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Dorothy Cargeeg did not live to see the publication of this biography, and the book is dedicated to her memory in acknowledgement of her contribution to its fulfilment.

Bobbie Oliver, Curtin University
The autumn sunlight shining through the leaves cast patterns of light and shade as Jean Beadle’s funeral cortège crossed the green lawns of Karrakatta Cemetery, in Perth, Western Australia. As well as the mourners, crowds of people had turned out to pay their last respects on a beautiful May day in 1942. A few snowy clouds floated in the deep blue sky, but the weather was perfect—more suited to a celebration of life than a funeral for the dead.

The world was at war. European Australians had often feared invasion by a foreign power, but, for the first time in their history, it was a very real possibility. Barely three months earlier, Japanese forces had captured the British fortress at Singapore and with it thousands of Allied troops; they had bombed Darwin, killing 243 people—although the Australian public did not know the death toll or the extent of damage—and then had attacked Broome. Australia was receiving thousands of American service personnel and gearing up for a war effort unlike any that the country had previously experienced. Yet the Prime Minister, John Curtin, spared the time to send flowers and a message in honour of a colleague from the Western Australian Branch of the Australian Labor Party (ALP). He wrote:

Mrs Beadle was truly noble; her work was of untold value to the Labor Movement, to the State of Western Australia, and to the nation…She never
wavered in her ideals; she never laid down the torch; she never failed to look forward to the day of a better life for all...Australia can be proud of Jean Beadle.2

In the funeral procession, women enjoyed an unusual prominence. Nurses from the King Edward Memorial Hospital formed a guard of honour. The cortege included representatives of practically every welfare organisation in the state, as well as youth and soldier’s organisations. Labor women gathered from all over the metropolitan area. The pall-bearers included three Labor members of the state parliament and the Lord Mayor of Perth. In summary, the cortege represented the numerous fields of endeavour and paid tribute to a physically small woman with an enormous capacity for work that would bring about practical reform.

Who was Jean Beadle? Why did John Curtin regard her as being ‘truly great’ and why was her work for the labour movement of such value? Why, today, is she virtually unknown, with only one memorial to her name? This biography of Jean Beadle examines her commitment to the labour movement, and her motivation and philosophy in the context of her public life and work. It discusses her perceptions of women’s struggles and the injustices that they frequently encountered even within the organised labour movement. Where possible, Jean Beadle’s private story has been reconstructed from family papers, photographs and the recollections of her grand-daughters, Mrs Jean Quarrill and the late Mrs Dorothy Cargeeg. In conclusion, taking up the theme of Curtin’s tribute, the biography will explore her contribution to the labour movement, the state and the nation.

Inevitably, with a study of this nature, there remain questions that may never be answered. While existing material from collections of private and public papers makes it relatively easy to portray the public Jean Beadle, the private woman has been much more elusive. Many political biographies do not contain much in the way of personal details about the subject. This is sometimes at the request of the subject.3 Unfortunately, the lack of the personal seems to be, even now, less acceptable when the subject is female. Consequently, some biographers have resorted to the pointless exercise of speculating about why their subject remained single; or, if married, how their husbands and children coped with their active public lives.4 I suspect that Jean was an intensely private person. Although—as we shall see—when pleading a particular cause, she sometimes revealed glimpses of her private life to
her audience, she would have thought that such details were, on the whole, irrelevant and of no interest to anyone but herself and her near ones.

Jean’s grand-daughters recalled her as a loving and kindly grandmother who was delightful company, as well as a busy activist who combined family picnics and holidays with organising and other work for the labour movement. Recollections of Jean’s house as the hub of the Carr Street community, with the family phone and car being made available to friends and neighbours when needed, the traditional family gatherings at Christmas and New Year, and outings to the cinema to see popular movies indicate that Jean enjoyed socialising, but that time spent with her family was especially precious. Jean and Dorothy remembered that their grandmother always took a little extra trouble over inscriptions in greeting cards. ‘She never ever just put Happy Birthday on the card. She always wrote a very meaningful message…’ Their memories, however, were mostly from their childhood, and were doubtless coloured by a child’s perceptions of a much-loved older relative. They freely admitted they did not understand many of Jean’s activities. The devotion of her children and grandchildren, however, testifies that Jean practised what she preached when she said that a woman could be an activist without jeopardising the comfort and wellbeing of her family.

Apart from Jean’s letter to her older son, Bill, on his departure for active service overseas in World War I, however, no family correspondence was available for this study except the tributes that came after her death. Consequently, her relationship with her husband, in particular, and children retain a certain amount of mystery. Apart from Jean and Dorothy’s recollection of Harry’s devotion to Jean and his support of her work, no evidence has been found that bears any indication of what Harry thought or said about her public roles, although these were unusually prominent for women of her time. Certainly, there is nothing to indicate that her work detracted from her ability to be a good wife and mother. Nor did Jean encourage women to put work or personal ambitions before these roles. Her vision of equal citizenship did not place paid work as anything other than a second best option for women, although she campaigned for their right to professional careers and equal pay for work of equal value.

Similarly, it has been impossible to uncover the full story of some events that significantly impacted upon family life, such as the death of Jean’s first grandchild, the failure of Harry Beadle’s partnership, the WA Forge and Engineering Company, or the failed marriage of the youngest son, Harrie.
Almost inevitably, family tensions must have occurred; including the anxiety caused by Harrie, as suggested by Jean’s grand-daughters. Public comment depicted Jean as ‘feisty’ and, opponents accused her of being argumentative. She clearly had courage, determination and a strong personality. Yet others spoke of her ‘humility’, her ‘modesty’ and her ‘retiring nature’—qualities that were revered in women of the period. Jean emerges as an extremely feminine woman, who took pride in her appearance and loved good clothes, most of which she made for herself. Contemporary photographs from her youth reveal fine features and head of thick, wavy, dark brown hair, which she continued to wear in a bun or a plait after it had turned snowy white in old age. Accessories included an assortment of hats and a fox fur.

In summary, testimony suggests that Harry Beadle fully supported his wife in her endeavours and that her children and grandchildren grew up not only loving and honouring her, but also emulating her social conscience. Curtin’s funeral message highlighted the factors that were central to Jean Beadle’s motivation: a deep love and compassion for women and children, a strong conviction that all people deserve equality, and an unshakeable faith in organised Labor as the only effective means of removing those inequalities and injustices that created poverty and oppression. Jean Beadle cared deeply for the victims of society. A study of her origins reveals that her concerns were rooted in the genuine adversity suffered by those who came unwillingly to Australia’s shores as convicted criminals.
Almost a century before the funeral service at Karrakatta, Jean Beadle’s maternal grandmother arrived in Australia. Born in Glasgow in 1825, Jane Perry disembarked in Van Diemen’s Land from the convict transport, *Margaret*, on 19 July 1843, when she was just eighteen. The 164-day voyage had been lengthy, even by contemporary standards, but the four deaths that occurred among the 156 convicts on board was a lower mortality rate than on many transports. At the time of her arrival in Hobart Jane was five feet, two and one quarter inches (approximately 158 centimetres) in height, with light brown hair, a fair complexion and grey eyes set in a small, round, freckled face. Although Jane was literate and had been in employment as a domestic servant and then as a steam loom weaver, she had twice been convicted for housebreaking, and on each occasion had served three months in prison. Records reveal that her father, Nelson Perry, lived in Glasgow and she had a brother, James, but no evidence has been found of other family members. On 15 September 1842, Jane was tried at the Glasgow Court of Justiciary on a
charge of stealing a rosewood writing desk and was sentenced to transportation for seven years.²

Jane Perry appears to have been fairly typical of almost 3,000 female convicts to arrive in Van Diemen’s Land between 1840 and 1844. The majority of the Scottish female convicts were from Glasgow, and almost half had been convicted more than four times—statistics that reveal more about the economic desperation of that city’s poor than their inclination to criminality. Yet the historian L. L. Robson concluded that the Scottish convict women were ‘more abandoned’ than their English or Irish counterparts and that those from Glasgow were ‘the worst of a bad lot’, thus giving them a reputation that may not have been entirely deserved.³ Whatever the circumstances that resulted in her transportation, however, Jane Perry was by no means a model prisoner.

Like many other female convicts, Jane’s rebellious spirit surfaced in a series of misdemeanours during her imprisonment. On the voyage to Tasmania, she was reprimanded on several occasions for having ‘gone much forward’. In the three years following her arrival, she worked in at least six different situations and committed as many offences including being intoxicated, possessing tobacco, neglecting her duty, ‘misconduct’ and absence without leave. This put Jane slightly above the average of three or four offences committed by female convicts. She served part of her sentence at the Cascades Female Factory in South Hobart, a gloomy and depressing prison, where the inmates suffered primitive, overcrowded conditions as they laboured at hand looms and other menial tasks. Jane’s punishments included three sentences of hard labour—the longest being three months—and two periods of solitary confinement. Hard labour may have been laundry work in the prison. She served fourteen days in solitary confinement and two months’ hard labour while she was pregnant. On 26 September 1845, Jane gave birth to a daughter whom she named Martha. Whatever joy or companionship she derived from motherhood was tragically short, for Martha died at the Brickfields Nursery on 2 February 1847, at the age of 16 months. From the brief records, it is impossible to ascertain how long Jane and Martha lived together, although Martha’s location at the Brickfields Nursery suggests that Jane was working from the Brickfields Hiring Depot at the time of her child’s death. According to Robson, about eleven per cent of female convicts in Van Diemen’s Land bore illegitimate children—a surprisingly low statistic considering their reputation for ‘licentiousness’ and their vulnerability.⁴ Kay Daniels
commented on the high death rate of children at the Female Factory, which, as late as 1855, was attributed to ‘mismanagement and neglect’ as well as overcrowding. As many endured flea-infested bedding and conditions where some thirty people occupied one room, diseases would have passed quickly among the inmates.\(^5\) Daniels’s research indicates that women were allowed to keep their children until they were old enough to be sent to ‘orphan’ schools. In the time that Jane and Martha were at the Factory, children made up about one quarter of the population.\(^6\)

On 2 August 1847, Jane married Edward Spencer at Avoca. Edward William Spencer, Jean Beadle’s maternal grandfather, was born in Stepney, London in 1810. He was a bookbinder by trade. At the age of 20 years, Spencer was only five feet, three and one-half inches (approximately 161 centimetres) tall. He had a pale complexion, brown hair and blue eyes and was clean shaven. On 16 July 1829, at Middlesex Magistrates Court, he was convicted of burglary and sentenced to transportation for life to Van Diemen’s Land. He was transported in the *Mary*, arriving on 9 or 10 April 1830, after a voyage of 113 days.\(^7\) According to statistics gathered by Robson, Edward Spencer, too, was a fairly typical convict. His crime—burglary—was one of the more common offences, and, although his life sentence seems a particularly severe punishment, almost half of those transported for burglary were sentenced thus. About one-third of male transportees were of a similar age to Spencer and half were single. Spencer’s trade was unusual, however, with only one per cent of male convicts in Robson’s sample being listed as ‘Worker in paper; printer’—the closest description to ‘bookbinding’.\(^8\)

Over the next thirteen years after his arrival in Van Diemen’s Land, Spencer worked mostly for J. H. Butcher at Richmond. Convicts who arrived during the 1830s were usually soon assigned to a settler as full-time workers.\(^9\) Like Jane Perry, Spencer was somewhat of a rebel. In the period January 1831 to May 1843, he had fifteen offences recorded against him. These ranged from ‘insubordination’ and ‘insolence to his master’ to ‘gross disorderly conduct’, drunkenness and ‘felony’. In August 1833, he was sentenced to thirty-six lashes for being in the township of Richmond without leave. He was sent to work in a chain gang after threatening to strike his employer, Butcher. While with the chain gang, he received fifty lashes for being absent from work, and after he returned to his former employer, he was again sentenced to fifty lashes for ‘gross insubordination’. In February 1838, Spencer was sentenced to twelve months’ hard labour, including six months in chains, after a further
charge of ‘gross insubordination’. Yet despite his poor record, he was granted a ticket-of-leave on 5 November 1839. In 1841, he married Maria Whitfield, a free settler. He continued to commit offences and, on 30 May 1843, he was found guilty of receiving stolen goods and sentenced to fourteen years imprisonment, of which he had to serve four years at Port Arthur. The fate of Maria Whitfield Spencer is unknown, but she must have died, for, in 1847, Spencer was granted permission to marry Jane Perry.

Jane and Edward Spencer moved to Launceston where they rented a brick house from a Mr Parker. Each held a ticket-of-leave and Edward was employed by the government, probably as a compositor, a skill that would have been highly valued during a period of economic depression when ‘male and female convicts languished in hiring depots while ticket-of-leave holders, without work, trudged the country’. On 31 August 1848, Jane gave birth to a daughter, whom they named Salina Sarah, but who appears to have always been known by her second name. There is no record of any siblings. When Sarah was ten years old, the Spencer family moved to the mining town of Clunes, in Victoria. Why did the Spencers leave Tasmania? Perhaps the anonymity of a new township thrown up in the search for gold offered a fresh start to the struggling family, but an even stronger inclination may have been to escape the hierarchical Tasmanian society, where the ‘taint’ of convictism continued to disadvantage those who had been granted their freedom.

Clunes is one of several settlements claiming fame as the site of the first gold discoveries in Victoria. In 1851, gold deposits had been found on the pastoral lease of a settler, Donald Cameron. The town’s mining industry started slowly and was relatively brief. Unlike nearby Ballarat, there was little alluvial gold at Clunes and mining yielded only very small quantities until, in 1856, a London-owned enterprise, the Port Phillip and Colonial Gold Mining Company negotiated an agreement to mine the gold-bearing quartz reefs. The Company erected a large stamping battery. Much of the mining was carried out by Cornish tributers, who were paid a percentage of the gold discovered. The Port Phillip Company had been in business only two years when the Spencer family arrived. Edward found work in his trade as a compositor, and the family settled in Service Street.

In 1865, Sarah Spencer, aged seventeen years, married George Darlington Miller, a miner ten years her senior. George Miller had been born in 1838 in Manchester, England, to Peter Miller, a manufacturer, and Mary Miller, née Down. Before coming to Victoria, he had travelled in Scotland and New
Zealand. At the time of George and Sarah’s marriage, Clunes was entering its heyday, with a growing number of impressive public buildings, including the Town Hall (c. 1872), banks and hotels, as well as private houses of the wealthy mine owners and managers. The town was overlooked from the north by the fine house of Rivett Henry Bland, Manager of the Port Phillip and Colonial Gold Mining Company, and a number of other grand residences. George and Sarah were married in St. Paul’s Church of England, a timber structure in Fraser Street, which was later rebuilt as a fine, granite edifice in Templeton Street. Not much of Clunes’s wealth came to the Millers, however. Early in their marriage, according to family history, they lived in a tent either in Clunes or at nearby Ararat. It is likely that George was working his own claim, but that he soon achieved greater financial security by joining the workforce of one of the mining companies, possibly in preparation for the birth of their first child. In 1866, they purchased a miner’s cottage at Lot 10, Suburban Street, and it was here that their daughter was born on New Year’s Day 1867.

On 3 February, they presented her for baptism and named her Jane, in honour of her grandmother, the feisty convict Jane Perry. Yet, the Millers’ eldest daughter was always known as ‘Jean’. She was barely eighteen months old when a brother, Peter, was born on 30 June 1868. A second brother, George Darlington, followed on 9 July 1870, and a third, Edward James (Jim) on 19 October 1872. Possibly this fourth child of the Millers was named after James Perry, Sarah’s uncle in distant Scotland.

In September 1873, industrial conflict flared in the normally peaceful town, when 130 employees of the Lothair Quartz and Alluvial Mining Company gathered to form the Clunes Miners’ Association. The company had recently decided to stop contract work and to require their employees to work extra shifts. The miners determined not to work more than eleven shifts per fortnight, and went on strike on 15 September in order to achieve their demands, which included increased rates of pay. When miners from the surrounding districts refused to ‘scab’ on the Clunes miners, the employers sought workers from further afield. In December—with the strike in its fifteenth week—the company agreed to employ Chinese miners. The Chinese arrived at Clunes on 9 December, with a police escort. Forewarned by telegrams from Ballarat and Creswick, a crowd of about 500 miners assembled on the outskirts of the town, armed with pickaxes and other weapons, and accompanied by women and children. By 8 o’clock in the evening, a 1,000-strong crowd was waiting at a barricade on the Ballarat road. When the five coaches carrying the Chinese
miners and their police escort arrived, the crowd attacked with stones and bricks, inflicting several injuries, and the party was forced to withdraw. The local press hailed the miners’ victory with glee. It is likely that George Miller was among the 500 miners, but it remains unknown as to whether Sarah, with her four children, joined him. Although it is tempting to speculate on whether this experience provided an early lesson in industrial solidarity for Jean—not quite seven years old—there are no references to it in her writings.

What is more likely to have impacted upon Jean from an early age was her mother’s continuous cycle of pregnancy and child bearing. Of a further five children, to the four already born to George and Sarah in Clunes, two did not survive infancy. Sarah Ellen contracted scarlet fever and died on 6 December 1876, when almost sixteen months old, and Selina Sarah, born in November 1879, died at the age of fifteen months. The additional three surviving children were Mary Ann (May), born 22 October 1876, Albert Ernest, born 1881, and Alice Maud, born 20 March 1883. Sarah travelled to Melbourne for the birth of Alice, her ninth child, possibly an indication that she required more expert medical attention than could be found in Clunes. Or she may have been visiting her parents, who had moved to Melbourne about 1870, and who, in 1871, were living at the Tasmania Hotel in Lonsdale Street. As the eldest of a large family, Jean must have assumed the responsibilities of womanhood very early in life. She is likely to have attended the South Clunes State School a few blocks from her home, but much of her time would have been occupied with housework and child minding for a mother who was always either pregnant or nursing a young baby.

In October 1885, when Jean was 18 years of age, the Miller family left Clunes and moved to the inner Melbourne suburb of Footscray. Perhaps their move was instigated by the poor health of one or both parents: child-bearing was becoming increasingly difficult for Sarah, while George’s asthma may have necessitated a change of employment—although the area where the family settled was hardly congenial. Jean commemorated the event with a sad little poem entitled ‘Leaving my birth place—Clunes—21.10.85’:

Sweet scenes of my youth
A long farewell—
Dear native home, adieu, adieu.
Fate sends Mr Magic Spell
To the hills and dales I must bid adieu.
It is not surprising that Jean was reluctant to leave Clunes, where the environment was relatively pure, despite its mines. By the 1880s, the atmosphere of inner Melbourne suburbs such as Footscray and Collingwood was polluted with smoke from factory chimneys and the odours and filth of tanneries, wool scouring works and manure dumps. In the local candle factory, thirteen-year-old boys worked a six-day week of twelve- to fourteen-hour days for a wage of a few shillings.

The Miller family moved into a cottage in Victoria Street, Footscray. Jean’s oldest brother, Peter, later lived in a house around the corner in Buckley Street. Both houses were probably demolished early in the twentieth century, when Victoria Street was widened, and a children’s playground was built on the corner where Peter’s house had stood.17

A studio portrait of the couple and their second son, taken after the family moved to Footscray shows George, adopting a slightly aggressive pose, squinting at the camera, while solemn-faced Sarah sits with gloved hands folded on her lap, possibly in an attempt to obscure the bulge below her belt indicating a tenth pregnancy. The features of their son, George, standing behind Sarah’s left shoulder, bear a physical likeness to his mother, with the same, sad, deep-set eyes and rounded face shape. In contrast, contemporary photographs of Jean show that she had inherited her father’s more aquiline features, although the deep-set eyes and straight-lipped mouth were reminiscent of her mother. She had thick, wavy hair, which she wore either in ringlets tied back with a ribbon or piled on top of her head in the Victorian fashion of the time. A coloured portrait copied from a photograph of Jean, taken on her twenty-first birthday, depicted her with dark brown hair and eyes.18 She did not wear spectacles until later in life. Jean had inherited the slight form of Jane Perry; she was often described as ‘petite’, and she did not gain weight in middle or old age.

After the family settled in Victoria Street, George became a member of the Protestant Alliance, the Friendly Society and the Loyal Footscray Lodge.19 It is not known whether he was employed. Jean found work, sewing men’s shirts and women’s underclothing. She was paid two shillings and three pence for lined coats, which she sewed with her own cotton, finished and pressed; one shilling for ladies’ frilled petticoats and one shilling and one penny for men’s dress shirts.20 This type of work was known as ‘white working’, and it was normally performed by outworkers, as distinct from other clothing workers who were normally employed in factories, using machines.21 It is likely, therefore,
that Jean earned her living as an outworker, although she may also have worked in a factory during this period. In either case, the appalling sweated conditions that she endured would leave a permanent impression upon her.

In the 1880s, female apprentices in the clothing trade often were paid no wages for the first six months, after which they received between two shillings and sixpence and five shillings a week for the next six months, and an adult wage of ten shillings thereafter for a six-day week of twelve- to sixteen-hour days. In some factories, small children worked alongside their mothers for the same long hours. Doctors examining children who had worked in factories for several years found evidence of a range of musculo-skeletal deformities, including joint problems and curvature of the spine, and digestive ailments from hurried eating during insufficient lunch breaks. Long periods seated at sewing machines, together with inadequate toilet and rest breaks caused rheumatoid problems, varicose veins, haemorrhoids and constipation. In old age, Jean suffered so acutely with varicose veins that bandaging her legs became a daily ritual.

Jean helped to form a union of female factory workers, which indicates that she was employed in a factory during this period, but it is probable that she left either after her mother's death or when she married. On 16 June 1886, Sarah gave birth to her tenth child, a son whom she named John. She died six days later, aged thirty-eight, from an infection contracted during the birth. The baby lived only a few months. At nineteen, Jean became mother to six younger brothers and sisters. The family remained at the house in Victoria Street. It is possible that Jean resorted to outworking as a means of employment, while maintaining care of two siblings under school age, and, initially, a very young baby.

In between work and domestic responsibilities, Jean was courted by Henry John (Harry) Beadle, an iron moulder four years her senior. Born in Footscray on 15 February 1863, he was the only son in a family of girls. Harry's parents, William and Jane Beadle, were natives of Durham, who had settled in Clunes. It is likely that Jean and Harry knew each other in Clunes before the Beadles moved to Melbourne. They were married in Carlton on 19 May 1888, and settled in Footscray in a small weatherboard and iron, single-fronted cottage with a bull-nosed verandah, edged with iron lace, and a tiny front garden behind a neat, white paling fence.

Within six weeks of their wedding, Harry's trade union, the Iron Moulders’ Society, went on strike for better pay. On 26 July 1888, the Iron
From a Background of Oppression and Struggle

Moulders’ Society and another ironworkers’ union, the Iron Founders’ Trade Union, combined to send an ultimatum to the Ironmasters’ Association, stating that their members would not work for less than eleven shillings a day—an increase of one shilling on the agreed daily wage. In a ballot, two-thirds of the Moulders voted in favour of the demand. The strike commenced on 4 August 1888, involving 500 workers in eleven foundries. Although some foundries quickly acceded to the demand, many others did not, and these were picketed by striking workers. According to the Age, there was widespread fear in the community that the strike would spread to machinists, turners and fitters, involving some 2,000 men. Eventually, through arbitration, the Ironmasters’ Association agreed to pay ten shillings and eight pence per day as a compromise. The strike had lasted seventeen weeks, ending on 5 December. Some of the strikers, including Harry Beadle, were blacklisted by employers and could not find work anywhere in Melbourne.

The next few years were lean ones, with an increasing number of mouths to feed on erratic pay. The Beadles’ first child, Evelyn Elsie (always known as Elsie), was born on 11 April 1889. William Henry Darlington (Bill) arrived just over a year later on 2 July 1890, and their third child, Harrie, on 5 February 1892. Almost fifty years later, Jean recalled those hardship years with a touch of bitterness. The unionists who, like Harry, had been most enthusiastic at picketing the various shops and thus preventing non-union labour from taking the jobs, as well as encouraging fellow workers to join the union, were victimised for months after the strike ended. It was then that Jean realised the ‘great part that woman could play in the work of industrial and social reform’.

Babies did not prevent Jean becoming active in the labour movement; either she took them with her to meetings or left them in the care of other family members. In 1890, she joined the Progressive Political League, which subsequently re-formed in 1894 as the United Labor Party, a forerunner of the Australian Labor Party. During the general strikes in the early 1890s, Jean organised the strikers’ wives to earn money by sewing and doing laundry work. She was reputedly present in the crowd on the Sunday morning in October 1890, when Colonel Tom Price gave the infamous order to his troops to ‘fire low and lay them out’. The waves of strikes which occurred in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland during 1890 to 1894, were in response to worsening economic conditions. Unionists strove to protect bitterly won
wages and conditions from being undercut by employers who themselves were experiencing declining business. The 1890s was an exciting and turbulent decade of reform and defeat for the young labour movement. In 1896, *Factories and Shops Acts* were passed in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland, with the Victorian Act being the most comprehensive. The Victorian Parliament set a minimum wage, prohibited children under thirteen years from working, and granted a maximum working week of forty-eight hours to boys under sixteen years and women. In the late 1890s, numerous Acts were legislated to regulate industry, including the *Employers’ Liability* and *Workers’ Compensation Acts* of 1897, and various mining regulation Acts. These reforms took place against a background of preparation for the federation of the Australian colonies into one nation. Campaigns to grant the vote to women were successful in South Australia (1894) and Western Australia (1899). Consequently, pre-Federation debates concerned political representation. Participants wondered how the states would be fairly represented, and whether the more populous states should have more influence than ‘smaller’ states. They also discussed equal representation in other areas, such as the role of women, both as voters and as parliamentarians, the place of unions and the development of an arbitration system to facilitate smooth industrial relations.

The inclusion of powers was not always seen as progressive. The Brisbane *Worker* ‘argued that pensions and arbitration powers were “really matters of domestic concern”, that had been redefined as federal powers to curb the tendencies of progressive states’. In 1897 and 1898, the *Tocsin*—a weekly newspaper published by the left wing of the Victorian Political Labor League (PLL)—warned that the ideology behind Federation ignored workers’ interests. The *Tocsin* published the PLL platform, which was based on the Chartists’ demands of one vote, one value; payment of Members of Parliament, and annual parliaments. To these the PLL added provision of the old age pension; the reform and ultimate abolition of Legislative Councils; an eight-hour working day; a universal minimum wage; the abolition of Sunday labour, and mining law reform. The *Tocsin* advocated that a Federal Constitution be drawn up by ‘a Convention elected directly by the People of all the States’ and then be ‘submitted to the people by means of a referendum’. These issues were of considerable importance to the Miller/Beadle families; there seems little doubt that the *Tocsin* was read in Jean’s household, and was the inspiration for some of her ideas. Apart from references in her writings to