

References

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Gerard Henderson, 'The Deportation of Fr Jerger', *Labour History*, No. 31, November 1976, pp. 61-78.

Peter L'Estrange, *Alien and alienated: The case of Charles Jerger 1916-1920, A Turbulent Priest and the War Precautions Act*, History Honours Thesis, University of Melbourne, 1974.

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Douglas Newton, '["We have sprung at a bound": Australia's leap into the Great War, July-August 1914](#)', *The La Trobe Journal*, September 2015.

George Williams, *Inside Australia's Anti-Terrorism Laws and Trials*, NewSouth Publishing, 2015.

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Public Forum

JUSTICE DENIED: WW1, THE CASE OF FR JERGER AND CIVIL LIBERTIES – THEN & NOW

Sunday, 22nd November 2015, 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Shrublands Hall, 196 Livingstone Rd, Marrickville 2204

Program

- 2.00 Welcome (*Jon Atkins – GCPC Secretary*)
- 2.05 Opening Remarks (*Fr John Pearce – St Brigid's Catholic Church*)
- 2.10 Statement by GCPC (*Jon Atkins*)
- 2.15 First Address (*Dr Janice Garaty*)
- 2.35 Second Address (*Assoc Prof Douglas Newton*)
- 2.55 Third Address (*Dr Peter Manning*)
- 3.15 Break for Tea and Coffee
- 3.25 Q&A Session
- 3.50 Presentation to Fr Gerard Mahony (*Clr Sam Iskandar - Mayor, Marrickville Council*)
- 3.55 Announcements
- 4.00 Conclusion

Soft drinks and snacks will be provided.

Event co-hosted by:

Gallipoli Centenary Peace Campaign (GCPC) and St Brigid's Parish
Inquiries: Jon Atkins 0418 864 907 or John Butcher (02) 9559 3406

GCPC website: www.gcpc2015.org.au

GCPC Facebook: www.facebook.com/gallipolipeace/

Background Information

Australian voters were first asked on 28 October 1916 to vote on the issue of conscription. Universal military training for Australian men aged 18 to 60 had been compulsory since 1911. The referendum, if carried, would have extended this requirement to service overseas.

The referendum, or plebiscite more accurately, sparked a divisive debate that split the public and the Labor Party. In the midst of this controversy, Fr Jerger gave a sermon in St Brigid's original church in Despointes Street in Marrickville.

Following the sermon, a local parishioner, Mrs McCall, officially complained that Jerger had expressed disloyal sentiments aimed at discouraging enlistment in the Australian Imperial Force. Jerger denied having made such statements to police investigators.

Late in 1917 Jerger was again accused of conducting an anti-British campaign and interned at Holsworthy Internment Camp on 15 February 1918 under the War Precautions Act (1914) and associated Regulations. However the charges against him were never specified.

Solicitor-General, Sir Robert Garran, recommended deportation on 29 March 1920. In June, Garran heard evidence from Fr Jerger. Thomas Ryan, Jerger's counsel, was prevented from appearing. Garran reasserted his claim that Fr Jerger's "attitude of mind" was German, that "during the war his sympathies were with the Germans, and that he gave expression to these feelings". Such inadequately supported claims bolstered the belief that this hearing was nothing more than a show trial.¹

The failure to hold a proper trial and have witnesses examined, heightened the feeling that Jerger had been unfairly treated. Demonstrations were organised and court actions and the threat of strikes were used in an attempt to keep him in the country.

Jerger was released on 30 April 1920 but rearrested on 7 July. He was eventually deported from Adelaide in July 1920. The controversy "was no longer a simple sectarian dispute: the labour movement protested at the deportation and there were bitter divisions in both Catholic and Protestant groups on the question of Jerger's loyalty and his right to remain in Australia".²

Join Us

Join us on Sunday, 22 November at 2.00pm to hear the full story behind the persecution and deportation of Fr Jerger. The forum will also examine the parallels between the assault on civil liberties during and after WW1 and the ever increasing over-reach of executive power in the "war on terror" today.

Tea, coffee and snacks will be provided. Entry by gold coin recommended.

All welcome.

Notes

1. Solicitor-General, Sir Robert Garran, quoted in Gerard Henderson, 'The Deportation of Charles Jerger', *Labour History*, No. 31, Nov 1976, p. 72.
2. Peter L'Estrange, 'Jerger, Charles Adolph (1869–1927)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/jerger-charles-adolph-6843/text11851>, published first in hardcopy 1983, accessed online 16 November 2015.