



# 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. 132 – 25 May 2018

## Resist to Exist, Its's Your Union - Townsville Waterside Workers Foundation Stone Mackay May Day – Townsville Patricks 20<sup>th</sup> - ITF Calling for Increase in Global Seafarer Wage

**Participate in Your Union or it Will Wither on the Vine. WE ONLY HAVE EACH OTHER.** *By Bob Carnegie*  
IN THIS COUNTRY and most of the developed Western World, union density and union participation rates are at rates not seen since the Great Depression.

There are lots of reasons for this, a changing economy, capitalist consumerism, atomisation of the workforce and increasing individualisation, self interest and an attitude of 'I pay my union dues and that's enough.'

An old Builder's Labourer said to me once on the job, out in Blackwater where I had played a role in getting the BLF back into black coal construction, "Bob, you can't buy militancy." It was one of those rare insights into workers and their mindsets that has stuck with me always.

arguments we have achieved a fairly decent wages and conditions outcome.

The only way we will retain this is by union activity both on and off the job. By this I mean participation in demonstrations in support of one another.

The only people who will keep us going is each other. I've heard it often said, now we are merged and when we have a demonstration the Construction and General Division of the CFMMEU will make up numbers and make it successful.



In the MUA we pay some of the highest dues of any group of workers in the country of that there is no doubt.

If you happen to work permanently in the offshore, in a terminal, bluewater, tugs or bulk and general a member is in the top 5 to 6% of wage earners in this country. That is good and proper as they are profitable industries in which over the decades through many battles and



Well the C&G Division of the CFMMEU cannot be expected to down tools every time we have a protest on industry issues such as our Rio campaign, rogue stevedores or whatever. The heart and soul of it must come from us. It means attending demos on your leave or week off. Participating in Your Union.

It means attending your Branch Monthly Meeting held between 0900 and noon on the last Tuesday of every

month. Despite what a few 'poison tongues' might say, the atmosphere is welcoming, debate and dissent encouraged and after it there is a beer, a bbq and a yarn to be had.

Unions wither on the vine without participation.

To our younger members please involve yourselves. Unionism is not just for overweight, grey headed men like your Branch Secretary. The future is yours.

We can either fight for a fairer waterfront and a larger and economically viable merchant fleet and for a decent future for younger members or we can give up.

If we give up, the only future is Centrelink so we have to continue to fight.

**Resist to Exist.**

### **Townsville Waterside Workers Foundation Stone**

IN A PROUD moment for Townsville wharfies, our members combined to re-establish the Foundation Stone



### **North Queensland May Day**

#### **Mackay**

MUA LED MARCH mainly with retired members.

Speaker for MUA was Laurie Horgan.



of the original 1919 WWF Hall out front of the MUA premises in South Townsville where it now sits proudly.

NSS members Brad Dickinson and Aaron Sperring put in some hard yards with the Foundation and new wall. TBSH member Mick Robson's wife Lisa (who is a professional stone mason and whose grandfather did the stonework in 1974) fully cleaned and restored the 70mm marble stone. The Branch and members thank these good people for their work and dedication to the local history of their Union. *In unity - Paul Gallagher*



## Townsville Patrick's 20<sup>th</sup>

THE NORTH QUEENSLAND event to commemorate the Patrick's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Lockout was a terrific night.

Many stories were told with an open microphone session with good food and a few beers among comrades.



## ITF, Nautilus Calling for Increase in Global Seafarer Wage

Sourced from: <https://worldmaritimeneeds.com/archives/253294/itf-nautilus-call-for-increase-in-global-seafarer-wage/>

THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT Workers' Federation (ITF) and Nautilus International are to call for a significant rise in the global minimum wage for seafarers – the only internationally-agreed pay floor applied to an entire industry.

In June, Nautilus International general secretary Mark Dickinson will lead the seafarers' delegation on behalf of the ITF at talks within the Joint Maritime Commission – an International Labour Organisation (ILO) standing body that has brought together ship owners and seafarer representatives since 1920.

The commission is responsible for setting the global minimum wage for seafarers – currently the equivalent of approximately USD 614 per month.

“Crewing the world's roughly 52,000 ships are approximately 1,647,000 seafarers, many of whom work dizzyingly long hours, in dangerous conditions, and for far too many, in return for a pittance,” Dickinson said.

*Image Courtesy: Danny Cornelissen/Nautilus International*



Seafarers commonly work over 90 hours a week and are away from home for up to eight months at a time.

“When you consider what seafarers endure at work and the efficiencies that the merchant navy has achieved in recent years, as well as the importance of cargo carrying to the global community, it is clear that the time has come for a significant rise,” Dickinson pointed out.

“The case I will be making in Geneva is fundamentally a moral one – seafarers deserve a pay rise. Seafarers deliver for us every day, it is time we delivered for them,” he added.

## The Coming Collapse by Chris Hedges

Sourced from: <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2018/05/21/coming-collapse>

**It is impossible for any doomed population to grasp how fragile the decayed financial, social and political system is on the eve of implosion.**

The Trump administration did not rise, prima facie, like Venus on a half shell from the sea. Donald Trump is the result of a long process of political, cultural and social

decay. He is a product of our failed democracy. The longer we perpetuate the fiction that we live in a functioning democracy, that Trump and the political mutations around him are somehow an aberrant deviation that can be vanquished in the next election, the more we will hurtle toward tyranny. The problem is not Trump. It is a political system, dominated by corporate power and the mandarins of the two major political parties, in which we don't count. We will wrest back political control by dismantling the corporate state, and this means massive and sustained civil disobedience, like that **demonstrated by teachers** around the country this year. If we do not stand up we will enter a new dark age.

The Democratic Party, which helped build our system of **inverted totalitarianism**, is once again held up by many on the left as the savior. Yet the party steadfastly refuses to address the social inequality that led to the election of Trump and the insurgency by Bernie Sanders. It is deaf, dumb and blind to the very real economic suffering that plagues over half the country. It will not fight to pay workers a living wage. It will not defy the pharmaceutical and insurance industries to provide Medicare for all. It will not curb the voracious appetite of the military that is disemboweling the country and promoting the prosecution of futile and costly foreign wars. It will not restore our lost civil liberties, including the right to privacy, freedom from government surveillance, and due process. It will not get corporate and **dark money** out of politics. It will not demilitarize our police and reform a prison system that has 25 percent of the world's prisoners although the United States has only 5 percent of the world's population. It plays to the margins, especially in election seasons, refusing to address substantive political and social problems and instead focusing on narrow cultural issues like gay rights, abortion and gun control in our peculiar species of **anti-politics**.

This is a doomed tactic, but one that is understandable. The leadership of the party, the Clintons, Nancy Pelosi, Chuck Schumer, Tom Perez, are creations of corporate America. In an open and democratic political process, one not dominated by party elites and corporate money, these people would not hold political power. They know this. They would rather implode the entire system than give up their positions of privilege. And that, I fear, is what will happen. The idea that the Democratic Party is in any way a bulwark against despotism defies the last three decades of its political activity. It is the guarantor of despotism.

Trump has tapped into the hatred that huge segments of the American public have for a political and economic system that has betrayed them. He may be inept, degenerate, dishonest and a narcissist, but he adeptly ridicules the system they despise. His cruel and demeaning taunts directed at government agencies, laws and the established elites resonate with people for whom these agencies, laws and elites have become hostile forces. And for many who see no shift in the political

landscape to alleviate their suffering, Trump's cruelty and invective are at least cathartic.

Trump, like all despots, has no ethical core. He chooses his allies and appointees based on their personal loyalty and fawning obsequiousness to him. He will sell anyone out. He is corrupt, amassing money for himself—he made \$40 million from his Washington, D.C., hotel alone last year—and his corporate allies. He is dismantling government institutions that once provided some regulation and oversight. He is an enemy of the open society. This makes him dangerous. His turbocharged assault on the last vestiges of democratic institutions and norms means there will soon be nothing, even in name, to protect us from corporate totalitarianism.

But the warnings from the architects of our failed democracy against creeping fascism, [Madeleine Albright among them](#), are risible. They show how disconnected the elites have become from the zeitgeist. None of these elites have credibility. They built the edifice of lies, deceit and corporate pillage that made Trump possible. And the more Trump demeans these elites, and the more they cry out like Cassandras, the more he salvages his disastrous presidency and enables the kleptocrats pillaging the country as it swiftly disintegrates.

The press is one of the principal pillars of Trump's despotism. It chatters endlessly like 17th-century courtiers at the court of Versailles about the foibles of the monarch while the peasants lack bread. It drones on and on and on about empty topics such as Russian meddling and a payoff to a porn actress that have nothing to do with the daily hell that, for many, defines life in America. It refuses to critique or investigate the abuses by corporate power, which has destroyed our democracy and economy and orchestrated the largest transfer of wealth upward in American history. The corporate press is a decayed relic that, in exchange for money and access, committed cultural suicide. And when Trump attacks it over "fake news," he expresses, once again, the deep hatred of all those the press ignores. The press worships the idol of Mammon as slavishly as Trump does. It loves the reality-show presidency. The press, especially the cable news shows, keeps the lights on and the cameras rolling so viewers will be glued to a 21st-century version of "[The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari](#)." It is good for ratings. It is good for profits. But it accelerates the decline.

All this will soon be compounded by financial collapse. Wall Street banks have been handed [\\$16 trillion in bailouts](#) and other subsidies by the Federal Reserve and Congress at nearly zero percent interest since the 2008 financial collapse. They have used this money, as well as

the money saved through the huge tax cuts imposed last year, to buy back their own stock, raising the compensation and bonuses of their managers and thrusting the society deeper into untenable debt peonage. Sheldon Adelson's casino operations alone [got a \\$670 million tax break](#) under the 2017



legislation. The ratio of CEO to worker pay now averages 339 to 1, with the highest gap approaching 5,000 to 1. This circular use of money to make and hoard money is what Karl Marx called "fictitious capital." The steady increase in public debt, corporate debt, credit card debt and student loan debt will ultimately lead, as [Nomi Prins writes](#), to "a tipping point—when money coming in to furnish that debt, or available to borrow, simply won't cover the interest payments. Then debt bubbles will pop, beginning with higher yielding bonds."

An economy reliant on debt for its growth causes our interest rate to jump to 28 percent when we are late on a credit card payment. It is why our wages are stagnant or have declined in real terms—if we earned a sustainable income we would not have to borrow money to survive. It is why a university education, houses, medical bills and utilities cost so much. The system is designed so we can never free ourselves from debt.

However, the next financial crash, as Prins points out [in her book](#) "Collusion: How Central Bankers Rigged the World," won't be like the last one. This is because, as she says, "there is no Plan B." Interest rates can't go any lower. There has been no growth in the real economy. The next time, there will be no way out. Once the economy crashes and the rage across the country explodes into a firestorm, the political freaks will appear, ones that will make Trump look sagacious and benign. **And so, to quote Vladimir Lenin, what must be done?**

We must invest our energy in building parallel, popular institutions to protect ourselves and to pit power against power. These parallel institutions, including unions, community development organizations, local currencies, alternative political parties and food cooperatives, will have to be constructed town by town. The elites in a time of distress will retreat to their gated compounds and leave us to fend for ourselves. Basic services, from garbage collection to public transportation, food distribution and

health care, will collapse. Massive unemployment and underemployment, triggering social unrest, will be dealt with not through government job creation but the brutality of militarized police and a complete [suspension of civil liberties](#). Critics of the system, already pushed to the margins, will be silenced and attacked as enemies of the state. The last vestiges of labor unions will be targeted for abolition, a process that will soon be accelerated given the expected ruling in a case before the Supreme Court that will [cripple the ability of public-sector unions](#) to represent workers. The dollar will stop being the world's [reserve currency](#), causing a steep devaluation. Banks will close. Global warming will extract heavier and heavier costs, especially on the coastal populations, farming and the infrastructure, costs that the depleted state will be unable to address. The corporate press, like the ruling elites, will go from burlesque to absurdism, its rhetoric so patently fictitious it will, as in all totalitarian states, be unmoored from reality. The media outlets will all sound as fatuous as Trump. And, to quote W.H. Auden, "the little children will die in the streets."

As a foreign correspondent I covered collapsed societies, including the former Yugoslavia. It is impossible for any doomed population to grasp how fragile the decayed financial, social and political system is on the eve of implosion. All the harbingers of collapse are visible: crumbling infrastructure; chronic underemployment and unemployment; the indiscriminate use of lethal force by police; political paralysis and stagnation; an economy built on the scaffolding of debt; nihilistic mass shootings in schools, universities, workplaces, malls, concert venues and movie theaters; opioid overdoses that kill some 64,000 people a year; an epidemic of suicides; unsustainable military expansion; gambling as a desperate tool of economic development and government revenue; the capture of power by a tiny, corrupt clique; censorship; the physical diminishing of public institutions ranging from schools and libraries to courts and medical facilities; the incessant bombardment by electronic hallucinations to divert us from the depressing sight that has become America and keep us trapped in illusions. We suffer the usual pathologies of impending death. I would be happy to be wrong. But I have seen this before. I know the warning signs. All I can say is get ready.

### IMO Approves US-Russian Proposal on Bering Strait Shipping Routes

Sourced from: <https://worldmaritimeneeds.com/archives/253399/imo-approves-us-russian-proposal-on-bering-strait-shipping-routes/>

THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME Organisation (IMO) has given the green light to a joint US-Russian proposal on regulating shipping in the Bering Strait, Russian transport ministry said in a statement.

The proposal was approved by the IMO Maritime Safety Committee at its 99th session being held in London.

To be applied from 1 December 2018, the scheme is said to be the first internationally recognised measure for navigation in polar waters approved by IMO, as defined in SOLAS 74/78.

The proposed system envisages six two-way routes in the Bering Strait with a width of four nautical miles and approaches to it from the US and Russian sides as well as six precautionary areas.

As informed, the routes are positioned parallel to each other across the US and Russian parts of the strait. This allows vessels to choose the most convenient way of their passage through the strait, taking into account weather and ice condition as well as the ship's destination.

In addition, the routes are located at the maximum distance from the coast, with depths being sufficient for the safe passage of large vessels.



Image Courtesy: Gazprom

The proposed two-way routes will be voluntary for all domestic and international ships and apply to vessels of 400 gross tonnage and above.

The measure is expected to reduce the risks of collision and provide adequate sea room for ships executing collision avoidance measures in order to avoid the risk of pollution and other damage to the sensitive marine environment.

According to the ministry, the measure will support further development of infrastructure projects in the Russian Arctic related to the export of hydrocarbons and promote the growth of transit shipping through the Northern Sea Route.

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