



The Maritimes

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Port Otago workers defend jobs and conditions

The Maritime Union entered in mediation with Port of Otago on Tuesday 13 October 2009 following plans to make up to 35 workers redundant.

The push for redundancies comes after ongoing problems with an unpopular restructuring process.

Maritime Union National President Phil Adams says workers at the port rejected a proposal to set up new divisions in the workforce.

Port Otago is pushing a new "flexible" third shift to load container vessels, which would disadvantage workers.

"The proposals we have seen will either reduce our conditions of employment and health and safety, or lead to redundancies, and our members will not accept these outcomes."

He says the workers are asking the company to adhere to the agreement which does not expire to July 2010.

"There has been a clear and united message from our members at several recent stopwork meetings that they are not agree-

ing to the company's proposals."

Mr Adams says the loss of cargo by the port is a temporary rough period.

"We do not see losing skilled and motivated staff at the coal face as the answer to the company's problems."

He says the Union advocates a process of voluntary redundancies and natural attrition over the next year, which will ensure a productive workforce and high morale.

Mr Adams says Port Otago is a major local public enterprise that is owned by the people of Otago through the Otago Regional Council.

"This is a company that has made consistently good returns to its shareholders, the people of Otago.

The Union had contacted the Otago Regional Council, as there were concerns that pressure was coming on for unrealistically high dividends from the port in a time of recession, due to the Regional Council over-committing itself in new projects and expenditures.

Mr Adams says the port has had virtually

no industrial action over the last decade with management accepting the Union's role in the port.

He says that he believes there are other agendas behind the restructuring as the workforce at Port Chalmers had exceeded productivity targets and was very efficient.

Late news:

Phil Adams reports progress is being made in negotiations towards a new proposal.



Port Chalmers Dunedin Branch members at a recent stopwork meeting discuss restructuring proposals

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Deadline for all Port reports, submissions, photos and letters: 13 November 2009 for next edition

Cover photo:

A busy day in the Port of Timaru,

Wednesday 1 April 2009. But moves by Fonterra to pull export cargo from the port threaten its future – see story page 11.

Photograph by John Bisset, courtesy of the Timaru Herald.

For more online photos, see

www.flickr.com/maritimeunion

Thanks to our photographers and contributors of photographs including Luke Appleby, John Darroch, Rachel Fahey, Simon Oosterman, Garry Parsloe, Keith Adams, Tony Mowbray, Harry Holland, Ray Fife, Joe Fleetwood, Glen Williams and others



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Port of Timaru fights for future page 11

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Notice:

New officials will be announced in November following the union elections.

Unions must set the agenda

By Victor Billot

The working people of New Zealand are under attack.

A global recession and the election of an overtly right wing National Government have provided the basis for an attack on jobs, wages, conditions and the social and economic security of working people.

The attack takes many forms, some direct and some subtle. They include industrial attacks in the workplace, as well as political attacks through the laws and activities of the State.

Employers have sensed the backing they have from the Government, and are willing to use the economic recession as a crowbar. Maritime workers have seen direct attacks in Auckland and Port Chalmers.

Then there are the indirect attacks of companies such as Fonterra, who have disrupted regional ports and communities like Timaru for their own ends.

The global recession is the result of an unstable deregulated global economy, operated and dominated in the interests of international capital.

But the cost of the recession has been shifted onto working people. Global business interests now dictate Government policy, and democracy has become an ever narrower choice between essentially similar political managers.

A number of other industrial disputes, largely driven by employers, have been occurring throughout New Zealand on the front-lines of this battle.

A major dispute in Telecom has seen EPMU members resisting contracting out. Dairy workers and concrete workers have faced aggressive tactics. Members of bus unions have been locked out in Auckland. Hospital and service workers are told they have to look at "pay restraint" but the cost of living still rises.

This is not a coincidence.

Unions have met these attacks, but amongst the general public there seems to be an attitude of complacency. It is a very different mood than the resistance which met the National Government's agenda in the 1990s.

Is this because unions are stuck in a defensive mode – is there a lack of confidence amongst working people?

Is it because unions have accepted core elements of the free market, capitalist ideology, and have failed to offer a clear and credible alternative vision of society?

The union movement needs to build an industrial and political agenda for our members and the wider working class.

Politically, the union movement needs to grow up. We are living in an MMP environment, but sometimes it seems our political approach is still stuck in a time warp.

Our engagement with political parties has to be based on what it delivers to working people - not on what it delivers to politicians.

There needs to be pressure from the left so issues like casualization, coastal shipping, yellow/scab associations, public ownership and the right to strike are taken seriously and not fudged.

There is a tribal mentality in some parts of the New Zealand union movement, and a conformist attitude. This is often sold as "unity" but it actually kills debate and creates a conservative and spineless approach.

The political goals of a militant progressive trade union like the Maritime Union should be just as important as the industrial goals.

Industrially the Maritime Union fights hard for workers.

Politically we must also have the same approach.

We have to set the agenda for a society where the interests of working people, the majority, come first.

Maritime Union will weather th



by Trevor Hanson
General Secretary

The last quarter of the year sees the Triennial Conference of the Maritime Union, held in Wellington on 27–29 October, and the elections for national officials of the Union, held every three years. These positions are the National President, National Vice President, Assistant General Secretary, and General Secretary. The 2009 Triennial Conference will be the third national conference of the Union since our founding conference in 2003. In that time we have made slow but steady progress to bring together the seafaring and waterside sections of the Union. Our “two” Auckland and Wellington branches are working well alongside each other. My view of the long term future of the Union is a simple one. The logic of the process behind joining together watersiders and seafarers was that it united two closely related groups of workers into a common organization. When I joined the industry as a young man, there were many thousands working in the industry. Our size now is a fraction of that. While we occupy a vital part of the transport and logistics chain, and punch above our weight in many respects, the fact is that we are only as strong as our weakest link. The goal for the Union in the second decade of the 21st century has to be “one union inside the wharf gates.” The current situation is a relic of the past and if anyone believes that the current situation can continue indefinitely, then I am convinced that reality will soon catch up with them. The pressures coming in from global capitalism mean that much greater coordination and unity is required between

transport unions. We need to continue to build a strong relationship with our other ITF affiliates and transport unions in the Asia Pacific region, especially the Maritime Union of Australia. There needs to be one union inside the wharf gates in New Zealand.

Pressure comes on workers

The maritime industry is going through one of its periodic cycles where we see job losses, attacks on conditions and employers going on the offensive. This is generally driven by large scale economic instability of the global system now in place.

In the last several months we have seen redundancies in the Ports of Auckland, threatened redundancies at Port of Otago, and the impact of Fonterra withdrawing large amounts of work from Timaru and New Plymouth.

Our seafarers working in Australian waters have also seen a downturn in work. There are also a number of major industrial disputes happening around the country such as the Telecom engineers dispute, dairy workers, concrete workers, polytech staff and others.

As always, a proactive union approach is required and we need to work with other unions to make a unified response to any attacks on workers.

Engineers' dispute

As I write we are in the midst of a national dispute as Telecom and their contractors attempt to force lines engineers into becoming “dependent contractors”.

The workers are members of the EPMU and the Maritime Union has actively supported their cause on picket lines and with financial contributions.

This model of contracting out is a sinister and planned method of reducing corporations obligations to their employees.

By making employees self-employed businesspeople, it divides the workforce, deunionizes the workforce, and turns worker against worker. The nonsense is that these workers for all intents and purposes will still be doing the same work, completely dependent on the corporations they contract to. But they have to buy their own tools and van.

Now I wonder who that benefits?

The use of contracting firms like Visionstream to do Telecom's dirty work is a shameful but common tactic. This fight is a fight for all New Zealand workers and for secure jobs.

Fonterra and regional ports

The ports of Timaru and New Plymouth recently received major blows when Fonterra announced it was stopping major exports of local products in favor of long distance rail to remote ports.

The Maritime Union has questioned the motives behind these moves and whether Fonterra has the right to be able to determine the future of regional ports.

We have held a successful public meeting on this issue in Timaru and are working with other regional interests to demand that regional ports are not placed in jeopardy through the actions of market dominating corporates. This edition of the Maritimes features an article on this situation.

Privatisation

Despite John Key's assurances of “no privatisation” in this term of Government, the groundwork is being laid for a future which will see the loss of more assets owned by the people of New Zealand. The Auckland Supercity plan has been handed over to the far-right extremist Rodney Hide, whose political party ACT is completely hostile to workers, especially workers who organize collectively. The agenda is to turn Auckland into some kind of corporate entity where the only people who can afford to run for office will be multimillionaires and tacky media celebrities.

Of more concern is the point that Hide and his gang of unreformed Rogernomes would like to sell everything off and turn the people of New Zealand into tenants in their own country. This process is already well advanced and they want to complete the job.

The Ports of Auckland are not state assets – they are regional assets, basically owned by the people of Auckland through the Auckland Regional Council via its business arm. So with the whispering campaign from big business seeking to plunder the people's property by continuing to push privatization, it is fair to say that the Ports of Auckland and other New Zealand ports for that matter are under threat. The recent moves to weaken investment rules with Australia also place ports under threat from privatization and sell off to overseas corporations.

We need to continue to watch this issue closely.

e storm

Fishing scandal

I recently watched "The Great New Zealand Fishing Scandal" by New Zealand documentary maker Guye Henderson which screened on Sky. This documentary should be on the national free to air networks and it should be seen by all New Zealanders.

It is an indictment on how big commercial interests have been allowed to rip the guts out of New Zealand's fisheries through dodgy joint venture operations.

While it is fair to say that simply removing overseas operators from the fishing industry will not solve all the issues in the industry, something has to be done.

The cost to New Zealand workers, the national income, the marine environment and fishing stocks has been terrible over the last generation.

The Maritime Union has called for a number of years for regulation in this industry to protect overseas fishing crews, create jobs for local workers and preserve our fishing stocks. The ITF is also promoting an international campaign in this area. We need to keep up the pressure.

National reverts to type

The agenda of the National Government is becoming more obvious, as they try to shift concerns about job losses and politicians' perks into attacking the most vulnerable New Zealanders.

The Government was coming under enormous pressure with the revelations of how politicians receive the kind of fringe benefits that others only dream of. The outrage was no doubt fuelled by the constant hypocritical propaganda that working New Zealanders have it "too easy" and need to get used to 0% pay increases while at the same time "saving for retirement." Bill English's \$900 a week accommodation supplement was one concern for the public, as was Roger Douglas (sporting his knighthood) taking free air trips to London to visit family members. Remember this is a man who receives an MP's wages, parliamentary pension plus national super. The really funny thing is that Roger Douglas campaigned on bringing down Government spending, which he thinks is too high. Perhaps he meant Government spending on schools and hospitals, rather than for junkets for hasbeen politicians paid for by the long suffering taxpayers.

In response to these injustices, the National Party turned to its favourite scapegoat, beneficiaries.

Since they came to power, unemployment has gone through the roof, putting thousands of New Zealanders unable to find work. In order to hide its glaring failures, the Government has reverted to its age old distraction tactics to whip up public hatred of beneficiaries through selective attacks. Let's hope that some of the workers who "voted for a change" are starting to realize that change can be for the worse.

Retirement

This is my last column for the Maritimes magazine as I retire in November following the union elections. I originally agreed to stand for General Secretary in 1990 for a short period but as it happened have remained for 20 years.

It is a cliché but nonetheless true to say there have been some good times and some bad times in the job.

To be honest I believe in many ways New Zealand has gone backwards in our social and economic way of life. Technology advances but working hours, conditions and the share of wealth received by the producers (working class) have all been under pressure.

We have had some successes as a Union and we have also had some areas where we could have done things better. But I am happy with the major achievements including the amalgamation between watersiders and seafarers, and having maintained our resources as a Union. Obviously the numbers in the industry have shrunk due to technology but also bad Government policy around ports and shipping.

One of the toughest fights we have had since port reform in the late 1980s is with casualization and the use of scab/yellow unions or associations.

One of the major battles was with Mainland Stevedores/ISO and their corporate sponsors such as Carter Holt Harvey that took place over many years throughout New Zealand.

As a group of workers we have weathered many storms going back over a century. The next years are likely to be turbulent times but I think we can be confident the Maritime Union will play its part defending and advancing the rights and conditions of workers.

"The Maritime Union will play its part defending and advancing the rights and conditions of workers"

Turbulent times for our industry



by Phil Adams
National President

Port Chalmers

My home port of Port Chalmers has recently seen a great deal of turmoil as unpopular and unnecessary restructuring proposals are thrown around by management. Most recently we have confronted proposals to make 35 workers redundant. This attack will be resisted.

This is a great shame as for a number of years the Union and Management worked together reasonably well, given our different interests, but realizing there was a middle ground that could be found.

Whether it is new and inexperienced managers, or whether they feel they have a pro-employer Government on side, or whether they are bored with solid profits and increasing productivity, our major employer seems to have decided they want to change the game. The problem they face is a united, unionized workforce that is well informed and solidly opposed to their strange plans and unhelpful methods.

With the current problems with the recession and the ongoing insecurity of work, you would think a conservative approach would be favoured by management. The Port of Otago should accept that they have a social responsibility as the Port is owned by the people of Otago through our regional council. Our message as a Union to them is that they need to reconsider their approach.

Fonterra and Ports

The Maritime Union is concerned about how work flows for ports can be disrupted overnight.

The recent decision by Fonterra to move goods by rail to major ports and abandon some regional ports has been a bombshell for some regions.

While this means more work for some ports, it means others suffer catastrophic and unexpected losses in trade that threaten jobs and the actual viability of ports themselves.

As a Union, we want to see a stable and secure industry that is planned and integrated. Otherwise we will continue to see ports played off against each other in a race to the bottom. The cost in inefficient duplication of infrastructure and on the livelihoods of maritime workers and port communities is too great to be ignored.

Fonterra is a massive player in the New Zealand economy and none of our mice-like port companies want to put the bell round its neck.

Fonterra is not just any company. By its size and market sway, it needs to be carefully regulated so it does not cause havoc by short-term commercial decisions that serve

only its narrow interests of shareholder profit.

A taxing issue

The recent proposal to increase GST should be knocked on the head. A Government appointed committee came up with the idea. GST is a regressive tax. It hits low to medium income earners hard. These people spend most of their income on goods and services.

GST should be phased out, especially on food. As much as I hate to say it, the Australians do this and it is a good idea.

New Zealand's tax system is weighted in favour of the wealthy. Family trusts, private companies and good advice help those with money and connections to increase their wealth, whereas those on lower incomes struggle.

It seems absolutely bizarre that a young worker will see a third of his or her hard earned income go in tax (not counting GST) while a speculator who can afford to buy up houses and sell them for a hefty profit pays no tax on these capital gains.

So workers, who generate wealth, pay tax on their productivity, but speculators pay no tax on their unearned income, while also pushing house prices out of the reach of many young people.

It seems New Zealand has got its priorities wrong.

Unions here to stay

I am always unimpressed by how it is the workforce who is expected to bear the brunt of recessions and ups and downs of business. There always seems to be a bottomless pit of gold to fly managers around the countryside and their numbers always seem to be on the increase.

Most of our ports have seen industrial action over the last decade. The key weapon we have is our national structure, our relationship with other New Zealand unions and our ability to call on the international transport unions through the ITF.

Employers want to divide workers. As individuals, we can be picked off one by one. How much power can one worker have against a major company with its managers, HR people, lawyers and financial resources? The worker is always at a disadvantage as in most cases he is replaceable, but he is also dependent on his or her job.

That is why Unions even up the power balance. By uniting and acting collectively, workers can then face employers from a position of strength. That is why many employers do not like Unions. But that's too bad for them, because unions are here to stay – especially the Maritime Union of New Zealand.

“While this means more work for some ports, it means others suffer catastrophic and unexpected losses in trade that threaten jobs and the actual viability of ports themselves”



Maritime Union Wellington Branch members supporting Telecom lines engineers at a protest outside Telecom Head Office, Wellington, 24 August 2009 (photo by Luke Appleby)

Maritime workers back Telecom lines engineers

The Maritime Union has backed Telecom lines engineers in their employment dispute.

The Union has contributed \$10,000 in donations and maritime workers from New Zealand ships and the waterfront have joined rallies and protest actions in Auckland and Wellington alongside the lines engineers and other supporters. The lines engineers are members of the EPMU.

On 25 June 2009 Telecom announced it was ending its network engineering contract with Transfield and Downer EDI for the Auckland and Northland regions and instead providing the contracts to Visionstream.

Because of this change 700 lines engineers face redundancy and are being told by Visionstream that they will only get work if they transfer as "dependent contractors" to Visionstream.

This would mean these workers would have to front up with up to \$60,000 to buy their own vans and equipment, set up limited liability companies and take on the financial risks associated with the industry. They'd also face a drop in income of up to 66%, have no negotiating power and be left with no employment rights. For more information you can visit the campaign site at www.epmu.org.nz/telecom

New Chinese ship riddled with safety hazards

A new Chinese-owned ship was detained in Wellington in September by Maritime New Zealand because of serious safety problems. Inspectors uncovered 37 deficiencies after

boarding the logging ship Zeus 1, including problems with lifesaving equipment, radio communications, ship certificates and documents, fire safety measures and mooring ties.

The Dominion Post newspaper saw a document claiming the captain, chief officer and third officer were not capable of taking the ship to sea, that senior crew failed to meet 'Safety of Life at Sea' (Solus) standards, and that navigation was done using photocopied charts.

Maritime New Zealand officials said it was clear the ship was not fit to sail. Inspectors boarded the ship on September 9 after it arrived from Noumea via Port

Chalmers. Problems were found during its Port State Control inspection.

Such inspections are done with foreign ships in New Zealand ports to ensure they comply with international maritime conventions, and are operated in compliance with national and international maritime laws.

Maritime New Zealand inspected 561 foreign ships last year, 326 had some deficiency and eight were detained. Zeus 1 is owned by Shandong Province Qingdao Marine Shipping out of China and was launched in July. Company officials in China could not be reached for comment.

A fair deal in hard times

It's a little known fact that four out of five Kiwi workers and their families have no protection against redundancy. At a time of rising unemployment this is leaving tens of thousands of Kiwi families under huge financial stress.

That's a situation Labour MP Darien Fenton is aiming to change with her Redundancy Protection Bill, which aims to protect Kiwi workers who are facing hard times by helping tide them over until they find a new job.

Under the Bill all workers who are made redundant would be entitled to four weeks pay for their first year's service and two weeks for every year after, up to a maximum of 26 weeks.

But it needs the Government's support to pass. Labour, the Greens, the Maori Party, unions and community groups are calling on John Key to honour his promise to help Kiwis through the recession by backing the Bill.

The Maritime Union is taking part in a cross-union postcard campaign to let John Key know how strongly Kiwi workers feel about this bill. Please fill in your postcard and send it freepost to Parliament, and if you need any more for friends and family please contact us at PO Box 27004, Wellington or email victor.billot@munz.org.nz. There's heaps more about the campaign and how you can get involved at www.hardtimes.org.nz.

Election of national officials

Voting forms were mailed to all members of the Maritime Union in October 2009 for the election of the national officers of the Union.

As there was only one nomination received for the position of National President, from the incumbent Phil Adams, and one nomination received for the position of National Vice President, from the incumbent Garry Parsloe, these two candidates have been re-elected unopposed. Voting forms have been sent out for the position of General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary, with two candidates standing for both these positions. You can only vote for one candidate for each contested position.

Triennial Conference 2009

The Conference of the Maritime Union of New Zealand is the main decision making body of the Union.

It is held every three years, attended by all branches of the Union and overseas transport and maritime unions.

The 2009 Conference will be held at the Brentwood Hotel, Wellington from 27 – 29 October, the week after Labour Weekend.

This is the third Conference of the Maritime Union.

Guest speakers will include Leader of the Labour Party Phil Goff who will open the Conference, CTU leaders and international guests including delegations from the International Transport Workers Federation, Maritime Union of Australia, International Longshore and Warehouse Union (West Coast USA and Canada, Alaska and Hawaii), RMT (United Kingdom) and Zen Kowan, the Japanese Dockworkers Union. Union business will include the appointment of committees and trustees, auditors and solicitors, reports from the officers of the Union and debate on remits from branches that will set union policy.

Full reports on conference proceedings will be in the next edition of the Maritimes.



Sue Bradford thanked for her support for workers

The Maritime Union of New Zealand has thanked Green MP Sue Bradford, who announced her resignation from Parliament in October, for her support for workers and those without a voice in the political process.

Maritime Union General Secretary Trevor Hanson says Sue Bradford was a friend of the Maritime Union and all workers.

"Sue was a principle driven politician during her time in Parliament who was ahead of her time and who provided a contrast to many other faceless representatives."

Mr Hanson says that Ms Bradford was one of the few MPs in Parliament who understood the crossover between social, economic and environmental policies.

He says she was a strong advocate for coastal shipping as an environmentally friendly transport mode.

Mr Hanson says Sue Bradford was also a friend of New Zealand workers and her resignation was a loss to Parliament.

"Her activist background gave her a real understanding of the struggle of unemployed and low paid workers since the 1980s."

He says he expects Ms Bradford to continue to be an active and effective political advocate outside Parliament.

Ports of Auckland under threat from secret SuperCity agenda

The Maritime Union is concerned about the intentions of the Government towards Auckland's public assets under the proposed SuperCity.

Maritime Union Local 13 Secretary Russell Mayn says there has been an ongoing "softening up" campaign from big business interests to sell off the Ports of Auckland so they can get their hands on them.

He says there is serious cause for concern that the SuperCity plan for Auckland's local government will be used to push forward privatization of assets - including the port.

"Minister of Local Government Rodney Hide has made it very clear that he favours sell offs of the people's assets which could see the ports along with land, infrastructure and water as monopolies owned by overseas corporations."

The fact that these assets are regional and local assets, not state assets, provides an escape clause from the Prime Minister John Key's promise not to privatize any public assets in this term of the Government.

Mr Mayn says the evidence shows the majority of Aucklanders are opposed to privatization of local assets.

"The Maritime Union will strongly advocate for keeping public assets such as the Ports of Auckland in public hands."

In-flight peacemaker

Dunedin's Alan McDonald has many strings to his bow. He's a JP, merchant seaman, former periodic detention warden, patron of the Otago Boxing Association, and a regular political candidate.

But last month, on a flight from Hong Kong to Auckland, he added "peacemaker" to his extensive CV when he helped Air New Zealand flight staff subdue someone he describes as an abusive and aggressive middle-aged man who attacked an attendant.

Alan intervened in the struggle, told the man to sit down and then wrestled with him until more flight attendants arrived. For his efforts Alan was offered a seat in business class for the rest of the trip and was then sent a box of "goodies" from Air New Zealand and a card thanking him for his "invaluable assistance."

Said Alan: "I don't want to be a hero. I was just doing it because he was annoying me."

(From the Otago Daily Times, 1 August 2009)

Government trucking plan a "roadhog's charter"

The Maritime Union says the Government should reconsider its push to put oversized trucks on New Zealand roads.

Maritime Union General Secretary Trevor Hanson says the Government is obviously not concerned at the extra deaths and injuries that will occur as a result on New Zealand roads.

"Has the Government considered the personal losses and increased costs in medical care and ACC payments resulting from accidents? Has it weighed the environmental costs and calculated the extra emissions that juggernaut trucks will produce?"

Mr Hanson says local ratepayers will be paying the bill to realign bridges, repair roads, and be responsible for all the future damage caused by the introduction of bigger trucks.

"Large trucking companies seem to be pulling the Government's strings and their profits are being subsidized by the taxpayer and the ratepayer."

He says the Government has abdicated its responsibility by completely abandoning any attempt to develop an integrated, long term transport solution for New Zealand that recognizes the economic, social and environmental importance of coastal shipping and thriving regional ports.

"Coastal shipping requires no infrastructure upkeep - by sailing on the 'blue highway' it does away with the need for the vast expense of fixing roads for oversize trucks."

The Government has directed enormous resources towards roading but has slashed the already tiny budget for support of environmentally friendly coastal shipping. Under the current direction, it is estimated bigger trucks will make at least 620,000 trips on our roads each year.

Mr Hanson says coastal ships can carry 1000 containers, keep extra traffic off roads, reduce dependence on fossil fuels, lower carbon emissions, are noise free and require no infrastructure maintenance as they sail on the 'blue highway'.

"The Government has reverted to a backward looking, short term approach which will have major negative consequences for New Zealand. New Zealanders must start to get active to defend their future before we are locked into the roadhog's charter."

Send it in.

We want to hear from members about what they want to see in the Maritimes magazine.

It's your magazine. We're looking for photos and news tips from members. Get in touch to tell us if there is something you'd like to see in the Maritimes.

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Power without responsibility

What is Fonterra's plan for New Zealand's regional ports?

by Victor Billot

The role of regional ports has come under the spotlight after dairy giant Fonterra pulled their exports out of Timaru and New Plymouth without warning in August.

Should one New Zealand company have the power to make or break ports? What's the Government doing about it? Is there a future for regional ports in New Zealand?

The decision was announced with an upbeat media statement on 13 August 2009. "Fonterra said today it was looking at consolidating its port usage as part of a drive towards greater efficiency in its supply chain for exports out of New Zealand," read the message.

The dairy giant was pulling its exports out of two New Zealand ports in favour of sending cargo via long distance rail to remote ports.

Fonterra logistics boss Nigel Jones had dropped the bombshell a little earlier on those ports which had been on the receiving end of a little friendly consolidation. The ultimate goal, Jones enthused, was to "put more money in our farmers' pockets." Unfortunately, this bottom line mindset did not go down well in many of the regions that allow Fonterra to flourish in their backyards.

As the company itself admitted, it was reducing the volume of its product moved through the ports of Taranaki and Timaru by 65% and 80% respectively.

The announcement will see the number of containers through Timaru drop from 61,000 to 37,000 containers a year.

Port Taranaki lost 22,000 containers annually but managed to get back possibly 10,000 containers a year after meetings with Fonterra.

The two ports were facing a radically different future – a future that was looking suddenly grim.

Fonterra are not the only exporters who use these regional ports. The regions and their ratepayers, including farmers, had invested heavily to keep their ports up to speed.

Like most ports in New Zealand, the main shareholder for Timaru and Taranaki is the people of the region. Timaru's port is majority owned by the Timaru District Council, with a minority private shareholding, and Taranaki is owned by the Taranaki Regional Council.

The shockwaves of Fonterra's decision spread out slowly. It seemed after years of maritime industry talk about "port rationalization", where the ports of New Zealand would be restructured, was here at last.

The only problem was that there was only one player making the calls – Fonterra.

The concept has often been bandied about how coastal shipping would be reinvigorated by the use of regional "feeder" ports sending in goods for export to major "hub" ports.

But with Fonterra deciding to use long distance rail to move product hundreds of

kilometers from plants such as Whareroa in Taranaki and Clandeboye in South Canterbury to remote ports, this concept had literally been blown out of the water.

Taranaki Mayor Peter Tennent told the Taranaki Daily News he was puzzled by how it could be more cost-effective for Fonterra to rail dairy product to an export port five times further away than Port Taranaki.

Could Government subsidies be allowing KiwiRail to offer preferential prices to Fonterra?

There was a resounding silence from the Government who seemed keen to stay at a distance from what was turning into a hot debate in some areas of the "heartland New Zealand" it wanted to appeal to.

Fonterra and KiwiRail were quick to deny this was the case, but hidden behind veils of commercial secrecy it is hard to know exactly what was going on. Whether ports were also involved in the old, self-defeating parochial game of undercutting each other to gain market share is another issue.

The incoming National Government had slashed any investment in coastal shipping, yet was pouring huge money into road – at a time of climate change and peak oil, the backward looking, short term outlook of the money men was on full display as they promoted heavy trucking as the preferred transport solution.

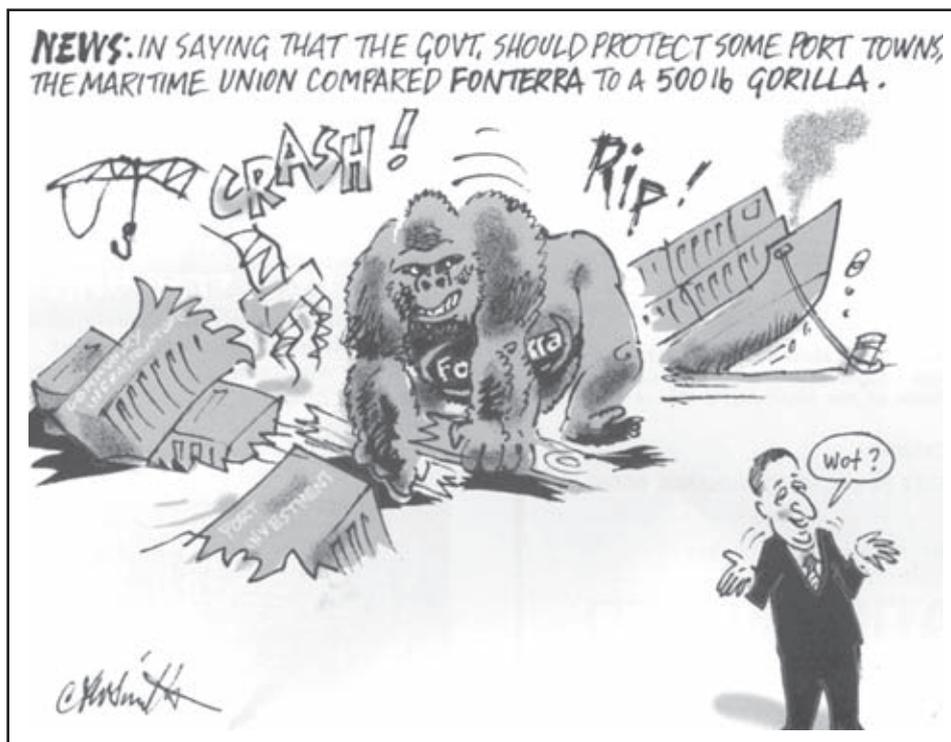
But was rail also being manipulated to the advantage of Fonterra, and the detriment of an integrated transport system?

After years of privatization and political mismanagement, there is no doubt that rail in New Zealand needed to be fixed. It needed to be brought into public ownership as a strategic asset and developed as part of an integrated transport system of road, rail and sea.

There have been no satisfactory answers – yet – to questions about how KiwiRail's \$90 million operational subsidy from the Government in its June budget could influence pricing.

But weeks after the KiwiRail/Fonterra deal was announced, Transport Minister Steven Joyce embarked on a very public hammering of KiwiRail, saying that subsidies would be withdrawn from the state owned enterprise which had to improve its performance. Curious timing in that the thinking of the Minister must have been clear to KiwiRail and Fonterra when their deal was announced mere weeks earlier. The Maritime Union has continued to demand that Fonterra show social responsibility to the communities from which it generates its wealth.

Cartoon courtesy of New Zealand Shipping Gazette



The Union was instrumental in organizing a public meeting in Timaru in September which brought together different sectors of the community and air concerns about the future of the port.

(We report on this meeting to the right) Yet underlying the examples of Timaru and Taranaki is the big question. Will New Zealand ports continue to be the victims of their own parochialism amidst the aggressive power plays of global shipping companies and corporates like Fonterra? All this will result in is a few winners and many losers, and the continuing destructive results of mindless competition – duplication of infrastructure, insecurity of income and jobs, heavy hits on local citizens who are shareholders through their Councils, and regional communities threatened with the loss of their export gateways.

The Maritime Union is arguing for a Kiwi-Port concept, where port development and operation is developed on a national basis with a level of public ownership and co-ordination so that an efficient and effective transport system is put in place.

Considerations of regional development and a fair and forward looking transport strategy that integrates road, rail and sea must be a central part of such a plan. Any rationalization of ports must be done in a way that protects the interests of all New Zealanders – not just powerful, self-interested market players.

Port in stormy weather

Timaru defends its port – a public meeting backs the port and a Port Network established

Following the August 2009 announcement that Fonterra was cutting 80% of its exports through Port of Timaru in favour of long distance rail to Lyttelton, the future of South Canterbury's port was looking grim. The one decision would cut export container moves from 61,000 to 37,000 a year. This has already led to redundancies and moves to casualize the port workforce.

The Maritime Union of New Zealand organized a public meeting at short notice in Timaru on 17 September. Around 100 local people attended, including port workers, farmers, businesspeople, retired workers and other concerned members of the public. The Timaru District Mayor Janie Annear attended, along with several district councillors. The Chamber of Commerce and Aoraki Development Council were represented, along with PrimePort CEO Jeremy Boys. Speakers included representatives of the Maritime Union, the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, and Labour Party transport spokesperson Darren Hughes MP. Apologies were received from Timaru MP Jo Goodhew and Transport Minister Steven Joyce.

A member of the local Maritime Union branch Peter Dixon moved the following motion from the floor (seconded Laurie Barnes):

'That this meeting request that Fonterra, national and local Government enter into a dialogue with the stakeholders of the Port of Timaru.

The issue of jobs and balanced regional development cannot be ignored.

We request a meeting between Fonterra, the Minister of Transport and local stakeholders be convened immediately.

We see a positive future for the Port of Timaru as part of a balanced transport system using coastal shipping, rail and road.'

Following the meeting, a "Timaru Port Network" was established.

The Maritime Union of New Zealand, South Canterbury Chamber of Commerce, Timaru District Council and Aoraki Development Trust met together as the Timaru Port Network in early October.

The intention of the group is to advocate for the Port of Timaru and its users, following concerns about the effect of the shock decision in August by Fonterra to stop exporting local products from the port in favour of long distance rail.

Trevor Hanson, of the Maritime Union, says the fact that such diverse groups are working together on the issue shows the strong support the port has in the region.

He says all the organizations involved have their individual concerns, but recognized the need for a united face and a co-ordinated approach.

The group is seeking a meeting with the Minister of Transport Steven Joyce to represent the interests of the Timaru region in retaining and developing its port.

They will seek to clarify the Government's view on KiwiRail and Fonterra's arrangements and how this was impacting on the Port of Timaru.

The Timaru Port Network also wants to continue talks with Fonterra and would be pushing for a "longer term" view of how Fonterra should be working together with regional communities on logistics and transport issues.

More information on the Timaru Port Network at www.portoftimaru.com



Around 100 local people attended a public meeting on the future of the Port of Timaru on Thursday 17 September 2009. (photo by Rachel Fahey)



Burmese crew assisted by ITF and Maritime Union

by Maritime Union National Vice President
Garry Parsloe and ITF New Zealand inspector
Grahame McLaren

The Liberian-flagged reefer vessel *Annapurna* arrived in Auckland on 3 August 2009 and was met by bailiffs, lawyers and the police.

It was seized in Auckland after creditors, the Japanese owned Aozora Bank, filed court action to recover a substantial debt from the owners of the ship, the bankrupt Eastwind Group.

Prior to its arrival in Auckland, the *Annapurna* was in Chile for a cargo of fruit but sailed empty for New Zealand on the creditors' orders,

It appears the purpose in coming to New Zealand was so it could be arrested in a country where the bank perceived all parties would be treated fairly under law. There was also an issue of a seafarer being lost overboard some 6400 miles from Auckland.

Once the ship was alongside in Auckland, Russell Mayn and Garry Parsloe visited

the vessel and talked to the crew. The crew were assured that the Maritime Union of New Zealand and the ITF were there to look after their welfare.

We left our phone numbers with the crew and told them to phone us if they needed anything.

The following morning Russell and Garry visited the ship and spoke with the crew again and met the agents for the Company. Some crew members had not been paid any wages for a year, and there were others that had not been paid in the last five months.

Garry raised the payment of wages with the agent stating that any unpaid wages must be paid to the crew before any creditor was paid, and checked to see that there was sufficient food on board.

The crew was very keen to get access to a phone as they had not been able to communicate with their families for many months. The agent agreed with the request and put telephones onboard for the crew to use.

What was good to see at this early stage was the interest that the media took regarding the plight of the seafarers.

I was approached by Radio News and managed to get our message across the radio at regular intervals.

The New Zealand Herald rang me and the next morning there was an article in their morning paper and one in the Dominion-Post.

It is amazing how quickly news travels as I was contacted from India only one day into the dispute, although it was late on that night, seeking an interview and of course the next morning the Mizzima News (a Burmese newssite based in India) came out with an article.

What was also very pleasing was that all the reports were in support of the stranded seafarers.

The following day 5 August when Garry visited the vessel, he was able to give the crew Moe Aung's phone number as he had contacted me the night before offering his support. Moe represented a Burmese

Support Group in Auckland. We also had Naing Koko who had left Burma to work in New Zealand with the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions to the vessel to meet with the crew and we spent a couple of hours addressing all their concerns. On 6 August Garry visited the vessel and met with Geoff Fraser and Rob Carpenter who were Shipbrokers, Valuers and Surveyors. The agents ISS McKay Limited and the full ship's crew were also in attendance.

We spent some time going through the issues and discussed how best to represent the crew in regard to their outstanding wages.

New Zealand ITF co-ordinator Grahame McLaren arrived in Auckland, and accompanied by Auckland members Greg Carn-cross and Paul Fry, lawyer Pauline Barratt, the agents and an interpreter, met with the crew to discuss outstanding wages and repatriation.

They were reassured there was every likelihood they would get what they were owed and then be repatriated, but also pointed out that it may take some time as the ship would most likely need to be sold before they could be paid.

It was agreed that each crew member would get \$200 for incidental costs after some negotiation.

The Annapurna had no ITF approved agreement in place and the Burmese crew were on pay rates below ITF minimums. The way they were being paid was that apart from allotments some of them had sent home, they were only to be given the balance of their wages at termination of their contracts.

So they have had no cash at all for many months.

The allotments going home to the families have obviously also stopped (since April), leaving the families destitute, and one crew member's father actually died as a result of not being able to pay for medication.

The total crew's claims were quantified to the end of August at US\$311,000.

There would be more to add to that as the crew were all on nine month minimum contracts and the ITF would try to have them paid for the full term.

The sale price ultimately achieved for the vessel should not impact on the crew, as their claims take priority over the mortgage and it is unlikely that the sale price will be insufficient.

On 31 August, the creditor Aozora Bank agreed to pay the wages arrears for the full 9 months and the repatriation expenses of the crew before the ship has even been sold.

The majority of the crew flew home on 4 September, and the creditors wanted a skeleton crew to remain on board pending the new owner's crew taking over.

This could take some time but there are a

number of the crew who are willing to stay on, if an appropriate new agreement can be reached.

Any new agreement must be at ITF rates and after a bit of a battle this was agreed to by the bank.

ITF rates came into effect for the remaining crew on board on 4 September.

We have also been able to have 4 of the remaining crew paid at higher rates, for example the 2 cadets who were on US \$160 total a month will now be paid at ITF TCC Ordinary Seaman's rates at a total of US \$1278 per month.

Our concern now is what could happen to them on their arrival home in Burma, as we've heard stories of persecution by the authorities against Burmese seafarers on their return home.

Grahame McLaren contacted the Seafarers' Union of Burma (which operates in exile in Thailand) and spoke to Aung Thu Ya about the possibility of problems for the Annapurna crew on arrival back in Burma.

Aung tells me that there could indeed be problems for them with arrest and/or confiscation of their money a possibility, and he suggested they go first to Thailand and from there make any decisions as to whether or not to return to Burma.

However the crew were desperate to get home and didn't perceive there will be any problems on their return, other than having to pay the mandatory government tax of 10% on all their earnings.

Aung Thu Ya of the SUB agreed to meet the men on their one night stopover in Bangkok to discuss their situation.

The New Zealand ITF office has also heard from Shwe Tun Aung, ITF Inspector in Houston, Texas, who has been dealing with another Burmese crewed Eastwind vessel.

Shwe says that the crew of that vessel have arrive safely in Burma with their wages intact.

This bodes well for our guys.

“Some crew members had not been paid any wages for a year, and there were others who had not been paid in the last five months”

ITF New Zealand Report

by **Grahame McLaren**
New Zealand ITF co-ordinator

Flag of Convenience Vessel faces international inspections

I received a request from Townsville ITF Inspector Graham Bragg to have a look at this flag of convenience vessel headed to New Zealand with no ITF approved agreement. I called Garry Parsloe who arranged for the ship to be visited in its first New Zealand port of Auckland. It was then visited in its subsequent ports of Nelson by Duncan Murray and Taffy Hicks, Lyttelton by Les Wells and Tauranga by Eddie Cook. In each case the Master and crew were friendly and polite but would not divulge any information regarding wages or conditions. It was noted by Duncan and Taffy in Nelson that the mess room and galley were very clean and tidy, that the ship appeared to be well provisioned and the rec room well appointed with all the mod cons.

I emailed the owners/operators and charterers asking for an ITF approved agreement to be put in place. The response from the crew managers was to inform that: "The Ratings are benefitting from wages which are based on Amosup ITF TCC rates, and the Officers are receiving salaries considerably higher than those. Our ships are all modern and very well maintained container vessels, with spacious and well appointed accommodations and recreation and mess rooms. As a consequence our seafarers are quite happy to return to our vessels after each contract, and the majority of them are with the company for many years, which you will agree is a clear indication that they must be quite content with the conditions they find on our ships."

I replied:

"While it is welcome news that you look after your Filipino ratings and pay them in accordance with the AMOSUP TCC wage scale, there is still concern on our part regarding the vessel's master being unwilling to provide any documentation to back up your statements. Surely if everything is as you say, there should be no problem instructing the master to release any relevant documentation to our New Zealand representatives of the ITF."

Their response to this last email was to inform me that they had appointed lawyer Ross Crotty from the Auckland law firm Lowndes Associates to act on their behalf in the matter. A couple of days later Mr Crotty contacted me by phone to inform me that he had some paper work from the manning agents to forward to me. These turned out to be a crew list and wage scale for the vessel.

Through these visits we certainly made our presence felt and conveyed to them in no uncertain terms that if they want to avoid

continued attention in New Zealand and Australia they must put an ITF approved agreement in place.

All through this process Graham Bragg was also corresponding with the owners, managers and charterers trying to persuade them to install an ITF approved CBA. Tokyo based Japanese ITF Co-ordinator Shoji Yamashita was also applying pressure to the Japanese charterers. The vessel has now departed New Zealand bound for Tokyo where Shoji Yamashita will continue the struggle.

Injured Bangladeshi seafarer receives assistance from ITF

On 22 April 2009 at the port of Tauranga, a Bangladeshi fitter Mr Mohammed Sarkar, was badly injured on board the Panamanian registered flag of convenience bulk carrier Primrose.

He was flown urgently by rescue helicopter to Waikato Hospital where he underwent surgery on his legs.

Mr Sarkar was later moved to a rest home in Hamilton for recovery prior to a second round of surgery, after which it was intended that he be repatriated to Bangladesh for further treatment. He is not expected to be fit to return to work for at least 12 months. It transpired that Mr Sarkar had effectively just been dumped in hospital and abandoned. He found himself alone and a long way from home, he had not received any wages since the accident and had been left to foot the bill for all the hospital, helicopter and rest home costs which he had absolutely no way of paying.

This amounted to tens of thousands of dollars, with one bill alone being NZ\$64,000.

I contacted the vessel's New Zealand agents who informed me that as the vessel was only here on a one off visit they were no longer the agents for the vessel. They went on to advise me that the local P&I Club agents were now looking after Mr Sarkar.

I called the P&I agents and asked about Mr Sarkar's wages. They replied that they knew nothing about his wages. I then asked that they assure me he would not have to pay for the helicopter, hospital and rest home, they said they could not assure me of that either.

The good news is that the vessel was covered by an ITF agreement. Under this agreement all costs relating to his injury must be borne by the company and his wages must also continue to be paid.

After much negotiation with the Japanese owners and managers, and the Bangladeshi manning agents, I finally received assurance that all Mr Sarkar's expenses including backpay and future wages would be met by the company.

Mr Sarkar was subsequently contacted by the company who confirmed the situation and has since been repatriated. He was very grateful when I last spoke to him on the day he left New Zealand.

I have since heard from Mr Sarkar who has repeated his thanks for the assistance of the ITF.

Tuvaluan seafarer's tragic situation

I received a call from Rev. Chris Barns, the new chaplain at the seafarers' centre in Auckland regarding Mr Leiki Tauaa. Mr Tauaa was a Tuvaluan seafarer who was Chief Steward on the Liberian flagged tanker Bow Baleria.

The vessel has an ITF Agreement with the German union Ver-di.

Whilst on board Mr Tauaa suffered a major stroke that has left him unable to walk or talk. He will never work again and now requires full time support. His stroke occurred while the ship was trading in Europe (it does not come down this way) and he was initially hospitalised in the Netherlands but has since been flown to Auckland where he is currently hospitalised. Mr Tauaa and his wife are in a tragic situation. They are in New Zealand on visitors visas that will expire on 16 September, and while they have family and medical support here in New Zealand they have none at home. They face a grim future on their return to Tuvalu, with little or no chance of any kind of aid. Looking after her husband Mrs Tauaa will have to devote herself to full time care, all this with no income.

They have applied to stay in New Zealand but have been unsuccessful in their bid so far.

I was asked to look into his contract and see whether he was entitled to any disability compensation under the ITF agreement. While there is provision for lump sum disability payments, these only relate to injuries and do not apply in this case.

I contacted the ITF agreements section who suggested that it may be possible for the ITF Seafarers' Trust to help. I contacted the Trust who told me that if there were absolutely no other avenues open to Mr Tauaa then it was possible that the Trust may be able to help. This help would need to be instigated via a request to the Trust from the Tuvaluan Overseas Seafarers' Union on Mr Tauaa's behalf for an ex-gratia payment.

I contacted TOSU who were already aware of Mr Tauaa's plight and more than happy to lodge a formal request with the Trust on his behalf.

The Trust has replied that it may be willing to grant Mr Tauaa an ex-gratia payment of around US\$3000 if the company will match the amount.

I have provided TOSU with the company's contact details in Germany and they are to contact them with a request to match the payment.

I will provide a follow up request from the NZ Inspectorate if needed.

Strong Unions, Sustainable Transport: Organising Globally in the Economic Crisis

by Joe Fleetwood

Wellington Seafarers' Secretary

I was one of six New Zealand delegates that attended the International Transport Workers Federation (ITF) regional conference for the Asia Pacific region in Kuala Lumpur from 14 – 20 June 2009.

All unions in the transport sectors throughout the Asia Pacific region were represented by delegates.

The conference theme was "Strong Unions, Sustainable Transport: Organising Globally in the Economic Crisis." The New Zealand delegation comprised Karl Andersen (National Distribution Union), Mark Davis (Merchant Service Guild), Aubrey Wilkinson and Wayne Butson (Rail and Maritime Transport Union), Russell Mayn and Joe Fleetwood (Maritime Union of New Zealand).

The first two days were dedicated to addressing Decent Work, Decent Life for Women, and the Asia Pacific Young Transport workers.

I only managed to sit in on the last few hours of the first day due to travel, but what I saw and heard was positive and constructive. It sets a very strong and solid platform for our women and youth in the trade union movement which in return strengthens the whole trade union movement of the world.

One thing we must never forget is women's issues are union issues, Strong unions need women and youth to survive the continual anti-union attacks from the big multi national corporations using the "recession" word to drive down wages and conditions.

16 – 17 June

Speakers at the official opening ceremony were ITF Chair of the Asia Pacific Region Zainal Rampak, retiring ITF Asia Pacific Region Secretary Shigi Wada, ITF Vice President Paddy Crumlin, General Secretary International Trade Union Confederation (Asia Pacific), International Labour Organization workers' education specialist Christine Nathan, Global Union Federations' co-ordinator Katsuhiko Sato and ITF General Secretary David Cockroft.

Guest of honour was the Honourable Datuk Dr S. Subramaniam.

All spoke positively about the trade unions of the world, the need to include our

women and youth members to support and organize together, and strong human rights, in the light of the "recession" created by right wing Government policies and unregulated capitalism.

Conference was opened and we all stood for two minutes silence as a mark of respect for our fallen comrades.

The South Pacific islands were invited to lunch which was hosted by the MUA. We then met after lunch to discuss a mapping and organizing project of the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and Australian Unions including the Trans Tasman and Hydro Carbon Alliances which was chaired by MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin. Next open session we discussed the Secretariat report on the 2005 – 2008 Asia Pacific activities and there were many speakers from the region.

Country reports covering all modes of transport air, sea, road and rail were read and endorsed.

Speakers included Burma, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Kiribati, Fiji, Australia, Philippines, New Zealand, Mongolia, Japan, Tuvalu, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Uzbekistan, Singapore, Korea, India, and East Timor.

The most common theme we all have was the class struggle, different places, languages, but we are all fighting to protect our members' wages, conditions, and human rights.

The afternoon of 17 June the Asia Pacific Offshore Regional Task Force Group (APROTFG) of which MUNZ is a member met to discuss issues including the ILO Tripartite meeting on promoting social dialogue within oil and gas exploration, production and distribution, Mexico Pemex legal action, the ITF campaign in Gulf of Mexico, North Sea ITF/ICEM delegate in London, the Timor Leste conference Feb 2009, future activity in Papua New Guinea and new membership in APROTFG.

Mick Doleman of the MUA is the chair of the Asia Pacific offshore task force group (APROTFG) and after much discussion and debate it was agreed that the next meeting of the group should coincide with our Timor Leste project in August 2009.

Mark Davis gladly jumped at the chance to take the minutes and agreed to distribute them.

18 June

This was another full day with a lot of debate. Many of these issues are products of capitalism, the hunger for global domination of the economic system by corporate interests, leading to a climate of individual greed rather than social responsibility.

Topics included HIV/Aids in the world and work place, women's issues, education activities, Organising Globally progress report on the economic crisis, planning for upcoming congresses, and global warming and climate change.

On top of the above there were some 13 resolutions fully endorsed by conference. Let's hope they are all followed up and words are put into action.

19 – 20 June

The ITF Asia Pacific Flag of Convenience Port of Convenience report was opened by ITF Vice President Paddy Crumlin.

Paddy spoke on the need to put protections in place to protect world dockers so we don't fail as we failed to protect our brothers, the Liverpool Dockers.

There is a need to organize non-union ports like Hong Kong, also the global network terminals (GNT) as they play a major part in the world port sector.

Other speakers were Graham Young of the ITF who gave an indepth over view of the Flags of Convenience campaign and Sharon James of the ITF who gave an overview of the Ports of Convenience campaign. Trevor Charles spoke on special activities, Finlay Macintosh on Flag of Convenience training activities for 2009 in South Asia and others.

It was good to hear the week of action was successful with many agreements expired and new ones re-signed up all from organised direct action amongst our ITF family of affiliates.

International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Conference Seattle, USA, 8-12 June 2009

by Ray Fife

Maritime Union of New Zealand Assistant General Secretary Russell Mayn and I attended the ILWU, ÅS 34th Convention in Seattle, USA.

320 delegates from throughout the west coast of USA and Canada plus 30 overseas guests gathered at the convention to map out and shape the next three years of policy for ILWU represented workers and pensioners. Delegates made the economy and health care their priorities.

Washington State Governor Christine Gregoire opened the conference and congratulated the ILWU on its 75th anniversary, noting that it has a rich history of fighting for workers' rights, to be treated fairly and paid fairly and went on to address the union's past and present roles.

Gov. Gregoire went on to talk about the need to undo the damage of the last eight years under the Bush administration. ILWU President Bob McEllrath then spoke, welcoming the delegates and guests from around the world.

He spoke on how it was almost 75 years ago on 9 June 1934 that the rank and file longshore workers united in a joint strike committee behind Harry Bridges.

The rank and file settled the contract insisting on a hiring hall and a coast wide agreement. They laid the ground work for one of the most militant rank and file democracies to be found in any union.

Bob McEllrath acknowledged the many members who stood up, gave time and money and pounded the pavement in ensuring that Barack Obama won the election, he said that the ILWU have had an impact far beyond its members.

Bob went on to say that if anyone doubts that the ILWU is a union that gives voice to the rank and file, all they have to do is attend an International Convention. He said 'This is your convention; this is the rank and files convention.'

Speaker Richard Hughes, President of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), which covers the entire east coast of the USA and Canada, said that he believed that under Obama and the Democratic Congress it would be easier to turn the country around. He then went on to say that on the east coast as on the west the employers are trying to break jobs out of the longshore unions' jurisdiction. New technology would increase productivity but takes away jobs.

ILA Local 1422 President Ken Riley said that management is using the economic crisis to get concessions that will long outlive the recession.

Other unions are moving in on ILA work on the East Coast and the Gulf Coast. Three other unions are working in longshore's traditional jurisdiction. In conclusion he noted that the ILA and ILWU have resources, technology and global connections and must use all of them to ensure those coming behind us inherit no less of a future than we had.

General Secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia Paddy Crumlin spoke on the global financial crisis, and the effects it is hav-



Maritime Union of New Zealand Assistant General Secretary Russell Mayn addresses the 34th ILWU Convention, Seattle, USA.

ing on the working class and their families. He then said that as a labour movement we must organise the generation of workers that have never had the opportunity to join a union.

Paddy acknowledged the great vision of the ILWU to extend the ownership of the union into areas where it was hard to organise, to continue to secure the rights of hotel workers and warehouse industries wherever they are.

He said we have a responsibility with our resources to make sure that we are able to embrace those workers in other industries. We are co-operative with each other and not against each other. Put politics and personalities aside and rebuild a world around the real labour values that we stand for.

Martina Davis Correia spoke on behalf of her brother Troy Anthony Davis. Martina said that the state of Georgia is set to execute Troy for killing a police officer, although there is no DNA, there is no physical evidence, no fingerprints and no motive. Davis was convicted on the testimony of nine eyewitnesses, seven of whom have since recanted.

Correia has travelled the world speaking out for her brother. In Savannah, Georgia, where she lives, black and white are still very separate and black people fear losing their jobs or their Social Security if they speak out for her brother.

She said she was happy to come here and see blacks, whites, Asians and Latinos all sitting together and fighting for human rights.

Assistant General Secretary of the Maritime Union Russell Mayn thanked the ILWU for the invitation to their convention stating that international solidarity means a lot to MUNZ.

Russell reported on the Port of Napier dispute outlining how the Port Company tried to replace union labour at the port with scabs, and how the union managed to keep every ship out of the port through the dispute because of the union's solidarity and finally winning.

Russell stated this was a great victory and it means a lot to a small union and we could not have done this without the international support of other unions including the MUA and ITF.

The All-Japan Dockworkers' Union President acknowledged the 50-year relationship between their union and ILWU and looking at the changes that have happened in that half-century.

Cargo has been containerised, ports privatized, work computerized and casualized. He said that unions need to work together to fight the corporations that seek to control global logistics.

Speaker Debbie Fontaine, a member of the Rite Aid bargaining committee, gave a powerful presentation on their struggle to join ILWU Warehouse Local 26 in March 2008.

Debbie spoke on how she spent a year out of work after being fired for supporting the union. She and her brothers and sisters wanted a union so badly they were willing to risk their jobs. The 600 Rite Aid workers have been without a contract since voting to join the ILWU, the workers were bullied and intimidated by a union busting consultant hired by the company and stalling negotiations with the company's anti-union campaign.

The convention was very worth while attending, it brings unionists from throughout the world together to hear how they are surviving through these hard economic times, to listen to the issues the union movement is facing and to work together on a global basis to organise and fight for jobs.

MUA Darwin Conference

by Joe Fleetwood
Wellington Seafarers' Secretary

Day One: 1 July 2009

The Maritime Union of New Zealand was invited by the Maritime Union of Australia to attend their inaugural Northern Territory conference, "Organising for Darwin's Future."

An indigenous elder from the Larrikr people Robert Mills, the traditional owners of the land, welcomed about 70 delegates, rank and file and officials to the Northern Territory, then blessed and opened the conference.

MUA Darwin Branch Secretary Andy Burford and Northern Territory Organiser Glen Williams both welcomed all on behalf of the MUA for attending from New Zealand and East Timor and around Australia, making reference to the great mile stone in Darwin's maritime history this conference is, but never forgetting Northern Territory day.

MUA National Secretary Paddy Crumlin addressed the conference by video link as he was out of the country on international commitments. As always Paddy's address was welcoming and from the heart.

We then watched a video overview of upcoming projects, and the many exciting organising tasks ahead for the branch. MUA Assistant National Secretary Rick Newlyn run through some of the current work and the big projects likely to go ahead in the near future, including LNG installations, FPSO's and the massive port infrastructure that is required.

He then welcomed guest speaker the Federal Member for Solomon Damian Hale. Damian opened with a chronology of the MUA and he finished off with an in-depth report on the Rudd Government and their shipping review and policies.

MUA Assistant National Secretary Mick Doleman give us a perspective on growth and organising in the territory. He stated our union is a political animal, and members must be political, not in the sense of party politics but understanding our politics which are working towards a progressive society.

He then summed up by stating that we should always take our youth members and women members along with us and above all never forget the importance of our veterans.

We then watched a DVD from Timor Leste on all the work the APOTFG has been doing in East Timor.

I was asked to address conference on the MUNZ connection with Timor along with Rigoberto Monteiro and Paulino De Costa from Timor and Trevor Gould from the Electrical Trades Union, along with the APOTFG chair Mick Doleman.

MUA women's officers Mich-Elle Myers and Raelene Jefferson took us through the training and young workers projects within the union, currently 4000 members are under 35 years of age.

Mich has been doing a lot of good work with the ITF on Women's issues and the youth in the Maritime Industry. The theme is 'Know the Past, Own the Future'.

We were given an update on health and safety in the workplace from Brett Hanon of the ETU.

The branch elected a new branch committee that will provide the right direction in building capacity from within. There were five recommendations put and discussed by conference, and this took us to the end of the day.

Day Two: 2 July 2009

Day two started with Raelene and Mich-Elle taking us through the new MUA web

site and how to sign up for news. Then Mich, Glen and Stephen Richardson (AKA Ape) gave us an in depth review of the MUA delegation that attended Cuba followed by a DVD on free the Cuban Five which saw all present sign and send post cards to President Barack Obama calling for the freedom of the Cuban Five.

We were then shown a presentation on the Future of the Port of Darwin followed by a healthy debate.

National Secretary of the AWU (Australian Workers' Union) Paul Howes addressed conference via video recording and stressed the importance to be able to work together in the MUA-AWU offshore alliance.

I was asked to brief the conference on the Trans Tasman Oil and Gas Alliance between the EPMU and MUNZ (New Zealand) and the MUA and AWU (Australia) along with Mick Doleman (MUA) and Rod Curry (AWU) which led into a good discussion on the hydrocarbon industry.

We were then given a good report by Australian ITF Coordinator Dean Summers on all current campaigns.

One thing that stuck in my mind was how he made reference to "floating dockers" – they sail on board flag of convenience ships as extras, unleash the cargo before they tie up, lash the cargo in port and also drive and work all the gear. This is a direct global attack on dockers' jobs and we all need to be very vigilant on this.

The session was followed by a good question and answer session, then all recommendations from the previous day were put to conference and endorsed.

Mick Doleman and Rick Newlyn summed up then handed over to branch officials Glen Williams and Andy Burford to close the conference and thank all for attending. I thanked the MUA on behalf of the Maritime Union of New Zealand for our invitation and know the Northern Territory Branch is looking good for the future. All the best comrades.





Supporting the Telecom Lines Engineers in their industrial dispute in Auckland, September 2009, from left, Green Party MP Keith Locke, Auckland seafarer Peter Davis, Maritime Union national vice president Garry Parsloe, and Auckland seafarers branch members Tava Vete and Paeroa Johnson



At the EPMU picket of the Telecom AGM at Ellerslie Racecourse, Auckland, 1 October 2009, supporting Telecom lines engineers, are from left Auckland seafarers Peter Davis, Lucky Peaufa, Paeroa Johnson, Kevin Dixon, Roddie Macdonald, Maritime Union national vice president Garry Parsloe, Auckland seafarers Kevin Todd, Greg Carncross, Vince McClafferty, Maritime Union assistant general secretary Russell Mayn and Auckland seafarer Sean Kelleher (photo by Simon Oosterman)

Auckland Waterfront Local 13

by Russell Mayn

Have the financial magicians pulled a rabbit out of the hat or is the current recovery in the financial and stock markets just one of the best illusions ever performed?

Everyone is sitting with their fingers crossed hoping that the worst is over and we can get back to normal. But for those that have lost their jobs the future certainly does not look that rosy.

The good news is that some of the losses experienced last year in the Superannuation Funds have been recouped and everyone is focused on making sure that they achieve the best results in a difficult market.

Lockouts and industrial turmoil are no stranger to our Union, yet it has been a long time since I have seen so many other Unions embroiled in disputes and being locked out by their employers.

Let's start with the Telecom/EPMU dispute, add in the Dairy Workers' Union being locked out at Open Country Cheese, the bus dispute in Auckland, CANZ in dispute with double bunking in prisons and privatization issues, public service workers being offered nil wage increases, education Unions being offered the same nil wage increases, lockouts at an NDU Auckland concrete site and last but not least the Maritime Union fighting to support regional ports Taranaki/Timaru and the latest announcement of redundancies at Port Chalmers. These are just a few of the current disputes taking place around the country.

Call me a cynic but I smell a 'big blue rat' here. On the surface there is no doubt the plan is to tie up every Union's resources in the country so that concerted action cannot be planned and taken. You know what they say about the best made plans of mice and men or is it in this case rats and men. They are doomed to the annals of history as failures.

The reality is that Unions will, through solidarity actions and organising, take on each one of these employers and fight until each dispute is resolved. The resolve of the workers targeted in these disputes has been unmoving, they know that asking for a fair go or merely a Collective Employment Agreement is in no way outrageous. Out of the current campaigns Unions will forge alliances as they work for the benefit of the Union movement as a whole while assisting their individual members. This will create bonds and strengthen existing relationships, so the message is that there is a real benefit to the labour movement and as each success is celebrated we will go from strength to strength.

Companies who choose to use the current financial crisis as a lever to drive condi-

tions back to where they were two years ago and standover their employees will not be forgotten nor will their actions be excused. Opportunism in times of recession is unforgivable.

This is not the time for the economy to stall through nil wage increases. If it is good enough to stimulate the financial sector through rescue packages, then why not stimulate the wage packets of the average family who regularly spend their earnings on food and other essentials.

The Government has to lead by example and agree wage increases to education workers, hospital workers and other public service employees, not freeze wages. What was the point of tax breaks and all the pre election hype if the future is to reduce services, freeze wages and neutralise any growth within the country.

A good example of what I am referring to is the hospital workers who along with their Union, the Service and Food Workers Union battled to get their hourly rates within the hospital system increased to \$14.50 per hour. It must be noted that the Labour government played a significant role in this by providing extra funding to the DHB's so the increase could be agreed. Currently these workers have been told by the National Government that what is on offer is a nil wage increase. This means that the increase that the workers received last time around will be negated and they will be back to where they started from. The suspicions that the average worker has whenever he/she hears that there are no increases across the Company are well founded. End of year results often include increases in directors' fees and increases in the number of employees earning over \$100,000. I still struggle with the gap between CEO remuneration packages and the package that a worker receives. Our Union's call for an integrated transport plan becomes more important especially when the latest announcements are considered. Regulation changes to allow larger trucks on our roads looks inevitable, and the Fonterra announcement to move cargo from Regional Ports to Rail has destabilised the Ports of Taranaki and Timaru.

The effects of the Fonterra decision doesn't just stop at the Regional Ports, we see that other Ports will be affected such as Port Chalmers and I am sure that New Zealand coastal shipping operators are also in the mix.

The "Seachange" strategy has gone and along with it the prospect of a long term sustainable solution to the logistics chain. The public meeting held in Timaru to address the impact on a community that a loss of 30,000 containers brings to a port, was I understand well attended and a

success with speakers from all sides of the debate taking an active part in the future of the port.

The logistics chain needs to be balanced and sustainable, it will have to take into account the long term effect on the environment. Future debate on issues like "Carbon Footprints" are important and any long term plan for New Zealand will have to include road transport, rail and sea if it is to last the test of time.

I may be wrong but at the moment I see no signs of a plan that encompasses all forms of transport. On the surface it looks that one mode of cargo handling is being played off against the other. This is neither constructive nor sustainable long-term.

In order for companies whether they be Port Companies, Rail operators or Shipping operators to plan for a semblance of predictability over the next five to ten years, it will be necessary that capital expenditure earmarked for infrastructure is not wasted or unnecessarily duplicated. Of equal importance is a plan that workers in our industry can see and buy into. At the moment every two odd year's contacts and cargo volumes are constantly moving from one port to another, coastal vessels have tonnage one minute and then it disappears. Workers are dropped at the stroke of a pen and casualisation is touted as the only way the industry can stay competitive. This is all avoidable but then so was the financial crisis. To simply aspire to the theory that an unregulated, free market approach will eventually lead to stability is hogwash.

To stabilise the financial sector, stronger more robust regulations were reintroduced because the result of the hands off approach had led to the debacle of sub prime mortgages and mayhem in the markets. Perhaps all the ports should be able to form a cooperative for the benefit of their owners predominantly the communities across New Zealand and make decisions on which port should accept what type of cargo and the most beneficial way to utilise the skills and expertise as a large single operator.

A dividend could be paid to all the shareholders and profits could be maximised in order to return the best dividend to the owners, the public of New Zealand. This would allow councils etc to undertake the necessary maintenance and planning, sadly neglected in some cities due to financial constraints. This may stimulate the economy through extra employment, I don't think it will happen in my time as the idea of a logistics chain that benefits New Zealanders would attract a certain amount of criticism.

Open letter to the Maritime Union public meeting in Timaru, 19 September 2009

The ramifications for the local community in Timaru following the decision by Fonterra to transfer a substantial volume of containerised cargo previously handled by the Port of Timaru to rail and other port destinations is of grave concern to the Auckland Seafarers' Branch and Local 13 of the Maritime Union of New Zealand. The future of all regional ports in New Zealand is now questionable as there seems to be no consistent transport policy or any intention to establish an integrated transport plan that would allow ports and transport providers any certainty in the future.

Rail freight, Sea freight and Ports will play an integral part in the future of the New Zealand logistic chain and in the future for New Zealand exports as the pressure to address climate change issues confronts all countries.

Regional ports do not only provide a gateway for cargo to enter and exit the country but they generate wealth through employment and returns to local councils by way of dividends.

In order to do this Regional Ports invest in their facilities and in their local communities. For large companies such as Fonterra to make decisions that have the ability to destabilise ports we believe is not in the best interests of New Zealand or the people who live and work in the surrounding areas.

The timing of Fonterra's announcement could not have been worse. Families throughout New Zealand are struggling as the impact from the "Global Financial Crisis" hits home. Large corporations are charged with having a corporate and social responsibility. These responsibili-

ties should not be forgotten in the search for profits, just as financial packages have been used to support troubled financial institutions, consultation and long term commitments should be made to ports and their communities.

The losses to a community are substantial when you consider the businesses that a port supports directly and indirectly. Engineering, transport, retailers and suppliers will all suffer from the Fonterra decision along with workers and their families who are directly employed in the industry.

We would challenge Fonterra to reconsider their decision in light of the points that we have raised and further challenge the National Government to provide leadership and governance in establishing an integrated transport chain that invests in Rail and Coastal Shipping.

Fundamental to a long term sustainable logistic chain is the premise that neither Rail nor Sea should be disadvantaged by each other as they both complement a climate friendly transport strategy that has the ability to take New Zealand into the future.

Ports, trains and ships should not be played off against each other by corporates and neither should local communities suffer for no logical reason.

Signed on behalf of the Auckland Seafarers' Branch and Dockers Local:

Denis Carlisle, President, Local 13, Maritime Union of New Zealand

Garry Parsloe, Secretary/Treasurer, Auckland Seafarers Branch, Maritime Union of New Zealand

Russell Mayn, Secretary/Treasurer, Local 13, Maritime Union of New Zealand

Tauranga Mount Maunganui

by **Eddie Cook**

We have been really busy here at the port with negotiations, meetings and mediations.

We have just about finished our new collective at Comvita which has been quite a battle but looks to be a good result for our members.

We have nearly finalised a deal for our captain on the Lakeland Queen at Rotorua and also a discount for our members with the good weather coming up.

NZL is still continuing their fight with the Port of Tauranga and seem to be making some progress there and a few other contracts are still to be finalised but will help our members retain some of their jobs with the end of the Kiwifruit season being in November.

A lot of talks with C3 about manning levels on the coal ships and new uniforms with their negotiations coming up in March so we will need a few more delegates for our battle there.

Negotiations at Ballance have nearly concluded with management screaming poverty like everyone else and not willing to come to the party although some sort of deal has been struck and will monitor their progress throughout the next few months. We will be having our AGM in late November and look forward to a good turnout but more on that later on. We have been doing a few ITF inspections recently as a lot of problems from the crews about wages not being paid on time and money not going into accounts at home which is causing problems for their wives and family.

There still seems to be a fair bit of work around the Port which is good for our members and there are a lot of good things to come for the branch in the near future.

I am just in the process of putting together some deals for our members so that they can benefit from being a member as everyone seems to just take all the time and not give anything back so until the next newsletter stick together as one and we will all win.



At the 20th anniversary Retired Members' Function for Tauranga Mount Maunganui Branch, Friday 9 October, from left, former branch officials and long serving members of the Tauranga Mount Maunganui Branch of the Waterfront Workers Union, Gary Jones, Jim Kirkland, Frank Hawkins, John Winter and Jim Gibson.



Kingi Ranui (left) and Gordon (Goro) Ranui at the 20th anniversary Retired Members' Function for Tauranga Mount Maunganui Branch, Friday 9 October.

At age 74, Goro is probably the longest serving watersider in New Zealand. He retires from C3 on 31 December of 2009 after 57 years on the waterfront, having joined the waterfront in December 1951.

His brother Kingi, aged 75, worked on the waterfront from 1956 through to 1998, and their three brothers Henry, John and Maurice were also watersiders.

Between them Goro and Kingi have clocked up 99 years of waterfront work.

Wellington Seafarers

by Joe Fleetwood

Political front

Comrades, now is the time to stand up and be counted, there are so many campaigns out there that need all our support.

Telecom workers, dairy workers, food and beverage workers and our waterfront workers, all being attacked by the multinational employers that think the only way to crawl out of the recession that they created is by making the workers pay. The despicable actions of Fonterra in displacing cargoes from New Plymouth, Timaru, and Port Chalmers shows they have no social responsibility to the worker, the communities and the local economies. The massive Government subsidies they receive to rail their freight through the country rather than the most eco friendly way by sea has yet again contributed to the demise of coastal shipping.

Public Meeting

I was one of three speakers at an open forum on 9 August organized by Alliance Party and RAM in support of the UNITE Union campaign to raise the minimum wage.

The UNITE petition seeks to raise the minimum wage from \$12.50 to \$15 dollars per hour then over a period of time base the minimum wage on 80% of the average wage.

This was a good meeting as there were many like minded people that attended from all ages.

We all had ten minutes each to speak then there were questions from the floor.

I mentioned what the Maritime Union was doing to help UNITE in their campaign such as petitions and flyers inside our national journal, letters of support sent to Government etc.

This is a very important campaign that should be fought and supported by the working class as there are so many in New Zealand on or just above the minimum wage.

Higgins

We should have the Higgins Tow services collective concluded by the end of this month.

KiwiRail

The company has sought legal advice on how to get around certain terms and conditions of the signed collective agreement for the live on board crew on the Arahura. The Kaitaki is currently in Brisbane dry dock while I write and should be back in the country and in service by the second week of September.



Maritime Union Wellington Seafarers' Secretary Joe Fleetwood at the EPMU Telecom lines engineers rally in Wellington, 24 August 2009 (photo by Luke Appleby)

Strait Terminals and Ships

The terminal seems to be plugging on with little or no problems due to the new delegates doing their job and looking after their collective agreement, all good stuff. The shipping negotiating team took the new collective to ratification with a 99% vote in favour to accept due to the financial economic recession the world is in. The new collective provided for gains and no losses compared to the expired collective.

Many thanks to the negotiating team - Wayne Davies from MV Santa Regina, Andrew McMillan from MV Kent and Darrell Robb on MV Monte Stello - the delegate system is live and running.

The Kent will be going to a one crew system in the middle of September, the Union negotiated no redundancies with the employer during the collective agreement talks, and all outstanding crew will be utilized throughout the fleet.

NIWA

The NIWA collective has been signed, back pay has been paid, and also the company is looking at having DP installed so they can pick up work in the offshore which is covered in the collective.

CentrePort

A joint meeting was held by MUNZ, EPMU and the RMTU in the Port of Wellington to discuss the troubled times CentrePort are in.

The company have asked the workers for suggestions on how to reduce their terms and conditions to save the company and their jobs which went down like a cold cup of sick.

Stopwork Meeting

Straight after MUNZ held our Stopwork meeting to discuss outstanding issues for the Union and also the remits for the up and coming triennial Conference which were read, put, then endorsed.

The national elections were discussed and after a good debate it was moved and seconded then carried unanimously that the Wellington Waterfront Branch endorse the nomination of Joe Fleetwood to stand for the General Secretary position.

Offshore and Ship inspections

The offshore in NZ is still quiet but as usual it will probably go off like a fire cracker and the branch again will be like a mad house.

We have a new company Teekay Shipping that has just picked up a long term contract in New Plymouth. The company flew me to Singapore to inspect the vessel which is in not to bad shape.

Offshore Alliance meeting

Members of the Offshore Alliance, MUNZ, EPMU, Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) and Australian Workers Union (AWU) met on 1 – 2 September in Wellington to discuss upcoming work projects intended for New Zealand over the next year.

We have the rig Kan Tan 4 due out late November/early December 2009 accompanied with 2 AHTS vessels, the vessels look likely to have full MUNZ crew on board them while the rig will have a 50/50 complement.

The offshore alliance is very important to us all as we are the main players in the Pacific Rim basin, it is important to keep a very high skill level, health and safety regulations and wages in our industry as to make sure of the spiral up not down. Thanks to Branch Vice President Glenn Wyllie for attending.

Joint meeting LiquiGas

A joint contingent of Trevor Hanson and Joe Fleetwood (MUNZ), Helen McAra (Merchant Service Guild) and CTU President Helen Kelly met with LiquiGas lawyers to discuss the exploitation of Section 198 of the Maritime Transport Act by certain companies.

This was brought to our attention when we received an email from the Ministry of Transport informing us that several companies have requested permits for about nine ships to trade and carry New Zealand domestic LPG cargo on the coast and asked if we had any concerns with this happening.

I emailed all other Unions informing them to do nothing is not an option. It was unanimous that we meet with LiquiGas lawyers first, then set up a meeting and put forward our claim to the Ministry and Employers.

The amount of vessels to be used justifies at least 1 fully manned ship with a dedicated NZ crew, and a meeting with the employers was held on 16 September. This meeting went as well as could be expected,

the company not saying yes to a full NZ manned crew but not saying no either. We are in the process of meeting with the other players in the industry.

National Elections Wellington Endorsement

I would like to officially thank the Wellington branches for nominating me to stand for the General Secretary position, also the vote of support from Nelson if I stand in the up and coming National Elections for MUNZ. I feel very proud to know that so many good working class people have confidence in me. If elected I will represent the Union to the best of my ability. Fight from the front.

Trevor Hanson

We all know my good mate Trevor is retiring this November. I would like to take this time to thank him for the guidance and direction he has given me personally over the last 7 years of working with him, I can say one thing that Comrade Hanson never forgot what class he comes from and never will. Trevor is a true defender of the Working Class. On behalf of the Wellington branch we wish you the very best in your retirement Comrade, fifty years

dedication to the working class, great stuff, but remember comrade as our veterans say "retired from the job but not the class struggle"

Branch clothing

Members, a reminder that the branch has long sleeve shirts, polar fleece jackets and beanies, caps and t-shirts all available with your branch and union logos.

Delegates

The delegate system is our democratic way we conduct business on board our ships and in our mess rooms ashore on our wharves. Delegates are the unsung heroes of the trade union movement and must be supported at all times as they are the ones taking on the fight on board the ship and on the wharf for the members before it comes to the attention of your union official.

"United we fight, Divided you crawl!"



Kaitaki crew at Brisbane dry dock August 2009, Hemi Taute, Duncan Mckeown, Staggers, Tony Mowbray (photo submitted by Tony Mowbray)

Lyttelton

by Les Wells

We believe the biggest happening in port at the moment is the signing of the contract between Lyttelton Port Company and Fonterra.

This could bring in 30 000 boxes through the Port, but like always this is at the expense of other Ports around the country. If this was new tonnage then everybody would be happy.

C3

We have had management come to us looking for a variation to the agreement. C3 have gone to 160/4, this was not very palatable but the alternatives were not very good.

The only good thing about this is that there is a review clause that there being any recovery in business then that puts us back to the original agreement.

Pacifica

Pacifica Shipping have turned dog on us over the payments to the men that went on forced redundancies early this year. The Union has filed with the authorities on this and are waiting for a date to try and get some settlement for the men.

Trevor Hanson

As this magazine goes to print, we come to the end of an era on the waterfront

with the retirement of Trevor Hanson (Mr Doom and Gloom).

Trevor has given a lot to this Union as General Secretary over the last 19 years, I would like to say that in my time as National President I got a chance to see just what Trevor did. Very rarely was there any good stuff coming our way, it always seemed we were fighting from one crisis to another. The obvious example to me was the liquidation of New Zealand Stevedoring and how it was put together to stay one foot ahead of us at the time.

I mentioned "Doom and Gloom" early this was a nickname that Trevor acquired from his ability to pick the outcome of a lot of things that normally were proven right but we were on the losing end.

In his retirement Trevor should take up fortune telling.

The other incident was when I rang him up one Monday morning. We got talking about fishing and after we had solved all the waterfront problems he was telling me he went fishing at the weekend, put his rod in the sand and went for a walk down the beach, when he got back his rod was gone. He then told me that there were a lot of stingray around, you don't have to be a genius to work out where the rod ended up.

In all seriousness on behalf of Lyttelton branch we would like to thank Trevor for his help and dedication to the General Secretary's job.

We wish you all the very best for your retirement and anything you choose to do in the future. You will be missed.

Port Chalmers

by Phil Adams

As we climb out of winter and feel the sun on our backs, we see the recession is having an adverse effect on our members here.

Port Chalmers Cargo Services

Port Chalmers Cargo Services are just ticking along with logs, fertilizer and fish to keep them going, but they are under constant pressure to accept changes to current work practices.

They have been working 12 hour shifts on logs in the middle of winter which is hard enough on anyone.

Port of Otago

The Terminal has been through the ringer with firstly Pacifica pulling out, losing the North Asia trade, and then losing the transships when Fonterra moved from Timaru and New Plymouth to Lyttelton and Napier respectively.

The Tranship trade has meant a loss of 30,000 TEUs which is substantial. The Union is working with the Company to look at savings. We want to ensure savings are made across the board from the CEO down not just the cargo workers.

Our officials are extremely buoyed by the attitude and trust the members have put in them at this time. We as officials will make decisions that we believe are in the best interests of our members and hopefully those members will endorse it.

Our branch faces some serious challenges ahead and at the current stage we are involved in mediation with the Port Company over redundancies and related issues. The membership is resolute and united and if we stay this way we will get the best possible outcome in the circumstances.

Meetings

It was indeed heartening to see 120 members attend our August branch meeting. As I have said before, meetings are the cornerstone of our branch and it was great to see the interest shown by members. Debate was good and all who attended would have felt the sense of being part of the most influential union on the waterfront. Members are reminded that the Annual Meeting will be held in October so make sure you attend.



Lyttelton branch members who recently received the National Cargo Handlers certificate, from left George Findlay, Garry Horan, John Rush, and Kevin McCreanor

National Elections

The elections for the four national officials of the Maritime Union, held every three years, are currently on. There is some competition for some of the positions. Our branch has nominated Phil Adams again for National President and the editor of this magazine Victor Billot for Assistant General Secretary.

Remember to vote in the postal ballot, voting forms and details about the candidates will be sent to all members in the mail.

Baby

Congratulations to Rebecca and Andrew Corbett on the arrival of your baby boy. All three are doing well.

Triennial Conference

Our Triennial Conference for the Maritime Union will be held after Labour Weekend in the last week of October in Wellington. It is hoped that the branch will send some observers to this event. These meetings are vital for new executive members to get a feel for the national side of our Union. There will be a representative of the Japanese Dockworkers at our Conference, who will be a guest of our branch after the conclusion of the Conference. He will be given a tour of our port and will be taken for a brief stay at our unit in Queenstown. Last year our Secretary was well looked after in Japan by their Union so we will be reciprocating.

Clothing

The branch has t-shirts and jackets for sale. The t-shirts are the new design and are very presentable. The secretary has some beanies and caps to give to members who want one for free.

Ash Yu Hoi

Recently our branch lost a popular retired member Ash Yu Hoi. A obituary for Ash is printed later in this magazine.

New Executive

The new executive is working well and attending meetings. It is important during these hard times to show strong leadership, and we are looking at taking a couple of observers to Conference. In addition we may send as we did last year a youth rep to the MUA Youth Conference in Brisbane this November.

New laptop

The Branch has purchased a new laptop and printer last month which is being put to good use by the Secretary.

Queenstown Unit

Bookings are still being taken for our Queenstown Unit. Anyone interested call Ian Quarrell on 021472021 or Alan Midleditch on 03 4728753.

Vessel Division

Recently we held a combined Union meeting to decide on joining the Company's vessel division. 220 members from both unions attended. Debate was constructive and all agreed surviving the restructuring by joining the vessel division did not offer protection.

All agreed having our wages and conditions altered to the detriment of the membership was not an option and all voted to reject the vessel division.

This was a proud moment for officials as it has been a stressful time weighing up whether we were leading the Union in the right direction.

We believe we were vindicated by the unanimous decision.

The vessel division was poorly put together, instead of employing "B's" they decided on 40 hour lashers who are only working around 24 hours a week (not the lashers fault).

Whoever thought of it has made a massive mistake.

It always intrigues us how those who push the vessel division with all its so-called advantages won't actually be working under those wages and conditions. This always seems to be the way.

Every member had the chance to have their say and vote on what they felt was the way to go. They did and it showed the vessel division is definitely not the way to go.

Lashers

The lashers are settling into their roles in the terminal and are all good members of our branch. It is disconcerting to hear cargo handlers making negative comments around the restructuring to them. Always remember that we will only succeed if we remain united – we are all members of the one Union.

Dredge in Lyttelton

The Port Otago dredge is heading to Christchurch to work off Christchurch and Lyttelton. Our members on board will rotate and commute between Dunedin and Christchurch. A good out of port deal has been put together and all seem happy with it.

Sheds

The sheds have been reasonably busy and it is sad to see some good lads leave to take up employment at Fonterra's plant at Mosgiel, delegate Shane Priest being one of them.

We are now looking for a new delegate. Perhaps Alana Hanson, niece of you know who. Also at the sheds welcome to new member Margaret McNamara and another niece of Trevor's, Candice Hanson.

Lines

Recently we have had incidents of ships being tied up putting linesmen in danger. Remember always make sure you are safe first before tying up ships, the new 4100 method of tying up is causing a health and safety issue for our members which we intend to address as safety is paramount.

General Secretary

Finally, as this is the last magazine where our current General Secretary Trevor Hanson is contributing as he retires in November, this branch would like to thank Trevor for his devoted service to our Union over the years and in particular his work for us over the Mainland dispute.

Trevor has worked tirelessly for the Union and although at times a bit doom and gloom has always put the members first. His handling of the financial side of our Union has been first rate and although every now and then wanting to stop the whole country on an issue and being extremely disappointed not to, he will be sorely missed. Although we have not seen eye to eye on all occasions his commitment to the membership of the Union cannot be questioned and we wish Trevor and Ann a long and healthy retirement.

Gisborne

by Dein Ferris

The recession, and our normal winter quiet period is being felt by Maritime Union members in Gisborne.

The processed timber products handled by our company have reduced in tonnage markedly.

Logs, which are handled by ISO, are pouring out.

We are told by Eastland Port that they are the second largest log export port in the country, behind Tauranga.

We had in port the other day the Annatoki, a little coastal bulkie, carrying Ravensdown fertiliser. We did the hatching and trimming on it. Hopefully this becomes a regular thing.

Spring has been here for a couple of weeks or more, and the weather has been good, so we are looking forward to the next squash season.

Bluff

by Ray Fife

The recession had seen a drop off in work in the port over the past few months. Indications are that the economy is stronger than expected and more businesses are saying that they plan boosting capital spending rather than cutting it, and there are almost as many businesses saying they intend hiring people as laying them off. We are hopeful that will see an increase in cargo over the wharf, it is already noticeable that log volumes have increased, fertiliser is picking up and aluminium volumes are increasing now that the Tiwai Smelter is working back to full production. Southport has been investing in its infrastructure to cater for the weekly MSC service which has greatly helped our members during the quieter periods. With the offshore work drying up our seafarer members are finding it more difficult to get to sea but we are hopeful that this will improve in the near future.

Branch Officers and Executive

The following are the branch officials for the coming year.

- President: Harry Holland
- Secretary: Ray Fife
- Executive: Ross Tangney, Terry Osborne and Ray Crown

ILWU Conference

I was fortunate to be able to attend the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) 34th convention in Seattle from 8-12 June 2009.

The convention gives our union the chance to meet and communicate on issues that affect the union movement, understanding that we are all in the same dire straits and not the only ones who are having hard times.

These conferences are important in that we are able to forge international solidarity with other unions within the Pacific Basin, with corporations working together to control global logistics so must we work together with other maritime unions to fight these corporations.

Southern Institute of Technology Picket

Our members were out supporting the cleaners employed by SIT who are asking for the same rate of pay as all other cleaners covered by the Service and Food Workers Union.

Once again we were the only other union supporting their picket for fair wages and it is pleasing to see that our members are prepared to help out when another union is in need. Thanks to those who gave their support.



Bluff casuals Karl Philip Batchelor (left) and Joseph Carol were part of a Maritime Union delegation who attended a recent picket in support of SFWU members who are cleaners at the Southern Institute of Technology in Invercargill



Bluff Branch Secretary Ray Fife (centre) with ILWU delegates at the ILWU Conference, Seattle, June 2009

The Da Vinci Con

by Pat O'Dea

Auckland member Pat O'Dea writes about the world's first ever, recorded, personal employment grievance to wind up in a court.

Leonardo Da Vinci, the original 'Renaissance Man', was an acknowledged artistic, and scientific genius.

But in an employment dispute that wound up in court, even this recognised genius, came off second best. Hard work and talent was no match in court, for wealth and political influence.

The Madonna of the Rocks is one of Leonardo's greatest works and the mystery of its creation is the heart of the plot in the novel *The Da Vinci Code*.

The Dan Brown book, and the screenplay based on it, have been decried by art historians, religious scholars and film critics as pure hokum.

According to Wikipedia the fictional plot of Dan Brown's book, 'The Da Vinci Code', is the mystery of why two versions of this beautiful and famous painting, the Madonna of the Rocks, were done for the same client.

Dan Brown, who wrote the Da Vinci code, weaves a fantasy story of conspiracy about secret occult signs and supposedly hidden meanings between the two versions of the 'Madonna of the Rocks'.

I have not read the Da Vinci Code, or seen the movie based on the book, but I would like to bet that the true story behind the reason for the two paintings, is more interesting, though unlikely to be made into a Hollywood block buster any time soon.

According to historical documents, the true record starts in 1472, when at the age 20 Leonardo joins the painters' guild, the 'Compagnia di San Luca'.

The appearance of Leonardo's name in the guild's register, or 'libro rosso', is a tangible marker in the otherwise unrecorded chronology of his artistic development. Although we are not sure what paintings Leonardo had done by this time, this record shows that by mid-1472 Leonardo Da Vinci is a signed up, 'dipintore', or practising painter.

The tradesmen's Guilds were the medieval precursors of modern trade unions, and were formed for the same reasons - to protect the common interests of their members.

Though the records don't show that the guild was backing their member in the following employment dispute, it is very likely that they were.

Leonardo Da Vinci was from Florence and it was there where Leonardo developed his skills and the first paintings thought attributed to him were created.

But his career doesn't really take off until he leaves his native Florence and moves to Milan.

On arriving in the city, Leonardo enters into a partnership with an established family of painters, the de Predis brothers.

The de Predis give Leonardo lodging in their home and the use of the de Predis workshop.

According to the records, the first tangible product of this partnership, and Leonardo's first painting done in Milan, is the beautiful and mysterious, "Madonna of the Rocks".



There are two, similar, but not identical versions.

The version in the Louvre is the earlier, and is essentially pure Leonardo, while the version in the National Gallery, London, was painted later by Ambrogio Predis and Leonardo.

The 1483 contract of employment, which still exists, lets us know that this painting was Leonardo's first registered commission in Milan.

The commission to do this work, is for a religious group called the Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception.

The Commission calls for an altarpiece to adorn the Confraternity's chapel in the church of San Francesco Grande.

The commission also stipulates that the "painters" must colour and gild the frame as well.

This Confraternity, as it is known, is, for all its holy trappings, a tight knit group of wealthy Milanese families.

The agreed fee for the work is 800 lira, though the schedule of payments seems unfavourable to the painters.

Leonardo, and the de Predis, receive a

down payment of 100 lira on 1 May 1483, then 40 lira a month from July.

As the painting was due for delivery in December 1483, over half the payment will be in arrears at the end of the job.

Legal documents show that the painting was indeed delivered to the Confraternity, but that there was a dispute over the payments.

In the dismissive language familiar to modern trade unionists in any employment court today, court documents of the time dealing with this dispute, describe the painting as, "la Nostra Donna facta da dicto florentino" - 'the Madonna done by that Florentine.'

The painters had asked for a "conguaglio" or adjusted payment of 1,200 lira, because the 800 lira would barely cover the work for the frame alone.

They now ask for a fairer payment, or permission to take back the painting. Instead, the painting is given to the German Emperor, Maximilian, as a wedding gift, by the feudal ruler of Milan known as Il Moro (the Moor).

The first public outing of this painting is as a gift from one feudal despot to another. This explains the real reason for the second version of the painting: it is a substitute, a copy, to replace the painting gifted to the German Emperor.

Legal records from the time show that this second painting too, is a subject of litigation between the painters and the Confraternity.

According to a supplication lodged by Leonardo and Ambrogio de Predis in 1492, the commission of the "Madonna of the Rocks", was not being fully paid for.

In protest, the painters, in the time honoured way of all wronged workers, withdrew their labour and refused to finish the painting.

In 1503 Ambrogio lodged another supplication, addressed to Louis XII of France who had become the de facto ruler of Milan in a military conflict with the Italians, which the French had won. (Il Moro having fled the city).

In a move unusual for the time, the king of France ordered a judge, one Bernadino de Busti, to look into the dispute.

The case wallowed in the bog of Italian litigation for three years, but in the arbitration handed down in April 1506, the judgement went against the painters.

The painting was judged by the court, "impefetto", - 'not good enough'.

This is a work judged by current art experts, among the greatest of all time.

As modern trade unionists, we often have to ask ourselves - is the standard of employment court judges any better today?

The overwhelming number of rulings that find on behalf of the rich and powerful and against working people in the New Zealand employment courts, plus the paltry awards given if a worker does win,

convincing me that little has changed in 500 years.

An eventful maritime life

The crew of the Union Steam Ship Company vessel SS Waikare, 1909. This historic photograph supplied by Keith Adams who writes:

"The young seaman right behind the man holding the lifebelt is John Carrington, the grandfather of MUNZ members Les, Keith and Phil Adams.

John was a long serving member of the Seaman's Union who became a rigger for the Union Company in Port Chalmers after leaving the coast.

John was on the Waikare when it ran aground and sank in Dusky Sound in 1910. John then went to the UK where he shipped out, and the family have a discharge of his from the Creek Fisher of Barrow. The crew apparently all left the ship to join the army as the First World War had

started, so John went with them and joined the British Army.

He survived the war although he suffered dreadful injuries to his legs. After recuperating in an army hospital in Largs, Scotland, and marrying the cook (our Nan) he was sent back to France and finished the war as a sergeant.

He then shipped out on an Anchor Line of Glasgow ship the Columbia, and later joined the SS Wahine which was being refitted in Newcastle for the USS Company, and brought it out to New Zealand.

He carried on shipping out on the New Zealand coast for a number of years until he went ashore in the late 1930s. John was born in Port Chalmers in 1892 and died in Dunedin in 1977."



New Zealand Scows

by Allan Phillips

Life Member, New Zealand Seamans Union 994

When I retired to Whitianga 21 years ago, it was only a short time until I met up with David Langdon, who was the then Trust-bank manager.

I think Jimmy Hewitt may have had something to do with it along the line, David got to hear we had been in scows in previous years and he was in the process of compiling anecdotes, photos etc. of New Zealand scows.

When David retired from the bank, he spent the following 15 years collecting all the data for the book he has finally had published "A History of New Zealand Scows and their Trades."

On the 18 September 2009, I had the pleasure of attending the book launch held in the Whitianga Public Library.

Without a doubt this beautiful book is a must for any of you old scow hands to possess.

Jimmy Hewitt gets a mention on page 162 and myself on page 188.

To have all the 140 scows on the New Zealand coast researched in such a great manner is a great tribute to David Langdon and his dedication for getting it all recorded before it was lost forever.

Once again, I reiterate this is a must read for anyone once associated with the scows and the sand and metal trade in New Zealand – thank you David.

'A History of New Zealand Scows and their Trades' is published by Captain Teach Press of Auckland and is available from Boat Books Ltd, 22 Westhaven Drive, Auckland, New Zealand. Phone 09 358 5691, fax 09 358 5817 or email crew@boatbooks.co.nz

Robert (Bob) Knight

Robert Knight (Bob) shipped out of Auckland in 1946.

He joined the Maui Pomare voyaging to the Pacific Islands.

Bob had a wide-ranging career including Norske ships.

He joined the Sydney Tugs and later on the Aussie Coast, then back to New Zealand where, after signing off the New Zealand Pacific in 1987, he retired in Nelson.

Bob always had a staunch interest in union and political affairs and spoke his mind on issues, and was part of the struggle along with members of that era which won the roster system, cml super fund and equal time setting the base for today's seafarers. Bob always asked about the family and children's development and those who were experiencing hard times.

Farewell Bob and enjoy sailing in smooth waters.

Submitted by Bill Lewis, Nelson Branch

Ash Yu Hoi

Recently the Port Chalmers Dunedin Branch lost a popular retired member Ash Yu Hoi. Ash transferred from Wellington in 1977 and retired three years ago from Port Chalmers.

In his time at Port Otago, Ash was a conscientious and great workmate, courteous and always with a smile on his face.

He retired to build his dream home in Samoa but still had a house in Dunedin. Ash died after taking ill in Samoa. His family request was that he be taken through the container terminal in his hearse and Port Otago obliged, much to the delight of his family.

Ash will be missed by all who knew him. Submitted by Phil Adams.



Tom Cox

It is with sadness and respect that I inform members of the death of Tom Cox, ex-AB of Liverpool, UK. Tom died aged 82 in Nelson, New Zealand, his adopted country on 29 July. His service on the 4 August brought together family, friends and seafarers to commemorate his life.

Tom was an ex-member of the New Zealand Seaman's Union. He joined the British Merchant Navy as a boy rating during the Second World War. One of the experiences he had to endure was picking up survivors from sunken ships from convoys, many of whom had already died.

He carried on in the Merchant Navy after the war sailing namely in the Blue Funnel Line, and he was a proud member of the Blue Funnel Association.

He came out to Australia and then New Zealand. I first met Tom on the New Zealand coast and found we had the same interests, tying decorative knots and shipping histories. If you wanted to know about tying a knot or shipping companies he was the man to see, a walking encyclopedia on these subjects.

He had a fantastic memory, that's why he was a great storyteller, many of these stories from his own experiences.

I always admired how Tom battled through the last few years after the loss of his beloved Helen, then with his own ill health. He always made you welcome and was still good for a yarn or two.

Tom Cox was a character, he was from the old school of seamen and a staunch union man. Men of his era were the backbone of the New Zealand Seaman's Union, sadly many of them have passed away

*What though the seas and wind
Far on the deep should overwhelm
Colours and sails and helm?
There, too, you touch that port that you designed -
There, in the mid-seas' realm,
Shall you that haven find.*

Rest in peace Tom - fair winds
Submitted by Barry Jackson, MUNZ0004

An important message for veteran and retired members receiving the Maritimes magazine

The Maritime Union is updating its mailing list of retired and former members of the Maritime Union of New Zealand, the New Zealand Seafarers' Union and the Waterfront Workers' Union.

To ensure our records are accurate, we are requesting that all veteran members above join the Maritime Union Veterans' Association.

Membership is free.

To continue receiving copies of the Maritimes, you must be a member of the Veterans' Association.

If you are not receiving a copy of the Maritimes magazine, then you are not on the membership list.

To join the Veterans' Association, please contact the Veterans' Association at PO Box 2645, Auckland.

A copy of the membership form is also available on our Maritime Union website and can be downloaded and printed off at the following address:

<http://munz.org.nz/veterans>

Note that you may have given your name previously to someone to get a copy of the magazine – but if you have not filled in an official form you are not a member of the Veterans' Association.

To keep getting the magazine, or with any queries, please write to PO Box 2645, Auckland.

The Mother of all King Hits

by Hector Thorpe MUNZ 3111

The right wing uppercut

Back in 1991 National came out swinging connecting square on the jaw of the Trade Union Movement. The "Employment Contracts Act-Right Wing Uppercut" sent Unions reeling to the canvas.

The standing count removed the legal status of trade unions, and abolished the industry award/arbitration system in favour of individual contracts, it also left the fans dazed, confused and a union membership in decline.

The left hook

The Labour Alliance comeback fight started with a couple of left jabs then in 2000 they let loose with the "Employment Relations Act-Left Hook". This allowed unions back into the ring to access fans, members and collective bargaining. Add the high profile and successful union cam-

paigns based around wages, boxing fans and union membership began to increase modestly over the remaining seasons, leaving many sports commentators to declare a split decision in favour of the left hook over the right uppercut.

The rematch

Nationals fast footed, sweet talking pre match hype polarised and gained admiration from the crowds, with their short simple publicity campaign of Tax cuts and Nanny State attacks.

Labours winning recorded on the other hand seemed to go unnoticed in the heat of the pre match build up. Their support was further weakened when they upset a section of their own fan base that "fore-shore".

The final blow

At the ring of the final bell the judges declared a unanimous decision in favour

of the contender, but strangely the final "trade relations blow" has not been delivered. "Keep your mouth guard in" warns their corner as once the recession has been removed, it will allow them to deliver the mother of all king hits!

The after match stats

- There are 168 unions with a total union membership of 373,327 members. This union membership represents 17.4% of the total employed labour force.
 - Approximately 44% of unions have fewer than 100 members
 - More women (55.4%) than men are union members
- Source Department of Labour (2008).

We should not underestimate the magnitude of the challenge ahead for the Trade Union Movement. Unions may have to agree on a realistic basis for the long-term restoration of union fortunes and implementation initiatives that will contribute to this.

Trouble on the Waterfront

The 1951 Waterfront Lockout was the most serious industrial conflict in New Zealand's history.

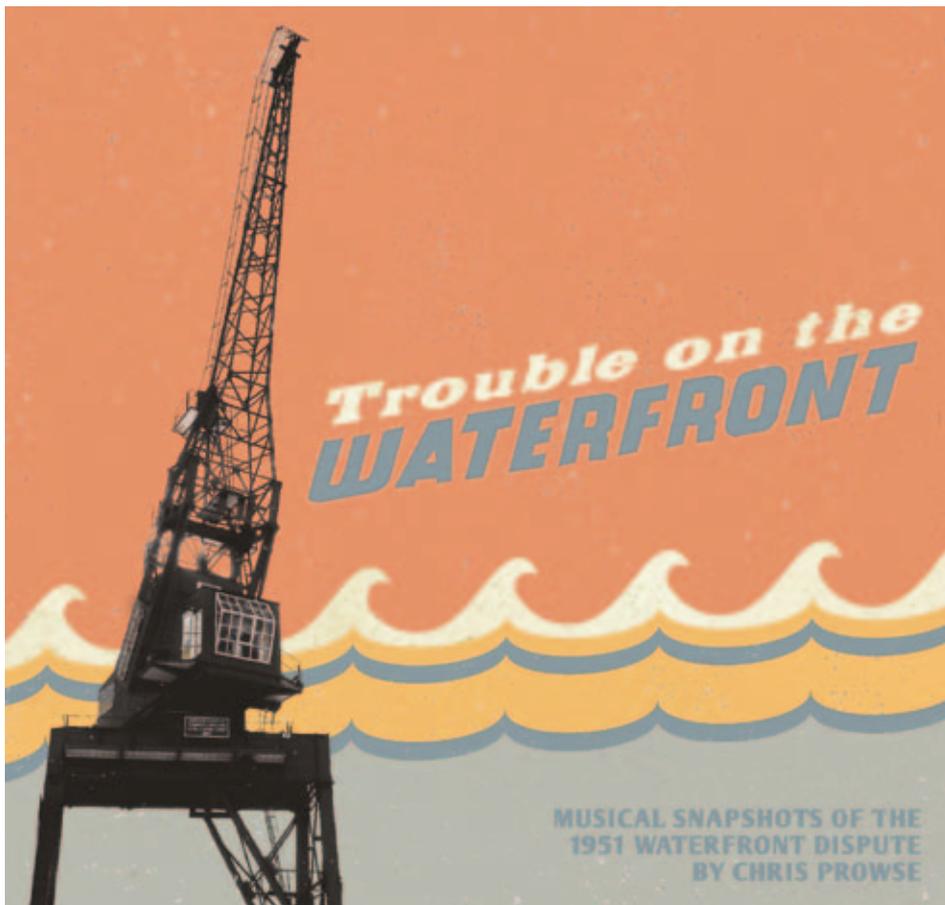
Much has been written about the 151 hard days of the lockout, when the combined forces of the employers and the National Government turned on the militant watersiders and their union allies.

But not much has been sung about it up until now.

Wellington musician Chris Prowse has released a CD album "Trouble on the Waterfront" which comprises 11 original songs all about the "Big Blue" as it was known.

Ranging from bluesy rockers and folk melodies to haunting traditional style ballads, "Trouble on the Waterfront" is a great package.

There are a number of wellknown local music figures appearing on the CD which is beautifully designed, and features an accompanying booklet with photos and information about those troubled times. Chris' family have maritime connections and his parents experienced the 1951 dispute, which provided some of the motivation for his project. He and his band will be playing at the Maritime Union's national conference held in October. An interview with Chris will be published in the next edition of the Maritimes. The album will soon be available via



online sales such as iTunes and CD on line sales such as smoke.cd, and will also be stocked in record stores.

But any Maritime Union member or friend of the Union can purchase a copy direct from Chris for the special price of \$25 (including postage).

Just send cheque and address to -
Chris Prowse
Proco Productions
P O Box 9030
Wellington

Email info@proco.co.nz for more information

Letters

Telecom dispute

The EPMU and 400 of its lines engineers in Auckland and Northland have been engaged in a brutal three month campaign against Telecom and its new sub-contractor Visionstream who have been trying to force them to sign up to contracts that would cut their pay, remove all their work rights and leave them with no guarantee of regular work.

Our members have been refusing to sign over to these vicious contracts, even after they've been made redundant. And it's working - Telecom and Visionstream are now starting to negotiate permanent employment agreements. But it has come at a cost. Many of our members have had no other income than the hardship contributions they have received from the EPMU and the rest of the union movement. This has been an unconscionable attack on the rights of our members and unionism itself but the tide is turning and it is turning because unions such as MUNZ have stepped up and supported our members and our campaign through acts of solidarity and through generous donations to our hardship fund.

A lot of employers have been watching this dispute closely to see how successful Telecom would be in stripping workers of rights and driving down their incomes, and it is safe to say that few would now consider attacking unionised workers so aggressively. We have the support of the whole union movement including MUNZ to thank for that and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you personally as MUNZ members for stepping up and fighting side by side with your fellow workers.

In unity,

Andrew Little

National Secretary

Names to faces

Regarding the photo on page 25 (Winter 2009 edition of the Maritimes), I think that the person second from left is Len Rockliffe. He also had a brother, Frank, on the coast. They were both ABs and were Londoners. Here is a photo of Frank taken in 1964 at a party.

Con Linton

(Thanks to Con, unfortunately we do not have space to print the photo, but it looks like it was a pretty good party – Editor.)

Under the Southern Cross

Thanks for the splendid write-up in the Maritimes Magazine. The type-setting and glitches will be corrected in our next edition of the book.

My traditional biography is the follow up book, Hertfordshire to Australia, you will then see the whole story when the second book is published.

For all our New Zealand brothers across the Tasman Sea, those who are not yet recognized by the New Zealand Government on the 3rd of September, Merchant Navy Day.

After reading the first book, my hope is that a better understanding will be had and why it is so important that our history books are corrected about the importance of the Merchant Navy. Let me remind people throughout the world that no one, be it the Queen, Government past and present - they cannot go on distorting history.

The people can recognize Merchant Navy Day, by demanding of their Government to fall in line with other countries such as Great Britain, Canada, Australia and America - countries that all now recognize Merchant Navy seamen by their people and their Government, 55 years after the war.

It is hoped that India and all Commonwealth Nations will follow suit in recognition.

Also to those Nations that in WWII were over-run by Hitler's Germany, whose Merchant Navies came to the Allied cause, it is hoped that they will too be recognized on the 3rd of September as International Merchant Navy Day.

Now that is something to strive for. I hope that you can get my books as well as my TV interviews into the public arena for this coming 3rd of September Merchant Navy Day.

God Bless New Zealand, yours in Unity.

Sincerely yours,

Bill Andrews

Copies of Under the Southern Cross can be purchased on the internet at <http://www.lulu.com/content/paperback-book/under-the-southern-cross---the-forgotten-service-of-world-war-two/7625904>

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