



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. 107 - Thursday 26 October 2017

Branch Conference - ASP EBA - Barney Sanders ILWU Report - Ruling on Casual Conversion - Jones Act Conundrum - ILWU Sends Thanks - Regulating Ship Speed Could Cut Emissions - Book Corner

Queensland Branch Conference 2017



*The Biennial Queensland Branch Conference is approaching fast. The Conference is titled, **Get Wise Organise: What future for Dockers, Seafarers and the Organised Labour Movement in this age of Automation and Disruptive Capitalism.** The Conference is being held on Wednesday 15 November 2017 to Thursday 16 November 2017, from 9am to 5pm. The venue is the Queensland Council of Unions (QCU) Building, Level 2, 16 Peel Street, South Brisbane. On the Wednesday evening a function will be held at the Fox Hotel. There will be guest speakers from around the globe and nationally. Please contact the Branch office for registration.*

In Principle Agreement Reached with ASP



MEMBERS COVERED BY the ASP EBA may be pleased to know that an in principle agreement has been reached with ASP Ship management. This Agreement is subject at all times to membership endorsement of course.

In general, the Branch is proud of what we have been able to negotiate, particularly in the Bauxite Run. There are long term benefits for members and the Agreement will leave us in good shape for our battle with Rio Tinto

and our huge battle for Australian Seafarers right to carry Australia's minerals around our coast and internationally.

The Branch would once again like to thank members and delegates who have shown great patience and discipline through the almost two years of these negotiations.

The Branch also wishes to acknowledge the great efforts of Tasmanian Secretary, Jason Campbell and Assistant National Secretary, Ian Bray in these talks.

Bob Carnegie and Jason Miners

Barney Sanders - Queensland Veterans President - ILWU Report



PACIFIC COAST PENSIONERS Association - ILWU 50th Annual Convention - Long Beach California. I was invited to attend this convention which was also attended by retirees, working members and ILWU officials.

The Port consists of two; one company owned and the other privately owned. The convention was addressed by Gene Seroka, Executive Director, Port of Los Angeles. They claim to have good relations with this person. He spoke about the Ports growth 15.5 million TEU through the port this year as well as technology, automation and environmental issues. When vessels berth they are placed on shore power and the funnel is stopped to remove any fumes/smoke from any emergency or necessary running of ships engines. These exhaust gasses are extracted to a barge alongside with scrubbers, the harmful chemical removed and the clean air released.

Attendees came from Alaska, Canada, Vancouver, Seattle, Washington, Tacoma, Oregon, San Francisco, Long Beach, Columbia River and many other West Coast ports. The Panama pilots, who are ILWU members, are attended.

The ILWU cover all waterfront jobs right up to the marine pilots and are in the process of signing up the control superintendents.

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

73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill QLD 4170

The ILWU is not a signatory to what we have, such as the ACTU. The reason being certain unions, the teamsters, building and construction unions and others campaigned for Trump in San Francisco. The white supremacist Nazi's planned a rally. The ILWU and community let it be known they would attend in opposition. No white supremacist rally took place. At the convention a resolution which had been sent by the Queensland Branch supporting the ILWU stand was read out.

I had a good talk with John M Castanho, who is their benefits specialist and a trustee. The West Coast longshoremen superannuation benefit is fully employer funded. So, with their social security payments, members are receiving virtually the same money when they were working. This money is taxable.

Listening to delegates we are all singing of the same song sheet – very similar issues. Trump increasing defence spending (same as Turnbull Liberals) attacks on Medicare, health and social services.

Through their previous employment, retired members have health cover and prescriptions are \$1.00. Working members are covered by company funded healthcare scheme. The ILWU are working on negotiations for long term health care (nursing home funded).

ILWU retirees and local Branches are very much involved in the community donations, schools, hospitals, food banks etc. There is a scholarship program for students to go to university. Their women's auxiliary is very active.

They continue to talk about the great leadership of Harry Bridges. I was fortunate to spend a whole day with Harry when he attended out All Ports Conference in Sydney, 1975.

We did a history tour, Harry Bridges Memorial Statue, Joe Hill Wall, Bloody Thursday and the Merchant Marine Memorial. They are big on educating their new members on, as we say, know the past, own the future!

Herbie Howe, the Canadian delegate, spoke of their recent elections. They now have a coalition government formed between the new Democratic Party and the Greens which they are happy about. Will Adams, ILWU International/West Coast Secretary and Bob McIlraith, ILWU West Coast President both addressed the convention. Willy again spoke regarding the introduction of a robot tax (automation). The purpose to fund job retraining and skills etc. They both spoke on campaigns past and present. A win over Rio Tinto for 20 workers on a private wharf exporting from a borate mine. ILWU support for workers picketing miners out since March at Mullan, Idaho – ILWU pensioners donated \$500.00, ILWU Local 19 donated \$5000.00.

The working members are very much fighting the same issues as us, such as casualisation and automation. The ILWU are doing a lot of work with emerging unions in South America. Like us, much lobbying of politicians is done. They are Bernie Sanders supporters. A resolution

on Israel's blockade of the ports of Palestine was passed. A good stand, especially because of America's close relationship with Israel. The blockade is causing great hardship on civilian population.

ILWU Thanks for Support to Queensland Branch
Dear members, our strong internationalist stand in supporting workers everywhere does not go unnoticed.



International Longshore and Warehouse Union

Local 10

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PRESIDENT, **Edwin R. Ferris**
VICE PRESIDENT, **Melvin Mackay**

Derrick H. Muhammad
SECRETARY TREASURER

October 24, 2017

Bob Carnegie
Queensland Branch Secretary
Maritime Union of Australia
149 Boundary Street
Townsville, QLD 4810

Dear Brother Carnegie:

On behalf of the entire ILWU Local 10 membership, I would like to thank you and your members for answering our call for support against fascist terror in San Francisco on August 26, 2017.

Under the guise of advocating for First Amendment rights, the "Patriot Prayer Group" was attempting to organize a rally that would have brought white supremacists, neo Nazis, alt-right militiamen, and potential violence to San Francisco.

I'm elated to say that the August 26, 2017 "Patriot Prayer Group" rally was cancelled at the last minute due to the collective efforts of many labor organizations and social justice activists. Thank you all for having the courage to stand up against racism, bigotry, intolerance, and fascism. It is imperative that we all remain ever vigilant against these deplorable ideologies as they are antithetical to a peace, love, and humanity. As Dr. Martin Luther King once prudently said, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." Thank you all for not being silent about opposing fascist terror.

In solidarity,

Edwin R. Ferris
President
ILWU Local 10

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Court Makes Crucial Ruling on Casual Conversion

Sourced from: www.workplaceexpress.com.au Tuesday, October 17, 2017

IN A LANDMARK judgment upholding a casual employee's right to convert to permanency on a "like for like" basis, the Federal Court has concluded it should fine Toll more than \$40,000 and order it to compensate a freight handler for refusing to grant his request for full-time employment from May last year.

Justice Geoffrey Flick found Toll Transport Pty Ltd breached s50 of the Fair Work Act by failing to comply with a 2013 agreement clause (21e) allowing casuals working on a regular and systematic basis for more than six months to elect permanency "on a like for like basis".

Toll also breached s50 and s345, including when a HR business partner denied the freight handler access to his time and wage records and refused to let him appoint his godfather, Workplace Advisory Group's Greg Selig, as his representative, Justice Flick found. It also failed to consult him about capping or changing his hours.

The court heard that the freight handler, who was employed by Toll Group employers for almost a decade and worked about 38 hours a week including overtime, in May last year sought to exercise his right under the agreement to convert to permanent full-time employment of 38 hours a week.

However, Toll initially sought expressions of interest for working "4 hour, 5 hour and 6 hour shifts" and ultimately offered him permanent part-time employment of 30 hours a week, saying this was "in line with Cl. 21(e) of the Toll Group – TWU Enterprise Agreement and the award".

When the freight handler requested access to his time and wage records to check whether the offer constituted a "like for like" arrangement, a Toll HR business partner refused, telling him he should check his pay slips and that it was his own "problem" if he didn't have them.

Justice Flick found the HR business partner also "knowingly" misrepresented his workplace right provided in an undertaking to the agreement to have a representative of his choice to assist in dispute resolution.

Instead she told Selig he was unable to represent the freight handler as he was "only allowed to have a support person".

Toll changed the freight handler's starting time from 4am to 5am and in April last year capped his hours at "no more than five hours per shift".

Justice Flick said Toll employees were "simply told of forthcoming changes" regarding hours and that a meeting on the topic "fell short of consultation", failing to engage them in a process in which they could have a say on alternative courses or the manner in which changes would be made.

"It has been concluded that [the freight handler] did have a right to convert from casual employment to permanent full-time employment," Justice Flick said, adding that he was "wrongfully denied that right" when Toll offered him a position of 30 hours per week.

"An order should be made pursuant to s545(2)(b) compensating [the freight handler] for the loss he has suffered because of Toll Transport's failure to convert [his] prior position as a casual to a permanent position on a "like for like" basis."

Concluding that penalties of \$42,500 should be imposed, Justice Flick also gave the parties a fortnight to make submissions or reach agreement on the amount the freight handler should be compensated.

According to the freight handler's calculations, Toll's failure to convert him to full-time permanency cost him about \$35,000 between May 2016 and April this year.

A TWU spokesperson told *Workplace Express* today that the "like-for-like" clause was "insisted on by Toll during EBA negotiations" and it was therefore "unfortunate" the employer had sought to "go back on it".

The union said the clause "effectively means that transport workers could not gain more hours work when converting from casual to permanent status" and that

"conversion involved only what the business is already sustaining".

Even where the term "like for like" is not specifically included in casual conversion clauses, the spokesperson said the "spirit" of casual conversion clauses across agreements "is interpreted as meaning a 'like for like' basis".

"The Commission rightly upheld the meaning and interpretation of the clause and thereby protected transport workers, who have a right to convert to permanent secure work."

Under its 2013 agreement, Toll committed to reviewing of its casual workforce and "to the extent that it is practicable having regard to Toll's commercial and operational needs" would "facilitate the use of clause 21 (e) with a view to converting 300 casual positions to permanent positions, on a like for like basis, in the first year of the term".

An FWC full bench ruled in July that it would insert casual conversion clauses in all awards (see [Related Article](#)).

[Tomvald v Toll Transport Pty Ltd \[2017\] FCA 1208 \(12 October 2017\)](#)

Puerto Rico and the Jones Act Conundrum

I HOPE ALL members take some time to read this expansive and very interesting article on the Jones Act and its history and its importance to Merchant Seafarers in the United States.

Jack Heyman is a retired Longshoreman from the famous San Francisco Local 10 and a dedicated internationalist and socialist with a lifetime of dedicated work in the working class movement. Prior to Jack working on the wharves he was a merchant seafarer. Bob Carnegie

WHEN HURRICANE MARIA made landfall in Puerto Rico on September 20, the whole transportation and communication infrastructure went down- the power grid, bridges, roads, cell towers- devastating the entire island. Most people are still without the basic necessities of life, a month later. Emergency logistics are dysfunctional and telephone service barely exists.

FEMA's bumbling for one month has looked like a rerun of a Keystone Cops movie. Although the marine terminals were loaded with commercial cargo since before the hurricane, there was no way for workers to reach the port facilities nor power to operate the port safely. Day after day cargo sat idle as people's desperation for water, food and life-saving medicine mounts. The early death toll was 48, but NPR has reported an additional 49 deaths since the storm and Puerto Rico's Center for Investigative Reporting found 69 hospitals had morgue at "capacity" as isolated towns and villages are reached the death toll will climb.

The Jones Act Under Attack.....Anew

Often when a major accident occurs the mainstream media are quick to blame workers. However, in the case

of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, many liberals and leftists have joined in the union bashing charging the Jones Act, which is supported by maritime unions, with stopping vital shipments of aid. While it may be true that Jones Act cargo may cost more, it is not true that the Act (which requires that shipping between U.S. ports be in U.S.-registered vessels) is preventing necessary aid from reaching the people. However, no such protectionist U.S. laws, including the Jones Act, should be imposed on the colony of Puerto Rico, and that goes for the U.S. imperialist embargo on trade with Cuba and trade sanctions on Venezuela and Russia as well.

The fact is there are plenty of U.S. bottoms to sail to the island. The Maritime Administration (MARAD) and the Department of Defense (DOD) manage [300 commercial vessels](#). And there are 4 Jones Act shipowners, Horizon, Sea Star, Crowley and Trailer Bridge that operate 5 container vessels and 12 barges on the Puerto Rico trade.

The blame for the lack of transportation and distribution of vital goods lies squarely with the U.S. government and its colonial oppression of Puerto Rico.

The Jones Act may pass on higher prices to an impoverished colonial people and that should not be, but there is another aspect to this question. Some of the most reactionary forces of the U.S. ruling class are trying to use the Puerto Rican hurricane relief crisis to get rid of the Jones Act, not because it would aid Puerto Rico but because it provides jobs for shipbuilders and seamen in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Much left opposition to the Jones Act comes from ignorance of the law and a knee jerk reaction to appear “anti-imperialist”. What it shows is their disconnect with the working class and blindness toward the capitalists’ machinations.

Capitalists and their news media often claim that good union wages cost the public higher prices. That’s the mantra of Walmart and the non-union big box stores who extol their “virtues” of the profit system. The danger is that this cacophony, unwittingly supported by “progressives”, could lead to repeal of the entire U.S. Jones Act, a longtime campaign of the right wing, anti-union *National Review*, Senator John McCain and most of the Wall Street banksters.

The 1920 Merchant Marine Act or the Jones Act as it is known was promulgated to protect the American shipbuilding and seafaring industries.

The Jones Act does not include the territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands nor should it include the colony of Puerto Rico. Both should be independent. However, it should remain intact for the continental U.S. Calling to free Puerto Rico from the restrictions of this U.S. cabotage law is part of the struggle for independence, but to call for abolition of the Jones Act in the U.S. would mean the destruction of maritime unions and the loss of hard-won union jobs.

A Colony Faces Natural Catastrophe & Imperial Oppression

Today, the colony of Puerto Rico is in debt \$70 billion dollars and is basically bankrupt. The island just sustained damage from Hurricane Maria up to \$95 billion dollars, according to Moody’s Analytics. While President Trump has offered Puerto Rico a loan of \$9.4 billion dollars, the state of New Jersey was granted \$50 billion in emergency federal aid after Hurricane Sandy. But Puerto Rico is a colony.

U.S. army veteran Ricardo Ortiz a patient in the VA Hospital in San Juan warns “American troops, just like in Haiti a few years ago after the earthquake there, are not here in Puerto Rico to aid the people. They are an imperialist occupying force and no imperialist army can free a colonized nation.” Blackwater, the murderous military security firm, is patrolling the streets of San Juan. Ortiz went on to say that barrios in his hometown, Caguas, are self-organizing humanitarian efforts to clean the streets, distribute and share food, drinking water and medicines. The demand should be raised for all U.S. forces, including the private security firm Blackwater, out of Puerto Rico.

Puerto Rico is run by the Control Board set up by Obama in 2016 under the Puerto Rico Oversight, Management and Economic Stability Act (PROMESA). Puerto Ricans on the island didn’t vote for this Control Board just as they have no congressional representation or right to vote for president. It is a colony under naked imperialist rule. The 10 day waiver of the Jones Act has ended. It must be extended and Puerto Rico excised from it.

Yet, blaming the Jones Act is really a diversion. The real capitalist drive is for privatization. That gem is the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), the largest publicly-owned utility in U.S.-controlled territory. With 90% of the electric grid down, the “green” capitalist Elon Musk offered to help rebuild the electric grid (and bulk up his profits). And Governor Rosello, the comprador bourgeois politician, suggested Musk make this his “flagship” project.

Both Democrat and Republican parties support the colonization of Puerto Rico and U.S. imperialist war policies. Their neo-liberal capitalist privatization schemes have targeted for years anything public, i.e. schools, prisons, social security. Many leftists oppose privatization of PREPA but support abolition of the Jones Act which would effectively eliminate U.S. merchant marine jobs as companies would use foreign flag registry to avoid union contracts.

Why were leftists silent 25 years ago when the Puerto Rican government-owned Navieras de Puerto Rico which owned several ships was privatized and sold to the North American capitalists, Bankers Trust? The ships were later sold to Sea Star Line, a joint venture of Saltchuck (45%), Matson (45%), and Taino (10%), the

Puerto Rican “pitiyanqui” capitalists. Saltchuck moved aggressively to buy out Matson.

Higher shipping rates on the Puerto Rico run were due, not to the Jones Act per se, but to actual price-fixing. In 2008, six executives of Saltchuck’s Sea Star Line, Crowley Maritime and Horizon Lines, all involved in the Jones Act trade of Puerto Rico were sentenced to prison for conspiring to fix ocean freight rates and cargo allocations. They incurred criminal fines, legal expenses and settlements of \$100 million. Now, Saltchuck’s Sea Star Lines and Crowley Maritime are each building [two new Jones Act containerships](#) for the lucrative Puerto Rico trade.

In 2015, Saltchuck’s rush for profit drove its Tote Maritime ship, El Faro, into the eye of Hurricane Joaquin en route from Jacksonville to San Juan resulting in the loss of the entire crew of 33. The U.S. Coast Guard, in the pocket of the maritime companies, [blamed the hapless captain](#) who went down with his ship and couldn’t defend himself.

The Downside of the Jones Act

The contradiction in the Jones Act is that while it provided fertile grounds for union organizing, other motivations were national security and protectionism. Two seminal acts during the anti-communist McCarthy period made that clear by introducing toxic policies, one for foreign policy the other domestic. Both opened the floodgates for union-busting runaway flag ships. The anti-Soviet Marshall Plan began the process of transferring U.S. merchant vessels to registration in other countries like Greece, part of a campaign to encircle the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc countries. U.S. financing of anti-communist parties and trade unions was well known in Europe, especially in France and Italy where the left led mass parties of the working class. It’s no wonder that charges of Russia interfering in recent American elections are met with laughter and derision in those countries.

The second dose of toxicity was the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, called the slave labor bill by unions. Aside from forcing workers on strike back to work, it banned reds from holding union office and made sympathy strikes illegal, all essential building blocks of the labor movement. On top of that the Coast Guard screened thousands of maritime workers from ships and ports, branding them communists. Many of them were black and brown, including Puerto Ricans and Jamaicans. A couple years before the crew of a merchant ship organized by the Communist-influenced National Maritime Union (NMU) sent President Truman a telegram protesting their transport of French soldiers back to Vietnam to recolonize that country. That was the first U.S. protest against the imperialist war in Vietnam.

The evisceration of the maritime unions was complete when militants of all stripes were purged by union officials-turned-finks like Joe Curran, president of the

NMU. What began as a trickle of runaway flag ships with foreign registry became a flood. The Jones Act only protected coastwide trade not trade union jobs. But by then the deep sea unions were left defenseless with no militants to organize internationally.

The West Coast ILWU was the only maritime union to remain unscathed by the anti-red terror and became a haven for many who were purged from other unions. It was the only maritime union to have opposed U.S. imperialist wars from the Korean War to the Middle East. On May Day 2008, the longshore union shutdown all West Coast ports to demand an end to the imperialist wars. ILWU even called for Puerto Rican independence and opposed the U.S. using the island of Vieques as a military target practise.

Retired longshoreman Jose Ojeda Jimenez, like his father before him, worked in the port of San Juan. He identifies himself as a proud “independentista and socialista” who opposes the Jones Act being imposed on Puerto Rico. A member of the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) Local 1575 he fought within his union for years against a discriminatory practise that denied Puerto Rican locals equal benefits like the pension and Container Royalty. Those benefits are provided for all longshoremen in the Master Contract, but shamefully not for those in the colony of Puerto Rico. ILA locals, especially the predominantly African American locals in the Southeast and Gulf ports, should demand equal treatment for all longshore union members.

U.S. Stops International Humanitarian Aid to Puerto Rico

An offer of teams of doctors and medical aid from Cuba was made to Puerto Rico, but President Trump has denied the humanitarian aid and continues to ramp up the illegal blockade of Cuba. Venezuela President Maduro pledged a “special plan of support and solidarity” assumed to be donated petroleum. That too has been rejected. Why? Venezuela is the majority owner of CITGO which maintains state-of-the-art refineries in Texas. Russia’s state-owned Rosneft owns 49.9% of CITGO and U.S. sanctions against both countries are what sank that offer of aid. Likewise, the Hess Oil refinery on the U.S. territorial island of St. Croix adjacent to Puerto Rico, and half-owned by the Venezuela government was closed in 2012. At the time it was the largest petroleum refinery in the world. Its shuttering reeks of U.S. imperial designs in the Caribbean.

Hostile relations against Russia, Cuba and Venezuela didn’t start with Trump. The U.S., has attempted to militarily overthrow the government in each of those countries: Russia (U.S. Expeditionary Force 1918-1920), Cuba (Bay of Pigs 1961) and Venezuela (U.S.-backed military coup 2002). Vietnam is a big exporter of rice to Cuba. Shipping rice to Puerto Rico would not be in violation of the Jones Act, however it could jeopardize

relations with the U.S. that Vietnam has been cultivating through the TransPacific Partnership (TPP).

United Socialist Islands of the Caribbean

Perhaps the arrogant imperial disdain for the plight of the working people of Puerto Rico will stir the cauldron of their desire for freedom and independence. That struggle must transcend the narrow confines of U.S. bourgeois democracy which even denies that Puerto Rico is a colony while the comprador bourgeoisie is besotted with their imperialist American partners. A revolutionary Puerto Rican socialist movement, the embers of which were seen in the celebration of the release of Puerto Rican freedom fighter Oscar Lopez Rivera after 36 years in prison, could rise up with the call for independence and reach out to the working class in the Virgin Islands, Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti and Trinidad and forge a united socialist islands of the Caribbean.

Jack Heyman (jackheyman@mac.com) is chair of the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee www.transportworkers.org and a retired longshoreman who writes on labor politics and history.

Study Finds Regulating Ship Speed Could Cut Emissions by a Third

By Sam Chambers – sourced from: <http://splash247.com>

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS from three ship types – containerships, bulkers and tankers – could be reduced by a third, on average, by reducing their speed, according to a new study that will be presented to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) next week.

The cumulative savings from reducing the speed of these ships alone could, by 2030, be as much as 12% of shipping's total remaining carbon budget if the world is to stay under the 1.5°C global temperature rise, the CE Delft study for NGOs Seas at Risk and Transport and Environment, founding members of the Clean Shipping Coalition (CSC) found.

Reducing operational speed would also provide a boost to jobs and growth in shipbuilding nations, where the study concludes production would have to grow by over 30% in order to maintain transport capacity for global trade. The study also concludes that the additional costs of slow steaming on exports such as oilcake and beef from Latin America would be marginal, and this is without accounting for lower transport fuel costs.



Bill Hemmings of T&E said: “Shipping is the only international sector that has yet to commit to a global emissions reduction target or measures. Talks at the IMO

are expected to be challenging as the industry body, ICS, is on record as opposing every reduction measure so far put forward – including binding reduction targets, the need to tighten design standards or have operational efficiency measures. But industry itself showed clearly that slow steaming works. It proved effective in weathering the economic crisis, so the IMO should now agree mandatory speed measures to achieve the substantial emissions reductions need to start decarbonisation.”

The findings will be discussed by the IMO next week when it meets for the second time to develop its initial 2018 greenhouse gas reduction strategy. The UN discussions in London will concentrate on a global emissions reduction target and potential measures for the sector. Regulating ship speed is one of the short-term measures on the table that can be implemented immediately.

John Maggs of Seas at Risk and President of Clean Shipping Coalition: “A new regulation to reduce ship speed will be key to the success of the IMO GHG strategy. Only reduced speed can give the fast, deep short-term emissions reductions that are needed for shipping to meet its Paris Agreement obligations. Significant early emissions savings are essential for the long-term decarbonisation of the sector as they preserve shipping's carbon budget and buy the industry time to develop longer-term decarbonisation solutions. Recent suggestions by industry that no new short-term measures are need is misguided and reckless, and threatens to undermine the IMO strategy right from the start.”

Book Corner



Benito Cereno, by Herman Melville, 1855.

AVOID SPOILERS IF you intend to read this. The reader should learn the shocking secret at the same time the narrator does. Melville pioneers here some fresh writing techniques to create a sense of horror and disorientation.

It is 1799, off the coast of Chile. An American merchant skipper, Captain Delano, rows over to a distressed Spanish slave ship to offer assistance. Cereno, the Spanish captain, explains that a storm and illness has led to the death of many of the crew.

A slave, Babo, arrives to shave Cereno, and Delano muses on the abasement involved in slavery. But then he wonders whether in their whispering Cereno is menacing Babo or conspiring with him. Delano cannot understand the unreal feeling on this ship.

This story was inspired by real events. Captain Delano was an historical figure who published an account of his travels. Melville often based stories on news, history or memoir. In *Moby Dick* and other books he had turned his own sailing experiences into fiction.

But Melville's way of showing reality makes it seem

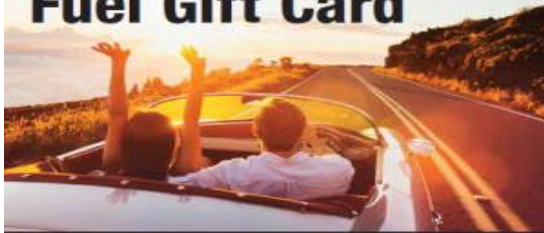
distinctly unreal. His interest in the uncanny is philosophical. Behind the appearances of things, he catches glimpses of underlying moral forces.

Melville wrote this story at a time when slave abolition was gaining ground and the American Civil War was brewing. Does the story exploit a racist fear of blacks?

I think rather that it presents an image of a monstrous force summoned into being by the slave system.

Perhaps Melville is aware, as were the Greek tragedians, of "the twofold evil of cruelty, that it not only causes pain to the victim, but actually by means of the pain makes him a worse person" (from Gilbert Murray, *The Medea of Euripides*).

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MUA Queensland Branch



Picnic Day 2017

FREE EVENT FOR THE FAMILY

Date: Tuesday 7th November 2017

Time: 10:00am – 4:00pm

Place: The Plantation

1204 New Cleveland Road, Gumdale

Lollies, drinks, ice-cream,
morning tea and lunch
provided.

Rides, giant slide,
swimming pools.

