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. 104 – Friday 22 September 2017**

Ferry Workers Unite - Battle of Stalingrad - Cash "Exposed" – Merchant Navy Day Letter of Thanks Automated Twistlocks - Vale John Underwood - Book Corner

Ferry Workers Unite

LET ME BEGIN by openly stating it is my strong view that EVERY working man and woman should be in a trade union and the record low in wage growth for workers is directly related to the demise in trade union membership.

The MUA supports all workers who fight for a better deal. It is those workers who are not in unions which should be the cause of angst amongst the union workforce.

Photo sourced from: http://www.wrightsons.com.au/brisbane-city-cats/

The MUA played the leading role under the slogan of "A Fair EBA for Ferry Workers". The MUA covers all workers on the Brisbane River that it is able to, under its constitution. This includes Ferry Masters.

We strongly believe that those Masters, still in the AMOU, should be respected for their union membership, HOWEVER we will not allow seeds of division to be sown amongst the workforce.

The MUA supports the unity of the trade union movement at all opportunities and considers a joint appeal to union workers fighting major employers, such as Transdev to be very important.

There will be a meeting on Friday 29 September 2017 at 12 noon at the union rooms. A BBQ will be provided and problems, hopes and aspirations can be discussed.

Jason Miners – Deputy Branch Secretary

Branch Monthly Meeting
Tuesday 26 September 2017
at 9.00am
All members available are urged to attend

Battle of Stalingrad

AS SOME COMRADES know I have a great personal interest in 3 areas

1. Is the History of the US Labour Movement
2. Is the Shoah or Holocaust
3. Is the war of annihilation between the Red Army and The Wehrmacht in WW2

This week marks 75 years of one of the most intense parts of the greatest battle in human history the Battle of Stalingrad which raged between August 1942 to February 1943.

The battle in the main was waged by the pride of the Wehrmacht the 6th Army led by Von Paulus and the Soviet 62nd Army led by the incomparable General Chukiov.

This week, 75 years ago, the 62nd Army was staring defeat in the eye and only by the heroics of General Rodmistev's 13th Guards Army was Stalingrad saved by the Nazi hordes. Rodmistev's division suffered terrible losses with a division of some 10000 men having less than 400 surviving after a few weeks.

During this titanic struggle on the Bank of the Volga, where the fate of humanity was fought for, we should never forget the sacrifice involved.

Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary
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The life expectancy for a soviet soldier during the months of battle was at one stage LESS than 24 hours.

After Stalingrad, Churchill famously said “The hinge of fate has turned”.

Cash "Exposed" After PM's Comments on Hadgkiss: Labor

Monday, September 18, 2017, 6:18pm sourced from:
www.workplaceexpress.com.au

THE OPPOSITION SAYS Employment Minister Michaelia Cash's position that she was unaware of the CFMEU's prosecution of ABCC head Nigel Hadgkiss until October last year is "unbelievable" after Prime Minister Turnbull said today the litigation was "public knowledge".

A reporter this morning asked Turnbull at a doorstop media conference at Kundabung (near Kempsey in NSW) whether he was aware of the allegations about Hadgkiss breaching the Fair Work Act before his formal appointment.

"Well the litigation that is referred to was public knowledge, so that’s the first point," the prime minister said. "Secondly, it obviously had to take its course.

"Thirdly, Mr Hadgkiss became the ABCC Commissioner by virtue of an Act of Parliament, because he was already the Commissioner of the Fair Work Building Commission which then transformed into the Australian Building and Construction Commission and given obviously stronger powers and the ability to levy greater fines. "So, he transitioned into that new role by virtue of a Act of Parliament", Turnbull said.

Shadow workplace relations minister Brendan O'Connor said in a statement that the prime minister's "extraordinary admission" about the litigation being public knowledge "has exposed" the minister's version of events.

"The litigation against Mr Hadgkiss commenced on 19 August 2016, which was covered by the media. "Minister Cash's claim that she didn't know about the behaviour until October 2016 is unbelievable", he said. "If the prime minister knew, why didn't she?"

O'Connor noted that the Turnbull Government re-introduced the ABCC bills on August 31, after the litigation against Hadgkiss had been initiated.

He said the prime minister's "admission" revealed the truth: "That the Government re-introduced the ABCC legislation, knowing that it would result in Mr Hadgkiss becoming commissioner, and they did nothing to prevent it".

Senator Cash told the Senate last week that she wasn't aware of the Hadgkiss legislation until October, when the CFMEU sought to add the federal government as a respondent (see Related Article).

The union filed the case on August 19 last year and the court joined the federal government on October 18.

A Letter of Thanks for Merchant Navy Day

S.E. Queensland Vindicatrix &
MN. Mariners Assoc. Inc.

12th. September. 2017

Maritime Union of Australia
73. Southgate Avenue
CANNON HILL : 4170
Queensland.

Mr. Paul Gallagher

Seafarer's Monument Dedication : Coolangatta : Sunday. 3rd. September. 2017.

Dear Paul

The Executive and Members of our Branch have asked me to convey to you, and the Membership of your organisation, our most sincere appreciation for your support of our Memorial Monument Project.

We wish to thank you also for your timely donation of $1000.00 towards our Monument fund – a most gracious gesture which we truly appreciate.

It was most gratifying to note the turnout of your members at the Dedication Function with the address given by 'Tug Wilson very much appreciated by those assembled

Finally the 'Mix n' Greet 'Get-together' at the Dolphin Hotel at the conclusion of the official Function, was attended by some of our members who took advantage of the Bar 'Shout' as offered by your Union Membership – another gesture also very much appreciated by those in attendance.

Thank you all again for your contribution to our 'Special' day...

Yours fraternally,

Terry Docker.
Secretary.

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Twistlock Automation

How we handle new technology by lessening the working day and getting far greater training and education both on and off the job, will determine whether we are still around in another generation. ***Bob Carnegie***

Sourced from: https://felixstowedocker.blogspot.com.au/2017/09/automatic-twistlock-handling-machine.html

RAM SPREADERS AUTOMATIC Twistlock Handling Machine (PinSmart) automate the handling of twistlocks in a container terminal. Designed to handle 20ft, 40ft, 45ft and Twin 20ft containers, the PinSmart machine improves productivity by efficiently removing the twistlock cones.

RAM Spreaders new 4000 series PinSmart Automated Twistlock Handling Machine brings innovative high standards of safety and performance to container handling. The machine automates the task of manually removing or fitting twistlocks to shipping containers a task that is performed by hand in container terminals worldwide over a billion times per year.

Designed to handle single 20ft, 40ft or 45ft or twin 20ft containers the RAM PinSmart machine enhances safety, improves productivity and can save costs by automating an archaic manual task.

With ports and terminals worldwide under pressure to further increase container throughput, the new RAM

PinSmart machine provides a potential break-though to higher levels of productivity for shipside container handling.

The RAM PinSmart 4000 series Automated Twistlock Handling Machine is an electro-hydraulic operated machine for removing or fitting the interconnecting twistlocks used with shipping containers in a container terminal. The machine is capable of fully automating the discharge process and semi automating the loading process.

The machine:

The RAM PinSmart machine comprises a welded steel structure for supporting the shipping container; a system of gather guides for positioning the container accurately onto the machine; robotic corner handling modules at each corner for manipulating the twistlocks and an on-board computer control system with operator friendly interface utilising touch screen controls.

The main structure is designed to withstand the heavy shock loads and vibration that occur during container handling operations. It is fitted with eight side and two end steel gather guides. These guides are fitted with a shock damping elastomer to reduce shock from containers and reduce vibration.

The frame is fitted with eight robotic corner handling modules. These are used to manipulate the twistlocks to or from the lower corner castings of the shipping container.

Each corner handling module is capable of handling a wide range of twistlocks through the use of specially designed attachments that have been developed to cater for the popular twistlocks used by shipping lines.

The operation:

During discharge a container with twistlocks fitted is lowered onto the machine. The machine senses that the container is in position and then the robotic corner handling modules automatically remove the twistlocks. Once this has happened the crane can hoist the container off of the Pinsmart machine. The twistlocks are then automatically discharged into the storage bins adjacent to each corner handling module.

During loading, the stevedore places a twistlock at each corner handling module. Once the placement of the twistlocks is completed, the stevedore moves away from the machine. A container or containers can then be lowered onto the machine and the twistlocks will be automatically fitted to the container(s).

The machine can handle a range of different container configurations. A single 20 ft or 40ft or 45ft container or twin 20ft containers. For the 45 ft container the machine is designed to handle twistlocks at the 40ft corner casting position.

The RAM PinSmart machine is lifted and moved by a standard telescopic spreader at the 20ft position and can be quickly and easily transferred from bay to bay by a ship to shore crane or straddle carrier.

The setting-up of the machine for the type of twistlock to be handled is via a HMI Human Machine Interface using a heavy duty touch screen. Selection of the container size to be handled and the twistlock type automatically configures the machine. The operator controls the machine by a small portable control.

Interaction with the machine and the ship to shore crane is managed by two sets of green and red RAM LoadLite LED indicator lights that indicate to the operator the machines status and when it is safe to lower or hoist. A hoist interlock linking the machine with the crane is available for additional safety.

Revealing the strategy behind the introduction of the new RAM PinSmart Automated Twistlock Handling Machine, RAM Spreaders Product Manager, Cameron Hay expanded on the importance of safety in dockside operations.

"Shipping containers are secured on board container ships vessels using twistlocks. These twistlocks are manually handled at the port every time a container is loaded and discharged from the vessel.

There are over one billion twistlocks removed annually by hand in the worlds ports. The task of manually handling twistlocks is a slow, arduous and expensive operation that can be dangerous and may result in stevedores incurring injury, which in some cases can be fatal.

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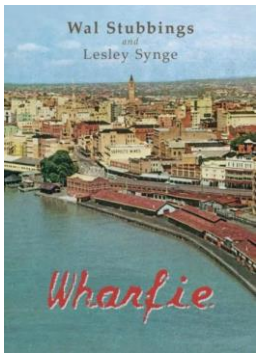
The RAM PinSmart automates the task thereby reducing the need for workers to be in these hazardous situations. RAM has utilised its 30 years of experience in designing spreaders operating in onerous conditions to now produce a machine that automates the task of handling twistlocks.

Funeral Details for Life Member John Underwood

THE FUNERAL SERVICE details for Life Member, John Underwood are:
Fitzgerald's Funerals, Hyde Park, 7 Yeatman Street, Townsville at 11.00am on Friday 29 September 2017.
John was a fine unionist who will be remembered.

Book Corner

A Century of Working Class Activism: A Review of *Wharfie* by Wal Stubbings and Lesley Synge, published by Zing Stories, 2017



IN THE LAST ten years of his life, retired Brisbane wharfie Wal Stubbings started recording the stories of his own life. When Wal died in 2014, aged 101, his memoirs remained unpublished, scattered throughout scores of documents typed and saved as computer files by family and friends. Wal's son Col understood the importance of this legacy. He phoned Brisbane writer Lesley Synge to ask her to piece together the stories into a coherent whole. Fortunately, she said yes. Drawing on Wal's written stories, his letters, recordings of interviews with him and other sources, Synge has compiled *Wharfie*, a book destined to become a classic of Australian working class memoir.

Synge has done a remarkable job of sewing the patches together. Occasionally she has added small sections in her own words, designed to clarify or explain certain points in the narrative. But her interventions are modest and complementary. With a deft editing hand Synge has allowed Wal to tell his own story. This is not a biography of Wal but a memoir in the first person, presented in Wal's own words with his own matter-of-fact conversational style, wry humour and honesty. The book follows a chronological arrangement, recounting Wal's early years in the isolated timber-getting and mining communities of Tasmania's west coast, then moving through his four decades on the Brisbane waterfront and as an activist in the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), and ending with his political, sporting and family activities during his long retirement. Each section is illustrated with photographs.

There are many reasons to read and enjoy *Wharfie*. Here are just three.

The book is rich in information about the way things were and how they changed, especially for working people. Capitalist societies like Australia's have evolved so rapidly and profoundly in 150 years that many aspects of human existence prior to the 1970s seem utterly strange to us. Reading the life story of a man who lived for more than a century is like reading science fiction in reverse. For most of his life Wal functioned in a world without personal computers, mobile phones, the internet, credit and debit cards, ATMs or mass air travel. He was in his 40s when television arrived in Australian homes, in his 60s when it changed to colour. When Wal and his wife Ada became active in community politics in the Brisbane suburb of Moorooka, their home became the venue for meetings because they were among the few locals who could afford a telephone.

On the waterfront men loaded and unloaded cargo by hand. Wal's first wharf job entailed shovelling and carrying coal in baskets from ship's holds to train wagons. Thousands of tonnes were moved this way. In Brisbane, humping bags of cargo was normal until containerisation in the 1960s. Wal's experiences remind us that technology, however sophisticated, is always an extension of human brains and muscles. However distant we become from the pick, the shovel and the grappling hook, labour and the natural world are and always will be the source of all social wealth.

Wal's life story confirms that humanity advances through collective knowledge and effort. While capitalist ideology encourages us to revere the outstanding individual, the self-motivated high achiever, in reality social progress derives from cooperation. Most of what we learn we learn from others, and what we achieve, we achieve together. Shovelling coal, the young Wal learnt from an old wharfie the best way to go about it. Thanks to him, Wal survived the long shifts with body intact. In the timber industry similar communal wisdom, passed down from experienced timbermen, kept Wal from being crushed to death by falling trees. Confronted by the structures of economic and political power, Wal could easily have been crushed in a different way. Instead, he turned to the collective strength of community organising, trade unionism and the Communist Party, and discovered in them both the power of solidarity and a way of leading a meaningful life. He realised his own advancement was bound up with the advancement of

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others. Not for him the dog-eat-dog selfishness of neoliberalism.

Wal's approach to life and politics provides a second reason to read *Wharfie*. He emerges from its pages as a worker-intellectual with the courage to question his own actions and beliefs. At least up to a point. A staunch socialist, he travelled to the Soviet Union in 1963, only to return with doubts about the nature of the Soviet regime. He aired those doubts publicly. But he didn't leave the Communist fold. Despite Wal's unease about Stalinism he remained a member of the CPA and loyal to the communist leadership of the Waterside Workers Federation (WWF). His loyalty skews his judgement at times. Was it really the case, for example, that in the 1960s the WWF 'tried to create a culture where you could express yourself – right-wing, left-wing or whatever'? (p.138) Perhaps. But probably not. All the same, Wal was no Communist dupe. In 1968 he lost close friends over his criticism of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia. Later, he came to the view that 'socialism under Stalin was not what Marx and Engels envisaged.' (p.161) Always close to the rank and file, Wal adjudged the Soviet Union a failure because central authority had taken control, crushing workers' democracy.

Wal never stopped questioning and learning. From the Aboriginal activist and wharfie Joe McGinness he learned that communication is more effective if you start with the little things, finding the common ground first. From a proud young man with paraplegia he learned not to assume your personal help is always needed or welcomed. From Ada's dementia late in her life he discovered he was not the self-sufficient carer he assumed he was. From returning to his childhood home in Tasmania and contemplating the environmental devastation wreaked by copper mining, Wal concluded that the 'slash and burn' approach to development dominant in his lifetime had to be rejected. Wal's ability to reflect honestly on his own habits of thought and behaviour and not to accept 'common sense' views on face value, is a lesson for us all.

The third reason to read this book is that it serves as a ledger of the debt we owe earlier generations of worker activists. As a Vigilance Officer for the WWF Wal was at the forefront of making the waterfront a safer place. In one incident the role almost cost him his life. This did not deter him. Through his persistence and the persistence of others like him, safety was established as a workplace priority. As a result, fewer workers were (and are) injured or killed on the job. As Wal well knew, however, this situation can never be taken for granted.

The debt we owe does not stop at the workplace. Many readers of *Wharfie* will already know about the WWF's role in supporting the Indonesian struggle for independence. They will probably also know about the union's support for Aboriginal rights and its prominence in the Queensland Right to March campaign in 1978-79. But how many will know that in 1956 a contingent of Brisbane wharfies travelled to Inglewood on the Darling Downs to help residents recover from a flood? How many know that Spinal Life Australia and the Sporting Wheelies and Disabled Association originated in fundraising activities by the WWF and its Women's Committee? How many are aware that the Communist Party organised what was probably Queensland's first rent strike to prevent a hike in government rents in Moorooka?

Wal or Wal and Ada together were involved in all of these battles. Wal also supported the Timorese against the Indonesian takeover in 1975. Thirty years later, in his 90s, he led a successful campaign to halt Coalition plans to extend the GST to personal and medical services for residents of retirement villages. This while coping with the trauma of Ada's decline. So many campaigns fought, so many conditions and freedoms won and defended. So many people who benefitted.

All his adult life Wal Stubbings believed organised labour to be the hope of the world. The history recounted in this tremendous book shows why he was right. For this reason alone it is a must-read for workers everywhere.

Jeff Rickertt

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