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Political sign of the times on display

POLITICAL posters more than half a century old will be unveiled in a new exhibition called 50 Years of Radical Activism.

The posters belonged to John Percy who began collecting them when he joined the movement against the Vietnam War in the '60s.

Mr Percy, who died in August, has created one of the most comprehensive private collections in the country, with 2000 posters.



Some of John Percy's collection of more than 2000 political posters, 65 of which will be going on exhibition.

EXHIBITION A HISTORY INTO RADICAL ACTIVISM

Co-organiser of the exhibition, which will be held at the Addison Road Community Centre in Marrickville, Alex McInnis, said 65 posters would be on display.

"It's been really amazing for me to see how many posters had to do with solidarity with struggles overseas for countries like Cuba in the 1970s and 80s and a lot of them are anti-Vietnam War posters," she said.

"One of the most interesting things for me are things fought for that we now take for granted – labour rights ... things like the eight-hour working day; a 35 hour week. Abortion is also a big one."

The exhibition is part of historical programs by the community centre to reveal the transformation of the site through times of war and peace, following on from commemorations earlier in the year for the war horses who left for Gallipoli and never returned.

When Addison Road became the centre to register for national service in the Vietnam War, a group – mostly of mothers whose sons were at risk of conscription – united to form Save Our Sons (SOS).

The SOS women were at the gates when the first intake of 20-year-old draftees arrived in June 1965. For seven years, with every new intake, they maintained their silent vigil, until conscription ended in 1972.

Ms McInnis said the exhibition showed how struggles can be cyclical with slogans from the 80s on posters such as 'fight the cuts', which had been used last and this year.

After the exhibition, the posters will be archived and the centre must find the best place for them to be stored.

"We are in the process of seeing which library is going to take them – it could be in Australia or overseas," she said. "There's a museum in Amsterdam that specialises in this kind of thing.

"It is a 10-day exhibition but this is just the start. The idea is ... we get all 2000 archived properly and available to the public."