

*Samuel Duncan Parnell - A Legacy
The 8 Hour Day, Labour Day and Time Off*

Written by Paul Corliss

Parnell, the grand old man of the New Zealand labour movement and the father of the 8 hour day.

Copies available at cost [\$10] plus actual postage,

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The Foreword by **Helen Kelly**, National President, NZ Council of Trade Unions

Yet again Paul Corliss has ensured an important part of New Zealand labour history is recorded in an accessible and interesting way. He has produced a delightful record of Samuel Parnell's contribution to the working lives of New Zealanders, both through his own analysis and then by providing an extensive listing of reference material. Its colourful description of Labour days past and the recording of industrial disputes make this book great reading.

This book documents Samuel Parnell's legacy not just as the "father" of the eight hour day, but also puts Parnell's deeds into an international and historical context. Probably few people really know just how far ahead Parnell's New Zealand was of other industrialising countries, although many of us appreciate how precious those gains were for working people and how easily they can be lost when they are not protected and nurtured, as shown in the 1990's.

This book contains a wonderful array of photographs, newspaper clippings and interesting memorabilia, along with other historical accounts and such things as internet links to other archival material. It is truly a comprehensive account of a man who left an indelible mark on New Zealand's history.

Importantly, Paul provides a contemporary context to his historical background, referring to initiatives by the current Labour Government and New Zealand Council of Trade Unions to build on to Parnell's successes through continuing improvements to working hours (such as legislated rest breaks), work-life balance and additional annual leave. It is an important reminder as we lead up to the 2008 General Election.

While there is no doubt that hours of work are still a major concern to workers today (with recent figures suggesting up to one third of all workers are working more than 50 hours per week), the work of Parnell and those that agreed and joined with him have provided us with a benchmark for reasonable hours that form the basis of our understanding of a working week today.

Thanks Paul for writing it, and let it be a lesson for us all.