

Biography Workshop

Professor John Murphy

Date: Thursday 27 April 2017

Venue: Conference Room 1.02, Sir Roland Wilson Building (Bldg. 120 McCoy Circuit, ANU)

Time: 12 midday until about 1.30 p.m.

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John Murphy will discuss his recent book *Evatt: A Life* (NewSouth Publishing, 2016), a biography of this significant Australian parliamentarian and jurist. Remembered as the first foreign minister to argue for an independent Australian policy in the 1940s and for his central role in the formation of the United Nations, Evatt went on to be the leader of the Labor party in the 1950s, the time of the split that resulted in the party being out of power for a generation. Murphy traces the course of Evatt's life and places him in the context of a long period of conservatism in Australia. He treats Evatt's inner, personal life as being just as important as his spectacular, controversial and eventually tragic public career. Murphy looks closely at his subject's previously unexamined private life and unravels some of the puzzles that have led Evatt to be considered erratic, even mad. 'Bert' Evatt remains a polarising figure – still considered by some in Labor as the man who 'split the party' and by many conservatives as unreliable and dangerous.



John Murphy teaches and researches Australian history and politics at the University of Melbourne. Formerly the editor of *Australian Politics and Policy*, he has previously published two books: *Imagining the Fifties: Private Sentiment and Political Culture in Menzies' Australia* (UNSW Press, 2000); and *Harvest of Fear: a History of Australia's Vietnam War* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney and Westview Press, USA, 1993). He also co-authored *After the Orphanage: Life beyond the children's home*; (UNSW Press, 2009), and has published articles on Australian social and welfare policy, and more recently has undertaken research on comparative social policy history, particularly in relation to Indonesia. He is currently deputy dean in the School of Social and Political Sciences in the Faculty of Arts at Melbourne University.