

The Canterbury WEA has shown an amazing talent for selecting guest lecturers and topics for these annual memorial lectures over 50 years – lectures reflecting the manifold political, social and educational passions of Lincoln Efford.

Tonight's is no exception. Lincoln always regarded himself as a scientist – first an aspiring agricultural scientist, a career ambition cut off by chronic illness, and then a social scientist specialising in labour issues during the 'Red Dawn' of the first Labour Government.

Penology and penal reform was one of his many causes and he led the Howard League and the Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society at various times, as well as organizing ad hoc campaigns against capital punishment in the 1950s.

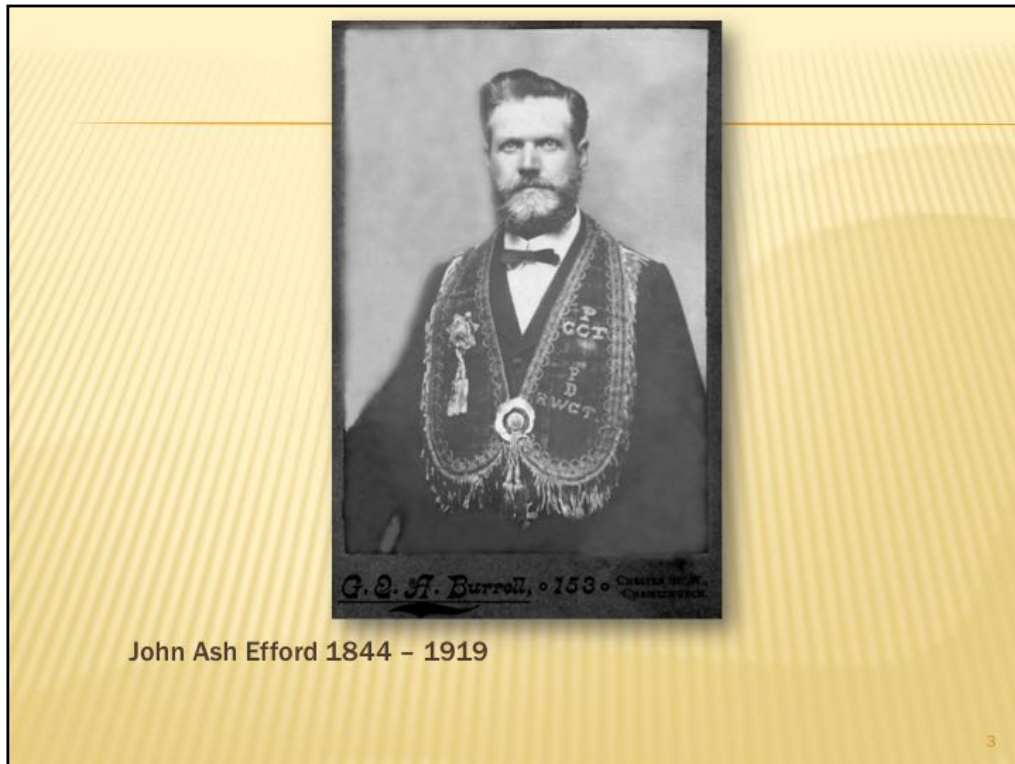
Lincoln Efford died, aged only 54, on 24 April 1962.

My brother Murray and I, just children when Lincoln Efford died, are among the handful of people now around with personal memories of him. This is my annual attempt to put not just a face but a real person to the name.

<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5e1/efford-lincoln-arthur-winstone>
(just Google 'Lincoln Efford')

Google Lincoln Efford and you will find this entry in the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand. But there is a lot more to the story than can be accommodated in a single website, as I am still finding out.

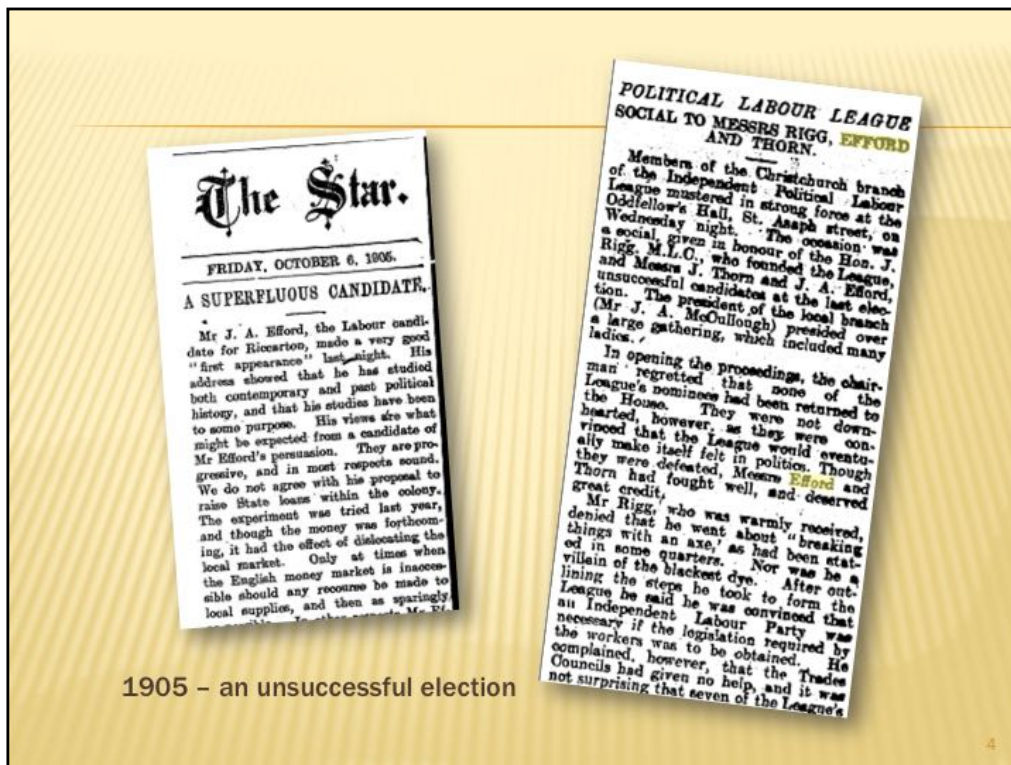
My second cousin Kay Rollinson has extensively researched the English origins of the family in Devon, and found records of the Effords acting as officials for the Parliamentary and Protestant cause in the village of Cornworthy in 1641.



John Ash Efford 1844 – 1919

The New Zealand end of the story starts with John Ash Efford, Lincoln's grandfather and a coachbuilder, who arrived in Christchurch in 1872 as a Vogel Scheme immigrant.

In many ways, John Ash is as fascinating as Lincoln, but it is the influence on his grandson which concerns us tonight.



1905 – an unsuccessful election

Already involved with left wing causes in his native Devon, he went on to work at the Addington Railway Workshops, the virtual cradle of the CWEA, when the shops opened in 1881.

John Ash was a founding member of the railway union, a leading Baptist and temperance campaigner and an active socialist who stood as a parliamentary candidate for the Independent Labour Political League – a Labour Party precursor – in 1905.

He was a close friend of Jack McCullough, one of the founders of the CWEA.



Lincoln was born over the road from the Workshops, in Lowe St in 1907, his father also a tradesman at the workshops.

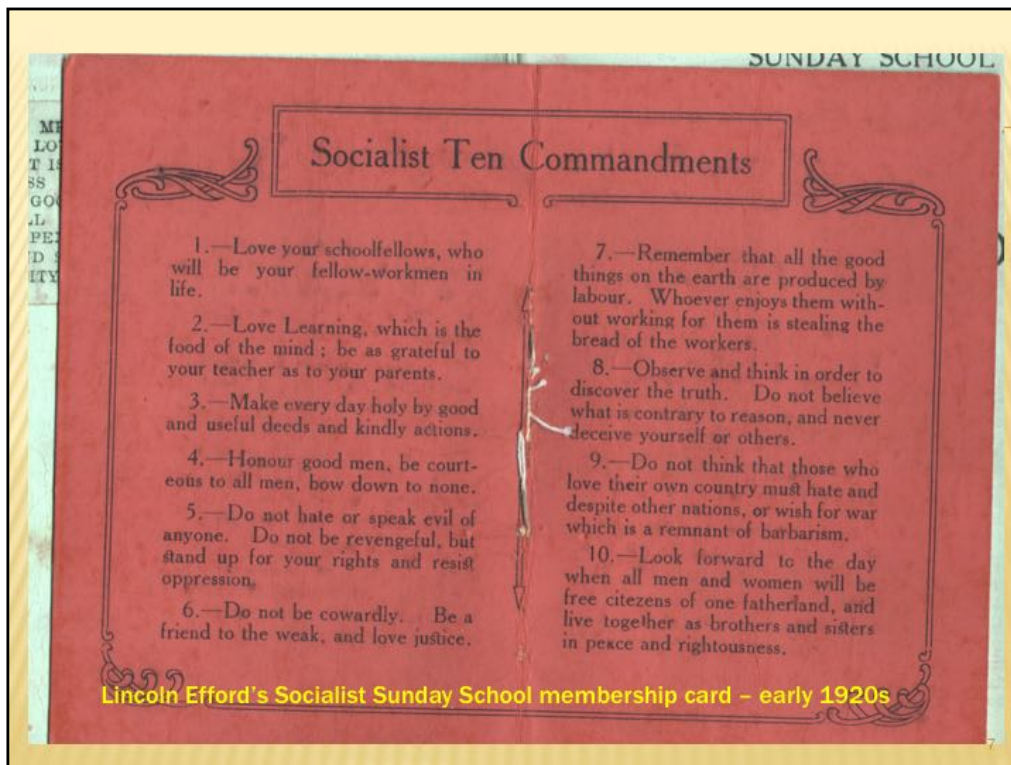
Although Lincoln was only 12 when his grandfather died in 1919, the old man was clearly influential in the youngster's political development. He even chose Lincoln's name, out of admiration for the American president.

In this Golden Wedding photo in 1915 we see 8-year-old Lincoln sitting immediately in front of his grandfather.

Lincoln's father, William Harris (or 'Wills') was also an activist, opposing the First World War and setting Lincoln on a pacifist course. Wills became a Rationalist in disgust at the Baptist church's support of the war and Lincoln followed that path, too.



Incredibly, that house still stands in very original external condition despite the earthquakes, apart from the chimney, hence the stack of bricks.

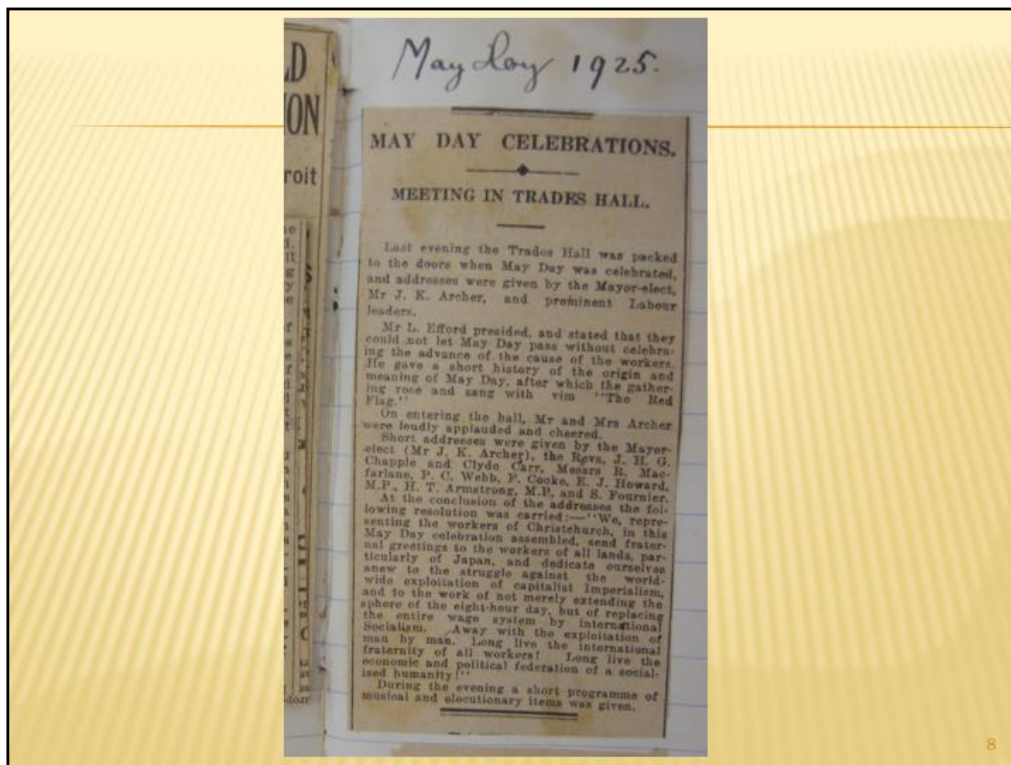


Another influence was the Socialist Sunday School, part of Christchurch's radical history now largely forgotten.

In 1920 Lincoln attended the first WEA Summer School, an annual institution which he later managed as WEA secretary.

At the age of 13, Lincoln was apparently under the guardianship of socialist and pacifist mentor and lifelong friend, Jack McCullough, at the summer school.

In 1943 Lincoln and Jack's son Bill were to be co-vice-presidents of the WEA.



Lincoln threw himself into active political involvement while still in his teens – in 1925, for instance, at the age of 18, he became a member of the executive of the Christchurch Branch of the Labour Party and, precociously, presided at the May Day rally in the Trades Hall addressed by a slew of prominent Labour personalities.

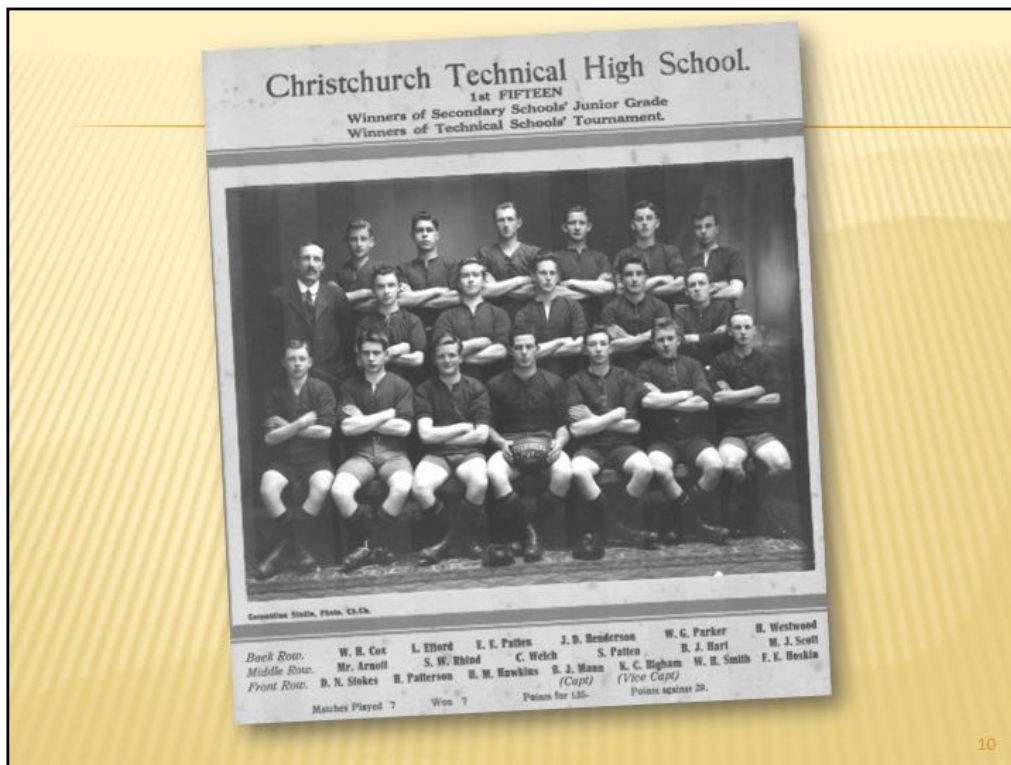


But Lincoln's teenage years were not just devoted to socialism.

At Christchurch Tech he did well in his agricultural studies – despite his urban industrial background – and went on to agricultural science studies at Lincoln College.

He was also heavily involved in sport as both a player and administrator of Tech Old Boys rugby and athletics.

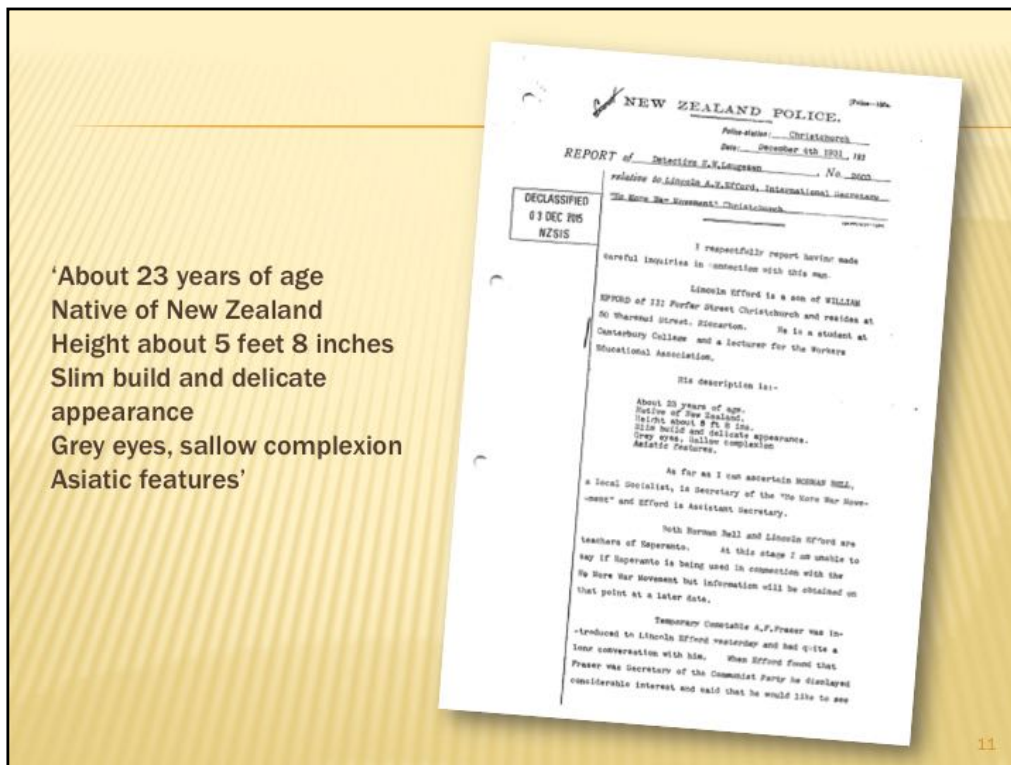
And it is clear from photos and other records that he was a popular and gregarious participant in many social activities.



However, rugby was also his downfall.

An injury sustained during a Tech Old Boys game, probably around 1928, was badly treated by the doctors of the time.

Somehow, this led to a bowel disorder which blighted the remainder of his life and because of the over-use of X-rays during frequent hospital stays probably precipitated his eventual death from leukemia. Constant head pains, tinnitus and partial deafness added to his misery and became particularly acute during the 1940s..

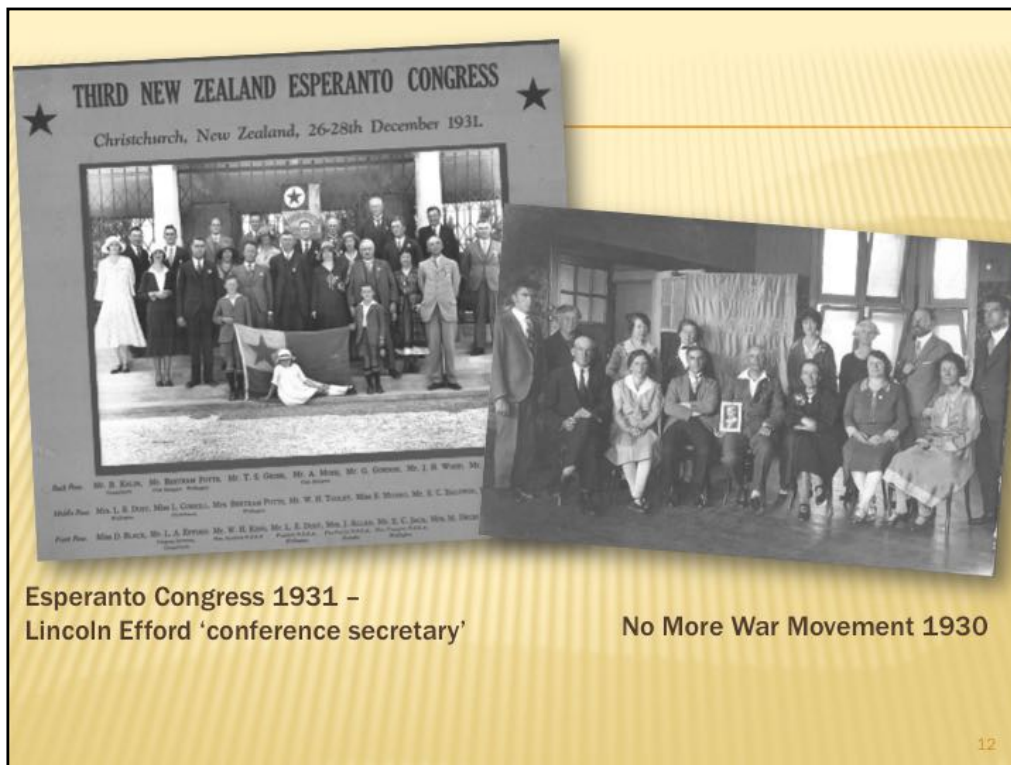


'About 23 years of age
Native of New Zealand
Height about 5 feet 8 inches
Slim build and delicate
appearance
Grey eyes, sallow complexion
Asiatic features'

A secret police report in December 1931 described Lincoln Efford as:

'About 23 years of age
Native of New Zealand
Height about 5 feet 8 inches
Slim build and delicate appearance
Grey eyes, sallow complexion
Asiatic features'

This doesn't quite jell with the image we have of Lincoln in his best years but perhaps gives us an idea of the toll that his illness took on him at a young age.

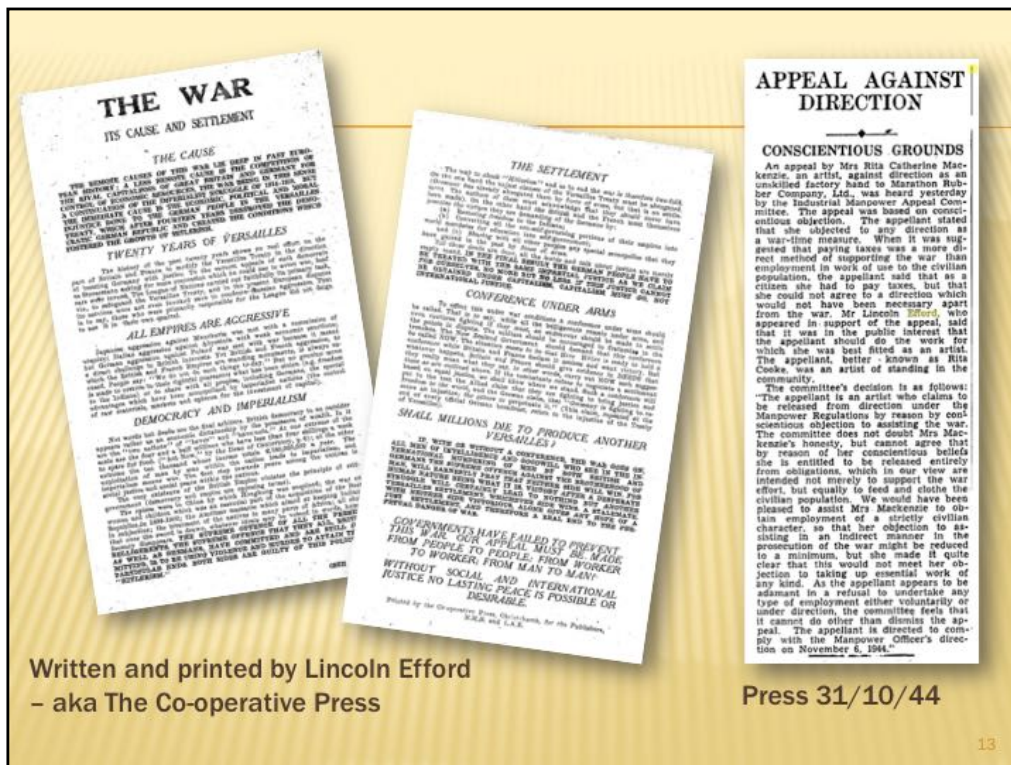


Lincoln extended his activity in the peace movement as well as being a keen promoter of Esperanto. He seemed to always end up the secretary or president of whatever organisation he got involved with.

But a particularly severe bout of illness forced him to abandon his agricultural science studies, and when he recovered sufficiently he switched to an arts course, with a strong emphasis on economics and history.

He graduated MA from Canterbury University College in 1935.

For the next 13 years, Lincoln struggled on with stints as a social science researcher, a WEA tutor and leader, private tutoring and in 1937/8 an extended period at Dr Ulric Williams' alternative medicine clinic in Wanganui unsuccessfully seeking a cure.

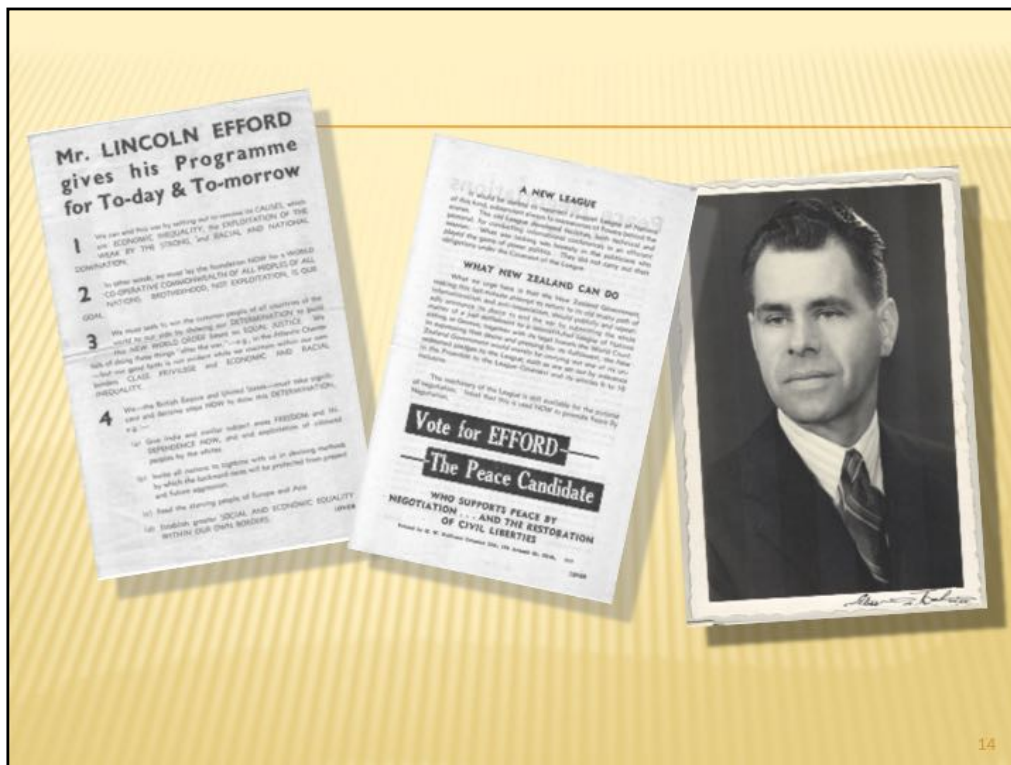


WW2 saw Lincoln at the forefront of pacifist activities. Lincoln, as a rationalist, was distinct from the Christian pacifists led by Ormond Burton but also from the Communists who at the start of the conflict were a large part of the anti-war movement – until the Soviet Union was invaded.

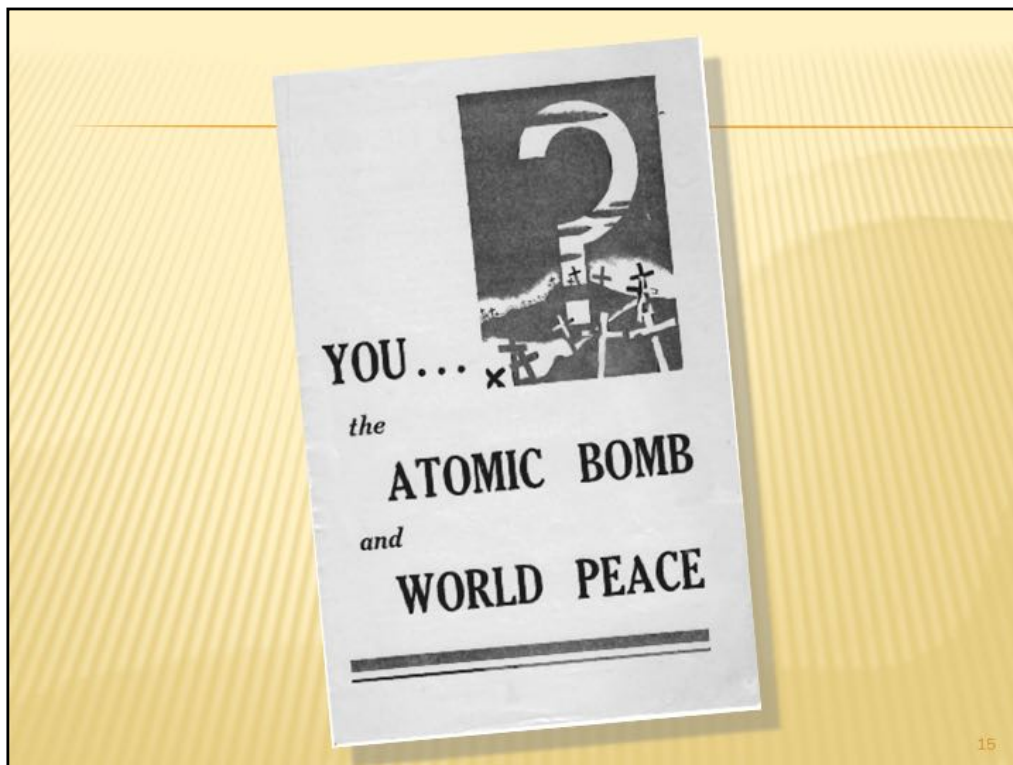
Although he sprang from the socialist movement, ‘pacifism’ was the only ‘ism’ that Lincoln was willing to be labelled with.

Lincoln’s activities during the war can’t be covered in detail now, but had many threads of activity:

- He refused to respond to the call-up, but since his illness would have meant automatic exemption from military service anyway the authorities apparently ignored his defaulting.
- He ran a printing operation in Chancery Lane, called The Co-operative Press – to churn out anti-war literature, until the press was seized by police in 1940
- He was the central support for conscientious objectors, advising and advocating for those facing the appeal tribunals and corresponding with and otherwise supporting those sentenced to the defaulters camps
- Likewise, he advocated for pacifist artist Rita Angus (or McKenzie, or Cooke), when she resisted being drafted for war-related work

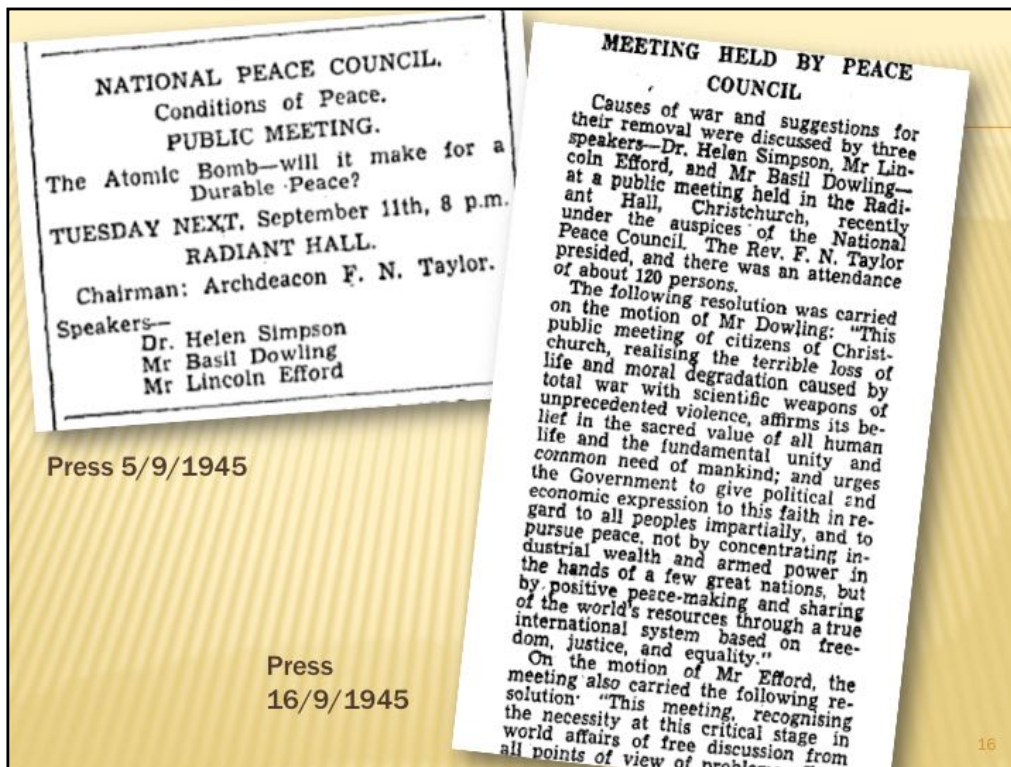


- He stood for parliament twice that year as a peace candidate, getting very few votes but able to generate some publicity for the pacifist cause at a time of rigorous censorship
- In reaction to the heavy suppression of anti-war activity and free speech, he organised the Democratic Defence League, forerunner of the Council for Civil Liberties (which he later also led)
- He continued as a leader in the Canterbury WEA, including being vice-president, and represented the Association at several adult education conferences in Wellington and Auckland, despite the health difficulties he had with travelling
- He commenced a relationship with Christian pacifist Morva Gunn during meetings in an apartment which still stands next door to this hall
- And throughout the time lived with his mother in Fulton Avenue and earned a meager income from private and WEA tutoring – when he wasn't confined to bed or in hospital.



But his most enduring legacy is now part of Kiwi culture – he literally started the anti-nuclear weapons movement in New Zealand. He may well have been the first person in the world to organise opposition to nuclear weapons.

His pamphlet “You ... the Atomic Bomb and World Peace” appeared soon after Hiroshima and the end of WW2 ...

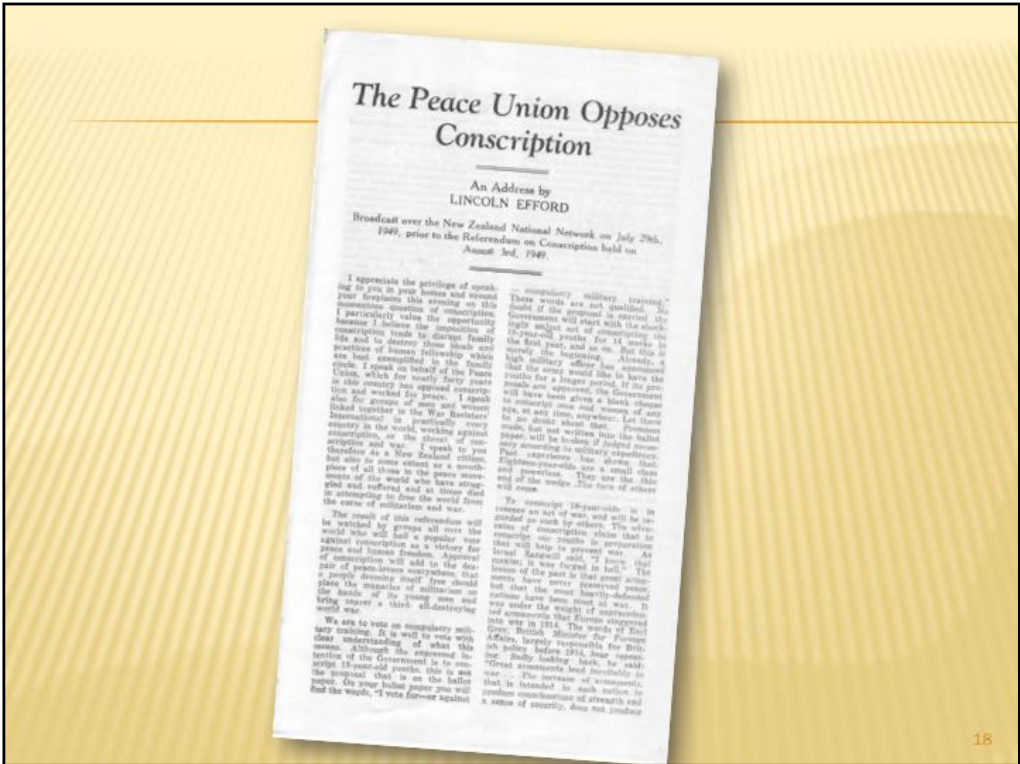


... and he convened an anti-nuclear protest meeting in the Radiant Hall in early September, only days after the war's end.



In 1946 he organised a large national pacifist conference to plan further anti-war action. This conference photo outside the Trades Hall shows Lincoln in the centre and Rita Angus beside him. Archibald Baxter is at the extreme left seated in the front row, and Morva Gunn is two seats along.

But the exhausted conscientious objectors who attended generally wanted to get on with a normal post-war personal life and the conference proved to be more of a reunion than a base for further action.





Relaxing – adult education conference, Wallis House, Lower Hutt, c 1960

19

A moderate stabilization of his health enabled Lincoln Efford to marry Morva Gunn in 1948, and also to take up a full-time position as Secretary of the Canterbury WEA, capping his years of voluntary leadership with the salaried position which he held until his death.

Lincoln was an authority on Adult Education nationally and participated in many conferences and seminars.

Another facet was his interest in psychology and human behavior, which intersected with his concerns in penology. He gave lectures to the Christchurch Psychological Society several times and was a leader of that organization.

It is also apparent from his papers that he acted as an advisor and virtual consultant to the Justice Department on penal reform during the 1950s. It is an indication of the respect in which he was held that he was able to do this during a period when he was also regularly petitioning and writing against capital punishment inflicted by the same Department!

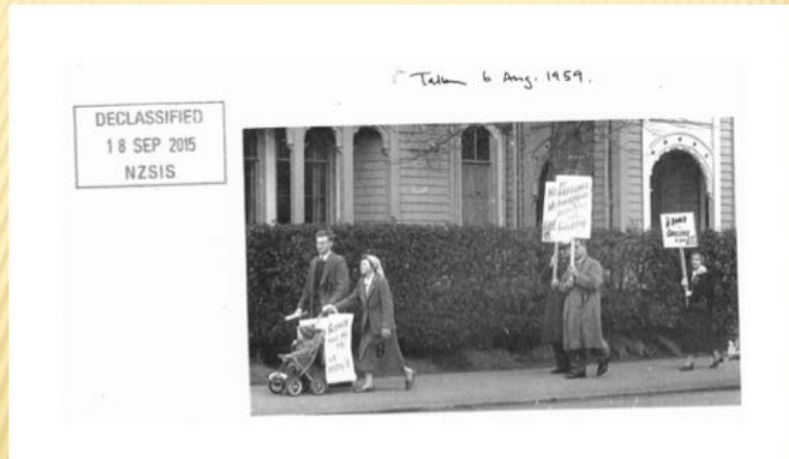


Family man 1950s

In the 1950s Lincoln threw himself into family life and developing a large property in Windermere Rd, Papanui. The nascent agricultural scientist re-emerged within the limitations of a quarter-acre garden section.

He was local or national president or secretary of the Howard League for Penal Reform, the Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society, the Esperanto Society, Council for Civil Liberties and various adult education bodies, and was a campaigner against capital punishment while the first National Government proceeded with executions.

But his health improvement was not permanent. He had a major breakdown in 1956 which took him near death and required major surgery.



First Hiroshima Day march 1959 – SIS surveillance photo

Jack Woodward Jim Cashin
Mary Woodward Lincoln Efford

21

In the late 1950s he organised the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in association with Elsie Locke, Mary Woodward, Rose Plumridge, Jim Cashin and a number of other close friends.



WEA centre working bee 1959

22

During the late 50s he and Alan Dingwall organised the purchase of this building and the move of the WEA office from Trades Hall in 1959.

The working bees held to renovate the building are a memory of my childhood...



WEA centre opening (?) 1959 - Lincoln, George Manning, Archdeacon Witty (?)

23

(Ad lib)



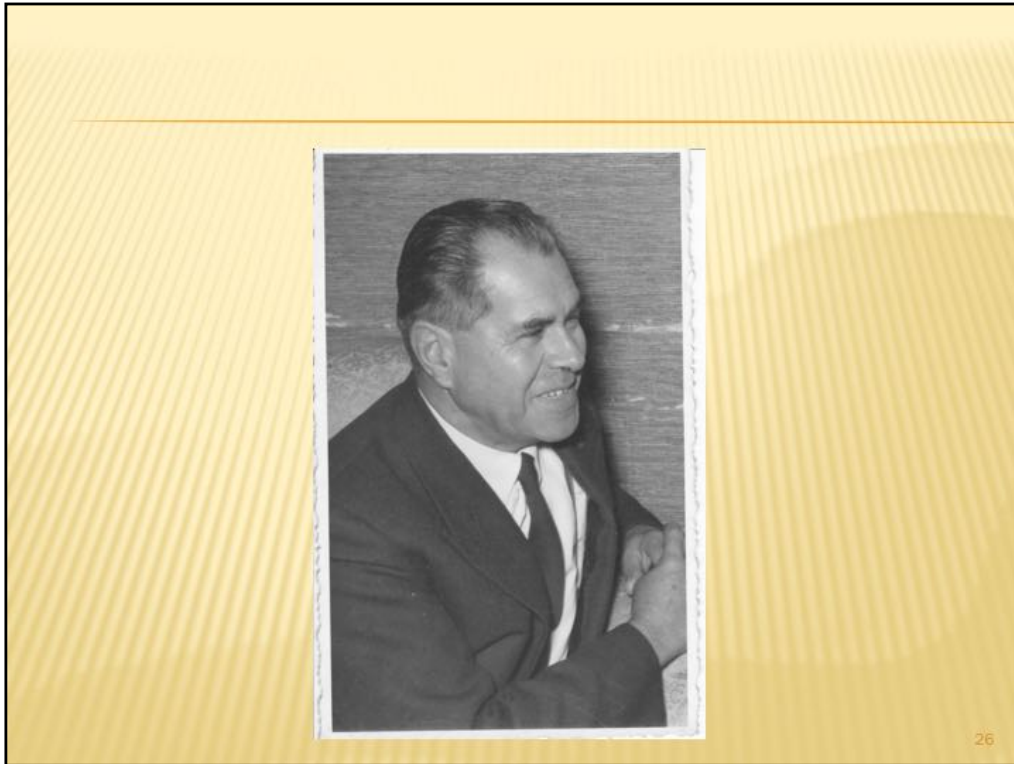
... as are the WEA Summer Schools he organised around the South Island.



Hiroshima Day 1961

25

This well-known photo of him with Alan Brash leading the 1961 Hiroshima Day march in Worcester St was taken only eight months before his death and is one of the last taken of him.



(Ad lib remainder, segue to Dr Ian Lambie)

Despite terrible physical afflictions, Lincoln Efford was hugely charismatic and led in an astonishing variety of humanitarian, educational and radical political endeavours right up to his early death.

Using evidence to build a better justice system would have been right up there as a Lincoln Efford concern.