

.11.18

The Director of News
ABC

I write to protest against the anti-union bias in the wording of news bulletins. For instance, this morning an item on the rail dispute in Sydney spoke of 'union bosses' and not as elected officials.

The ABC's regular use of 'bosses' against the representatives of working people is an instance of the ideological part of the attacks on organised labour that have rolled through several Royal Commissions and repressive legislation, and are now undermining living conditions through the loss of penalty rates and the forcing of employees off EBAs and onto Awards.

The ABC's use of 'bosses' to dog whistle about stand-over tactics by organised workers is perhaps no more than one can expect from the corporate media.

One way to regain the ABC's prized objective of 'balance' is to refer to company directors as 'bosses'.

I remain

Humphrey McQueen



30 January 2018

Mr Humphrey McQueen
52/9 Oxley Street
GRIFFITH ACT 2603

Dear Mr McQueen,

Thank you for your letter which Mr Morris passed on to me for response.

I do not agree that the use of the word "bosses" in relation to union leaders demonstrates anti-union bias or is dog-whistling about standover tactics.

As I am sure you are aware the term has been in common use across the media and in common parlance for decades, if not generations. It is used in a wide variety of contexts and not just in relation to unions. A quick Google search of the ABC website will reveal 'boss' or 'bosses' used recently in relation to executives in the banking and mining industries.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Mark Maley', is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Mark Maley
Editorial Policies Manager, News

Geraldine Doogue
Saturday Extra

You prefaced this morning's interview (24 February) about Syria with laments for the dead.

The immorality of killing is not decided by numbers. Killing the one-millionth Jew for being a Jew was no more immoral than it was to kill the first. The killers, though, became more evil.

Yet we know that there is a calculus of horrors in the tussle for media attention. Every mass killing has to be rebadged 'genocide' to get a hearing. So, let us not contrast Syria with any other killing field on a scale of criminality. Let us look instead at the media space allotted per corpse. Since 1960, at least 12 millions have lost their lives in the resource wars in the Congo. Do the sums: divide 12,000,000 by 58 for the number of years, then divide that number by 365 to get the average death toll per day: some 550.

Then dredge up memories of how many stories you have done on the Congo across your career. Finally, what is the ratio of minutes of ABC coverage to the total slaughtered?

It is never too late to make amends. Starting points are Conor Cruise O'Brien's *To Katanga and Back*; Raoul Peck's feature on the murder of Lumumba; and the on-line archive of *Le Monde Diplomatique*.

There is a chilling exchange in the feature film *Blood Diamond*. The di Caprio hero is sympathizing with an elderly enslaved diamond dredger how terrible the situation is for his country. - It could be worse, the old man replies. - How might it be worse? - We could have had oil.

Humphrey McQueen

22. 11. 18

Peter Martin

'Economics'

ABC RN

I've just turned off your programme after hearing one bit of nonsense after another.

Trailing after nearly 200 years of apologists for capitalist exploitation by trying to escape from the labour concept of value in Smith and Ricardo, you began by announcing that economics is all about making choices.

There is a minor flaw in this definition.

If use-values have not been made, what will there be to choose between?

That rule applies to resource allocation for production goods as much as to consumption ones.

As Smith knew: a poor man might want a coach and six but such demands are ineffectual. Why so? Smith also knew that all governments exist to maintain the inequality of worldly goods.

The enclosed pamphlet will not rescue you from floundering in a supersaturated solution of bourgeois bullshit, but it might remind you that economic science can be more substantial than calculating the price of a cup of tea.

If you read the recent life of James Buchanan by Nancy MacLean, *Democracy in Chains*, you will find that the current version of 'choice' came from efforts by racists in the U.S. A. to 'chose' not to send their children to integrated schools.

Humphrey McQueen

22.11.18

Phillip Adams,

Mistaking yourself for a Luddite is forgivable because misrepresentation of their politics is still being used to disable proletarian resistance to any change that threatens the workers' share of the value that they produce.

The Big Lie is that they smashed machines under the delusion that they would thereby secure their livelihoods forever and a day. The truth is that they were class conscious, selective in which machines they attacked, above all, breaking them as a way of punishing their owners.¹ Moreover, the Luddites not only hit out at certain machines but thrashed and murdered their owners, singling out wage-cutters, especially those who swindled them by paying in kind ('truck') rather than in cash.² Another reason for machine-breaking was the exorbitant rent on looms, charged even to cottagers who owned their own looms. Employers were also selective in their support for machino-facture, often opposing the factory-system because its competition deprived them of the opportunity to screw the cottagers bound to them for equipment, credit, raw materials and sales.³

The reason that Luddites are pictured as dills is because they were anything but. Their methods were the most effective on offer before the development of communism and an organised labour movement in the 1820s.

The British state knew it faced a broad and deep revolt against class rule when its agents made machine-breaking a capital offence and dispatched 12,000 troops to suppress 'General Ludd', more than it had fighting Bonaparte in the Peninsula Campaigns.⁴

We should all be Luddites, seeing class rule rather than technology as the threat, not just to employment but also to humane relationships at work, and beyond.

Humphrey McQueen

¹ To inflict the maximum harm on their enemies with minimum harm to themselves, Australian Aborigines drove flocks of sheep over cliffs; the 'Captain Swing' rural protestors burnt hay ricks in the early 1830s without supposing that they were ensuring their futures.

² J.L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond, *The Skilled Labourer, 1760-1832*, London: Longmans, Green, 1919, pp. 157-63; M. Thomis (ed.), *Luddites in Nottinghamshire*, Thornton Society, Research Series, no. 26, London: 1972, pp. 12-3, 21-2, 33 and 62.

³ J.D. Chambers, *Nottinghamshire in the Eighteenth Century*, London: P.S. King, 1932, pp.129-36.

⁴ John Cannon (ed.), *Oxford Companion to British History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p.599; Marx misrepresents them too, *Capital*, I, London: Penguin, 1976, p.554.