



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. 182 - 7 June 2019

Branch Secretary's Report - Svitzer Brisbane - Teacher Members at Langports Need Our Help Human Need Should Supplant Human Greed - Police Hit With \$85K Costs - Cuban Experience Tax and Wealth After the Election - Can Australia's Economic Run of Luck Continue Cover-Up of Tiananmen - Commander KK Rokossovsky - Cartoon Corner

Branch Secretary's Report *by Bob Carnegie*

It's been a tough week in some respects in the Branch. The Fair Work decision on the 1560 hour dispute at Hutchison was handed down on Thursday. The decision went against us, despite the very best efforts of the Branch, National Office and our very clever legal team. An appeal is being considered.

On Thursday I was involved in a very emotional and difficult possible dismissal of a long term and very competent wharfie. In the end, after difficult negotiations with the company, our member's job was saved but not until after a lengthy suspension was agreed upon. I would like to thank the delegates involved and the member, who I won't name, but who carried himself with genuine humility. As your Branch Secretary I did my absolute best in advocating for the member. I know there was nothing left in my tank at the end. Hopefully out of this very fraught experience we have all come out of it with a better understanding of how things operate. I also know our members wonderful workforce from his site and others will make sure he and his family will not go wanting (should they need it).

I was in Cairns on Thursday night for a Branch membership meeting. Newly elected Senator, Nita Green, Senator Murray Watts and Elida Faith all spoke on continuing the fight.

Adam Turner from Turner Freeman spoke passionately on the rights workers have under compensation and the need to report accidents. The hard work of Paul Gallagher and Dave Lyons is showing up in increased membership. I also had the honour of



meeting many divers in the recreational area who are joining our union.



Members at Cairns Meeting

This week's Branch News has an iconic photo of Jeff Langdon and I capturing a train during those difficult days in April and May 1998 during the Patrick's lockout.

In my working life I've worked with some terrific men and women, but Comrade Jeff Langdon will always hold a special place in my heart. His honesty, humour, dedication and genuine caring nature is something I remember with great fondness. It's been terrific seeing Jeff at Branch Monthly Meetings.



Authorised by Bob Carnegie, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) Queensland Branch Secretary
73 Southgate Avenue, Cannon Hill QLD 4170

MUA Gets a Landing on Extra Permanent Jobs in Brisbane with Svitzer *by Jason Miners*

SVITZER CONTACTED JASON Miners late Tuesday afternoon of their intention to move forward with our 16 crew model which saw the Fair Work proceedings called off.

A meeting was convened by lead delegate, Jason Steen with Branch Secretary, Bob Carnegie and Deputy Branch Secretary, Jason Miners in attendance. Industry reports and Queensland Branch initiatives to protect towage workers were outlined.

We met the port manager to outline our understanding of the Agreement between the parties and how we expected it to be implemented prior to POPs discussions Wednesday. Throughout the previous meetings our concerns regarding traffic/fatigue around there proposed later start times were our main arguments.

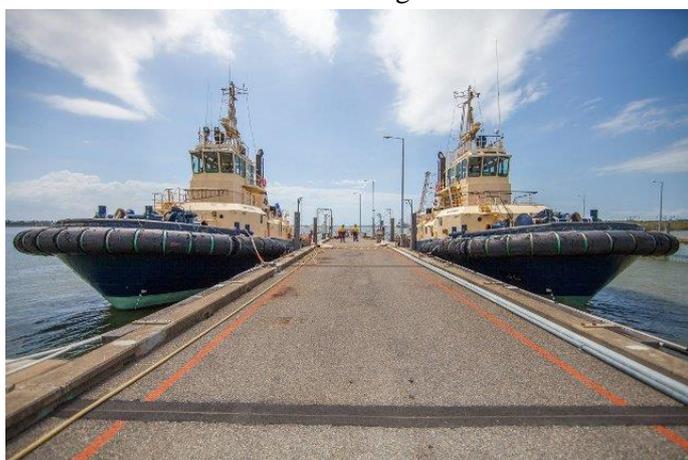


Image Courtesy: @svitzerau

The fact that we were one out sitting in the Commission with the other two departments already agreeing to a 40% crew with 0700/1900 shift change certainly did not make our job any easier and it was disappointing they knocked back the offer to join us in our pursuit of more security in employment for maritime workers at Svitzer.

With the company having 0700/1900 signed off by 2 out of 3 and us arguing our preferred 0600/1800 their next proposal was obvious staggered starts across the board!

They proposed 0800/0900/1030
15 minute start and finish increments, then
0700/0900/1000.

We came back with 0530/0630/1000

Our last offer for endorsement would be 16th crew made up of 2 x 50% PPT operating on the 15.4 roster with the two 50% working on a fortnight about swing.

The on swing 50% would cover the 4 of the roster and would be 1st pick for any overflow when not rostered in that two week period.

The fairest order of pick should be considered to also give the remaining casuals a fair share of the work as well. Let's be mindful we have EBAs for a reason and we need to work to them.

Members endorse both the outcome and the ongoing support of the delegates and will not accept any of their members being targeted over achieving the outcome.

A special mention needs to go to Jason Steen for his work on this along with Paul Garrett.

IEUA-QNT Teacher Members at Langports English College Urgently Need Your Help

UNION MEMBERS AT the College in central Brisbane recently took a simple campaign action of wearing a union badge in support of their efforts to negotiate their first agreement. This was protected action following a member ballot endorsing the wearing of a badge.

The Langports employer responded by taking the unprecedented step of locking out for three-and-a-half days, without pay, any teacher who participated in their collective action.

This is the first time that this hostile employer action has ever occurred in the Queensland education sector.

This is an outrageous and unnecessary escalation by the employer. These teachers are without pay for the duration of the employer lockouts for simply wearing a badge.

How can you support these locked out teachers?

- * Share this update with fellow members in workplaces to highlight this situation.
- * Make [a donation to teachers facing loss of pay and hardship due to the lockout.](#)
- * [Send a message to Langports to end their shameful and unnecessary lockout!](#)

A rally is planned for 3.30pm on Monday 10 June outside the Langports College at 33 Herschel St Brisbane City, to coincide with a bargaining meeting later that day.

Come along with union flags and signs to make sure Langports College hears that workers will stand up for their right to bargain for fair pay and conditions and show support for their union! It's time to fight back against this employer.



Human Need Should Supplant Human Greed

by Bob Carnegie

It's 0500 on a beautiful winter's morning in Brisbane. My pooch Albert is standing in front of a banner demanding the right of Australian Seafarers to work in their own country.

The early morning is when I catch up with correspondence and some reading and reflect on work and life.

My three great intellectual loves are the US Labour Movement, the 1941-45 war on the Eastern Front and the Holocaust or Shoah.

Currently I'm reading Viktor Frankl's classic, *Man's Search for Meaning*. Frankl survived Auschwitz and like many (not so many) who survived he makes the very deep but sad comment, as did Primo Levi, that "Whatever we might say, the very best amongst us (in the camps) did not survive".

When people ask me why I get so involved in areas outside just the normal remit of a union official my reply these days, is quite simply, "there is only one race and that's the human race and let's try to make it a better one".

That's why I do strongly believe 'human need should supplant human greed'.



Police Hit With \$85K Costs for "Naïve" Union Prosecution

Source: www.workplaceexpress.com.au

Bob Carnegie, on behalf of the Queensland Branch of the MUA, congratulates State Secretary Michael Ravbar and the whole CFMEU C&G Division on this very important victory for union men and women throughout Queensland.

THE CFMMEU'S QUEENSLAND construction and general division says a decision ordering four police officers to pay costs of \$85,000 over a failed trespass prosecution is a landmark ruling upholding "crucial right of entry laws".

Magistrate Wendy Cull awarded costs to four CFMMEU officials after last month dismissing trespass charges against four union officials, two of whom were from the CFMMEU's construction and general division (see [related article](#))

Police had charged the officials for trying to enter the Enco Precast concrete plant in December last year to investigate workplace health and safety concerns.

Magistrate Cull said police had "taken the side of the business owner from the outset", and that some police conduct was "naïve and concerning".

She also described key elements of police evidence as "demonstrably untrue" and showing a lack of understanding of the relevant industrial relations law.

In costs orders issued yesterday – understood to be the largest awarded against the Queensland Police Force in the Magistrate's Court – Magistrate Cull gave a sergeant, a constable and two senior constables two months to each pay \$21,250 to a nominated union official.

CFMMEU Queensland construction and general secretary Michael Ravbar said the decision "demonstrated the futility associated with the ongoing persecution of unions going about their lawful business of representing workers" in the State.

Ravbar said the union "respects the important work of the [Queensland Police Force] in protecting our communities", but that the "landmark case... reaffirms the right of a properly authorised union official to exercise his or her right of entry under the Act without fear of bullying, intimidation and legal standover tactics".

Tax and Wealth After the Election by Janet Burstall

Dick Bryan spoke to Janet Burstall for Workers' Liberty about Labor's tax policies and the federal election results. Dick researches the significance of financialisation, for capital, labour and households. He is Emeritus Professor of Political Economy at Sydney University and co-author of the book 'Risking Together'.

Q: Is it possible that policy changes initiated by Labor in the 1980s and 1990s (and then built on by Howard) that were designed to increase household savings and their financial exposure, have altered the perspectives of traditional Labor voters on taxes targeting wealth? If so, how?

A: Labor Government policies of the 1980s and 90s generated a critical turning point in a number of ways. Some would say that these governments performed the transformations of Thatcher and Reagan, but with trade union support! I think that's a bit cynical, but nonetheless by the early 2000s Australia, the US and Britain had all turned in the same direction. Howard was, in critical senses, a continuum of this agenda, but was able to take up the right-wing turn for which the Labor governments had built the preconditions.

But in Australia, major reforms came with the inclusion of trade union support, and superannuation was central. Its effect was indeed to change savings culture, and in complex ways. On the one hand, households became critically and increasingly invested in the performance of the stock market via compulsory investment there. Another was that households took on debt, in the knowledge that part of their wages were already going to compulsory savings through superannuation. But the

effect of engaging debt, especially from banks pushing loans, was that households became vulnerable to variability in income, in interest rates, in house prices, etc. In these circumstances I think people can readily become anti-tax - they would rather have the money in their own pockets to meet their financial obligations than pay more tax in the hope of benefits from improvements in health and education, etc. The tax is seen as both compulsory and unaffordable. The promised social expenditures are seen as hypothetical and unpredictable.

Q: Some prominent Labor figures have criticised Chris Bowen's tax reform package as too radical. How would you assess that policy package?

A: It is interesting what the word 'radical' means in this context. The tax reform package was perhaps radical in the sense that it gestured at challenges to the wealth of the wealthy. And I think that this intention needs to be acknowledged. But it was gestural in terms of real reform in wealth distribution. So it is interesting how, in the public relations exercise (election campaigning), the Labor package could be condemned as an assault on 'ordinary people'. It's a positive sign that the right didn't feel it could defend the rights of the rich; it's an alarming sign that they didn't need to!!

So the analysis could get strategic at this point: how could Bowen have put grandfather clauses on policies; caps on tax increases, etc. so as to minimise the critique. For those of us who want the nature of capitalism itself to be an issue for open discussion, it is good that he didn't dabble in these softeners more, but it was oddly un-strategic. I think Bowen landed in that space where a (slightly) reformist set of policies needed to come out of a bigger reframing of debate in Australia: to make talking about class and wealth, and how wealth is acquired more a part of mainstream discussion. Thinking you can just introduce these issues in an election campaign and not get push-back is odd politics.

Q: What are the prospects for reforms to make the taxation system more progressive? What might make them both more appealing to voters, and worthwhile?

A: I think if politics starts with tax levels and what is fair, it is hard to build a successful politics. It is, as we have just seen, too easy for those who will lose from reforms to wheel out cases of people who are not wealthy who will be disadvantaged by the changes. Tax must be the policy consequence of an alternative reframing of how society and the economy work differently for the wealthy and those on high incomes from how it works for those who are poor and on lower incomes. Tax cannot be the starting point of debate. Unless we challenge the underlying processes, it is too easy for the right to open issues like the deserving, hard-working, self-made rich person in contrast with the un-deserving, welfare-scheming poor, etc. as if these cases are representative of their 'class'.

I think that this recent election in Australia, like that of Trump and the Brexit referendum, suggest that we need

to re-think class in relation to politics. Working class people angry with their displacement will vote for disruptions that may not be progressive. People on low incomes, and especially volatile incomes, and people with high contractual commitments (especially debt) will vote for tax cuts because they want money now, not state services in the future, and they don't trust the state to deliver.

So really tax is the tip of the iceberg. How to deal with people's experiences of volatility and insecurity, without making promises that we can initiate policies to go back to the forms of job security (for white men!) of the 1970s, is critical, I think. I sense we are in an era of significant change, where there is diminishing trust in the state to deliver benefits, security and stability.

Accordingly, the very legitimacy of even current levels of tax is under challenge. Turning that around is not (particularly) about making the state bigger, at least not before we have seriously reconsidered how the state can play a supportive role in the emerging new era.

Cuban Experience by Mike Barber

CUBA IS DEFINED by centuries of struggle for independence from Spain's colonial Empire, and from the second independence war (1895-1999) during the Spanish/Cuban/American Wars. The latter one included participation of an earlier Cuban hero, Jose Marti and became a nominally independent republic in 1902. However, intervention by the USA during this latter war came at great cost to the Cuban People, with American Dominance and control of Cuba's main exports of tobacco and sugar.

The attacks by students, alongside Fidel and Che's guerrilla forces upon the Macada Army barracks initiated a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of USA backed Batista regime. This 'spark' of the social and political movement gave rise to the formation by Fidel and Raul of 'The July 26th movement' and led to the successful 1959 Revolution and the establishment of Socialist Cuba.

After many comrades have viewed my Cuban photos on Facebook, even more have asked my views on Cuba. Similar questions arose after my previous two trips to the Soviet Union back in the early and late 80's. The answer I gave then is as applicable today. "If like myself you believe in a better social system, going to Socialist countries and the euphoria you feel upon arrival and analysis, probably equate to the euphoria devout Catholics presumably feel when in Rome, particularly the Vatican and St Peters or other religious entities.

The sense of egalitarian levelling, no class conflict, no racism, and one of open welcoming from mutual comrades is so opposite to the consumerism, working conflicts, the constant battle between capital and labour, the struggle to survive in Capitalism, is so strikingly none existent in Socialist society, and it hits you immediately. No billboards, No Maccas, no other flashy shops from which we can view but not purchase. Cuba is truly the safest place to wander alone. No mass or single shootings, no

deaths in parks, no retrograde reduction in social achievements and living standards.

The pride by Cubans in their revolution and the obvious adjustment having to be made with the ongoing 60 year USA Trade Embargo, does not dampen their determination to not change their society or their destiny, despite this economic pressure. The opening up of the tourist industry by the relaxing of restrictions by the Obama Presidency, has had beneficial efforts with contacts with the outside world, and their delight in welcoming them with pride of their country.

As a Queensland Branch MUA Member, attending on my own recognisance, I felt tremendous pride in being hosted by Fabian Cespedes and Ana Maria from the CTC, (Central Trade Union) for International Guests.



Being allocated in the special section of the viewing Dias just below where Fidel and now Raul and other Government ministers, including the President of Cuba, address and view the over a million marchers celebrating the famous Cuban May Day parade, was such an honour and privilege. It gave rise to me not only displaying the MUA Queensland Branch Flag, but also getting it signed by the Cuban 5 Comrades who had unjustly been jailed in the USA on false charges. I have presented the flag to the Branch.



The 2nd highlight was attendance, along with Mick Williams from MUNZ and Vrelo Velo to the 80th congress on International Solidarity at the CTC building in Havana. All international delegations attended to voice support for

the Cuban Revolution and its people, but also Cuba's support for the Struggle in Venezuela.



The USA delegation condemned their own Trump administration for the Embargo, called for its lifting, and expressed its intention to carry on with such demands within "the belly of the beast" when they returned to the USA. CFMMEU Delegate from WA and CP President in the West, spoke for 10 minutes and outlined the struggle for workers in Australia, particularly the construction industry. To our surprise, Vrelo saw the evening Cuban News broadcast which included a focus swing onto Mick William and myself, which I have uploaded to my Facebook page. The MUA flag flew prominently in that forum too. It was obvious during the meeting that Imperialist attacks in Latin America will continue under Trump and his administration intend to do in Latin America what previous US and Puppet governments successfully did in undermining Socialism in the USSR and Eastern Bloc countries.



My 3rd highlight was my trip to the home of Che Guevara, Santa Clara, his hometown, and a place of a pivotal battle at the start of the Revolutionary overthrow of the US backed Batista Regime. I paid homage at Che's museum and mausoleum. No pictures are allowed in that honoured

room, where the ashes and bodily remains of Che and his other comrades who were brutally murdered in Bolivia. Plaques displaying their rank and names marked where they lay, a continuous flame of memorial, burned exactly where Che lays, and I and many others left with tears in our eye and a heavy hearts in recognition and respect of the ultimate sacrifice these Comrades gave for the advancement of the Cuban People and Country.



I had a trip from Santa Clara to Trinidad De Cuba. It was such a contrast from the Capital Havana and this sleepy picturesque town, with its proud Spanish and Caribbean migrant population was an enjoyable and relaxing night and walk around such coloured rows of homes and small tourist shops. I had spent an earlier relaxing night in Havana at the hotel concert hall seeing and enjoying the Bueno Vista Social Club, a world famous Cuban Jazz group.

Before Santa Clara, I spent some great relaxing drinking company with Mick Williams and his wife Jill, serenaded by the in-house trio musicians. I want to acknowledge the hosts, Fabien and Anna (Fabien's wife) for their constant hospitality while there. I also want to recognise and thank assistance with Gifts for the People of Cuba from ETU organiser Wendel and Peter Ong and for their guidance on what to expect and enjoy.

Asked by many since 'would you go back again', after what seems a lifetime since Cuba was on my 'bucket' list, the answer is 'you bet I would.'



With Rate Cuts and the Real Risk of a Recession Ahead, Can Australia's Economic Run of Luck Continue?

Source: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-06-03/rate-cuts-and-recession-can-our-luck-continue/11172000>

JOHN HOWARD FAMOUSLY declared during his 2004 re-election campaign that interest rates would always be lower under a Coalition government. That's been a truism for several years now, with the official cash rate at a record low of 1.5 per cent.

But if the betting is correct about our interest rate trajectory, it may well be that interest rates under the Morrison Government will forever hold the record for the lowest of all time. That would be a neat historical bookend given the highest was 21.4 per cent, which occurred in April 1982 during the Fraser government when Mr Howard was treasurer.

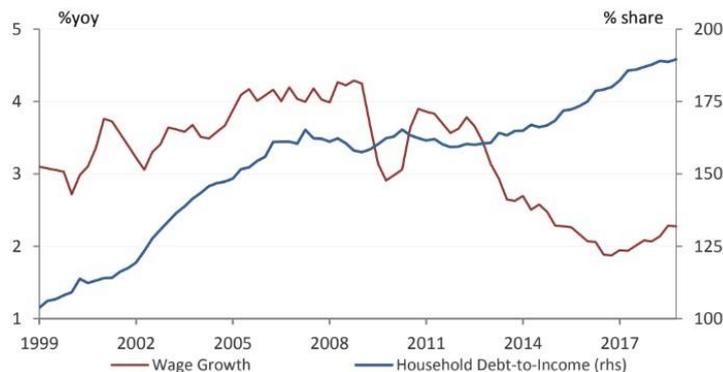
No-one equates low interest rates with superior economic management any longer. In fact, [it's debatable just how much influence governments have over rates](#). Given its habit of shifting in 0.25 percentage point increments, [when the Reserve Bank lowers rates tomorrow afternoon](#), it will be firing off one of the last six shots remaining in the chamber.

[Market economists are falling over themselves guessing how many are to come](#). The consensus is two cuts, one tomorrow, the next in August. But the outliers are predicting as many as four in the next 12 months.

That points to an exceptionally weak economy, susceptible to a growing list of potential international shocks; [a message starkly at odds with that presented at the budget and the election](#). Just two months ago, we were promised a decade of federal budget surpluses based upon a strong and recovering economy.

When A Housing Slump Collides with Rising Unemployment

That's the problem with booms. They tend to unwind, occasionally in spectacular fashion, especially when they've been supercharged with debt.



Source: ABS, Morgan Stanley Research

[Infographic: Super-cycle payback — low wages and record debt. \(Supplied\)](#)

That's where we find ourselves; hocked to the eyeballs with no obvious way out. Wages growth has slumped and savings have depleted. More concerning, the housing boom — where most of that debt has been deployed — is but a distant memory. It has been in reverse for four years

in West Australia and for more than 18 months on the east coast.

The Scourge of Negative Equity



Mortgage delinquencies are on the rise, house prices are still tumbling and borrowers are falling into the quicksand of negative equity in their property. It's bad.

That's leaving a growing number of owners under water, owing more than their house is worth.

If it's temporary, and you can keep paying the mortgage, that's not a problem. But an extended price decline hits a growing number of homeowners and if the economy sours and firms start laying off indebted workers, the banks and the financial system take a hit.

In the west and the Northern Territory, **almost 15 per cent of all mortgages are in negative equity**. So, when the unemployment rate ticked higher last month, the Reserve Bank was left with no alternative; rates had to be cut and lending restrictions loosened.

With the ALP's defeat, two threats to property values — easing property tax concessions around negative gearing and capital gains — were removed. Add in the first home buyer government guarantee and that's a five-point housing market stimulus plan.

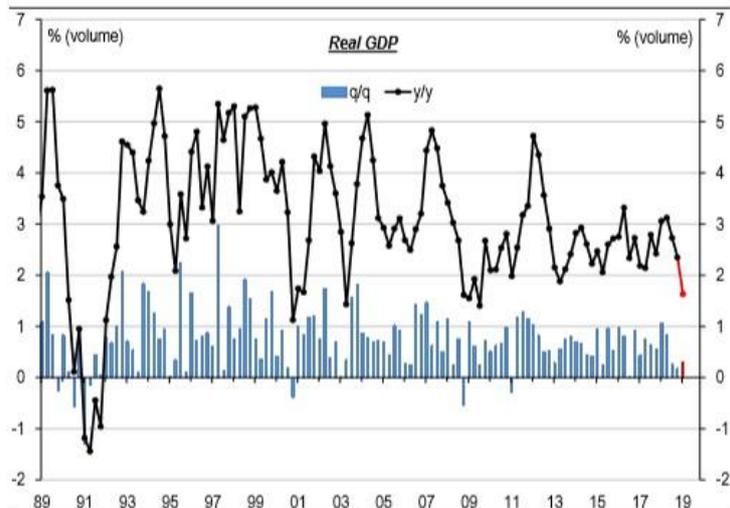
That immediately changed housing market sentiment. But the spruikers predicting another property boom may have some time to wait. It's more likely the market bottom will be reached sooner and not be quite so severe. But prices still have some way to fall.

Why the Economy is Slowing

No-one is mentioning the 'R word' quite yet. But the run of bleak news on our economy has been unrelenting of late, on almost every key measure. In fact, it's extraordinary no-one made much of a fuss about it during the election.

Inflation came in at zero for the March quarter, wages growth is anaemic, retail sales are poor, car sales have plummeted and last Friday, credit growth was weaker than even the pessimists were forecasting. That followed sluggish business investment data along with a sharper than expected fall in building approvals. And despite all the recent hype, housing prices continue to slide.

On Wednesday, we'll be presented with the March quarter GDP numbers. This time last year they were strong. But in the second half of last year, the economy suddenly weakened. There's every indication that trend continued in the first quarter of this year with annual growth expected to come in at just 1.6 per cent.



Source: ABS, UBS forecasts

Infographic: Life in the slow lane. (Supplied)

There's just one part of the economy that is doing well. And that's exports. More specifically, our iron ore exports have been forging ahead.

Not only have we been shipping vast quantities to China, we've been raking in vast profits. Iron ore prices have soared as China has pumped in stimulus at the same time supplies from **Brazil have been disrupted by catastrophic dam failures with tragic consequences**.

That export performance may lift real GDP and nominal GDP (which includes value). Unfortunately, given our mining industry is dominated by foreign owners, most of that cash ultimately flows out of the country.



Photo: Australia's iron ore exports have been one of the few high points of the economy. (Reuters: David Gray)

What if the Rate Cuts Don't Work?

When the Reserve Bank cuts rates, it has more than just home owners in mind. The main aim is to force the Australian dollar lower. That helps boost our export income and makes our local industries more competitive.

Unfortunately, according to investment bank UBS, our temporary iron ore export boom could prevent a dramatic fall in the currency, which means the RBA would be firing off one round of its precious ammunition for little or no impact.

That's why Reserve Bank governor Philip Lowe [has called on federal and state governments to help stimulate the economy](#). "These include further monetary easing, additional fiscal support including through spending on infrastructure," he told a group of economists in Brisbane a fortnight ago. "Relying on just one type of policy has limitations."

That's a big admission from a central banker; that it no longer has enough conventional firepower and it is in need of old-style government spending. It's a realisation that's dawned a little too late on many of the world's biggest monetary authorities.

The problem is, state governments, particularly in NSW and Victoria, have coasted along on the back of a property boom that now has turned to bust. The stamp duty rivers of gold no longer are flowing, meaning the Federal Government will most likely have to step up. And that will punch a massive hole in the budget.

Even so, should everything turn pear shaped, the RBA is prepared to delve into the murky world of unconventional monetary warfare. Late last year, just as the first signs of our slowdown became apparent, RBA deputy governor Guy Debelle let slip the bank could engage in quantitative easing, a form of money printing employed by the US, Japan and Europe [in the aftermath of the global financial crisis](#).

Our weakening economy couldn't have come at a worse time. An increasingly aggressive America is upping the ante with a hugely indebted and slowing China over trade, our major trading partner. Global bond traders are pricing in a global recession. What a time to win an election.

The West is Complicit in the 30-Year Cover-Up of Tiananmen by Ai Weiwei

Source: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/04/china-tiananmen-square-beijing?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

This article, from one of the world's great contemporary writers, is worthy of the time it takes to read. The totalitarian State of China is trying to make us forget, but it is our duty to remember. Bob Carnegie

Beijing's continued whitewashing cannot expunge our collective memory of the killings of 4 June 1989

THE EVENTS OF 4 June 1989, when the Chinese government deployed the full might of its military to purge Tiananmen Square of students who'd been peacefully protesting there, have become known in China as the "June Fourth Incident". Thirty years on, it is still thought of as an ["incident"](#), a one-off event. In fact, it was part of a political movement in which [every major Chinese city participated](#).

To this day, a complete definition of 4 June 1989 as a historical event has not been realised, because defining a historical event requires not only the full facts but also multiple perspectives. And in its aftermath, the Chinese government intensified its oversight of free expression in China, deploying various tactics to suppress, arrest,

detain and imprison anyone who spoke about "June Fourth".

It remains the most taboo and politically sensitive topic in China, much like the questions of Tibet and Xinjiang for the Chinese Communist party (CCP) and its machine of propaganda and censorship. Yet the facts and significance of "June Fourth" are not discussed in China. The exact events, the persons responsible for issuing directives, the methods of execution, the number of people killed and detained, and the killers responsible for the cumulative political decisions remain unclear.



Tiananmen Square, 4 June 1989: 'Thirty years on, it is still thought of as an 'incident', a one-off event.' Photograph: Manny Ceneta/AFP/Getty Images

The memory of the past is an individual's property. To deny it is to obliterate humanity.

What now, 30 years on, is its significance? The need to examine this question is vital, rational and urgent. If the CCP relied on violent revolution to overthrow the previous regime and establish its legitimacy, then "June Fourth" once again overthrew the legitimacy of the ruling party. The Communist party is a regime that used violence to supplant dialogue, directing its [army and tanks against unarmed citizens](#) to maintain its existence. Despite attempts to cover up, whitewash and misinterpret "June Fourth" over the past 30 years, from the moment the first bullet was fired that day the regime's legitimacy was compromised. Nothing can change that.

On 4 June, CNN's 24-hour live broadcast conveyed the event and its developments to any audience that could receive its signal. I watched from New York. Viewers in New York probably witnessed a more comprehensive version of the incident than my family in Beijing. In New York, I organised and participated in many demonstrations of solidarity with the students in Tiananmen Square, protested before the Chinese consulate, and took part in a hunger strike at the United Nations. Why does a political power attempt to suppress reality? I have always wondered about totalitarian regimes' fear of facts. As a political dissident, I insist on seeking the truth and resist attempts to change my memory of events. Because facts constitute the foundation of my understanding of the world. Upholding reality is a precondition for the mind to function. Otherwise, the world before us is disordered and chaotic; a world gone mad.

Why do autocratic and totalitarian regimes, in fact most forms of power, fear facts? The only reason is because they have built their power on unjust foundations. Once facts are established, justice will be restored. And this is the greatest fear of powerful regimes. This is true not only of China, North Korea, or most non-democratic societies, but also some societies with democratic frameworks. When I consider the experience of whistleblowers such as Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning or [Julian Assange](#), they remind me of my time living in a totalitarian society that suppresses and whitewashes fact, creates no-go zones and fears the light of public disclosure. Even if the lives of an entire generation are wiped out, no prisons and no amount of lies or censorship can expunge or conceal the facts. This is why memory – individual and collective – is such an important part of civilisation. To remove the memory of the past is to rob what is left of an individual, because our past is all we have. Without it, there is no such thing as a civilised society or nation. Any attempt to destroy, remove or distort memory is the act of an illegitimate power.

China is a society without citizens. It is dominated by the CCP. And even after 70 years in power the government still does not trust its people: 1.4 billion have never in those 70 years had the opportunity to vote for their rulers. As a result, there is no [freedom of speech](#) and information. The memory of the past is an individual's property. Its details are the veins carrying blood in the body, giving life to truth. To deny them is to obliterate humanity. Happiness, sorrow, wealth or poverty is all we possess. Once that is taken away, we simply have no future: when there is no past, the word "future" loses its meaning.

When we talk of the past and of fact, it is essential to emphasise the importance of freedom of speech. When facts are changed, freedom of speech does not exist and has no meaning because this freedom cannot exist without an individual's understanding, vision, emotion and interpretation. What we call social justice could never exist without open discussion in the public sphere because fairness and justice are necessary for public welfare and to maintain a harmonious society. Whenever social justice is missing, there will be crisis and tragedy. This is why we cleave strongly to fact and refuse to forget. This is how we give definition to an individual's mind, and why we must protect the dignity of being.

What occurred on 4 June is not merely a Chinese issue. It is not simply an event that happened 30 years ago. Injustice is timeless. It haunts us and affects our state of mind until the day justice is served.

At the same time, the tolerance of injustice and distorted information is an act of encouragement and complicity. Such tolerance allows authoritarian regimes to transgress any red lines. This is exactly what happened after "June Fourth", when the west bought into the excuse that Chinese society would [become more](#)

[democratic](#) after it became richer. China has become wealthier and more powerful on the world stage, but it has never matured into pluralism or democracy. It continues to reject fundamental values of openness, social justice, fair competition and freedom. We will all pay the price for this failure.

China Erases the Tiananmen Story: "It's Been Depressingly Effective" Podcast Available

ON THE 30th anniversary of the [Tiananmen Square](#) massacre, our correspondents recall a dark day and assess [its legacy](#)—not least the Communist Party's effort to suppress the memory of how it crushed China's pro-democracy movement.



Could such widespread dissent flare up in today's China? Also, why laws requiring immigrants to speak host-nations' languages are [counter-productive](#). Below is the link to an excellent Podcast – please click on the link to listen. Runtime: 22 min

<https://podcasts.google.com/?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9yc3MuYWNhc3QuY29tL3RoZWludGVsbGlnZW5jZXBvZG Nhc3Q%3D&episode=M2FhNjU0YzAtYzU5NS00MTC xLWI1OWEtNGRiZDhhZGM2ZjVi>

Soviet Military Commander KK Rokossovsky

by Craig Buckley

My terrific friend and comrade, Craig Buckley has written (at my request) an article on a man, not known by many Australians but who I consider the greatest military leader of WW2. Marshall Rokossovsky. We are not taught much about the horrors of the war of 'Annihilation' on the Eastern Front but should the result had been different and the Wehrmacht conquered the Red Army, there is every chance the iron heel of Nazism could have dominated the world. It's important we don't forget.

Bob Carnegie

MARSHAL KONSTANTIN KONSTANTINOVICH (K.K.) Rokossovsky was one of the Red Army commanders who led the Soviet Union to victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War. Usually awarded second place to Zhukov, it is not difficult to argue that Rokossovsky was in fact the greatest Soviet military commander of the war. Indeed, that view was held by many senior German officers who fought against him.



Born in Warsaw (then part of the Russian Empire) in 1896, Rokossovsky's family was part of the minor Polish nobility, his father serving in a rather modest position as a railways official. Both his parents died when he was young, and as a teenager Rokossovsky worked as a factory worker and an apprentice stonemason. Upon the outbreak of war in 1914, he enlisted and served in a cavalry regiment. He was wounded twice and decorated for bravery. In 1917 he joined the Bolsheviks, and served in the Red Army during the ensuing civil war, including the liberation of Mongolia from White Russian rule.

His post-war advancement in the Red Army was good, and he became a student and advocate of the new theories of mobile warfare developed by important Soviet military thinkers such as Tukhachevsky. Such associations were, however, likely responsible for him becoming a victim of Stalin's purge of the Red Army leadership, which saw the demise of Tukhachevsky and many others. In 1937, Rokossovsky was arrested and accused of being a saboteur, and then a spy for, at various times, Japanese and Polish intelligence agencies.

In such difficult and desperate times, Rokossovsky demonstrated his preparedness to defy authority when he knew himself to be right. This was a characteristic which he would display throughout his military career which – perhaps surprisingly – served him well. He was tortured and beaten, which saw eight of his teeth knocked out, three of his ribs broken, and a toe smashed by a blow from a hammer. He refused to admit any wrongdoing or sign a confession. At his trial, he mocked the prosecutor, pointing out that the alleged witness to his crimes had

been killed during the Russian Civil War almost twenty years previously.

As the threat of war with Nazi Germany heightened, Stalin ordered the release from prison and restoration of rank to thousands of experienced Red Army officers who had been purged, including Rokossovsky. Imprisonment and beatings had not diminished Rokossovsky's characteristic refusal to back down, which he demonstrated upon a chance encounter with Stalin. Stalin asked Rokossovsky why he had not seen him in so long. Rokossovsky told Stalin bluntly that he had been in prison. Stalin's reply: "*A fine time you chose to go to prison!*"

When Germany launched *Operation Barbarossa* and invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Rokossovsky was in action from the first day. He commanded the 9th Mechanised Corps, one of the new mobile formations, although still equipped with old and outdated tanks. His forces were involved in the Brody-Dubno encirclement battles in the Ukraine, the largest tank battle of the Second World War (and probably ever).

Rokossovsky would go on to serve in the most crucial battles of the war, repeatedly thrust into difficult and desperate situations, where he could be relied upon to succeed where so many others failed. In July 1941, near Smolensk, his resolute defence allowed thousands of Red Army troops to escape encirclement. Delay at Smolensk would ultimately doom any chance of success that *Operation Barbarossa* had. In the latter part of 1941, and given command of the 16th Army, Rokossovsky defended the capital, Moscow, from the main German attack.

By mid-1942, Rokossovsky was the Red Army's most accomplished army commander. Though the Red Army would eventually produce many brilliant commanders, few would earn Rokossovsky's reputation of being careful with the lives of his soldiers and reluctant to squander lives needlessly.

Promoted to command a Front (the Soviet term for an Army Group), Rokossovsky would be transferred again, to Stalingrad. Here, he led the operation to eliminate the enemy forces encircled by the Soviet counteroffensive.

In July 1943, the Germans made their final attempt at securing victory on the Eastern Front. Their attack consisted of two major thrusts – from the northern and southern flanks of the Kursk salient. Cold War-era historians who liked to fantasize about Germany's chances of defeating the Soviet Union have spilled a lot of ink writing about German attack on the southern axis of Kursk, which made steady progress for about a week before stalling. They wrote comparatively little about the German attack from the north. The reason: Rokossovsky commanded the defence on the northern flank, and the German attack got nowhere, ground into dust.

In June 1944, Rokossovsky would play a major role in *Operation Bagration*. Again, Rokossovsky clashed with his superiors in the planning of the offensive against the German "Army Group Centre." Stalin demanded to

know where the main penetration of the German line would occur, but Rokossovsky insisted that two major breakthroughs were necessary. On three occasions Stalin angrily sent Rokossovsky to go and reconsider his position, but each time he refused to budge. Other officers witnessing the event expected that Rokossovsky would be relieved of command, but Stalin eventually conceded Rokossovsky's plan. Rokossovsky would subsequently lead the First Belorussian Front as part of *Operation Bagration*, which historians now refer to simply as "the destruction of Army Group Centre."

Rokossovsky would lead his forces in the liberation of Belorussia and Poland. In the final months of the war, he was given command of a secondary sector, clearing German forces from the Baltic Coast while Zhukov and Konev raced for Berlin. However, in June 1945, Rokossovsky was afforded the honour of commanding the Victory Parade in Moscow.

In post-war years he would serve as the head of the Polish Army, then as Poland's Defence Minister, before returning to the Soviet Union in 1956. He died, after a long and severe illness, from prostrate cancer in 1968, and was buried in the Kremlin Wall Necropolis in Red Square.

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Cartoon Corner

WARNING GRAPHIC CONTENT
READERS MAY FIND SOME OF THE FOLLOWING IMAGES DISTURBING

Woman sitting quietly with a dog.

child observing a bird building its nest.

Man staring intently at the ground and smiling.

Here is what the man is smiling at: small daisies growing in the grass.

Leung

DOG

The news was bad
The day was cold
The world grew sad
As I grew old.

Then as I neared
Catastrophe
A dog appeared
And smiled at me.

It smiled at me
It smiled at ME
A dog came up
And smiled at me!

Leung

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Solidarity!

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

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