



No. 69 – Friday December 23, 2016

Stevedoring, Towage, IDC, Blue Water Conference, Flexible Working Arrangements, Nationalism

The major article in this branch news is one on the danger of Nationalism and its historically negative role in Australian Society. I hope it makes for an interesting read over the festive season.

As the year draws to a close we can reflect on how hard it has been for unemployed seafarers'. In my opinion it has been the toughest for over 40 years. However, there is hope on the horizon with the INNPEX project to ramp up next year. This by all accounts should provide considerable relief for our unemployed seafarers.

Stevedoring

In the Stevedoring industry, we have after 41 meetings and 15 months of negotiations we are finally in a position to put the vote to members on both Part A and Part B to the Brisbane Membership of QUBE. The vote will take place at the Union Hall at 0700 on the 5th January 2017.

At DP World, we have been involved in a continuous struggle against sophisticated attack by the company to instil fear and obedience into the workforce. They are doing this by having minor working incidents being blown up out of proportion, they have also increased the use of surveillance cameras outside locker rooms etc.

As previously reported the Branch has fought DP World tooth and nail in this attempt at the behavioural modification of an entire workforce. Special mention must be made of the outstanding work of Branch Organiser Paul Petersen in defending members at DP World.

On a more sombre note the Branch has been advised of the DP World Terminal manager getting ill. We wish Glenn Wayne a speedy recovery and hope he backs a winner in his recovery phase.

The Patricks EBA has been finalised and all our memberships reserve credit for the terrific result they achieved.

Hutchison; after spending 136 days on a picket line in 2015 the last months in 2016 has seen a great change in the workforce at Hutchison's.

We've been successful in getting virtually all those made redundant back into permanent jobs at the BCT Terminal, also this has seen the hiring of more than 70 casual employees.

Yesterday Paul Peterson and myself and the committee have reached a tentative agreement to be taken to the floor on what we consider to be a decent roster, however the grading of that roster is still being debated.

The branch thanks all Hutchison Members for standing firm this year. Joe, JT, Blair, Dave, Diego, Rob and Damien and all other comrades your resolve has been fantastic.

In North Queensland, due to Union Redundancies we have lost our Organiser and Branch Manager. Assistant Secretary Paul Gallagher has been given the responsibility of looking after North Queensland. Paul is doing good in North Queensland, I thank all members in North Queensland for welcoming Paul Gallagher.

Towage

In the Towage area, this year, a black cloud settled over the industry with BMA pushing for partnership agreements on the HAY Point Tugs. We fought valiantly to keep members under a union agreement, however the tide against us was too strong and BMA was successful in de-unionizing the HAY Point tugs after 45 years of continued union presence.

To BMA I can promise you this and that is, the MUA will be back on your tugs better and stronger than ever. We have no intention of giving up on this struggle.

Special mention has to be given to Tug Delegate Bob Barnes who fought such a great collective and personal battle for the Union.

On a more positive note, in Towage the Svitzer National Agreement was finalised and the branch has been successful in negotiating a top class EBA in Gladstone, in which a special note should be made of Jason Miners leadership, as well as the great work of our delegates to get such a successful agreement up.

IDC

Lastly but certainly not least I would like to mention the branch's work and our affiliation to the IDC (International Dock Workers Council).

In September, this year the branch sent a strong delegation to the IDC's 7th General Assembly in Miami. At this assembly of rank and file Dockers and their Leaders. Co-ordinators were elected for various zones around the world. I, along with Paul McAleer was elected as joint Zone Coordinators for the Oceania/Asia Region. This is position is an honorary position (no wages or allowances are paid) which I feel very humble and proud of being elected to play a part in.

The IDC was formed out of the ashes of the 1996 Liverpool Dockers Dispute. During this dispute both the ITF and the Dockers British Union, the TGWU sold the Dockers down the drain and it's my contention that if the Liverpool Dockers had received the support internationally and nationally to which they were entitled, the 1998 Patricks lockout may well have either never occurred or taken a much different shape.

The IDC now represents over 100,000 Dockers around the world. The IDC is a very flat structured non-bureaucratic organisation. It follows Spanish and French syndicalist lines. The entire bureaucracy of the IDC consists of 1½ people. Jordi Arguande the General Coordinator of the IDC still a working wharfie on the port of Barcelona.

Season's Greetings to the Queensland Branch from Jordi (General Co-Ordinator of the IDC) and his family.



For member's information and to dispel any rumours, there is currently in Europe some tension with the ITF and IDC and these tensions I hope can resolved shortly. To me

it can be likened to the younger more aggressive rank and file centred IDC compared with the more staid bureaucracy of the ITF.

My hope that both of these fine organisations find a middle ground. I see that the more highly resourced ITF working together with the organisational brilliance of the IDC hopefully working together for Dockers everywhere.

I acknowledge Paddy Crumlin's efforts and attempts in charting a new course for the ITF under his Presidency.

In Australia, the IDC and the ITF will continue working closer together for the interest of Maritime Workers everywhere.

All in all, it has been a hard but rewarding year, my first full calendar year as your elected branch secretary. It has been a huge honour and privilege running the branch. 2017 is shaping up as a massive year.

The only force that will defeat us is a six-letter word called APATHY. If we all do a little bit for our union, we will go on to better things for working people everywhere.

From all Officials and staff of the QLD branch I wish all members a festive season and a healthy prosperous and peaceful 2017.

Bob Carnegie

Wishing you all a Festive Season and Peaceful New Year from Bamboo and Albert our branch Mascots.



Blue Water Conference

Three events took place at the Blue Water Conference held on the 11th, 12th and 13th December. Seafarers met in MUA Rooms Victoria to debate a way forward for saving Australian shipping and to iron out an MUA acceptable Shipping Policy for Government. We also took part in an honour guard for the return to work by the CUB 55 after

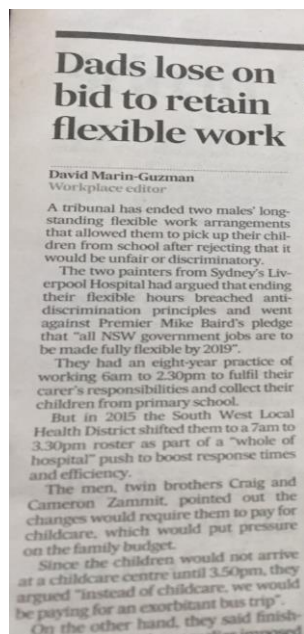
180 days picket at C.U.B. Finally, Wednesday saw the historic signing of an MOU between the MUA and CFMEU.

Analysis and debate on shipping and forward Policy was framed around past inability with Policy's and government, with a current "Green Paper" by industry participants used, and improved upon by the aims of the MUA to see a reinvigoration of the shipping industry. Concerns and a way forward were expressed by the many delegates, including those representing the Brisbane Branch.

Brainstorming commissions arrived at ways to take "control of the helm of our industry", and importantly revitalise control at the shipboard levels, inspire faith in our organisation and hope for the future. Critical assessment reports by National Secretary Paddy, and other Officials outlined the current state and requirements of our Blue Water sector for survival.

Monday 6am saw the MUA rally and honour the CUB 55 return to work, with improved wages and conditions, after 180 days on the picket, providing evidence how solidarity in action, community, and inter-union support, came together for a mighty win for those workers and critically, the Union movement. Wednesday at Trades Hall the MOU of MUA and CFMEU was signed off.

Mike Barber
Conference Delegate



Flexible Working Arrangements

Several of our Members have approached the Branch about the capacity to work flexible working arrangements. In some cases we succeed and in some we don't. This article from the Australian Financial Review outlines the difficulties we face in trying to win these arguments. The CFMEU is appealing the tribunals decision.

Nationalism

The following Article was jointly written by Martin Thomas and I. Martin is well known to many in the Queensland Branch for the importance of his role in Hutchison Dispute.

The reason this article was put together is to explain the problems and pitfalls of going down nationalist routes in campaigns.

I don't expect all members to agree with it, but I do hope working people who do read it, think about it and how Nationalism is nearly always a call by the political right to confuse working class people to support views that are actually counter to working class values. Look at the election of Trump and the billionaire club he is installing as his Cabinet.

Samuel Johnson, the great British writer, thinker and producer of probably the first English Dictionary summed up my feelings in one sentence 'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel'.

THE AUSTRALIAN LABOUR movement, on the defensive, more and more tries to justify its complaints and demands in nationalist terms, rather than in terms of global concepts such as equality, solidarity and worker rights.

The ACTU complains about "this intrinsically un-Australian budget from the Abbott Government...". It whines that "the employer groups want to send the most vulnerable workers backwards and that's un-Australian..."; that "cutting people's pay by \$20 an hour on Anzac Day is un-Australian...".

"Productivity is good", it says, "but exploitation is un-Australian...". "A situation where we have an underclass of migrant workers... would be very un-Australian". When the ACTU has a win, it reckons that is because it put Work Choices into "the pantheon of things un-Australian".

The CFMEU complains that "the construction industry laws enacted by John Howard remain unacceptable and un-Australian...". Or that "opaque global [tax] structures designed to avoid responsibilities in Australia are unfair, un-Australian..."

The MUA chimed in with its 2016 campaign, "Sacked for being Australian". The aluminium corporation Alcoa had said in November 2015 that it would replace the ship and crew which carried alumina from Western Australia to Victoria on - and this is the point - union-negotiated conditions and pay. Crew occupied the ship in protest. In January 2016, security guards raided the ship, and Alcoa replaced it with a vessel with no Australia union agreement but instead Filipino seafarers paid about \$150 a week.

Instead of focusing on the issues of worker rights, union representation, union agreements, and defence of conditions and wages, the MUA ran its campaign with the slogan "sacked for being Australian". In truth, Alcoa would have been happy with Australian seafarers on \$150 a week, and unhappy with Filipino seafarers with strong union organisation and good pay.

Nationalism is rife in Britain, as shown by the Brexit vote. The slogan "British jobs for British workers" was briefly deployed by Labour prime minister Gordon Brown

when desperate to regain electoral ground in 2007. Yet the slogan was officially disavowed by the major union involved, Unite, when it resurfaced in the engineering construction strikes of early 2009 - and most trade unionists went along with the union disavowal. In Australia, the slogan "Australian jobs for Australian workers" is widespread.

In the Hutchison container terminal dispute over sackings in 2015, a left-wing and militant union official bringing greetings to the Brisbane workers' protest assembly declared that it was "a dispute about our national identity". Many other solidarity messages, in milder tones, framed the dispute as one between "Australian" values and a corporation labelled as "transnational" or "Chinese", not as one between workers and bosses. In fact the problem was very "Australian". That Hutchison could sack workers instantly by text message was very "Australian". In other rich capitalist countries, in Europe for example and even in the poorer eastern countries of the EU, that would have been illegal. And, if there were sackings, in those other countries and even in Hong Kong, the workers would have had the right to strike in response (maybe after a ballot); it was very "Australian" law that denied them that right. And the Hutchison workers (a good many of them New Zealanders, not Australians), in finding ways to resist, were being very "Chinese": mainland China, for many years now, has seen probably the most sustained surge of unlawful or on-the-fringes-of-the-law industrial action ever in world history.

This article will argue that:

1. This search for the soft option of appealing to a supposed national consensus, rather than forthrightly standing up for the working class and for the general global slogans of human emancipation - solidarity, equality, freedom - weakens the movement.
2. The nationalist surge is not more of the same as the old "White Australia", Bulletin, nationalism, but a new blend, much of it brewed in the 1980s and 1990s by Bob Hawke and Paul Keating as an ideological sauce for neoliberalism. When union officials and Labor politicians complain against a boss or a government as "un-Australian", they aim to appeal to a national consensus which they and their listeners share. What national consensus?

"Academics in Queensland gathered focus groups to ask them [what was 'un-Australian'] back in 1997, and they decided these people were un-Australian: James Packer, Paul Hogan, Rupert Murdoch and Pauline Hanson, along with Christopher Skase, the entertainer Peter Allen, and historian Geoffrey Blainey.

"The groups said it was un-Australian to falsely claim the disability pension, to sue people, and to be flashy and big-headed. It was un-Australian to commit crime, to be a drunk, abusive man, to be racist... They also said Asian students were un-Australian, and the Irish Club, and

migrants who don't speak English. It was un-Australian to go to union rallies, to schoolies, to Mardi Gras. They declared Chinatown to be un-Australian, along with Hamilton Island, Cabramatta, the Gold Coast, and Sydney" (Tim Dick, Sydney Morning Herald, 24/01/16).

There is no national consensus. Or, to the extent that there is one, it is shaped by the ruling class, through the media, the schools, and so on. Some threads of the ideology promoted by the ruling class shows the imprint of the struggles of the labour movement - the general idea that some sort of democracy is desirable, for example - but the thread is always shaped in detail by the ruling class (to say, for example, that the bureaucratically-trammelled, money-dominated bourgeois democracy we have is the best there is).

The purpose of the labour movement is to raise the working class from our current position as the "lower" class to taking control of the wealth we create and rebuilding society on classless lines. That requires dissecting, criticising, challenging all national consensus, not clutching at it in the weak hope of tripping up the bosses on their own platitudes. The spirit of independent working-class thinking is as Karl Marx enounced it: "ruthless criticism of all that exists, ruthless both in the sense of not being afraid of the results it arrives at and in the sense of being just as little afraid of conflict with the powers that be".

Or, as Leon Trotsky wrote, "the method of ideological imitation of the opponent and of the class enemy - a method which is thoroughly contradictory to the theory and the psychology of Bolshevism... the spirit of mimicry, constant imitation of the enemy, a striving to utilise against the enemy not their own weapons - which alas! they do not possess - but the weapons stolen from the arsenal of the enemy" cannot serve a self-respecting labour movement. (He was writing about the German Communist Party, when corrupted by Stalinism, seeking to "trick" the Nazis by appealing to the same ideology of "national liberation").

The appeal to what is "Australian" or "un-Australian" as the decider of what is good or bad is worse than servile and ineffectual. It is also distracting and divisive.

It usually seeks to invoke an "Australian community" against "the transnationals". But Australian capitalists are just as likely to do what unions call "un-Australian" as capitalists of other countries. In 1998 Patrick's, "the Australian stevedore", was the leading union-buster on the waterfront, not foreign-owned P&O (now DP World). Besides, many Australian corporations are also transnational: BHP, Rio Tinto, Westfield, the Murdoch empire, Macquarie Group, and others.

Workers of other nations, however, really are "un-Australian", or anyway non-Australian. Whether workers recently migrated to Australia are reckoned to have

become "Australian", or still to be "un-Australian", depends on mood and circumstance.

The "un-Australian" charge distracts workers from the class conflict between exploited labour and exploiting capital, and off into targeting capitalists of other nations, or Australian capitalists reckoned to be not "really" Australian. It sets up a division between Australian and non-Australian workers. Australia is a relatively small capitalist economy, dependent on trade, integrated into world markets: serious progress by Australian workers is impossible without solidarity across the borders of nationality.

The Macquarie Dictionary first listed the word "un-Australian" in 2001, after it had been popularised in the 1990s by John Howard and Pauline Hanson. As late as 2004, Howard accounted for 28.2% of mentions of the word in major metropolitan newspapers. "He... used the term to describe trade unionists attacking Parliament House in 1996; wharfies in 1998; anti-globalisation protesters at the Melbourne World Economic Forum in 2000; anti-war marchers in 2003; and 'cutting and running' from Iraq in 2004" (Judith Ireland, SMH, 15/03/05).

The term was borrowed from the USA's "un-American". The Nazis, in their day, would target what was "un-German", but since then no-one uses that term. In other countries, "un-French", "un-Portuguese", "un-national", are not ready terms of political censure.

In the USA, "un-American" reached its peak in the witch-hunt years of the early 1950s, with the House Un-American Activities Committee (set up in 1938) and the activities of Senator Joe McCarthy. The term continued after McCarthy's disgrace; in 1959 former President Harry Truman declared that HUAC was the "most un-American thing in the country today". Today Barack Obama calls Donald Trump "un-American", and Trump supporters call Obama "un-American".

"Australian" and "un-Australian" have become value judgements as polymorphous and adaptable as "American" and "un-American". Mutations in Australian nationalism in the 1980s and 90s led to this.

Humphrey McQueen's book *A New Britannia* describes in its title the two faces of the older Australian nationalism. Australia was defined as British - white, English-speaking, militarily and economically tied into the British Empire - but also as "new", priding itself on being more brash, more active and venturesome, more egalitarian, and more irreverent than staid, hierarchical, conservative Britain.

There were older Australian nationalists who were not racists. The Communist Party of Australia, after its Stalinist degeneration, painted its politics with Australian nationalism. In the 1950s its Eureka Youth League made *Advance Australia Fair* the first song in its songbook. But it also opposed "White Australia" and supported rights for

indigenous Australians.

However, the racist undertow was strong. The anti-conscription movement in 1916-7, militantly socialistic and revolutionarily anti-capitalist in tone, made central the racist argument that conscription would destroy Australia by producing a drive to recruit Asian immigrants for the jobs of white male workers conscripted into the armed forces.

Then came the gradual de facto growth of multiculturalism in the 1950s and 60s; the official adoption and promotion of it from the early or mid 1970s; the scrapping of the White Australia policy in stages from the 1960s to 1973; the conceding of civil rights to indigenous Australians between 1967 and 1992; the weakening of ties with Britain as the British Empire dwindled, Britain ended its military presence east of Suez in 1968, and Britain reoriented to Europe; the end of compulsory military service, in 1972, and a long period without nation-state-vs-nation-state wars between richer countries. By 1988, left-wing academics could publish a book hailing "the demise of nationalism in Australia".

"The processes of internationalisation/ universalisation and localisation/ pluralism are both tending to the formation of... 'community without nation'... the transition from White Australia to multiculturalism... chequered and problematic... in fact amounts to one of the most advanced experiments in practical post-nationalism in the world" (Stephen Castles and others, *Mistaken Identity: Multiculturalism and the Demise of Nationalism in Australia*).

In 1945, 90% of the population had been Australian-born and English-speaking. By June 2015 Australia had 6.7 million residents born outside the country, 28% of its total. The UK still supplied the biggest single group of foreign-born, but China, Taiwan, Hong Kong supplied 632,000; New Zealand 611,380 (many of them Maoris or Pacific Islanders); India 432,690; the Philippines 236,400; Vietnam 230,170. As of 2012, more than 15% of Australians spoke non-English languages at home.

No-one, not even Hanson's One Nation, seriously proposes to radically reverse this trend, or to return indigenous Australians to helotry. A cosmopolitan anti-racism and what might indeed be called "post-nationalism" have gained a grip among at least a significant minority of young people in Australia. Sue Howard and Judith Gill, surveying young school students on this issue, got a minority, but a significant minority, of such responses as:

"Rosie: I don't really think that's fair... about the citizens. If you really like the place then I reckon you should be able to stay there.

Interviewer: Just because you like it?

Rosie: Yeah, if you want to live there you should be able to live there.

Amy: Just like you can move to a house and buy it and live there.

Interviewer: You think the world should work like that?

Amy and Rosie: Yes.

Rosie: Different coloured people living in all different countries". (Knowing Our Place: Children Talking about Power, Identity and Citizenship)

This is another reason why labour movement officials' appeals to what is "Australian" and "un-Australian" are so wretched: they cut the labour movement off from inspiring, educating, rallying and organising the most radical and critical-minded young people.

Similar trends can be found elsewhere. Rumanian researchers find that 57% of the mid-20s to mid-30s people they studied across Europe thought of themselves as having a "European identity" as well as, and for some more importantly than, a "national" identity. The Pew Research group, seeking reactions to the claim "Our people are not perfect, but our culture is superior to others", found in 2011 that 61% of Americans under 30 rejected it, though as recently as 2002 60% of all Americans accepted it. The claim is even less accepted by young people in Britain and France.

Yet no-one aware of the rise of Donald Trump, of the Front National in France, of the Brexit vote in Britain in June 2016, and of similar right-wing populist-nationalist surges, would claim that the cosmopolitan, maybe-post-nationalist minority is on its way to dominance. Not in Australia, either. Labour movement officials' orientation to nationalism is based on an attempt, though a foolish one, to capture real sentiment. There was no demise of Australian nationalism in the 1980s. There was a reconfiguration and revival.

Australia Day was mostly "desultory" before 1988. By 2004 92% thought it "important" and 80% agreed that "celebrations on Australia Day make you feel proud to be Australian". In 2007 28% used their day off work to attend a public Australia Day celebration, and 26% had some family-and-friends event which they described as specially to celebrate Australia Day (Pearson and O'Neill in McCrone and McPherson (ed), National Days, 2009). A survey of drivers in Western Australia found that fully a quarter displayed Australian flags on their cars on Australia Day 2011, although the display of flags on cars became popular only around 2006 (Fozdar, Spittles, and Hartley, Australia Day, flags on cars and Australian nationalism, Journal of Sociology, 2015).

The British journalist Nick Bryant, writing about Anzac Day in 2009, cited an Australian reporter from 1968 - "I had the distinct impression I was witnessing the end of a ritual, the last gasps of a ceremony which had lost most of its meaning... dying on its feet". But by 2009 "Anzac Day seems stronger than ever... has taken on the character of a quasi-religious festival... the parades and dawn

observances are attracting ever-swelling crowds".

Gough Whitlam, Labor prime minister from 1972 to 1975, talked of fabricating a "new nationalism". He "recognised the need to throw off the symbols of colonialism, and the inherent difficulty in finding alternative Australian emblems of civic pride and belonging". His efforts were ineffectual, and even "faintly ridiculous" (Anne Pender, The Mythical Australian, AJPH 51 (1), 2005).

The reworking of Australian nationalism started seriously after the labour movement and the left were cowed by the Kerr coup of 1975. Malcolm Fraser ran an "Advance Australia" campaign in 1979, headed by big businessmen and with Bob Hawke, president of the ACTU, as a deputy chair. It started to develop the theme of an Australia defined by diversity and by global capitalist competitiveness. (Labor leader Bill Shorten borrowed Fraser's slogan, "Advance Australia", for the title of his ALP conference keynote speech in 2015).

The effort escalated under the Hawke-Keating governments from 1983 to 1996. The declaration of Advance Australia Fair as the new national anthem, in 1984; the Bicentennial celebrations in 1988, though a bit awkward; and the re-energised promotion of Anzac Day and Australia Day, were staging posts. "Australia is not a nation of spontaneous flag-wavers - it is a nation of organised flag-wavers", comment Pearson and O'Neill; and organised it was. The 1980s became "a decade of revived Australian nationalism" (Graeme Turner, Making it National: nationalism and Australian popular culture, 1994).

Hawke and Keating reconstructed nationalism precisely in order to rationalise and seek consensus for a neoliberal policy which would reconfigure Australia as a competitive unit in a fast-moving, free-trading global capitalist economy. Australia would be managed into a new distinct identity defined not by being British, not by being white, not by state-organised social arbitration and protectionism, but by diversity and by a supposedly unique larrikin creativity.

The union-Labor Accord, under which unions held back on wage demands and industrial action in return for promises of welfare benefits, was rationalised by a strategic document, "Australia Reconstructed", in 1987. "Its version of national identity [was of]... citizen identity in a co-operative capitalism, where business and unions work together... a 'consensus society'" (Carol Johnson, Reconstructing Australian identity, JAPE 39, June 1997). The unions, battered by defeats like the SEQEB and Mudginberri disputes in 1985, folded in behind this.

Keating was more ideologically aggressive than Hawke, taking up the old anti-British strand in traditional Australian nationalism to assist him in "a process of

national reinvention" and "national character building". He is described by Paul Kelly as "the only Australian prime minister who belonged to the radical nationalist school". "Radical", here, means "anti-British", by the 1990s a cheap "radicalism". Keating's "conception of nationalism" included denunciation of the "cultural cringe" of Australia's British-identified past, plus "republic, Aboriginal reconciliation, engagement with Asia, and a modern internationalist economy". He even tried to re-orient celebration of Australian military history towards regional conflict, at Kokoda, instead of the disastrous British-directed Gallipoli campaign. Deregulating the Australian economy, he denounced "the Liberal Party's prior failure to deregulate as proof of its lack of faith in Australia's ability and inventiveness" (Paul Kelly, *The Modern Patriots*, 2009).

Keating said: "We can no longer be Australian in the way Bob Menzies was Australian... Many things have changed and will change in Australia - our ethnic composition and, with it, our culture; our economic and industrial practices; our world view - a great deal will change. But traditions of democracy, fairness and personal liberty which we have fought wars to defend, will remain this country's guiding principles".

Hawke and Keating promoted a cult of larrikin capitalists. "There was a time when a suspicion of capitalism and a lack of respect for business seemed to be a permanent feature of representations of Australian life... [but then] in the 1980s, political debate in Australia collapsed almost entirely into a discourse of economic management... During the first half of the 80s, in particular, the businessman emerged as a media celebrity, a 'star'... Each of these star businessmen... operated as a sign of a new, aggressively Australian, version of capitalism" (Turner).

At the same time, Keating claimed to represent "Australian values" of cooperation and mutual aid. After his election victory in 1993 he declared: "This is a victory for the true believers... It will be a long time before an Opposition party tries to divide this country again. It will be a long time before somebody tries to put one group of Australians over here and another over there..."

"This, I think, has been very much a victory of Australian values, because it was Australian values on the line and the Liberal Party wanted to change Australia from the country it's become - a cooperative, decent, nice place to live where people have regard for each other... We have turned the corner. The growth is coming through. We will see ourselves as a sophisticated trading country in Asia". Notice: "the country it's become", not "the country it always has been".

John Howard, prime minister from 1996 to 2007, denounced Keating as "attempting to redefine national identity in a crudely self-serving way", and offered a more

traditionalist spiel. "The Australian identity has always meant practical mateship. It has meant a great egalitarian tradition, shunning pretension and pomposity... a sometimes fierce and irreverent scepticism" (speech on "National Identity", 13 December 1995). "I want... an Australian society that sees this country as a unique intersection of Europe, North America and Asia" (Four Corners interview, 19 February 1996).

In the reworking of Australian nationalism, however, there was a sort of symbiosis between Keating and Howard. Keating provided the basis for Howard to be able to condemn resistance to the priorities of the capitalist world market as "un-Australian"; Howard could use Keating's raucousness to claim to offer a scheme of national identity evolving in a "comfortable and relaxed" way, rather than in a sharp break from the old. Howard amplified the anti-indigenous and pro-war claims of the intellectual right, decrying the so-called black armband view of critical left-wing Australian historians; Keating had created the space for Howard to do that while also quietly shifting away from "being Australian as Bob Menzies was Australian".

The traditional markers of Australian nationalism had been eroded or discredited: the writers who saw "the demise of nationalism in Australia" were right about that. The new markers are unclear, shifting, incoherent: as we have seen, there is no real national consensus. The union official who sees a workers' dispute as about "national identity" will see Pauline Hanson as very "un-Australian", and so will many others; Hanson no doubt sees the workers' resistance as "un-Australian".

As Benedict Anderson comments (*Imagined Communities*), the "philosophical poverty and even incoherence" of nationalisms does not stop them having great "political" power". If people define their participation in the "imagined community" of Australia in many different ways, that polymorphousness does not undo nationalism. There just needs to be enough overlap or family resemblance to enable each individual to think that she or he is subscribing to a real community, even if one marred by the presence of some un-Australian Australians.

What a nationalism sees as stereotypes or defining traits of its nation can change over time without undoing the nationalism. In the 19th century, German nationalism liked Madame de Stael's 1810 definition of Germany as "the land of poets and philosophers". The Nazis saw the German identity as militaristic, masterful, industrious. For a long time now, German identity has been associated more with studiousness, precision, thoroughness, technology.

Anderson further remarks that, to understand nationalism, it is better to think of it as belonging with "kinship" or "religion" than with definite political doctrines such as liberalism or fascism. As Antonio

Gramsci commented, religions gain strength from being incoherent composites of elaborate intellectual structures with varieties of folk superstition. In Italy alone, Gramsci found Catholicism to be "in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory religions: there is one Catholicism for the peasants, one for the petty bourgeoisie and the urban workers, one for women, and one for intellectuals". Likewise, Australian nationalism is in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory "imaginings" of an Australian community; it can still shape, and this is the important thing in relation to class politics, an idea of national consensus, of national common interest between Australian capitalists and workers in contrast to the people of other nationalities.

That nationalism can be built on definitions other than racial or ethnic, and thus that Australian nationalism could be rebuilt after the collapse of "White Australia", had already been shown by the example of the USA. Indeed, Anderson argues that the independence movements of the Americas - Spanish America as well as the USA - set the "blueprint" for nationalism. European nations then adapted it to include the myth of the "nation" as an immemorial ethnic or quasi-ethnic continuity in a particular territory. "Out of the American welter came these imagined realities: nation-states, republican institutions, common citizenships, popular sovereignty, national flags and anthems, etc., and the liquidation of their conceptual opposites: dynastic empires, monarchical institutions, absolutisms, subjecthoods, inherited nobilities, serfdoms, ghettos, and so forth".

There has always been racism in the USA. But the ideological basis of racism against African-Americans is not, and scarcely has been, an idea that they are not American. There have been bouts of "nativism", sometimes linked with assertion of Protestantism as a criterion of Americanism. But even the "nativists" must have been aware of themselves as diversely-originated "ethnically". The term "WASP" (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) became current only in the 1950s, by which time it was already taken to refer to a minority, and a somewhat scorned one, rather than a definition of the nation.

The idea of the USA as a "melting-pot" of different cultures is very old. The common American identity has been supposed to be defined ideologically, as in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: "Our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal".

The vagueness and untruthfulness of this definition has not deprived US nationalism of vigour. On the contrary, flag-waving, anthem-singing, and national ceremony are more enthusiastic in the USA than in Europe.

In part this must be precisely because the USA does not have "ethnic" continuity; it has been formed by successive

waves of immigration. To be British, for example, when it means that you, and most of the ancestors you know, live or lived in Britain, requires no great ceremony to confirm it. If you or your parents became American - often through overcoming difficulties to reach the country, to get in, to become established and integrated - then you may want literally to flag it up. Your more ostentatious nationalism is not necessarily more xenophobic or uncritical or hostile to the disruption of the "nation" by distinct working-class struggle than a quieter and more taken-for-granted nationalism.

The same is probably in part true about the more ostentatious and ceremonial character that Australian nationalism has acquired in an era of large and more diverse immigration. Outside the Pauline-Hanson-wavelength fringe, a worrying minority but a minority, sentiment is diffuse, even shambolic. Most of those going to Anzac Day ceremonies, or putting flags on their cars, are not Hanson types or racists. When the researchers asked people why they celebrated Australia Day, some gave answers like "to reflect on the past treatment of indigenous Australians" or "to welcome new Australians".

State high schools have the national anthem at each school assembly, as schools in Germany, France, or Britain would not do, and schools in Spain could not do, since Spain's current national anthem, to evade controversy, has no words; but the best efforts of school principals cannot persuade the students actually to sing the song, rather than stand quietly or at best mumble along when a recording is played. Or: I remember my Australian citizenship ceremony. The organisers had decided some "cultural" element was necessary. So they brought along some Bolivian (Bolivian-Australian) folk dancers. The Bolivian government surely does not deploy Australian folk dance for its citizenship ceremonies.

Nationalist sentiment among Australian workers should not be regarded with prissy horror, or seen as so potent as to extinguish class struggle. If the labour movement deployed ideas of working-class struggle, of socialism, of internationalism, then probably many workers would quite easily shrug off nationalism, or at least come to regard it as a "cultural" matter which should not be allowed any political grip. The problem is not really that workers are nationalist-minded, in various ways, and to various degrees. That is more or less inevitable in a capitalist society at any time short of revolutionary socialists winning majority support.

The problem is that the leaders of the labour movement have converted the legacy of the setbacks of the 1970s and 80s into a smothering ideological defeatism, educating workers to appeal to and defer to an imaginary national consensus rather than to try find their own voice.

Cartoon Corner

This is the final chapter and follows on from last week, the 99% are taking revenge.



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