21 April 2011, UWS Archives. Anne Cusick (Cusick, Interview, 16 February 2011, UWS Archives) points out the contributory stream of Catholic social justice theory.

Political Ground

Engaging State Aid as a political tool was not an innovation of the Whitlam government. This was a legacy of Whitlam's great foil, Robert Menzies in the post-War period.³² The globalisation of the economy made necessary by war, and the value of human capital coordination (entrenched as a means of extending federal influence in the face of external threat), were major push factors for the following period. National unity and the search for efficiency in the midst of total war became the mechanism for undoing the idea of universities as temples of light in (to use Sir Eric Ashby's phrase) the "Kingdom of the mind."³³ The war in the Pacific – which Curtin, Chifley, Menzies and Whitlam all fought in their own ways – was interpenetrated by themes of national self-determination and social uplift, with regard to which education (entrenched in such programs as the Colombo Plan) was a central plank. The 1950s, with its concentration on the necessary institutional support for the domestic baby boom and international tensions mediated through the advance of science (particularly nuclear and space science, the victory of which seemed to be manifested through the atomic bomb and the launch of Sputnik) provided legitimisations for massively expanding government involvement in higher education. These legitimisations were made explicit in a series of weighty tomes produced by eminent government committees in 1957 (the Murray Report), 1963-65 (the Martin Report), and at ever decreasing intervals since, as the mechanisms of government successfully embedded the culture of expertise in this exemplary meritocracy in the South Pacific striving thereby to climb out of its dependency on commodities exports (or, as Paul Keating was later to say, to avoid becoming a banana republic). On the back of his direct aid to both private and public schools, Menzies established the Australian Universities Commission (1959), which acted not only as a precedent for funding mechanisms to the states, but a model for the Whitlam Government's own Schools Commission and later the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC).

The difference between the approaches of Menzies and Whitlam was that – to the latter – education was central to the whole platform, and not merely an additional tool to gain victory at the polls. Menzies believed in the *Kingdom of the Mind*, and so had expanded university funding. The Coalition continually attempted, however, to avoid further entanglement in education from early childhood to post-secondary levels. They 'failed to raise the level of educational provision in line with demand',³⁴ and even though instituting the Murray Review's proposals for a 'binary system' of education (giving rise to the CAE sector), saw its role largely in predicting demand and keeping a cap on costs. For Whitlam, it was quite another thing. He believed in the mind, but it would reside neither in a Kingdom nor quite in a platonic Republic of Learning. Returning from RAAF service at the end of World War II, he had been advantaged by Chifley's Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme, enabling him to complete the law degree he had commenced prior to hostilities. Over a third of Australian university students in 1948 were returned service personnel, providing not only Australia's first experience with mass university education, but a fundamental model for the future Labor Prime Minister's understanding as to the obligations of the Commonwealth in higher education. The 'vast equalizer' which was the CRTS provided a vision as to how Commonwealth assistance could not only overcome political barriers, but help create a society which was more inclusive and equal.³⁵ Whitlam's legal experience and education would also become central to the catalytic event which promoted him into the leadership. His public condemnation of the 'extremist group' in his own Party which challenged the Federal Caucus' decision to leave undisturbed the Menzies state aid provisions, and the '12 witless men' of the Federal Executive which supported them, nearly brought about his dismissal from the Party. He fought it through rejection of American precedent and 'extreme' secularism, from a Party loyalist position which tied the Party's future to its ability to retake the middle ground. He was committed to making the ALP a 'broadly-based socialist party with a radical and modern programme'.³⁶ There was legal permission for Commonwealth involvement in Schools education – the Chifley government's Education Act 1945 and the powers granted by the social services referendum of 1946 – and the Party needed to take it.³⁷

32 Whitlam self-consciously compares himself to Menzies on a number of occasions. Hocking notes that "Gough and Freda Whitlam arrived in Canberra in time for the start of the 1928 school year. Gough recalled it, with an aside to Robert Menzies' birthplace, as: 'only marginally bigger than Jeparit It was sheep country (flies) with a continental climate (chilblains)'." Hocking, J., *op.cit.* p40.

He also took great delight in quoting Menzies back to Fraser and the 'dries' who dominated the Senate and blocked the 'mandate' he saw his government as having on the back of two successive election wins. Whitlam, EG. 'The Chifley Memorial Lecture 1975'.

33 O'Brien, J., *loc. cit.*, p256.

34 Encel, Sol. 'Whitlam, Wran and Education Policy', in Australian Labor Party (NSW) (eds), *Whitlam, Wran and the Labor tradition*, vol. 2, Sydney: Pluto Press in association with the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Labor Party, 1988, p37.

35 Hocking, J., *op.cit.*, p112.

36 *Ibid.*, p255.

37 *Ibid.*, p253.

It was not the last time that Gough's penchant for the grand gesture, his self-confident, fact-based debating from an Olympian height, would draw accusations of Bonapartism. What his opponents did not understand was that the gesture only came in response to a canny assessment of the political necessities and the moral imperative of the moment. (It may be left to the psychologists to argue the disconnection between Gough's height and the accusation of Bonapartism!). Calwell might have had the numbers in the Executive, but Whitlam had them at the ballot box and in the regions. He also had a better understanding of the power of Labor history as a living identity: he drew on the great Labor figures of the past (Curtin, Evatt, Chifley, and even, in the negative, Lang), and gave contemporary meaning to Chifley's 'Light on the Hill' approach to social reform. Like Chifley, he thought of the ALP as the Party 'which stood for justice for the whole of the people and not one section of it.'³⁸ Unlike Chifley in 1949, however, Whitlam intended to make his implementations of the "Light on the Hill" the basis for electoral success through the articulation of a needs-based, non-partisan funding regime. He would 'work out new programs whereby the basic ends envisaged by Chifley could be achieved by other means.'³⁹ His reforms of the 'party and program' during the late 1960s were described as designed:

to promote equality, to involve the people of Australia in the decision-making processes of our land and to liberate the talents and uplift the horizons of the Australian people.⁴⁰

These turned the party towards Australia; other reforms aimed to turn Australia back to the Party.

Whitlam's position was built on a perception of the central role of the Commonwealth in knitting the lot of everyday people with the prospects for the whole. Education and health were particular examples of the way that, while the Commonwealth had reserved for itself in 1942 the preserve of direct income tax, the relationship with the States had failed to live up to the way the country actually worked. Indeed, Whitlam's emphases on the West might be typified as health first, education second – not in order of importance so much as in order of practical need. That was certainly the way it worked out: as Pam Allan has noted, the Westmead Hospital, which was a key element of the Whitlam plan, as developed and carried through at State level in Laurie Brereton's 'Beds for the West' program, provided the political template for the bid by Western Councils to obtain a university.⁴¹ Not only did Gough provide the personal example for his Werriwa constituents – some of whom, such as Mark Latham, Madi Maclean and Pam Allan were raised within his extensive electorate – he provided them, through the waiving of university tuition fees, with the means to go to university. It was this cohort of people who became the carriers of the promise enunciated in 1972 at Parramatta and Blacktown, but which was cut short in 1975. Not only did Whitlam provide them with the means, but as people like Allan, and Maclean, and others went to university, took courses in government and politics, and joined various political parties, they went back into local politics seeking to make a change. There too, Gough had provided them with a mechanism. As a means for ensuring that growth found the peripheries, the Whitlam government established regional growth centres, as a part of which funding was directed towards the establishment of networked regional organisations of Councils. Under the chairmanship of David March (Blue Mountains), and later Pam Allan, the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (WSROC) became one of the few common institutions across, and a major driver for a university presence in, Western Sydney,⁴² holding seminars, coordinating particular local council actions, lobbying with and through regional politicians, highlighting the inequity of NSW higher education for the Press. As Allan notes, when WSROC held a seminar on the Westmead campus in 1985, which brought together Rodney Cavalier, Jack Ferguson and the head of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, Hugh Hudson, Cavalier (who would be the driver for the first attempt to found the university in 1987) spoke briefly, and largely on themes which repressed enthusiasm.⁴³ It was Hudson's talk, during which the big South Australian suggested that all the West needed was a few more TAFE-trained engineers, which enraged Ferguson.

38 Day, David. 2001 *Chifley: a Life*, p208.

39 Whitlam, EG. 'The Chifley Memorial Lecture 1975', tss of speech delivered by The Hon Gough Whitlam QC Prime Minister of Australia at the University of Melbourne, 14 August 1975, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

40 Australian Labor Party Policy Speech 1972, "It's Time for Leadership" delivered by Gough Whitlam at Blacktown Civic Centre on 13 November 1972, quoted in Carmen Lawrence, 'There's Something About Gough (2)', *Overland*, no. 194 (2009), p82.

41 Allan, Pam. Interview with Mark Hutchinson, 10 May 2011, UWS Archives, University of Western Sydney.

42 Indeed, Ross Free considered it likely that March would be acknowledged as the 'father of the western Sydney University.' Speech in Adjournment, Parliament of Australia: Hansard, 14 November 1986, p3181. March later ran for Federal preselection in Newcastle, and was prominent in the Merewether West branch.

43 Interviews, Allan, Pam., 10 May 2011; and Price, Roger., 16 May 2011, UWS Archives.

A supporter of popular education and himself a self-made man (thanks to retraining through the CRTS),⁴⁴ Ferguson responded tartly that “the people of the western suburbs are more than hewers of wood and carriers of water”.⁴⁵ If necessary, NSW would go it alone and found the University by State legislation, without reference to CTEC’s preferences. It was exactly what the organizers – mainly Western Suburbs mayors and MPs representing areas hungry for their share of infrastructure – wanted to hear.⁴⁶ WSROC itself, however, could not be a decisive voice – the Parramatta, Blacktown, Penrith and Campbelltown political lobbies were too locally based for that. What it did provide was the initial necessary illusion, and then increasingly the fact, of the West’s electoral power, helping (as Whitlam intended all along) to turn essentially passive recipients of government leftovers into significant factors in the consideration of the governing Parties. Once Greiner contractualism failed, it became increasingly obvious that Gough’s canny assessment and shaping of the Western Sydney identity in the 1960s and 1970s remained an essential consideration in the 1990s and 2000s.

For NSW to push for Whitlam’s vision of a university in a post-Whitlam world, however, another, less visible change had to be in place. In order to achieve their reforms, Whitlam and his team of “long-haired intellectuals” in Canberra had needed to establish efficient internal political mechanisms which would support the external innovations directly associated with the broader social movement. First, while Whitlam’s educational policy is constantly referred to (and was in fact referred to by his policy team) as ‘needs-based’, the degree that it was also *individually*-based is often overlooked. The Whitlam government promise that every young Australian would have ‘the opportunity to fulfil their promise’ is not about ‘needs’ in the Leninist sense: it is rather about the almost mantra-like commitment that Whitlam and his circle had to making sure that talent did not go to waste. Egalitarianism was just good economic and cultural sense, he noted in the 1969 launch:

When government makes opportunities for any of the citizens, it makes them for all the citizens. We are all diminished as citizens when any of us are poor. Poverty is a national waste as well as individual waste. We are all diminished when any of us are denied proper education. The nation is the poorer – a poorer economy, a poorer civilisation, because of this human and national waste.⁴⁷

These were not just campaign ideals. Twenty years later, Peter Wilenski, with whom Gough had talked about education reform since the two first met in the early 1960s, greeted a liberal Premier of NSW to the future headquarters campus of the University of Western Sydney with virtually the same words.⁴⁸

Though bald, Wilenski was one of Gough’s ‘long hairs’. Under Wilenski, the Whitlam government had sought to make the responsible Minister (and his/her direct staff) rather than the public service responsible for the promulgation of policy. Some authors, such as Barcan,⁴⁹ see in this the origin of the ‘political class’ that Cavalier dismisses in his book *Power Crisis*. The Wilenski reforms, however, were a necessary step towards the Whitlam reforms, as the mandarinate was properly seen as a major force for conservatism and a roadblock to reform. Their emphasis was not on irresponsible power so much as on opening the doors to talent and expertise. And they understood the university as an axial institution in modern meritocratic societies. Whitlam and Wilenski took the meritocratic society seriously, and so constructed organisations such as the Commonwealth Schools Commission as ‘coalition[s] of “senior State educational administrators, nongovernment school authorities, parents, teachers and academics”’.⁵⁰ If a government was going to be serious about efficiency, it had to look carefully at equity, so that the entire available pool of talent could be tapped. In assessing the efficiency of an organisation, Wilenski also noted in his broader public administration work, one needed to apply values, going so far as to add a ‘values impact statement’ to corporate risk assessment activities.⁵¹

44 Cavalier, Rodney. “Jack Ferguson: Representing workers,” <http://www.cfmeu-construction-nsw.com.au/pdf/jackferguson.pdf>, accessed 9 March 2011.

45 ‘Council won’t give way on standards’, *Sun Herald*, 15 February 1987, p11.

46 Interview, Price, Roger. 16 May 2011, UWS Archives.

47 Hocking, J., *op.cit.*, p333.

48 Wilenski, Peter. Introduction to The Hon Nick Greiner, ‘Turning of the Sod’ Ceremony, Werrington North Campus, CUIC Collection, UWS Archives.

49 Barcan, Alan. ‘The New Politics of Education’, *Quadrant*, vol. 54, (Oct 2010), p88.

50 *Ibid.*, p88.

51 Wilenski, Peter. “Competing Values in Public Administration”, in R. Banks, (ed), Conference proceedings, Zadok Centre, Canberra, 1984.

Through the late 1970s Wilenski, a powerful figure in the federal public service, and from 1979 Professor of Public Administration at the Australian Graduate School of Management in the University of NSW, was commissioned by the Wran government to bring these reforms to NSW.⁵² When Lionel Murphy passed away suddenly before he could take up the post, it was Peter Wilenski who would be named by Rodney Cavalier – a minister who made the most of the direct ministerial responsibility which Wilenski’s public administration reforms had gifted him – as Chancellor for the new Chifley University being planned for Sydney’s West. It was significant that, when Rodney Cavalier offered University of Sydney the role of ‘patron’ to a new University for the Western Suburbs (involving direct oversight of ‘Chifley University College’), both Gough and Peter Wilenski were Fellows of the University of Sydney Senate. Gough encouraged the old university to not consider itself beyond child-bearing age: ‘We should take the same attitude to Chifley as to Westmead fifteen years ago. It would be better if we did not delay the legislation and gave prompt positive response.’⁵³

The focus of Gough’s government was on the whole cycle of education, not just on universities, an approach which was borne out when participation rates jumped markedly under its policy interventions through the 1970s. While university tuition fees, for example, only affected (after Commonwealth scholarships etc were taken into account) about 20% of the student population, the closer attention to schools under Peter Karmel, and to TAFE (on which spending jumped from \$19m in 1972-3 to over \$100m in the final year of the government) ensured a ‘pipeline’ effect for students heading towards university enrolment. The sheer amount of money was perhaps less important than the symbolic function of opening the doors of Australia’s universities. It is important not to underestimate the power of university attendance as a ‘right’, rather than (as with the scholarship structure) as a ‘gift’. Here again was the difference between Menzies’ patronage, and Whitlam’s third humanism. Such a development converted the ‘special event’ model of the CRTS into a yearly and sustained reality from the 1970s onwards: university was finally becoming part, if not in the expectations of, at least in the possibilities for, every Australian family.⁵⁴ The period 1969-1975, therefore, can be identified as the swing period in which Whitlam’s programs of realising and extending the Curtin/ Chifley social reform agenda became entrenched as a generalised ideal. At one end of the period, in 1969 the Labor Campaign Launch ran under the heading ‘Into the Seventies with Labor’, promising among other things, ‘an enduring commitment’ to:

opportunities for all citizens – the opportunity for a complete education, opportunity for dignity in retirement, opportunity for proper medical treatment, opportunity to share in the nation’s wealth and resources, opportunity for decent housing, the opportunity for civilised conditions in our cities and our towns, opportunity to preserve and promote the natural beauty of the land – can be provided only if governments – the community itself acting through its elected representatives – will provide them. Private wealth is insufficient now to provide such opportunities even for the wealthy few. The inequalities in our community now reflect not so much gross disparities in income, but the failure of successive Liberal governments to create opportunities for the overwhelming majority of our people – the lower, modest and middle income families – opportunities which only governments can make. And increasingly in Australia the national government must initiate those opportunities....⁵⁵

These became the major thrusts also of the 1972 election, and so the bellweather for the decade. At the other end of the decade, key Whitlam policy writer, David Bennett, was noting (at almost the same time that the foundation of a University in Western Sydney effectively became NSW Labor government policy) that simply appealing to equity principles was no longer a sufficient motivator for educational reform.⁵⁶ Labor needed a new vision, Bennett proclaimed, one that retained the core values of equity and equality, but which gripped the constituency. It would indeed get a new vision in the Dawkins reforms: whether it was a *Labor* vision, Gough publicly asked in his critiques of the Hawke government, was something else again.⁵⁷

52 Wilenski wrote two reports which influenced the structure of the NSW Public Service: *Directions for change: an interim report* (Sydney: Government Printer, 1977), and *Further report: unfinished agenda* (Sydney: [Government Printer], 1982). See Richard Alaba, *Inside bureaucratic power: the Wilenski review of New South Wales government administration*, Sydney: Hale & Iremonger in association with the Royal Institute of Public Administration Australia (ACT Division), 1994.

53 Minutes of Senate, 13 April 1987, p713, 071/00001/00026, University of Sydney Archives.

54 “In 1974, TAFE enrolments totalled 590,000; by 1985, they had risen to 1.3 million. There was a doubling of enrolments in vocational and preparatory courses, while participation in recreational, leisure and personal enrichment courses, the so-called Stream 6, rose by a factor of 350 per cent.” Encel, *S. op.cit.*, p39.

55 Quoted in Hocking, *J. op.cit.*, p333.

56 Bennett, David. ‘Education: Back to the Drawing Board’, in G. Evans and J. Reeves (eds.), *Labor Essays 1982*, 1982, p161.

57 Whitlam, EG. Address by Hon EG Whitlam AC QC at the 25th anniversary of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations – CAPA, Australia Postgraduate Association, The Boulevard, Sydney, 29 May 2004, Whitlam Institute.

Social Ground

The policy for which Whitlam would be remembered above all else by the people of the West – the abolition of university tuition fees – was in fact a result, rather than the centre, of his approach to education. It was already in view, however, right at the beginning of his political career. In his maiden Parliamentary speech in 1953, Whitlam laid the basis for the innovation by using education provision, with health, as an example of the underprovision of services to the burgeoning margins of Australia's metropolis. His argument was typically both practical and based on his forensic humanism. The States were in a declining financial position and could not provide equitable services, meaning that education in particular would need to become a responsibility of the Federal government.⁵⁸ Education was a right, not a privilege, and it was at the same time the coinage of both globally engaged societies, and fully formed citizens of modern Australia.⁵⁹ These were not principles which he alone supported: they were almost a direct quotation of Article 26 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which his father and Bert Evatt had helped to draft in 1948:

Article 26.

- (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
- (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

As Whitlam stood to his feet in Canberra to represent an electorate which had no hospital, nor high school, within its boundaries, and whose services had been severely curtailed by the Menzies' government's austerity budget of 1951, Whitlam established an extended version of the same principle: "Everybody in Australia is entitled, without cost to the individual, to the same educational facilities, whether it be in respect of education at the kindergarten or tertiary stage or the post-graduate stage"⁶⁰ (The power of the ANU model in providing a precedent for that legal mind should not be underestimated.) He kept agitating in Federal Parliament as occasion (such as the introduction of restrictions to enrolment at the University of Sydney in 1961) arose.⁶¹ Twenty years later, he stood – now Leader of the Opposition – before a packed hall in Parramatta, and outlined the policies he would adopt as Prime Minister. These included Federal responsibility for urban development around the country and particular attention to education and health. "The next university in NSW," he stated, "the next college of advanced education and the next teachers' college must be built in the western suburbs, an area which has the largest population of college age of any area in Australia." He would not only authorize it, but he would pay for it.⁶² On entering government, Whitlam immediately established an intercommission inquiry "on the location, nature and development of tertiary institutions throughout and near the Sydney and Melbourne metropolitan areas and in the Albury-Wodonga region". The resulting "Bull Swanson Report" proposed *against* the establishment of new universities in other regional areas (such as Bendigo), and *for* the establishment of greater provision in the peri-urban areas of Sydney.⁶³ Consequentially for the future University of Western Sydney, that report defined such colleges as Hawkesbury Agricultural College as 'rural'.⁶⁴ While the report identified the need for more places in Western Sydney from an equity perspective, therefore, it missed the upsurge in demand which Colleges such as Hawkesbury and Nepean were experiencing. It did, however, provide the principles which would later result in the establishment of Milperra and Campbelltown campuses of Milperra CAE/ Macarthur IHE, and the general rationale for the university into which they would be incorporated in 1989.

58 Whitlam, EG. Parliament of Australia, Legislative Assembly, Hansard, 1 October 1953.

59 Whitlam, EG. Radio Broadcast, Macquarie Network, 3 July 1972, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

60 Parliament of Australia, Legislative Assembly, Hansard, 1 October 1953.

61 It was, for instance, a question from Whitlam in the Legislative Assembly which prompted the closer attention of both the AUC and Menzies to the problem of the third university in Sydney. See 'Area of up to 250 Acres for Third University suggested', Sydney Morning Herald, 28 October 1960, p4.

62 Whitlam, EG. Policy Document "Labor and Sydney's Western Region" and Transcript of Speech by Mr E.G. Whitlam, MP Leader of the Opposition at Parramatta Town Hall on 6 April 1972, Whitlam Institute Collection, University of Western Sydney.

63 Bull, FB., and Swanson, TB. *op.cit.*, p 22

64 Interview, Swain, F. Graham., 13 April 2011, UWS Archives.

The Bull-Swanson Report was tabled in 1973: the following year, the Whitlam Government made a commitment “to establish Sydney’s fourth university as part of the Macarthur growth centre”.⁶⁵ On 5 December 1973, Lionel Bowen announced that there would be new universities at Campbelltown and Albury-Wodonga.⁶⁶ On 26 February 1974, the Minister for Education announced nearly \$100,000 in funding to the NSW government – which the latter had promised to match – for the establishment of a university at Campbelltown.⁶⁷ The commitment fell at the dual barriers of the dismissal of the Whitlam government, and the economic constraints which the subsequent Coalition government imposed to meet global economic stagnation. It was a disaster for regional higher education. Les Johnson, Labor MP for Hughes (a seat which included parts of Sutherland and Liverpool) bemoaned the collapse of the “The growth centres of Albury-Wodonga, Macarthur, Bathurst-Orange and Monaro” as the “major Budget casualties”, which seemed “destined to become the ghost centres of the 1980s and beyond.”⁶⁸ At Wollongong, Michael Birt saw his negotiations for a medical school disappear.⁶⁹ While Commonwealth authorities – such as the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) Working Party on Outer Metropolitan Areas (1983) – continued to support the need for more higher education in Sydney’s West, its preference was to support expansion of Advanced Education offerings, and delay the establishment of new universities. The Lynch Razor Gang, indeed, was pushing for the merging of CAEs, and a stop to all new institutional foundations. It looked like all the official pathways which might promote Gough’s big picture vision for a university in the West were firmly closed.

As noted above, however, Gough’s influence was not ultimately to be restricted to the actions of his government. We can identify three forms of continuing influence: first, his personal presence as the iconic centre of the ‘maintain the rage’ movement, and for some time as the Member for Werriwa; secondly, the continued influence of those who, like Jim Spigelman and Peter Wilenski, and (one step further out) the Wran ascendancy in NSW, continued to promote the ideas of the Whitlam circle through their very significant public and private networks; and thirdly, the hundreds of thousands of young Australians for whom the Whitlam reforms were the framing political and cultural ideas for their entry into adulthood. If we look at the academic writing about social movements, we see authors making distinctions between political campaigns, social movements proper (which tend to be cause-oriented), community self-organisation (which focus on the social needs, structures, ‘space’ and identities in particular communities), and broader social organisation. The solution to the first two of these is easy – wait until the cause, or the eliciting event/person etc., exhausts itself, and it will go away. The favour that Kerr did for Whitlam was that, amidst the drama of 1975, Whitlam’s agenda – like Hamlet – was never allowed to fail. It had not yet been ‘tried’, and so would remain forever young, and so appropriated by the young. In this sense, it became the property of community self-organisation, and reemerged in particular causes – like the variant campaigns for the founding of UWS – when political organisations sought broader based legitimacy. As Rucht points out, social movements – whatever theoretical standpoint is applied – have at their core three elements: the aim for social change, an identity based network structure, and a means of protest.⁷⁰ The Whitlam program for social change was picked up as Western constituencies became politically vocal, developed networks (such as WSROC, and other more grass-roots organisations such as ARROW and the UniWest Committee) based on identities of dispossession, and acquired a means of protest through representation of marginal seats in NSW Parliament, the ability of lobby groups to elicit interest of mainstream media such as the *Sydney Morning Herald* and new media such as radio 2WS, and public meetings where their presence could not be denied. Despite the official attempt (on behalf of CTEC) to kill, and when killing no longer appeared possible, (on behalf of the Greiner Coalition government) to truncate the Labor influences related to, a new university in the West, its emergence in 1989 after three failed Acts of Parliament,⁷¹ was the cause of much frustration and astonishment to many. The aspirations and voice that Gough had given to the West would not be denied.

65 Whitlam, EG. Typescript of Speech at the 30th Birthday of the Western Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils held at Old Government House, Parramatta on 13 November 2003, Whitlam Institute, University of Western Sydney.

66 Bowen, L. ‘New Universities’, Press Statement, 5 December 1973, *Australian Government Digest*.

67 Beazley, K. ‘Media statement: First Money for Campbelltown University’, 26 February 1974, *Australian Government Digest*.

68 Johnson, Leslie. Question, ‘Albury-Wodonga Growth Centre’, Parliament of Australia, Hansard, 22 September 1976.

69 Horne, Julia. 1998 *Not an Ivory Tower: The Making of the Australian Vice-Chancellor*, Kensington: UNSW Press, p60.

70 See ‘Introduction’, in Loader Brian D., Nixon, Paul G., and Rucht, Dieter (eds), *Cyberprotest: New Media, Citizens, and Social Movements*. New York: Routledge, 2004, p3.

71 The University of Western Sydney Advisory Council Act (1986); the Chifley University Interim Council Act (1987); and the University and University Colleges (Amendment) Act (1987).

Conclusion

It is perhaps symbolic of the emergence of Australia as a nation that Gough Whitlam, the classically trained, Melbourne-born, Canberra-raised, Sydney-resident humanist lawyer son of a centralist bureaucrat, should become champion, teacher and symbol for Sydney's marginal suburbs. In the words of Dante, he taught those who had gone to the West with a vision of a better life, only to lose it in the difficulties of unserved suburbs, to 'riveder le stelle' (rebehold the stars). Gough was not intending, perhaps, to follow Dante quite so literally in having a 'service' such as UWS (almost literally) to have to emerge from a 'hidden path', and perhaps he would rather have seen himself in the position of the Poet than the Guide. The fact that his vision became a policy, and then a cause, and finally a legacy, however, was because of the broad 'grounds' which his upbringing, education, personal attainments, political experience and longevity as a social *ikon* contributed to the pursuit of a university in Western Sydney. Due to the disruption of 1975 and the rapid shift of the Australian economy into the global society (and economic theory to the right), his 'back of the envelope' sketches for a university in Western Sydney would become well hidden under the piles of government papers, media reports, and brochures supporting local claims for having thought of the university 'first', in order to have first claim to the location of a campus. Gough's own *aides-memoires* – to institutional openings, university lectures, and book launches – seem largely to have been forgotten by those who have been the beneficiaries of his vision. By the time that UWS was sufficiently large and well-developed so as to be able to tell its own story, Gough's personal retellings have been largely lost in the personal retellings of the whole generation which lived through his times, to the sound of baby boomers scribbling in their journals and now on their iPads.

This is the value of intellectual history: to uncover (in the words of the same Canto) the sources of the hidden 'small rivulets' which descend 'Through chasm within the stone... in course(s) that wind about', and then connect them to the great river that suddenly emerges into 'the bright world', seemingly fully formed, from the ground.⁷² These 'streams', referred to in the text as 'grounds', converge on institutional formation from Whitlam's personal, philosophical, political and social formation, projecting a larger vision of social services as ineluctable legal, economic and social realities which needed to be applied for the unity, development and well-being of a mature, modern, humane, and internationally engaged Australia. They appear in his earliest speeches, are enacted in his earliest policy statements, and projected in his actions and intentions while in government. The vision and planning for a fourth Sydney, 'western' university was part of all of these, only to go 'underground' with the dismissal. The fact that the vision resurfaces is because of Whitlam's ability to entrench the idea into a worldview which finds perpetuation through the 'identity based network structures', and 'means of protest' which become available to an increasingly assertive, self-conscious, and politically-critical Western suburbs of Sydney. While first he, and then his protégée Peter Wilenski, were both dismissed by Coalition Ministers pursuing more technocratic solutions, the disruptions of 1975 and 1988 do not erase the Whitlam contribution to the institution which emerged the next year as the University of Western Sydney. It had a past and, as the foundation of the Whitlam Institute at that institution in 2000 signified, Gough's contributions to that past inevitably continue to surface, calling on the people of Sydney's West to 'rebehold the stars'.

⁷² Dante Alighieri, Canto xxxiv, *The Divine Comedy*, H. W. Longfellow (transl.), Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1867, p147.



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