



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. 121 – 9 March 2018

Sea Swift - Kalmar – Merger – AAT Contractors – ASP EBA - Dealing with Workplace Turmoil - Brisbane Cruise Terminal - MT Tintomara - Crucial Ruling on Notice, Redundancy – Fire Rips Through Maersk Ship - Trauma of the Stalin Era - Flame Cutting Lashers – Member Work Not Dole Rally 15th March

Sea Swift Developments

ON THURSDAY 1 March 2018, Branch Secretary, Bob Carnegie met with Sea Swift's CEO, Fred White and HR Manager, Dan Erbacher.

We had a very forthright, and I think, honest discussion about how we see things going forward.

Out of the discussions has come an MOU which both parties have agreed to. Part of this MOU will give us access to members and potential members onboard Sea Swift vessels.

At all times both parties are to act in a respectful manner towards all parties. AT ALL TIMES.

What I liked was that these talks were conducted 'old school' over a cup of coffee at an open café for the whole world to see the MUA Queensland Branch Secretary and the CEO of Sea Swift debating issues.

I suggested to Fred White that perhaps if things progress well, we might end up having a delicious glass of the nectar of the Gods or a XXXX bitter, with a few members, in the not too distant future.

Whether some members like it or not, Sea Swift is a major player in North Queensland. They employ a lot of our members and potential members and as I said to Fred White, I see Sea Swift not as the enemy but, like both of us, as major stakeholders in the maritime industry.

I would like also to go on record to thank Bernie Farrelly for his outstanding work he has done in his work with this company.

The MOU is for six months and the MUA will approach it in a positive way for the benefit of the seafarers working for Sea Swift. We have a long way to go but we are making some progress, one step at a time.

Bob Carnegie

Kalmar EBA

OUR FIRST EBA discussions with Kalmar (Cargotec) began on Wednesday. Delegates Steve Wildman and Steve O'Brien are doing a terrific job. *Bob Carnegie*

Merger

THE MERGER BETWEEN the MUA/TCFUA and CFMEU has been approved. The great hope of working

class people around Australia is that the merged union will advance the interests of its members and the working class generally.

The Queensland Branch of the MUA will do its best to see that at all times the lofty traditions of our union ideals are always at the forefront of this merged union.

As with all things in life, the proof will be in the pudding and the pudding will be in the eating. The below statement on the merged union is from our National Secretary, Paddy Crumlin.

Dear Comrades,

This is a great day for our union, the TCFUA, CFMEU and the entire trade union movement in Australia and internationally.

The Fair Work Commission has recognised our legitimate right to form our new union with the overwhelming support of our membership.

I have recorded a message of thanks to those of you who voted in the ballot and supported this historic amalgamation here: <https://youtu.be/Zs0mEY80Znk>

The employers have persistently tried to block the merger, together with Turnbull Government.

The only basis for this opposition is to further attack the rights of maritime, construction, forestry and manufacturing workers in this country.

It is nothing more than a response driven by their elitism and the fact their ideological agenda is threatened by the genuine interests of our members.

The employers will probably appeal but the members have spoken.

The Fair Work Commission has confirmed that voice and we will now continue to embark on forming the new union regardless of their opposition – legal, political, industrial or otherwise.

Congratulations to all members, officers, officials and staff for your overwhelming support that helped realise this historic day.

Yours in solidarity and unity.

Paddy Crumlin
National Secretary
Maritime Union of Australia

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

73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill QLD 4170

Maintenance Contractors for AAT

THE QUEENSLAND BRANCH has been successful in our unionising of the workers at AAT maintenance. For many, many years, this had been one that has been overlooked or placed in the 'too hard basket.'

Through the great preliminary work of Damien McGarry and the terrific follow up and continual organising work of Queensland Branch Organiser, Paul Petersen, this has been achieved.

The Branch and the members are facing a concerted effort to prevent workers being covered by the proper industrial instrument.

Every port, stevedoring operator, agent, ship operator etc should not be under any illusion about the resolve of the Branch and its members.

Any attempt to intimidate a union member or union official will be met with immediate legal and political action which will be sustained as long as necessary.

Since I have been Branch Secretary of the Queensland Branch I have tried to foster an arm's length, respectful relationship with employers.

However, the one thing that will not be accepted is any employer using nefarious means, such as intimidatory leaflets from employer groups attempting to destroy workers' rights that are clearly defined in the general protection section of the Fair Work Act.

ASP EBA by Jason Miners

THE UNION HAS now completed the ASP EBA and is in the initial stages for determining the vote roll out. We were given a few strict instructions from the members in relation to the Gladstone to Weipa element which in our view and in the delegates view has been satisfactorily addressed. They are as follows:

- Extra IR when there is no TIR available;
- Operational catering duties clearly identified in the EBA;
- Taxis put back into the agreement with the option of utilising excess credit for shore leave in Weipa;
- Income protection;
- Increases in super;
- Stronger definitions around travel to and from the vessel which hopefully will fix the issues; expressed by members over a long period of time
- A commitment to put together a training matrix; for the fleet and to hold further discussions with the employer over increasing training on the ships.

Both Bob and I will be trying to get to all the Gladstone to Weipa RTM vessels in coming weeks to meet with crews about the benefits of the Agreement, seeking endorsement from the membership.

Thanks to the delegates who made themselves available to attend meetings throughout the process.



Dealing with the Personal Toll of Workplace Turmoil

David Greene, our outstanding

Legal/Industrial Office, has written an article

about the personal toll of workplace turmoil. I urge members to read it. If you encounter it contact the Branch immediately. Bob Carnegie

WORKERS WHO HAVE experienced turmoil at work – whether in the form of a disciplinary investigation, bullying or harassment, workplace injury, the injury or death of a colleague, dismissal, redundancy or such like will appreciate that every such event is often accompanied by feelings of anxiety, depression, anger, humiliation, hurt, or grief. There is often little in the way of support provided by employers in such circumstances, and the natural tendency (of men in particular) is to bottle it up and try to deal with it internally and in their own way.

In events such as those mentioned, workers often feel lost and confused. They are confronted with a potentially life-altering event, and often a process that nothing else in their life has prepared them for. They tend to bury themselves into the detail of an incident, seeking to somehow find a reason or justification for the conduct or result, as if by doing so will help them to process or to deal with their feelings. Those reasons or justifications are often not easily identifiable, which reinforces the negative feedback loop and perpetuates the feelings and sense of helplessness.

For people who don't learn to cope with this trauma or with the feelings and helplessness that often accompany the trauma, the internal mental anguish can manifest in the physical sense. Some people turn to drink, and others still to prescription medication or other drugs. Mood and personality changes can appear, and then relationships outside of work begin to suffer. Home, the usual place of safety and relaxation, can soon become another place of confrontation to be avoided.

One incident, often arising through no fault of your own, can suddenly and overwhelmingly take over every aspect of your life and drive you to a place you never imagined being.

If you, or someone you know, is going through turmoil at work, there are a number of support services you can access, and some tools you can use to help put things into perspective.

In the first instance, please speak with your MUA delegate, or any official, officer or organiser of the union. They are here to help and can help you access union services and advice.

Consider accessing your employer's Employee Assistance Program, or the MUA's service, HunterLink. This is a free and confidential service provided to members. **HunterLink can be contacted on 1800 554 654 or www.hunterlink.org.au.**

We strongly recommend that members going through any type of turmoil consider accessing a mental health plan from their General Practitioner. A plan will give you access to up to 10 Medicare-supported sessions with a Psychologist.

There is no utility in members burying themselves in the detail or process associated with a traumatic event – that is the job of the union’s legal/industrial officers and any external lawyers working on your behalf. There is an old adage – why buy a dog if you’re going to bark for yourself – which makes the point. Members don’t need to worry about researching their employer’s policies, or making sure that the employer interviews X, Y and Z, or whether the employer has done something wrong. Respectfully, that is the job of the union and its staff, and your only job is to look after yourself and do the work you are paid to do (if you are able).

There is also no utility in bringing your workplace issues home, or in turning to substance abuse. Spending hours in the pub, or laying awake at night thinking about your situation, will not make your situation any better. Admittedly, this is easier said than done, but workers, with the help of the Employee Assistance Program, their G.P., and their Psychologist, can learn to put appropriate barriers in place and develop the tools to separate work issues from home life.

You can also access a range of external health and welfare groups, including:

Lifeline

Counselling services for anyone at anytime.

Phone 13 11 14

Kids Helpline

Telephone and online counselling for young people aged 12-25.

Phone 1800 551 800

SANE helpline

Information, advice and referral for mental illness.

Phone 1800 187 263

beyondblue

Information and referral for depression and anxiety.

Phone 1300 224 636

Parentline

Support, counselling and education for parents.

Phone 1300 301 300

Diverse Voices

Peer counselling service for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and their families and friends.

Phone 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight)

Harmony Place

Mental health services for culturally and linguistically diverse people and communities.

Phone (07) 3848 1600

Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service

Counselling and group programs for Australian veterans, peacekeepers and their families.

Phone 1800 011 046

ARAFMI

Support for family, friends and carers of people with mental illness.

Phone 1800 351 881

Men’s Line

Telephone and online support, information and referral service to help men with relationship and other problems.

Phone 1300 789 978

Mental Health Association of Queensland

Access to support, information and referral to mental health-related services in your area, 9am to 7pm Monday to Friday.

MiNetworks

Connects you to an experienced mental health worker to find information and support.

Phone 1800 985 944 or go online.

You could also join a local support group, such as

Self Help Queensland can help you find a support group in your area. Phone (07) 3344 6919 or email

info@selfhelpqld.org.au.

The Mental Health Association of Queensland has a list of support groups operating in the Brisbane and Gold Coast region.

Grow is Australia’s leading mutual help program for people with a mental illness.

Helpful resources

Queensland Health offer mental health information and resources.

Contact the Australian Counselling Association on 1300 784 333 to find a counsellor.

Contact the Australian Psychological Society on 1800 333 497 to find a psychologist.

Use the Lifeline service finder to find other free or low cost health and community services in your area.

by David Greene

ACCC to Conditionally OK Carnival-Brisbane Cruise Terminal Deal

Sourced from: <https://worldmaritimeneews.com/archives/246220/accc-to-conditionally-ok-carnival-brisbane-cruise-terminal-deal/>

THE AUSTRALIAN COMPETITION and Consumer Commission (ACCC) is proposing to allow arrangements between the Port of Brisbane and Carnival Cruise Line aimed at developing a new AUD 158 million cruise terminal in Brisbane.

However, in a draft decision, the ACCC proposed conditions on its authorisation due to competition concerns.

The duo has sought authorisation for an agreement under which Carnival will be bound by take or pay obligations for the new terminal. Specifically, Carnival will pay a fixed yearly amount to the port over the term of the 15-year agreement.

In exchange, Carnival will receive preferential berthing rights at the new terminal, including 100 “Foundation Berthing Days” a year, which allow the cruise line

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

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company to have first pick of 100 days a year at the terminal, up to a maximum of four days a week.

“A new dedicated cruise terminal in Brisbane, capable of berthing the increasingly popular ‘mega’ cruise ships, would be a real public benefit to the community as this is infrastructure that is currently lacking in Brisbane,” Roger Featherston, ACCC Commissioner, said.

“Of course the ACCC recognises that commercially, having a foundation customer helps to underwrite the projected AUD 158 million investment for the Port of Brisbane to build the new terminal,” he added.

“But we do have concerns about aspects of the agreement, particularly in relation to the four days a week Carnival is proposed to have preferential access to the terminal. This may limit or prevent competition from other cruise liners wishing to dock at the terminal in Brisbane during the peak summer cruising season,” Featherston explained.



Image Courtesy: Port of Brisbane

As explained, the ACCC’s second, greater concern about the proposed arrangement is the prospect of Carnival being granted a right of first refusal over a possible future second berth at the terminal.

“We are concerned this will block other cruise operators from being able to offer alternate cruise options to consumers in Brisbane,” Featherston further said.

For this reason, the ACCC said it proposes to impose a condition on the authorisation that the Port of Brisbane and Carnival not give effect to these provisions of their agreement.

Words of Thanks from Mrs Ezzy

DEAR MR. BOB Carnegie,

To all your seafarers, employees and stoppie, thank you all for your kindness in remembering Desmond Ezzy with your donation.

Your thoughtfulness and generosity are much appreciated by me.

Thank you again.

Sincerely yours,

Remy Ezzy

(Widow of Des Ezzy)

MT Tintomara by Damien McGarry - ITF Inspector - Gladstone



ON THURSDAY THE 22nd of February I received information that there were some issues onboard the MT Tintomara, berthed at South Trees Wharf Gladstone.

Upon boarding and being greeted by the deck crew, it soon became evident there was an underlying problem onboard as officers tried to keep the ratings away from

me and stood beside them to ensure nothing was mentioned about the events that had occurred over the past 6 weeks.

This situation is an all-too-common occurrence in the lives of foreign seafarers and these types of complaints are received regularly. This one was unusual as the crew were made up of different nationalities who understood the strength of sticking by one another. After a few meetings with AMSA and I, the crew felt confident enough to sign their names to a statement in front of AMSA which gave them the capacity to detain the vessel until the crew agreed they felt safe to sail.

Working through the investigations onboard there was enough evidence to prove physical and emotional bullying had taken place since the new Captain joined the ship in December and was assisted by the Chief Officer and 2nd Engineer. The Chief Officer was my initial concern as he was the one doing the physical bullying, so a request was made to have him removed from the vessel immediately which was done.

The company superintendent arrived from Hong Kong and I was informed that the Captain and the 2nd engineer did not physically harm the crew, so we were satisfied the crew were in no immediate harm.

Overnight the Captain and superintendent decided to write a statement for the crew to sign stating that they were now happy to sail with him to Singapore as the Chief Officer was no longer onboard. The crew were woken up at 5am with their manning agents on the phone demanding they sign the Captains letter to prevent

“Blacklisting” which means they will never work in the industry again. After hearing of these events, I again boarded and assured the crew that AMSA will not agree to release the vessel if they stick



together and tell the truth. AMSA conducted the interviews again and each crew member once again stood firm and signed a statement saying they were coerced and bullied into signing the letter. AMSA issued a warning to the Superintendent and Captain about their behaviour and what was expected over the next few days if they wanted to be released from detention.

It was agreed that the Captain be replaced in Gladstone and our focus now turned to protecting the crew when they left Australia. The ITF procedure is to have the owners/ operators sign an "Indemnity" letter to make sure no crew would be punished in any way for their actions. This was done in front of AMSA and each crew member took a copy.

ITF National Coordinator, Dean Summers had already formally placed this ship in dispute and worked with the Hong Kong affiliates to have the ship covered by an ITF agreement. This effectively gave the ratings a substantial wage increase and significantly better conditions but more importantly afforded them all another level of protection from either angry manning agents, owners or operators.



The process of getting an agreement across the line especially within a short timeframe is an exhausting

exercise. This one was compounded by time zones, with the owners being in Hong Kong and manning agents being in India.

After a long weekend of negotiations onboard and Dean Summers dealing with the political and industrial elements of the dispute we finally settled the agreement on Monday morning.

A reminder to all wharfies is you have the best access to these seafarers and the ability to help if they are in a difficult situation. So please be mindful that a few words to find out how their voyage is going may be all that's needed to make a positive change to the lives of these men and women.

A big thank you to Dean Summers and Sandra Bernal for their guidance and assistance over the weekend.

Court Makes Crucial Ruling on Notice, Redundancy

Sourced from:

https://www.workplaceexpress.com.au/nl06_news_selected.php?act=2&nav=11&selkey=56540&utm_source=daily+email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=subscriber+email&utm_content=article+headline&utm_term=Court%20makes%20crucial%20ruling%20on%20notice%2C%20redundancy

IN A LANDMARK ruling, the Federal Court has found today that a Spotless subsidiary failed to meet its obligations under the NES to provide notice and severance pay to employees – some with 15 to 20 years service – when it lost a longstanding services contract at a major shopping complex.

Justice John Reeves found that when Berkeley Challenge Pty Ltd purportedly gave notice to the employees, it in fact was only notifying them that it had lost its cleaning and security contract at Sunshine Coast Plaza Shopping Centre, which it had held for almost 20 years.

Turning to redundancy entitlements, the company claimed that it escaped the severance pay obligation because of the exception that applies when employees become redundant and "this is due to the ordinary and customary turnover of labour" at s119(1)(a).

Justice Reeves ruled against the company's construction of the provision, saying that "to sum up, the exception applies if a particular employer decides to terminate a particular employee's employment and to render that employee's job redundant in circumstances where the redundancy component of that decision is for that employer, with respect to its labour turnover, both common, or usual, and a matter of long-continued practice".

"In that confined set of circumstances, the employer concerned does not have to pay the employee concerned any redundancy pay", he said.

"In this matter, the critical question therefore reduces to this: has Berkeley, as the employer of the affected employees, discharged its onus to show that its decision to terminate their employment and, at the same time, to render their jobs redundant was, for it, common or usual and a matter of long-continued practice?"

He concluded that the evidence "appears to show the opposite of the circumstances in which the exception applies.

"That is, it appears to show that the terminations and the connected job redundancies were, for Berkeley, as the employer, uncommon and extraordinary and not a matter of long-continued practice".

Because the exception didn't apply, Berkeley was obliged to pay severance under s119 to the employees.

He said the company would be required to pay notice and severance pay to the employees, plus interest.

United Voice, which brought the case, says the employees missed out on \$200,000 in total. The longest-serving employees will be entitled to payouts of up to 21 weeks, plus interest, the union says.

Queensland branch industrial coordinator John Spreckley told *Workplace Express* this afternoon the judgment is the "first proper test" of the "ordinary and customary turnover of labour" exception and what it means.

He said contracting industries had been relying on the provision to avoid paying notice and redundancy to workers like the cleaners and security guards employed under at the Sunshine Coast Shopping Plaza.

He said the ruling "dispenses with the idea that there is a blanket exception" from paying redundancy because the employer is supplying services under a contract. Spreckley said there has been "an evolving practice of contracting companies giving ambiguous notice of

termination that includes conditions or contingencies rather than a certain date." "We expect this decision will put a stop to that growing problem.

"Similarly where we used to have *ad hoc* arguments about whether the exception applied, we are now finding increasingly contractors refusing to pay redundancy pay. "We will rely on this judgment in future cases".

He added that while the union is pleased with the ruling, "we should have a system where workers don't need to go to the Federal Court to receive NES entitlements".

"There should be no exception to the requirement to pay redundancy pay – the rules should be changed and the Act amended".

United Voice v Berkeley Challenge Pty Limited [2018] FCA 224 (2 March 2018)

The Importance of Delegates

By Bob Carnegie and Martin Thomas

THE QUEENSLAND BRANCH of the MUA is unequivocal in its support of on the job delegates. Several times over the last 2½ years our collective resolve has been tested and each time the Branch has fought back in defence of our most important asset – our rank and file delegates. In this and upcoming issues of the Branch News we will be running a series of interviews that were held with our rank and file delegates with Martin Thomas.

Brett Membrey

WE'VE JUST GONE through a restructuring. It's been an ongoing issue over 30 months. The company demanded redundancies to reduce their fixed costs. Eventually we got it down to six, and voluntary redundancies.

The company said at first they wanted 18 redundancies. They keep telling us they're losing money. That's to do with the way they manage the business, but at the end of the day the poor stiff at the end of the line gets to pay for it.

They didn't think it out too well. With those six voluntary redundancies, that's 80 years experience gone, all up.

Now we're going through an EBA process. The old EBA expired on 30 April. Part A of the new EBA is done, but not part B.

One of the big things we've got through is income protection. The company have signed on to pay into an income protection scheme for every employee at Linx. In effect it's a pay rise.

In Part B, the main thing will be trying to get workers some job security. We have 50 casuals, and some of them have been working for the company for ten or twelve years.

The big thing I'd like to see the branch achieve is to get an MUA labour pool, so casuals would get more stability by being able to work for different companies different days. That would give the branch a lot more strength. I know the seafarers have shitloads of issues too.

Serious Fire Rips Through New Maersk 15,000 TEU Ship, Four Missing

Sourced from: <http://splash247.com/serious-fire-breaks-rips-through-new-maersk-15000-teu-ship-four-missing/>



A SERIOUS FIRE broke out on the 15,262 *Maersk Honam* in the Arabian Sea yesterday afternoon. The fire erupted in one of the cargo holds and appears to have spread across the

giant boxship. 23 crew have been evacuated to the nearby vessel *ALS Ceres* and search and rescue operations are ongoing for four missing crew members with the Indian Coast Guard assisting. Two of the evacuated crew are understood to have sustained injuries.

The ship – less than 12 months old – was enroute from Singapore towards Suez when the fire started some 900 nautical miles southeast of the Omani port of Salalah.

"The fire onboard the *Maersk Honam* continues, and the situation of the vessel is very critical," Maersk Line stated in a release.

"We've received the news of *Maersk Honam* and the four missing crew members with the deepest regret and are now doing our utmost to continue the ongoing search and rescue operations. This by rerouting our own vessels, with the assistance of vessels in the area – most notably *ALS Ceres* that thankfully acted promptly upon our distress call – and the local authorities," said Soren Toft, chief operating officer at Maersk.

The container vessels *MSC Lauren*, *Edith Maersk* and *Gerd Maersk*, all enroute in the Arabian Sea, diverted their routes and are searching the area. The vessel is carrying 7,860 containers.

The cause of the fire is currently unknown with Maersk Line stating it will investigate the matter thoroughly in cooperation with all relevant authorities.

Russia Has Yet to Recover from the Trauma of the Stalin Era

By Sergey Parkhomenko

Sourced from:

https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/mar/07/russia-stalin-putin-guilt-victims?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

This article deals with the malaise that hangs over the Russian people and that is of Stalinism over 65 years after his death.

Stalin, more than any other ruler of the 20th century ruled by FEAR hence the importance of the Last Address Movement.

Stalinism has crippled the left for decades around the world and sadly lingers on, much to the detriment of democratic movements. I urge members to take the time to read this article. Bob Carnegie

PUTIN DOESN'T WANT the nation to address its guilt and ignorance. So we started a civic movement that humanises the victims.



Russian Communist party supporters mark the anniversary of Joseph Stalin's birth in Red Square. Photograph: Vasily Maximov/AFP/Getty Images

Earlier this year the Russian ministry of culture banned the satirical film *The Death of Stalin*, supposedly because it contained “information whose dissemination is prohibited by law”. On Russian-language social media, the withdrawal of the film’s screening licence was met with widespread laughter and scorn: what sort of secrets could this movie possibly have disclosed? Could it be that Stalin is indeed dead? – so went the irony.

It looked ridiculous. But back in December, there had been an ominous precursor: Alexander Bortnikov, the head of Russia’s FSB intelligence services, told the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* government newspaper that Stalin-era repressions had been justified. He mentioned the need to counter Trotsky’s networks, and plots that had “ties with foreign secret services”. He also claimed that “mass-scale political repression” had ended by 1938 – a blatant rewriting of history.

As Vladimir Putin prepares for re-election on 18 March, Russia’s Soviet past has become a constant object of manipulation by a regime that is for ever sending out mixed messages. Prior to Bortnikov’s comments, Putin had inaugurated the Wall of Grief in Moscow, a memorial dedicated to the victims of repression. “This terrifying past cannot be deleted from national memory,” Putin said. “These crimes cannot be justified by anything.”

Stalinism is hidden in the minds of many Russians, how they perceive history and relate to basic values.

Meanwhile, new monuments, banners and exhibits honouring Joseph Stalin are sprouting up around the country, and new posters and banners glorifying him have become commonplace, while hundreds of Soviet-era representations of him have been left intact: busts and bas-reliefs of the man, statues big and small, standing or on horseback. Twice a year, on his birthday and on the anniversary of his death, admirers bring piles of red carnations to Stalin’s grave on Red Square. You might think this is what the remnants of Stalinist ideology look like: memorabilia and ceremony. But there’s more to it than that.

Russian society is not ignorant of the scale of the purges and crimes perpetrated under Stalin. When Bortnikov spoke about millions of victims, those figures

were nothing new for most Russians. For decades, Soviet doctrine taught citizens that these events were an unavoidable price to pay for the survival and development of the country. Stalinism today in Russia isn’t found in those monuments, flowers, or posters – nor is it in censorship or the double-speak of high-level officials. Instead it is hidden in the minds of many Russians, in how they perceive history, and how they relate to fundamental values.

For most Russians, those millions of victims are nothing but cold statistics. Few people care to pore over the difficult and unpleasant questions. That’s because an unprocessed, psychological trauma remains in our society. The state doesn’t need to make any special effort to perpetuate this. All it needs to do is leave people alone with that terrifying past, and make sure they aren’t helped in trying to understand how it came about, or in coming to terms with unspoken feelings of collective guilt. This is how a totalitarian mindset can reproduce itself.



Nikita Sokolov, Russian historian and activist for the Last Address project, watches the installation of a memorial plaque in Moscow. Photograph: David Krikheli

Four years ago, I decided to do something about this. I went to the Moscow offices of the human rights organisation Memorial with an idea: let’s launch a new civic movement. I was inspired by an initiative that had started in Germany in the 1990s, the *Stolpersteine* project. *Stolpersteine* (stumbling blocks) are brass plaques the size of a cobblestone laid into the pavements of German towns and cities, outside the houses where the victims of Nazi atrocities had lived. Each plaque bears the name of the victim as well as the place of their birth and death, where known. Since then, more than 50,000 *Stolpersteine* have been laid in about 700 towns and cities, across 22 European countries.

My idea was to remember the Stalin era in a similar way. Helped by Memorial’s team of historians, we named the project *Last Address*. Our activists attach small metal plaques to the front of houses or buildings where victims of Stalinist persecutions once lived. The plaques include details about the person who was executed or died in detention: his or her profession, the dates of birth, arrest and death, and in many cases the date of posthumous rehabilitation.

Our movement depends on citizens’ initiatives, not local authorities. What’s especially important is that

behind every plaque there's a living person who contacted us because they felt the past should not be swept away so easily. Sometimes it's the relative of a victim, sometimes it's the person who lives at that address now, and is mindful of those who once climbed up the same staircase, opened the same door and looked out of the same windows, before being dragged away to a tragic fate.

Last Address has spread across more than 40 Russian cities, and to Ukraine and the Czech Republic. Soon it will be in Georgia, Moldova, Romania, Estonia and Latvia. The goal is to unite as many people as possible around the simple idea that human life is unique and invaluable. We're creating a community that feels it is important to think and talk about ordinary people who were destroyed by a ruthless system.



One of the memorial plaques in the Last Address project in Russia. The text reads: 'Here lived Olga Mikhailovna Rostovtseva; medic; born in 1902; arrested April 28, 1948; Shot April 20, 1950; rehabilitated 1956 Photograph: David Krikheli

Each time we visit a building and ask residents for permission to put up a plaque, we see how attitudes can change. Last Address transforms the perception of distant events by zooming in on a specific human life, or the fate of a family. The people we encounter start to speak differently of the past: they no longer use confused or vague political language, instead they give some thought to individual human destinies.

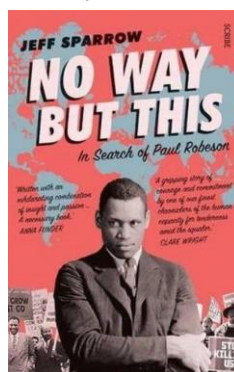
Marina Bobrik, a linguistics scholar in Moscow and one of our volunteers, says people get emotional when they are shown "a photo or pages from an 80-year-old case file". Elena Visens, another activist, describes how sometimes even the relatives of a victim know practically nothing about their father's or grandfather's story.

Last Address is unlikely to arouse Putin's interest. He may (at times) warn against amnesia, but he has done much to rehabilitate Stalin. Putin's system rests on the notion that the powerful are never held to account, and that individual lives matter less than the strength a nation can project. That's what our movement wants to chip away at. With Last Address, the dryness of statistics fades away. Instead, there are human lives, senselessly and cruelly crushed. House by house, street by street, history comes to life. I believe there is no stronger way to confront some of my country's deep woes.

Book Corner

No Way But This: In Search of Paul Robeson - by Jeff Sparrow, Scribe, 2017

Review by Allan Gardiner

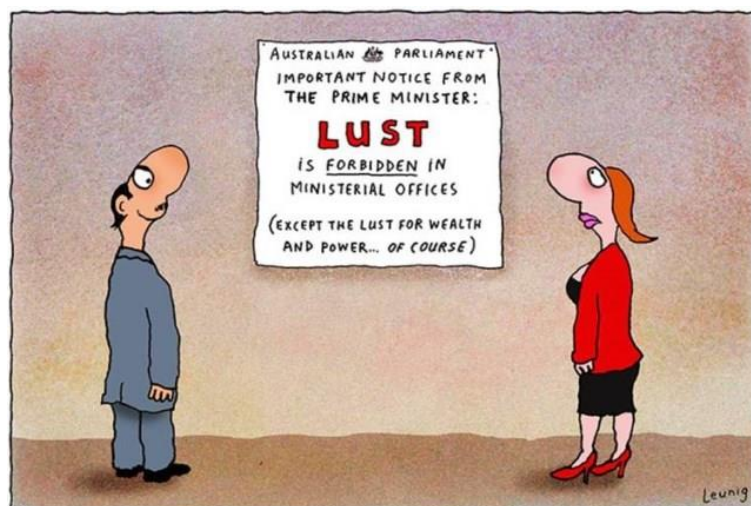


THE SUB-TITLE MADE me wary. These days historians and documentary presenters always seem to be "on a personal journey of discovery". And since he has my own brand of Trotskyist politics, I assumed Sparrow knew beforehand what his "search" would reveal: that Robeson's socialist and anti-racist activism was betrayed by his generation's illusions in the Soviet Union.

Actually, I was a bit hasty. For one thing, Sparrow's travels result in meetings with people whose activism or historical work really do cast light on the unfolding biographical story. Seeing the Harlem neighbourhood in the company of an experienced black activist for example, Sparrow is better able to say why the place was a crucible for black intellectuals and artists in the early twentieth century and why the threat of casual murder by police or racists has always shadowed black lives in the USA. Just as interesting are his meetings with other people in Wales, where Robeson discovered the international solidarity promised by trade unionism; and in Spain, where Robeson and his wife Essie tried to support the International Brigades who formed the first, pitiful attempt to stop the fascism that proved the true winner in the ideological crucible of the 20th century.

Sure enough, by the end of the book, Sparrow makes the expected plea for us to escape the ghosts of the failure of the Communist states and revive a yearning for a better world. However these ideas are not presented as easy platitudes. They come after the book has shown us not only the full tragedy of the last part of Robeson's life but also the parallel collapse of the liberation movements of the 20th century.

Cartoon Corner



Flame Cutting Lashers



THE ABOVE PHOTOGRAPHS depict the arduous and safety challenging conditions lashers at the Swedish port of Vasteras face. One seldom hears of lashers being obliged to remove lashing bars through means of flame-cutting!

Unity Bank News



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AUSTRALIAN MERCHANT SEAFARERS DEMAND WORK NOT THE DOLE!

Workers **UNITED**
will never be defeated



Time: 12 Midday

Date: Thurs 15th March

**Place: Rio Tinto Building, 123 Albert St,
Brisbane City**

Meet at Union Rooms at 11am

**73 Southgate Ave, Cannon Hill. Transport will be
provided by the Qld Branch**

Authorised by Bob Carnegie, MUA Qld Branch Secretary
73 Southgate Ave, Cannon Hill

AUSTRALIAN MERCHANT SEAFARERS DEMAND WORK NOT THE DOLE!

Australian Merchant Seafarers are being removed from their industry by the likes of Rio Tinto (2nd largest Mining company in the world). Rio Tinto is refusing to employ Australian Merchant Seafarers on the vast majority of the inter and intra state shipping needs. Rio Tinto may mine and refine Bauxite in Queensland **HOWEVER**, they are mostly employing **foreign** Seafarers paid \$4 an hour to transport the Bauxite from Weipa to Gladstone; and Alumina to Newcastle from Gladstone. The Maritime Union of Australia passionately believes that Australian Merchant Seafarers, paid a living Australian wage, should be crewing these vessels. We need your help in putting Rio Tinto under the microscope to do the right thing, we ask for your help and support.



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