



QUEENSLAND BRANCH NEWS

NEWSLETTER of the QLD Branch of the MARITIME UNION of AUSTRALIA

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To be truly radical is to make hope possible, rather than despair convincing - Raymond Williams No. 77 - Monday 27 February, 2017

Smit Lamnalco EBA - Qld Branch Supports Refugee Rights – Spanish Dockers Dispute Legal Benefits for Members - Trump: The Disaster We Had to Have? – Vale Steve Connor

Smit Lamnalco Towage Australia National EBA

THE NATIONAL TOWAGE Agreement for Smit Lamnalco has commenced with Deputy Branch Secretary of Queensland, Jason Miners leading the discussions. Jason is being assisted by National Women's Liaison Officer, Mich-elle Myers and Queensland State delegate elect for Smit Lamnalco, Dave McIntosh.

The negotiating team has had constant support from Assistant Sydney Branch Secretary, Paul Garret and Assistant National Secretary, Ian Bray.

The union has outlined in no uncertain terms that we want our members local issues fixed in the port work practices prior to any flexibility being offered to Smit Lamnalco on the National EBA.

The employer came to the table expecting a rollover which both AIMPE and the AMOU gave commitments to. This has made our battle to achieve our claims more difficult.

The MUA has rejected a rollover of the Agreement and will continue to press claims that have strong backing from our members after wide consultation in the ports of Weipa, Townsville, Mackay and Brisbane.

The discussions are in the embryonic stages and the employer has committed to respond to our claims in writing. However, we have already seen some movement on key claims aimed at ironing out the local and national issues. These include extra pay for casuals doing maintenance on tugs, a selection criteria for employment which includes the involvement of workplace delegates and a casual employment system to make sure work is distributed fairly.

The MUA is yet to get a commitment from Smit Lamnalco about the inclusion of port practices for Sydney, Melbourne and Newcastle which is obviously an important claim. We will make the MUA continues to pursue a strategy that preserves the conditions of unionised towage workers working with EBA towage operators in Australia.

The union has made representations to the CEOs of Townsville and Cairns over the upcoming Ports North

Towage Licence which is currently operated by Smit Lamnalco in Townsville and Svitzer in Cairns, Lucinda and Mourilyan. The next round of discussions are set for the 27 – 28 February 2017.

Jason Miners

Queensland Branch Supports Refugee Rights

MUA RANK AND FILE activist, Hutchison Wharfie and former Seafarer, Ciaran MacLennan spoke passionately about the rights of refugees at a meeting held on Friday 24 February 2017. Ciaran will be representing our Branch on the 'Trade Unions for Refugees' Committee. The Branch thanks Ciaran for his principled work in this area as we as a union and a society are defined only by how we treat those in our midst, the most downtrodden in our community.

The most prestigious Medical Journal in the world, The Lancet, in a recently published article proves without question children born into such oppressive regimes such as Mannus Island and Nauru suffer long term, permanent psychiatric conditions. It is a



massive blight on what Australia is supposed to be about. There is no 'fair go' on Mannus Island or Nauru.

Bob Carnegie

*My name is
Ciaran*

MacLennan and I'm a wharfie, a union delegate and rank and file member of the Maritime Union of Australia. We are a union that represents some 2000 workers in Queensland and somewhere in the order of 14000 nationally in the maritime sector.

Before I was wharfie I was a merchant seaman and in late 2010 I joined a vessel called the Ocean

Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary

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Protector. It was chartered by the Australian government and manned by a Canadian tanker company. There were 30 odd custom enforcement officers onboard, along with 17 MUA members. We were patrolling in the Indian Ocean much closer to Jakarta than Darwin. We were there to intercept boats carrying asylum seekers.

The people we pulled out of the ocean in the dead of night in rough seas were desperate and terrified, many were children. Once onboard they were housed in windowless cells without even proper bedding. They were then taken to Christmas Island where they were incarcerated in a privately run, maximum security prison. Throughout this whole ugly process, it's important to note profits were being reaped.

The MUA is proud to support the QCU's Unions for Refugee's Committee because we believe that all people are entitled to live in peace and with dignity and with justice.

Spanish Dockers Dispute

SOME COMMENTS ON the Spanish Dockers Dispute by Raquel Verala. Raquel is an outstanding left wing Portuguese academic who has studied the struggles of Dockers in great depth.

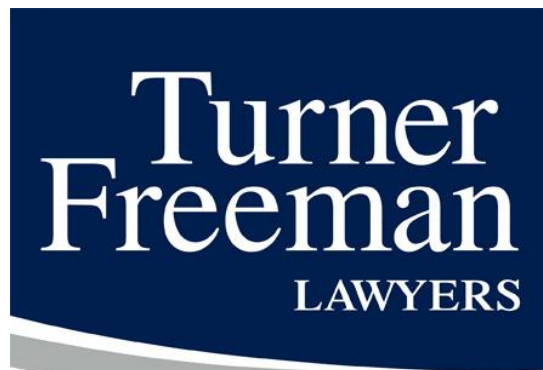
She has done wonderful work for the IDC on the effects of automation and has given us huge intellectual as well as moral support in our battles. Bob

“The Spanish Dockers are about 6700, defeated two European Union Directives, claiming they are a monopoly, and again Mariano Rajoy threatened and made a decree saying that he will allow the dismissal of 75% in the next 3 years. And they gave an answer that I find fantastic as a labor historian, because it is very rare in the EU framework. I believe that since the miners' strike there is nothing similar. There have been assemblies in all Spanish ports, where each dockworker can speak and vote, so it is not a union in its hierarchical structure that decrees the strike, there are rank and file assemblies in which even families may be present, all are heard, local communities, organisations and trade unions around the world have become involved. Sixty-five thousand dockers held assemblies, meetings, on the West Coast and the East Coast of the USA, in Australia, in dictatorial countries in Latin America, sending the signal that they are ready to strike in order they do not lose their jobs. We often speak here of the EU, and I want to tell you this, it's an ideological position of mine, for me the European Union is this, for me the EU is when Swedish dockers say: "we are willing to defend the Spanish dockworkers".

The EU is not a banking union, it is not a salary competition, it is not what Mariano Rajoy came to say: "we are going to put foreign workers to break your

strike". That is the European disunity, it is the competition. These people are there fighting for the right to work, it is not for the right to unemployment benefit, it is not for the right to social assistance, it is for the right to work. And for workers who have no other forms of life, the work is the right to life. In the capitalist mode of production there is no other way of living but working. And, it is fantastic that unions, for twenty years now, are asking for subsidies, which unfortunately they ask for, unemployment benefits, subsidies for the maintenance of jobs, subsidies paid by all of us, taxpayers, and these unions are here to say no. We want to work, we want our jobs and, therefore, we are willing to fight. Just as J.P.Morgan, who is one of the main stakeholders aiming at the privatisation and precariousness of the Spanish ports, is there to fight, and to say: "we are prepared for a battle to sack you", they are saying: "We are ready for a battle to defend our jobs."”

Legal Benefits for Members



Free standard Will and Enduring Power of Attorney for Members

BRANCH SECRETARY, BOB CARNEGIE, and National Legal Officer, David Greene, have secured agreement on free wills and enduring powers of attorney for Members with Turner Freeman Lawyers.

As you know, Turner Freeman Lawyers is the Queensland Branch's preferred personal injuries law firm, and we have had a very successful relationship with the firm over the past 18 months. Turner Freeman also offer a range of other services including wills, estates and superannuation/TPD services.

Turner Freeman Lawyers will offer a **free standard Will and Enduring Power of Attorney** service to all MUA members and employees, and their respective partners.

In relation to more complex documents, including testamentary trusts or more detailed wills, Turner Freeman Lawyers will offer a **discount of 40%** from their normal fees.

Jenna Hutchison, Associate with Turner Freeman, advises that it is always best for de-facto or married couples to arrange their Wills and Power of Attorney documents together.

Turner Freeman can be contacted on **1800 683 928**, and they have 8 offices strategically located throughout Queensland.

Is Trump the Disaster We Had to Have?

By James Moylan

This is a wonderful article from the American Left. Please read.



SINCE WWII THE AMERICAN government has been taken over by big business. Much of the American population does not

vote, simply because they do not believe that their vote will count. And until recently, it was hard to disagree with this assessment.

When you think about the sort of country that the US has become, it is not hard to label it as a 'rogue state'. It has 5% of the world's population, consumes more than 50% of the world's spending on armaments, it owns more than 82% of the world's wealth and is directly responsible for 72% of the 'two-state' conflicts since WWII.

There has not been a single second since the end of WWII, in which the US has not been officially engaged in at least one war. And even in the wars where it is not 'officially' involved, it is usually deeply implicated.

The US currently has troops stationed in 118 of the 196 countries in the world. In these 'official' conflicts the US has killed more than 20 million people in 37 "Victim Nations" since the end of WWII. This estimate of casualties is dwarfed when the casualties inflicted in wars that were backed by American interests and undertaken using American armaments, are also taken into account.

In the Middle East alone, another 20 million souls have lost their lives when the 'unofficial' conflicts are added to the tally.

Why this huge army and armed presence? It simply reflects the reality that the US is now the home for the vast majority of the world's wealth. The total value of all the assets on the face of the globe is a difficult sum to work out but, by all estimates, the US, or US corporations, control the vast bulk of all the assets that exist: anywhere.

The US government alone spends more than 7 million dollars a minute. All this in a country that tells its people that it cannot afford to provide a social safety net, a universal pension plan, or medical or hospital benefits, for its citizenry.

Aussies, like all of the western world, have been conned by our press into believing that the American alliance is essential for our safety. We are constantly told we need to be allied with this greatest of empires, if we want to remain safe.

However, few people bother to sit back and consider that the reason we need to be allied with the US is because we need to be protected from the conflicts that

the US starts and controls. An alliance with the US is more akin to a protection racket than it is any sort of an open handed agreement.

America offers its 'protection' with a nod and a wink and a sly comment that: 'It would be terrible to see something happen to your nice little country; wouldn't it?'

Don't get me wrong: I detest Mr Trump and virtually everything he stands for. However, he is not a puppet of the establishment forces in the US, nor is he beholden to either of the corporately controlled political parties that have a stranglehold on the US political scene. So while he is a loose cannon, perhaps he is the loose cannon we need to have?

Trump is the face of corporate America when it steps out of its democratic drag. He is ugly, unhinged, greedy, and entirely self-centred. However, the damage he will inflict will be primarily restricted to the US economy and society. His lunatic actions are unlikely to unravel the social protections that are enjoyed by residents within many other countries.

So perhaps it is good to have a 'leader of the free world' who is openly, rather than surreptitiously, horrific? Perhaps it might cause the population of the globe to rethink the idea of 'American exceptionalism'.

Is Trump really all that uglier than the last few incumbents in the White House? His ambitions are certainly disgusting and offensive, but Obama was happy to kill many thousands of people with unmanned drones, continue George Bush's monetary policies, punish any country that dared step out of line with American financial interests, deport record numbers of poor and disaffected workers, increase military expenditure from obscene levels to even more obscene levels and expand and extend US military adventurism.

Perhaps Trump is just the raw face of American power where Bush and Obama and all the rest, were simply much the same thing, but wearing makeup and a fancy dress.

If the arrival of Trump causes the other 195 countries on earth to rethink their relationship with the U. S., can that be a bad thing? Maybe his arrival might even shake loose a little of the dead hand of control that the corporations exert on the American government and economy?

After all, it seems to have mattered little who was in the White House during the last fifty years: the corporatocracy was still in charge of the country. Consider that even under Obama the banks got bailed out even after they had stolen trillions of dollars from the working public across the globe and had almost wrecked the global 'economy'. Even after it was obvious that their actions were not only criminal but despicably unethical and greedy, not a single Wall Street banker was goaled for their complicity in theft.

While the US continues to lock up a greater percentage of its population than any other country in the world, very

few if any, of these inmates are guilty of corporate crimes.

The US corporate sector continues to cause massive destruction and murder across the globe, yet right now, as you read this, America has in its prisons and gaols more than one in every one hundred of its own citizens.

However, these are mostly the poor, the disaffected, and members of minority groups.

In parts of the American continent a black man between the ages of 18 and 24 has a one in three chance of being in gaol right now. But not black businessmen. Or white businessmen. Or white businessmen.

If you steal to eat in the US then you will be gaoled; if you destroy the poor and disaffected population of an entire third world country, you will likely retire in comfort and be praised for your efforts. Perhaps one of the reasons they lock up such a huge percentage of their population, is because the inmates can never vote? Perhaps another reason is because it provides for a workforce of millions who will work for the corporations for as little as 37c a day? The Russian Gulag system was never as populous, nor as efficient. Gaoling so many people must have some sort of a rationale: after all – it certainly does not seem to be doing anything to make America a safer place to live.

While Obama may have been black; he was nothing if not a part of the ruling class. The US gaol population continued to increase while he was in power. The disparity between the rich and the poor continued to grow. US corporations continued to plunder the world's resources without check nor hindrance.

So while the change to a lunatic and ugly American President may be of significance for the American public, and while Trump might accentuate and worsen the hellish conditions for poor Americans within America, it is difficult to see how his presence can worsen the effects of the American empire outside of America.

The American Corporate Empire already has full control of the globe. It is hard to see how it can be made any worse.

So perhaps the reality that the American government is now being run by a monster who actually looks, sounds, and acts like a monster, may actually be a benefit?

Perhaps it might cause the population of the globe to question the nature of the propaganda that the American empire has been pumping out so skilfully over these many years.

Maybe we might even see a backlash within America? Maybe Trump is the disaster that we all have to have?

Funeral Details for Steve Connor

The funeral for highly respected past member, Steve Connor will be on Tuesday 28 February 2017 at Saint John Vianney Chapel Manly at 10.30am. The burial will be at Mt Gravatt Cemetery then afterwards at the Mt Gravatt Bowls Club, 873 Logan Road.

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