



The Maritimes

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GST off food campaign presents 40 000 signature petition

40,000 signatures calling for GST to be removed from food and a tax placed on financial speculation were presented to Parliament on Tuesday 16 August 2011. The petition was organized by the Tax Justice campaign, and the Maritime Union of New Zealand was the first union to publicly back the campaign. Maritime Union General Secretary Joe Fleetwood says the campaign to take GST off food and introduce a financial transactions tax was a great effort to get some fairness and equality back into the system.

Working people in New Zealand are facing tough times, he says.

"The cost of living is soaring, wages have fallen behind, and it is a great disgrace that we now have a society where many people are struggling to pay for the basics. The current Government is clearly anti-worker. However, the fight back is already happening."

Tax Justice coordinators Vaughan Gunson of Northland and Kay Murray of Dunedin had intended to join campaigners to hand over the petition.

But due to heavy snow and cancelled flights, the petition was instead handed over by Wellington campaign organiser Grant Brookes to Labour Party MP for Mangere, Su'a William Sio.

Union representatives, local government representatives, Green Party co-leader Russel Norman, Mana Party leader Hone Harawira, and Maori Party MPs Rahui Katene and Te Ururoa Flavell also attended the handover.

The Tax Justice campaign was a joint initiative of Socialist Worker and the Alliance Party.

Wide support for campaign

Tax Justice campaign coordinator Vaughan Gunson thanked all those who had signed and supported the petition. "Particularly the hundreds of people throughout the country who took the time to collect 5, 10 or 20 signatures from friends, family and workmates, and posted them in to us."

Mr Gunson says that the 40,000 signatures only represent the tip of the iceberg when it comes to how Kiwis feel about having a tax on their food.

"Calls for GST to be removed from all food are not going to go away."

The petition also requests that a financial transactions tax – sometimes referred to as a "Robin Hood Tax" or "Hone Heke Tax" – be introduced, which would cover the cost of removing GST from food.

Mr Gunson says that one of the heartening things to come from the petition presentation has been the attention given to the idea of introducing a Financial Transaction Tax.

"A small percentage Financial Transaction Tax applied to financial markets is the only mechanism which can make speculators pay the tax they should be."

He says the Tax Justice campaign is now aiming at bringing together left parties inside and outside of Parliament, along with unions and other grassroots organisations, to push for change.

People struggling to afford food

Tax Justice campaign spokesperson and Alliance Party co-leader Kay Murray says the petition has struck a chord with New Zealanders.

"The majority of New Zealanders are struggling with stagnant wages but hefty increases in the cost of living. Removing GST from food would help the majority of people in New Zealand."

Ms Murray says many people are questioning why in a food producing country like New Zealand, basic food items are becoming too expensive for many working families, superannuitants and beneficiaries.

Many people are struggling to feed their families yet the National Government's income tax cuts have only delivered for the wealthy.

That goes against traditional New Zealand ideas of fairness, says Ms Murray.

Positive feedback on campaign

Some of the comments posted by people signing the online version of the Tax Justice campaign include:

"It's [GST] wrong, it's unfair and it's making those less well off unable to feed themselves or their families properly."

"It makes absolutely no sense to force the poorest percentile of our population to pay more tax to compensate for the tax cuts that the richest percentile has benefited from. We can expect that such measures will lead to increased poverty and as a result increased crime and destitution. Is that the sort of country we want to live in?"

"The entire monetary and economic system needs a complete rethink, this is a great start."

"Great campaign. I'm all for it, I don't know how some people are surviving."

For more information, see www.nogstonfood.org

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National Office:
PO Box 27004
Wellington
New Zealand
Telephone: 04 3850 792
Fax: 04 3848 766
Email: joe.fleetwood@munz.org.nz
Web: www.munz.org.nz

Editor:
Victor Billot
Mobile: 021 482219
Fax: 09 9251125
Email: victor.billot@munz.org.nz
Mail: PO Box 8135, Dunedin
New Zealand

Editorial Board:
Joe Fleetwood, Garry Parsloe and Ray Fife

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For more on-line photos, see
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Authorized by Joe Fleetwood, 220 Willis Street, Wellington



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Contact the Maritime Union

National Office
Telephone: 04 3850 792
Fax: 04 3848 766
Address: PO Box 27004, Wellington
Office administrator: Ramesh Pathmanathan
Email: ramesh@munz.org.nz

General Secretary: Joe Fleetwood
Direct dial: 04 8017614
Mobile: 021 364649
Email: joe.fleetwood@munz.org.nz

National President: Garry Parsloe
Direct dial: 09 3034652
Mobile: 021 326261
Email: garry.parsloe@munz.org.nz

Assistant General Secretary: Ray Fife
Direct dial: 03 2128189
Mobile: 0274 475317
Email: ray.fife@munz.org.nz

ITF Inspector: Grahame MacLaren
Direct dial: 04 8017613
Mobile: 021 2921782
Email: mclaren_grahame@itf.org.uk

Communications Officer: Victor Billot
Mobile: 021 482219
Fax: 09 9251125
Address: PO Box 8135, Dunedin
Email: victor.billot@munz.org.nz

The old is dying and the new cannot be born

By Victor Billot

In 2011, the global political and economic system is in ongoing crisis. A second wave of the global recession is now appearing likely.

The warnings coming from the heart of the establishment are that previous measures to prop up the status quo have postponed – but not solved – the essential problems.

Politically, the United States and Europe are in turmoil. In the United States, the extreme political right has made inroads with attacks on “big Government”. But at the same time, unions are fighting back, and there are signs of new mood of resistance. Regimes in the Middle East have crumbled before mass civil disobedience from long suffering peoples.

At the same time, in a curious twist, many leading capitalists are questioning the viability of the system that has generated the vast wealth they now control.

The billionaire American investor Warren Buffett has called for higher taxes on the super rich in the United States, to ensure the survival of the system.

In New Zealand, market commentators such as Bernard Hickey and the high profile investor Gareth Morgan have been analyzing the failures of the free market. Morgan has gone as far as proposing a universal basic income paid to all New Zealanders as a way of overcoming the crisis in employment and inequality.

The irony is that while these members of the elite are questioning the system, many working class people have adopted the outlooks of talkback radio hosts, and are lending their support to the political right. Strange days.

Many working class people are de-unionized and unorganized, especially the young and those on the margins of the modern economy, including casual workers and beneficiaries. This is no accident and is a deliberate strategy of the powerful.

While many people may not connect smiling Mr Key with what is happening in their everyday lives, the connection is there in everyday reality. You may not be interested in politics – but politics is interested in you.

Poor wages, insecure jobs, dangerous and under-regulated workplaces where injuries and deaths occur: these are the outcomes of a political system where the drive for private profit is more important than the wellbeing of the majority.

New Zealand political commentator Bryce Edwards recently described aspects of the New Zealand political scene today by quoting 1920s Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci: “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear”.

“Morbid symptoms” seems to sum up where the world, and New Zealand, is at in 2011. Let’s hope that the outcome is different from when Gramsci made his observation in the years before the Great Depression and the Second World War.

The current system is dying and cannot continue, but as yet no clear alternative has presented itself, and the ‘new cannot be born’. When that future arrives, what will it consist of? Will it be determined by the organized working class, involving the leadership of militant and progressive unions like the Maritime Union? Where secure jobs and an internationalist outlook are some of the foundations of a society based on equality and solidarity.

Or will the future be one where racism, national bigotry, attacks on the unemployed and other victims of the system, are used to distract the majority and prop up the privilege of a few?

That is the choice that we make as working people, whether through the ballot box, in our community or on the job.

Vote for a better deal for workers



by Joe Fleetwood
General Secretary

“The Maritime Union is fighting for the rights of workers on the job and through the ballot box. We need a worker friendly Government.”

General elections

We all must be engaged in the fight back as the National Party is a cancer eating away at the working class.

The future of our families depends on us. Vote National out before they sell what belongs to us all – Our Country.

The Maritime Union is fighting for the rights of workers on the job and through the ballot box.

We need a worker friendly Government. Make sure all your friends and family are on the electoral roll.

Remember there is also a referendum on MMP at the election and the Maritime Union along with other unions says “Support MMP”. Have your say and vote.

Union elections

Following the resignation of the National President earlier in 2011, an election was held for the vacant position.

Garry Parsloe, former National Vice President, was elected unopposed. This left the position of National Vice President open, and an election was held between the three candidates.

None of the candidates achieved an absolute majority of votes in this ballot, so as the union rules require, a second ballot was held between the two highest polling candidates in the first round.

The election results are published on the opposite page.

The returning officer John Whiting has noted his disappointment that only around 40% of members voted in the first round of this election.

In a union with a strong democratic tradition like ours, this is not good enough. Voting is our responsibility as a union member, the Union belongs to us all, and the hard won right to elect our officials should not be given away because of a lack of motivation or apathy.

National executive

The next national executive meeting of the Union will be held in November and will be concentrating on the work to update our union rules and union structures.

The goal is to work through these changes and have a new updated set of rules prepared for approval and sign off at the 2012 Triennial Conference.

In addition some fine tuning of our union structures will be carried out to ensure we are operating in an effective way.

Sector reports

At the May 2011 national executive meeting, a new method of reporting on our industry was introduced.

This was the introduction of four sector reports covering different areas of the industry. This is a way of improving the information flow in our Union and supplements the reports provided by branches and other special reports. Each sector will be reported on by a national official, and these are Oil and Gas Offshore, Coastal Shipping, Terminals, and Break Bulk and General Ports.

Port and branch visits

I have attended a number of stop work meetings in ports around the country in the last several months. It has been good to speak to members and find out what is happening on the ground.

As General Secretary I am happy to visit any port or branch, if available, to meet with members.

USW international solidarity

I recently attended the United Steel Workers Conference in the USA.

The USW is one of the biggest trade unions in the world and we have a good relationship with them through the Mining and Maritime Union Initiative.

Health and Safety

All branches must log and notify National Office of all health and safety incidents and accidents.

If you are on the job, report any incident to your officials as soon as possible. Photos and notes of what occurred are useful.

Fishing Industry

There has been a number of developments in the fishing industry.

In the last month, we have seen the Government announce an inquiry into the fishing industry.

The Maritime Union has been actively calling for the industry to be tightened up for many years, as we have seen the mistreatment of overseas crews, exploitation, health and safety issues, sinkings, ship jumping, all going on in this industry.

MUNZ also met with a senior US diplomat Luis CdeBaca who is investigating human trafficking and modern day slavery.

Our Union also appeared at a Government select committee on 4 August to speak to MPs about industry problems.

There have been ongoing media reports about the problems in the industry and a report has just been released by Auckland University researchers into the industry and its failures.

We want two things – the proper treatment and conditions of all crew in New Zealand waters, and jobs for New Zealand workers in their own industry. After many years of shameful inaction by the industry and Government, it looks like we may be getting some traction.

Productivity inquiry

The Maritime Union intends to make sure the Government inquiry into transport and logistics is not just about promoting privatization.

The Government-appointed Productivity Commission has opened an inquiry into International Freight Transport Services. They say the goal is to ensure New Zealand's transport infrastructure, including ports and shipping, is operating as efficiently as possible.

However we want to make sure this is not just a cover for further casualization of the workforce and sell off of New Zealand ports.

We have contributed towards a submission by the Council of Trade Unions to the Productivity inquiry.

Keep Our Port Public

The Keep Our Port Public campaign in 2006 was set up to stop the partial privatization of the Ports of Lyttelton.

The KOPP campaign has now been reactivated on a national basis to protect New Zealand ports from privatization. These are strategic assets, majority owned by the people of New Zealand, through local Government.

Obviously there is room for many improvements in the current system, but privatization and loss of control of our ports is not the answer.

The website for KOPP which is maintained by the Maritime Union is www.keepourportpublic.org

Fiji

The Maritime Union has joined many other unions in extending our support to trade unionists in Fiji who are under attack.

The international workers' movement has announced its opposition to anti-union laws and violence and intimidation from the military regime.

The Maritime Union will be supporting actions by the ITF and New Zealand Council of Trade Unions to put pressure on the Fijian authorities.

*Kia Kaha Tatau Tatau –
Be Strong We Are All One*

Workplace links to motor neurone disease under investigation

A team of New Zealand scientists at Massey University is looking at the connections between exposure to hazards on the job and Motor Neurone Disease (MND).

Researchers, led by Professor Jeroen Douwes at the Centre for Public Health Research, will investigate whether as chemicals or electromagnetic fields increase the risk of someone developing the disease.

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) attacks nerve cells that control muscle movement. This leads to weakness and wasting of muscles, causing increasing loss of mobility in the limbs, and difficulties with speech, swallowing and breathing.

There is no cure or standard treatment for MND, and although palliative care has improved, there is no treatment that will significantly alter its course.

The Motor Neurone Disease Association of New Zealand notes that there are about 100 new cases each year and 300 cases in New Zealand at any one time.

A simultaneous study will hone in on workplace exposure to the fumigant methyl bromide.

Although highly toxic to humans and recognised as depleting the ozone layer, methyl bromide is used in ports and aboard vessels on exports such as logs. Professor Douwes says workers who undertake fumigation and those that open fumigated sea containers could potentially be at risk of health problems.

The study looks at workers exposed to methyl bromide, and assesses their risk of neurological (brain) health problems.

Professor Douwes says New Zealand invests a lot less into occupational health research than some other comparable countries.

"Traditionally we have had very little interest in occupational disease despite the fact we have between 17,000-20,000 new cases of work-related disease per year, most of which are potentially preventable. If we are to reduce this we need to invest in research, and research that will result in effective interventions."



New national vice president elected

Carl Findlay of Local 13 has been elected as Vice President of the Maritime Union of New Zealand.

Maritime Union Returning Officer John Whiting reports that Carl Findlay received 530 votes and Phil Adams received 472 votes in a postal ballot of all union members, with 7 invalid votes received.

Mr Whiting says the total turnout of 1009 was around 40% of membership.

He says this turnout was slightly improved on first ballot, but it was disappointingly low for a Union such as the Maritime Union.

The election was held over two ballots, because the first ballot had three candidates, and no candidate received a majority of votes cast.

According to the Union Rules, this meant that a second ballot was held between the two candidates with highest votes from the first ballot.

The position of Vice President became vacant when Garry Parsloe was elected National President unopposed in early 2011.

All four national official positions will come up for election again in 2012.



Maritime Union has strong views on productivity inquiry

New Zealand's freight transport services including ports and coastal shipping are under investigation.

The Government's Productivity Commission is carrying out an inquiry into industry productivity and will make recommendations back to the Government.

For first stage of the inquiry, the Maritime Union contributed with other transport unions to a submission by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions.

Maritime Union General Secretary Joe Fleetwood says the Union wants to make sure the inquiry into transport and logistics is not just about promoting privatization in the ports, or attacks on workers' wages and conditions.

"We won't be accepting any status quo thinking and 'free market is best' assumptions." Key issues for the Union include keeping control of New Zealand ports in New Zealand hands, healthy and safe workplaces, and ensuring secure, permanent and high skill jobs with a career path for young people entering the industry.

"There is no point expecting productivity from casualized workers who are not properly trained and for whom there is no career path. But this is the approach of many employers in the industry."

Mr Fleetwood says any move to privatize ports would quickly result in the control of New Zealand's logistics infrastructure passing to GNT (global network terminal) operators and shippers, who would operate the system for their own benefit, not New Zealand's benefit.

He says many problems with New Zealand ports currently come from lack of planning and co-ordination, not through lack of competition.

"The Maritime Union is proposing a KiwiPort concept where port ownership remains in community control but national co-ordination is used to minimize disruption and end the duplication of infrastructure we currently see."

"We will be making sure that productivity is not just an accounting term for employer profit, but refers to the wellbeing of workers in the industry."

He says the Union questions some of the assumptions suggested by the Productivity Commission, including a concept of competition as an intrinsic good.

"In the maritime industry, competition has driven corner cutting on health and safety which has led to deaths and injuries, downwards pressure on wages and conditions resulting in casualization, and a lack of national co-ordination in the port sector."

"We are looking at the real world situation, not an economics textbook. We are the people who are out there being productive around the clock and we expect our voices to carry some weight."

The Maritime Union is also promoting a much greater role for coastal shipping as an important part of a low-impact, environmentally sustainable transport mix. Coastal shipping and regional ports also provide an important security and civil defence function, as had been seen during the Christchurch Earthquake disaster, when ports provided the main emergency logistics link for relief supplies.

The freight inquiry will run through to next year, with a second round of submissions on the draft report produced by the Productivity Commission.

To see the CTU submission to the Productivity Commission, <http://www.productivity.govt.nz/view-submissions/315>

Keep Our Port Public relaunched

The Keep Our Ports Public campaign has been relaunched to protect and preserve New Zealand ports.

The Keep Our Ports Public campaign is about keeping all our New Zealand ports in public ownership and community control.

Ports are public assets and are under threat from privatization being pushed by private interests and global big business.

The campaign originally grew out of a local campaign in Christchurch in 2006.

The Christchurch City Council announced in February 2006 that it was bidding to buy all the 31% of shares it did not already own in the Lyttelton Port Company.

It then planned to sell 49.9% to Hutchison Port Company of Hong Kong, the biggest private owner of ports in the world.

In addition, operation of the port would be through a new company, Lyttelton Port of Christchurch, with HPH holding a controlling 50.1% and appointing a majority of the directors.

The coalition, Keep Our Port Public (KOPP), was quickly set up to oppose the privatization.

Christchurch City Holdings Limited did not achieve its initial goals, but the danger of privatization remains for ports throughout New Zealand.

Our current supporters include the Maritime Union of New Zealand, the Rail and Maritime Transport Union, the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa, the Green Party and the Alliance Party.

For more information see www.keepourportpublic.org

New oil exploration rules as industry expands

The Government has introduced a Bill to Parliament to manage the environmental effects of activities in New Zealand's offshore industry.

Environment Minister Nick Smith says the Exclusive Economic Zone and Extended Continental Shelf (Environmental Effects) Bill will come into effect by 1 July 2012.

In the meantime, interim rules have been introduced to deal with concerns about environmental impact and safety.

Oil exploration companies will be required to submit environmental impact assessments to the Environmental Protection Authority.

They will also have to comply with new drilling safety rules developed after the disastrous Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010.

A High Hazards Unit of four inspectors specifically for the petroleum industry has also been announced.

Liability requirements for the industry are under review, with plans to raise the current level of insurance.

New Zealand's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is the area of sea and seabed from 12 to 200 nautical miles offshore which comes under New Zealand jurisdiction, covering around 400 million hectares.

The Extended Continental Shelf (ECS) is New Zealand's submerged landmass where it extends beyond the EEZ, covering around 170 million hectares.

Earlier in 2011, protests by local iwi and Greenpeace took place during seismic surveying off the North Island's East Cape by Brazilian oil giant Petrobras.

US-based Anadarko has deferred a test drilling programme in the Canterbury Basin until 2012.

In August 2011, Shell New Zealand announced a joint venture with Austrian operator OMV to explore the Great South Basin.

Test drills at depths of 800m to 1200m will be made off the southeastern coast of Otago and Southland.

One of the world's largest independent oil and gas firms, Apache, is working with small Canadian player Tag Oil in the East Coast Basin in the New Zealand offshore.

Seismic testing has already started with first drilling expected early 2012 as part of a 4-year exploration programme.

Tag's East Coast Basin exploration permits include more than 1 million acres of prospects to be surveyed with both 2-D and 3-D seismic testing and drilling.

The blocks are thought to hold "unconventional" shale oil, plus conventional oil and gas.

Tag uses fracking – hydraulic fracturing – at its Taranaki wells.

Apache uses fracking to recover natural gas from the deep shale reservoir of the Horn River Basin in Canada.

The controversial technique has been criticized by environmental groups.

Chinese log trade hits wall

The heavy demand from China for New Zealand logs has ground to a halt with prices dropping by nearly 20%.

The effects of less demand over the winter were compounded by the strength of the New Zealand dollar.

New Zealand log imports into China have risen due to strong economic growth plus problems with sourcing logs from traditional supplier Russia, but it is thought that China has been stockpiling logs in recent times.

Waiheke Island ferry evacuated

A small engine room fire on the Fullers ferry Jet Raider on Saturday 27 August 2011 resulted in over 300 passengers and crew being evacuated.

The ferry was on its way to Waiheke Island from Auckland and was in between Motutapu and Motuihe Islands at the time. There were no injuries during the evacuation onto another vessel.

The engine room was sealed by crew members and automated sprinklers had extinguished the flames by the time fire officers had arrived, according to the Fire Service.

Allied workforce employee killed at Port of Tauranga

An Allied Workforce employee, Walter Daniel Crosa, 49, was killed at the Port of Tauranga on 14 August 2011 in a vehicle accident.

The Bay of Plenty News reported it was believed Mr Crosa was working for a contractor at the port doing some roading works at the time of the accident.

The Department of Labour is investigating and the matter has been referred to the coroner.

It is the third fatality at the port within the past 15 months

In June this year, two Bay companies were fined a total of \$55,000 after a forklift ran over and killed ISL-employed stevedore Brian Shannon, 61, at the port in June 2010.

On 17 December 2010, a 35-year-old Chinese seaman died after falling from the side of the logging ship Green Hope and into the water in Tauranga Harbour.

Attempts to resuscitate him after he was pulled from the water by workmates were unsuccessful.

There was also a death at the port in 2003.



A Korean fishing crew member uses a plastic bag over his head as "safety gear" while working on a vessel at the Port of Bluff, February 2010. Photo taken by a MUNZ member.

Net closes on fishing industry shame

By Victor Billot

Pressure is building on New Zealand fishing industry bosses involved in joint ventures with overseas vessels and crews. More than 2000 overseas crew members have been working in what has been described as "virtual slave-like labour conditions" aboard foreign charter vessels (FCVs).

The Government announced an official inquiry in July 2011, following ongoing media reports about abuse and exploitation of crews. At the same time as the inquiry was being announced, the Maritime Union was meeting with a visiting US diplomat who leads efforts to end "modern day slavery" of vulnerable workers.

The Maritime Union and the Service and Food Workers Union (SFWU) also appeared before a parliamentary select committee in August, and MUNZ representatives attended the launch of a new study from the University of Auckland that details illegal practices in the fishing industry.

For many years the Maritime Union has pressed for stronger regulation in the industry to protect overseas crews, and for the use of New Zealand crews in our own fishing industry.

Why have New Zealand companies been allowed to continue to operate with joint venture partners who have breached New Zealand laws and regulations, when the alarm bells were being sounded?

It appears as if the problems in the industry have now become so bad, that the Government has been forced to take action as the spotlight has gone on the industry. In true self-interested style, it appears a key motive is the damage that was being done to New Zealand's commercial image in overseas markets through the adverse publicity.

But why were things allowed to get this bad in the first place?

Inquiry launched into fishing industry

Minister of Fisheries Phil Heatley and Minister of Labour Kate Wilkinson announced a Government inquiry on the fishing industry on 15 July 2011. The inquiry will examine alleged human rights abuses of Asian crews aboard overseas fishing vessels in New Zealand waters.

The "broad in scope" inquiry will look into labour standards, immigration, and maritime safety and fisheries laws. The effects of New Zealand's international reputation and trade relationships are also to be considered.

Former Labour Government Minister Paul Swain leads the inquiry.

The two other panel members are career bureaucrat Neil Walter and corporate accountant Sarah McGrath.

The deadline for the panel's report is 24 February 2012.

The Maritime Union has welcomed the inquiry, but Maritime Union General Secretary Joe Fleetwood says while it sounds good on paper, real answers and real action are required.

"Enforceable rules and regulations for labour standards, and the need for New Zealand to benefit from our own resources, including jobs, are the big issues. This inquiry will need to shine a light into dark places."

"This inquiry is long overdue and the Maritime Union has been calling for one for many years. But we know in advance that this inquiry will confirm what we already know, that disgraceful practices have become the norm and accepted by the industry."

This has caused great harm, says Mr Fleetwood.

In an interview carried out with Radio Australia, MUNZ General Secretary Joe Fleetwood, said the investigation was long overdue.

"There have been cases where people have been battered with shovels and picks, and cases of sexual abuse," he said.

"We are a disgrace on the international circuit, because we have allowed social dumping within our country and all these abuses and atrocities happen to fellow workers."

In 2006 new regulations were brought in to tighten up the rules around overseas crews on joint venture vessels, but the inquiry is effectively an admission that previous efforts have not cleaned up the industry.

International concerns

The situation of foreign crews has now gained international attention due to the ongoing and serious nature of incidents. The Government is extremely sensitive to any bad publicity causing problems in overseas markets.

But the fishing industry's use of foreign charter vessels has already damaged the reputation of New Zealand.

Negative media reports have been published in the home countries of many overseas crews who have been treated poorly – and in some cases, have lost their lives in dubious circumstances.

Many of these nations also have strong trading and cultural links to New Zealand, including Indonesia, Myanmar/Burma, India and Vietnam.

In other high-end markets such as Europe and America, the "clean, green" image of New Zealand is a myth that is now taking a severe hammering.

In July 2011, the Maritime Union of New Zealand held a productive meeting with US State Department Ambassador at Large Luis CdeBaca.

Ambassador CdeBaca was visiting New Zealand in his capacity as head of the Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, which investigates concerns with the global exploitation of vulnerable workers and "human trafficking".

The New Zealand fishing industry gets its own mention in the 2011 Trafficking in Persons report from the Office.

"Some foreign workers report being charged excessive and escalating recruitment fees, experiencing unjustified salary deductions, restrictions on their movement, confiscation of passports, and altered contracts or working conditions without their permission – all indicators of human trafficking.

According to a press report and the United Nations Inter-Agency Project on human trafficking, there were concerns that some fishermen from Indonesia, Vietnam, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia are allegedly victims of forced labor in New Zealand waters; these men may have experienced conditions including passport confiscation, significant debts, physical violence and abuse, and are often forced to work a seven-day work week.

No independent research has been conducted to determine the full extent of the trafficking problem in New Zealand." The report recommends New Zealand makes "proactive efforts to identify victims of labor trafficking, particularly among populations of vulnerable foreign laborers" and "investigates and prosecutes employment recruiting agencies or employers who subject foreign workers to involuntary servitude or debt bondage."



Maritime Union of New Zealand General Secretary Joe Fleetwood with US State Department Ambassador at Large, Luis CdeBaca (right), discussing labour issues, July 2011

These goals are endorsed by the Maritime Union of New Zealand.

Our concern is that it is an overseas Government, from one of our major trading partners, that has raised the questions, rather than our own.

Workers deliver message to politicians

The Maritime Union appeared at a select committee hearing at Parliament on 4 August, along with the Service and Food Workers Union (SFWU) who were presenting a 12,000-signature petition in support of New Zealand jobs and fair workplace treatment in the fishing industry.

Media reports quoted SFWU member Victor Norman, who has worked in the fishing industry for more than 17 years, telling the committee that workers in the industry are constantly being threatened to meet company demands or face losing their jobs to cheaper overseas labour. "That made them insecure and people were going to get sick of bad pay and having their rights ignored, Mr Norman said.

Sealord would not give Mr Norman time to attend the select committee in Wellington today.

He came straight from a shift at the factory and was headed back to work after the hearing, without any time off for sleep. 'If we can tighten up this fishing industry it'll stop them thinking about (going overseas), at the present moment they're abusing something that all New Zealanders own and that's the fish in the sea.'"

MUNZ General Secretary Joe Fleetwood told the Select Committee that foreign workers in the industry were treated "like rubbish" and the country's fishing industry had turned into a disgrace. Reporting on the evidence presented at the Select Committee hearings, TV3 reported that "a foreign fisherman on Bluff Wharf was seen last year working with a plastic bag over his head as safety goggles . . . Two ships sank off New Zealand last year and 28 foreign sailors drowned. There are Indonesian and Korean crews stuck in Auckland and Christchurch right now with unpaid wages. And MPs were told of passports being confiscated, skippers running fake sets of books, and threats to Department of Labour observers."



Maritime Union of New Zealand General Secretary Joe Fleetwood (rear) with SFWU officials and delegates, and Labour MP Darien Fenton, during Select Committee hearings into the fishing industry, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, August 2011

Investigative reports confirm bad practices

The Government inquiry comes after a series of investigative reports by Sunday Star Times journalist Michael Field uncovered evidence of massive breaches of regulations by foreign charter vessel operators.

Events took an even more bizarre turn when the Sunday Star Times reported that Oyang Corporation had paid private investigators to “find out how academics and the Sunday Star-Times obtained information on the slave-like conditions aboard foreign fishing vessels.”

“The private investigators also followed the US ambassador on human trafficking, Luis CdeBaca, when he met university academics and a Fairfax reporter in Auckland.”

But the dirty tricks didn’t stop there, as the media were faced by intransigence from the New Zealand authorities.

The Sunday Star-Times reported it had asked the ombudsman to intervene after Maritime New Zealand sought \$3040 for files requested under the Official Information Act relating to foreign vessels.

Study shows “routine lies”

At the same time, Auckland University researchers have released the results of their own studies into the joint venture fishing industry.

Their report “Not in New Zealand waters, surely?” looked at the operations of the Sajo Oyang Corporation of Korea.

This company operated the Oyang 70, which sank last year off New Zealand with the loss of six lives.

Senior lecturer Dr Christina Stringer and PhD candidate Glenn Simmons, working with fishing industry figures, carried out official information act requests and interviews, as well as getting paperwork that showed that New Zealand officials were lied to by fishing operators.

The researchers also found joint venture vessels were involved in illegal dumping and “high grading”, throwing quota and by-catch fish overboard in the hope of getting higher value catches later.

Beatings and sexual abuse took place, and officers refused to get medical treatment for injured crew members.

A New Zealand official quoted in the study described a vessel as a “slave ship” and “a floating freezer” with slum like conditions.

The researchers also investigated the situation of the widow and family of one of the crew who died in the Oyang 70 sinking in 2010.

“Eula” (not her real name), who approached the manning agent for insurance and compensation to assist her family, was sexually blackmailed.

In 1999 Eula had helped her husband “Mohammed” get a job on the Oyang 70 through a manning agent.

She had to sell a wedding gift to pay the agent’s fees.

The agent would take up to 50 per cent of wages as a fee.

The study revealed that a foreigner on an FCV could expect to earn between \$6700 and \$11,600 a year while a foreigner working on a New Zealand-flagged fishing boat would earn between \$60,000 and \$80,000.

The full report is available online at <http://docs.business.auckland.ac.nz/Doc/11-01-Not-in-New-Zealand-waters-surely-NZAI-Working-Paper-Sept-2011.pdf>

A long history of problems

Since 1986 New Zealand fishing has operated under the Quota Management System.

Joint ventures involve New Zealand quota holders working with overseas operators and engaging foreign vessels and crews to catch their quota.

The Maritime Union has noted a number of problems with the system. Overseas crew are exploited as cheap labour in the industry.

While overseas crew work in and nearby New Zealand waters, and come into New Zealand ports to offload catch and take on-board supplies, they are outside effective regulation and protection of New Zealand law and New Zealand authorities.

Other concerns include the environmental standards of overseas operators, the displacement of New Zealand workers, a race to the bottom on wages and conditions, and the health and safety standards aboard overseas vessels. This is a result of the “out of mind, out of sight” attitude from industry and regulators.

As overseas crew are not New Zealand citizens, and are not in a position to advocate for their own interests, their rights are overlooked.

Extensive studies and reports by Government, labour and environmental organizations, show the abuse and exploitation of maritime crews, especially in the fishing sector, is a major global issue. It is a common theme of IUU (illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing, that if a vessel has problems in one area, those problems run through to other areas of its operation.

The following incidents are a selection of some recent examples of fishing crew harm, exploitation and abuse within and around New Zealand waters.

May–July 2011

In May 2011, Southern Storm Fishing held a “media event” in Dunedin where journalists were invited on board to inspect their new vessel, the Oyang 75 that replaced the Oyang 70 that sank in 2010. But less than two months later, in July 2011, the crew abandoned the Oyang 75 en masse in Lyttelton, claiming physical and verbal abuse and underpayment. It has been reported that the Oyang 75 is also under investigation by the Ministry of Fisheries over allegations it discarded fish at sea.

July 2011

Overseas crew members left the Shin Ji in Auckland due to underpayment and mistreatment. DOL is investigating. In 2009 the ITF and Maritime Union previously investigated the Shin Ji after 12 Indonesian crew members left the vessel.

December 2010

Five Korean crew are confirmed dead and 17 missing presumed drowned after the No. 1 In Sung sank in the Southern Ocean in unexplained circumstances.

August 2010

Oyang 70 fishing vessel sinks in Southern Ocean. Six deaths. Survivors brought to Lyttelton. Claims of underpayment by surviving crew investigated (Korean, Filipino, Indonesian, Chinese).

June 2009

12 Indonesian fishermen from joint venture fishing vessel Shin Ji leave vessel in Tauranga, citing non-payment of wages, harassment and substandard conditions. NZ\$52,776 back pay obtained for crew by ITF/MUNZ and repatriation to country of origin.

June 2006

Burmese crew aboard Sky 75 in Timaru approach union for help. Wages were unpaid, physical and verbal abuse. 10 Indonesian crew previously jumped ship in Nelson in 2005 with similar claims.

May 2006

Joint venture fishing vessel Malakhov Kurgan involved in crew dispute in Lyttelton. Crew wished to be paid New Zealand minimum wage when working in New Zealand waters. Threats made by Ukraine based employers.

March 2006

9 Indonesian fishermen from Korean fishing vessel Marinui jump ship in Dunedin, claiming severe physical and mental abuse. Crew were being paid US\$6 per day. Repatriation and back pay organized.



The Oyang 70 fishing vessel sank in the Southern Ocean in August 2010 with the loss of six lives in dubious circumstances. Survivors were brought to Lyttelton where claims of underpayment by surviving Asian crew investigated.

January 2004

33-year old Vietnamese fisherman Vo Minh Que drowned near Stewart Island after falling from the trawler Tasnui. Maritime New Zealand reported that poor condition of vessel and lack of safety gear or procedures contributed to his death.

Fixing the industry

Mr Fleetwood says the Maritime Union’s goal for the fishing industry was simple. “We want to have the fishing and processing done by New Zealand operators employing New Zealand workers on decent wages and conditions. We want the phase out of joint ventures. They’ve been a failure, that has resulted in New Zealand being identified internationally as a place where disgraceful practices are condoned.” “If overseas crews are phased out, the abuse, exploitation and underpayment will be solved.”

The original promise of a “New Zealandized” fishing industry never materialized.

Instead we have seen a race to the bottom approach with the exploitation of vulnerable overseas crews, and overseas processing of New Zealand resources. These resources should be providing sustenance and employment for New Zealanders.

The loss of employment opportunities to New Zealand workers has had a bad effect on many local communities, especially at a time of high unemployment.

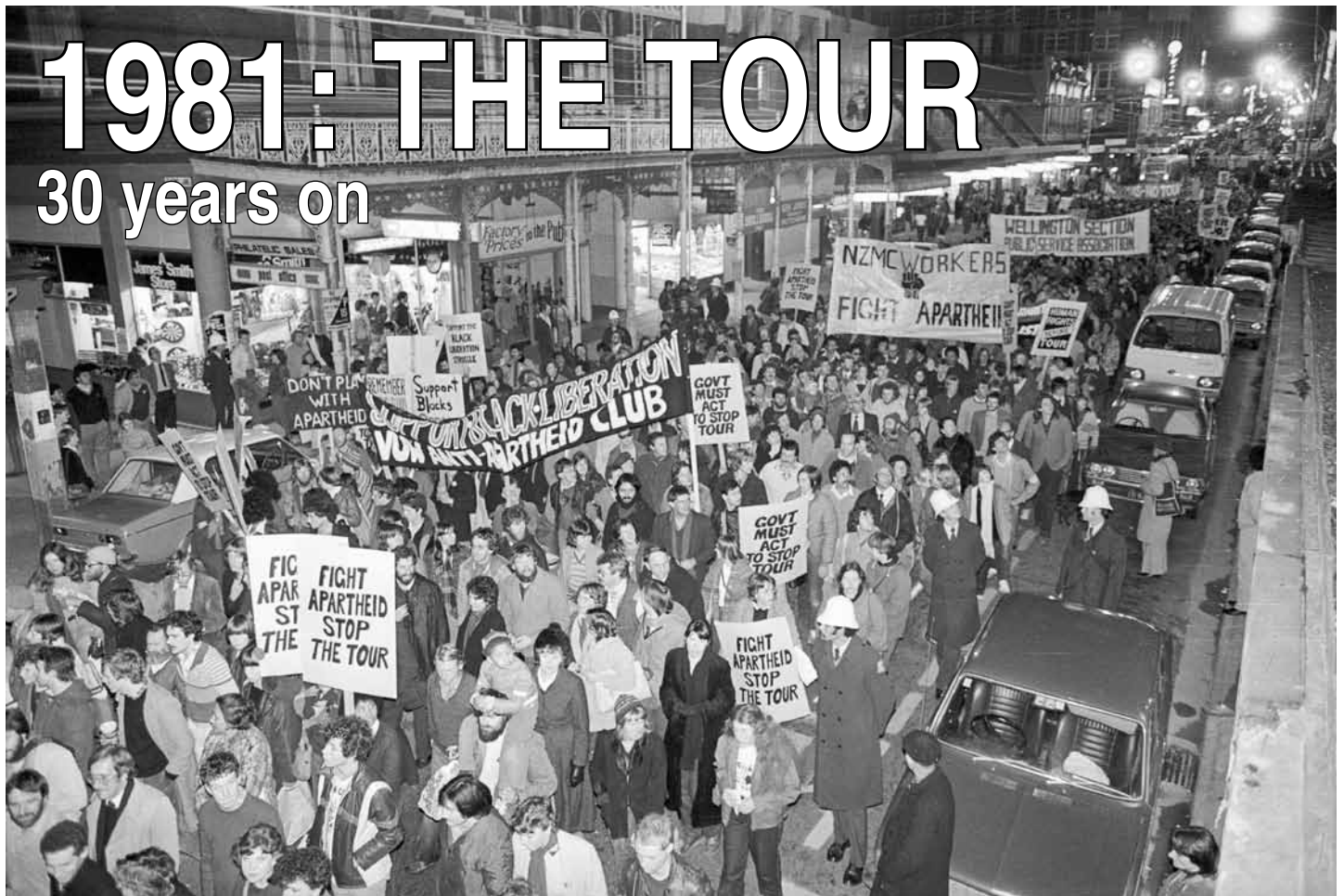
It has been especially hard on young people, and Maori who have had a strong traditional involvement in this industry.

The fact that in some cases the joint venture operators employing overseas crew are iwi affiliated corporates utilizing Treaty settlement quota is especially concerning.

The Maritime Union wants to ensure high standards in the global maritime industry both at sea and on the waterfront, for merchant vessels and fishing vessels. The answer in our view lies with co-ordinated international action to maintain a baseline around wages and conditions, and to regulate the use of labour from deprived communities and developing nations to ensure exploitation does not occur.

At the New Zealand level, the Maritime Union intends to continue to provide assistance to distressed crew, as well as advocating for stronger regulations and enforcement to protect the human and labour rights of overseas crew working within and around New Zealand waters. MUNZ General Secretary Fleetwood says the Union would be working with other bona fide unions and the International Transport Workers’ Federation to discuss ways to organize local and international labour in the industry.

The Maritime Union has already been working with the new fishing industry campaign “From Catcher to Counter” recently launched by two global union federations, the International Transport Workers’ Federation (ITF) and International Union of Food Workers (IUF) (<http://www.itfglobal.org/fish/index.cfm>) The programme seeks to address the fishing industry as whole – from “catcher to counter” – and to increase union membership, improve and standardize conditions, and establish processes to assure that fishing is not “illegal, unregulated and unreported.”



Anti Springbok Tour demonstration, Willis Street, Wellington, 3 July 1981 (Evening Post Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand)

A massive social conflict

The Springbok Rugby Tour in 1981 was one of the biggest social conflicts New Zealand has ever seen.

Massive demonstrations against the apartheid policy of the South African regime took place throughout New Zealand.

These protests were met by violent response from the police force, acting under the conservative National Party government of Robert Muldoon.

Violence also occurred when pro-tour supporters clashed with anti-tour protestors.

Many of those involved have stated it was extremely lucky that no one was killed. Many were seriously injured.

"More than 150,000 people took part in over 200 demonstrations in 28 centres, and 1500 were charged with offences stemming from these protests." (NZHistory.net)

Rugby tour becomes flashpoint

New Zealand in 1981 was a society creaking with pent up change, dominated by a conservative Government.

Rugby played a huge part in traditional society, for both Pakeha (white) and Maori New Zealanders.

The role of rugby in white South African society was likewise an important one.

Sporting contact between South Africa under apartheid and New Zealand had been a contentious issue for many years. Up until 1970, the New Zealand Rugby Union did not select any Maori to tour South Africa.

A major petition had circulated in 1960 against sending a racially selected team. Despite a "No Maoris – No Tour" campaign, the tour went ahead.

The United Nations called for a sporting boycott in 1968, affecting games such as rugby and cricket that were popular in both New Zealand and South Africa.

In July 1969 HART (Halt All Racist Tours) was founded to oppose sporting contact with South Africa.

In 1970 Maori players joined a rugby tour of South Africa after the South African Government made them "honorary whites."

Sport and politics

A Springbok tour to New Zealand was proposed for 1973.

But a newly elected Labour Prime Minister, Norman Kirk, cancelled the tour due to political concerns.

The conservative National Party was elected in 1975, led by the aggressive Robert Muldoon, who stated that a Springbok team would be welcomed to New Zealand by a National Party Government.

In 1976, the All Blacks accepted an invitation to tour South Africa.

As a result, 25 African nations boycotted the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal. The Gleneagles Agreement was the result of a Commonwealth meeting in 1977, which sought to "discourage" sporting contacts with South Africa.

However the New Zealand Government refused to "interfere" with sporting contacts, arguing that sport and politics were separate.

In 1980, the New Zealand Rugby Football Union invited the South Africans to tour the following year.

Organizations such as HART, CARE (Citizens Association for Racial Equality) and NAAC (National Anti-Apartheid Council) were active in a highly organized opposition to the Tour.

Many trade unions including waterfront workers and seafarers also opposed the Tour.

Despite the majority of the anti-tour movement being committed to non-violent protest, two notorious police riot squads were established – Red Squad and Blue Squad.

These squads were later involved in the most violent confrontations of the 1981 Tour.

Wearing helmets and visors, and armed with heavy batons, their tactics created huge controversy.

56 days of resistance

The Springboks were welcomed to the country on 19 July at a Gisborne marae. Civil unrest and protest rapidly increased to an unprecedented degree.

The first game on 22 July saw the Springboks win against Poverty Bay, but violent scenes occurred as anti-tour protestors were confronted by pro-tour spectators.

However on 25 July the next game in Hamilton against Waikato was called off after hundreds of protestors ran onto the pitch and occupied it.

The level of violence rose as missiles rained down on protestors from the rugby spectators.

The protestors were escorted off the field by police and many were confronted and some attacked by angry spectators.

On 29 July in Wellington's Molesworth Street, police used batons on anti-tour protestors for the first time.

The All Blacks won the first test match against the Springboks in Christchurch on 15 August.

The second test in Wellington on 29 August saw heavy protests as 7000 anti-tour protestors gathered in central Wellington.

The motorway was blocked and police and pro-tour rugby supporters clashed with anti-tour protestors.

The third test in Auckland on 12 September saw pitched battle between protestors outside the grounds. A Cessna plane flying overhead dropped flour and smoke bombs on the grounds.

The tour had gone ahead but the cost had been huge.

For 56 days, New Zealanders had been divided against each other.

Millions of dollars had been spent on policing the tour, and the New Zealand Government had been badly embarrassed by the international attention as well as the level of opposition within New Zealand. But although it may have seemed the battle may have been lost, the war against apartheid was about to enter its final phase in South Africa.

The scenes of the conflict had spread around the world, and had become much more than a debate about sporting contacts.

The apartheid establishment in South Africa was shocked at the sight of multiracial protestors standing together. Likewise those struggling against apartheid took heart from the struggle in New Zealand.

Nelson Mandela recalled that when he was in his prison cell on Robben Island and heard that the game in Hamilton had been cancelled, it was as 'if the sun had come out'. (NZHistory.net)



Demonstrators against the Springbok rugby tour turn away from police in Cuba Street, Palmerston North, 8 August 1981 (Dominion Post collection, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand)

Legacy of "The Tour"

The legacy of the 1981 Tour was extensive for New Zealand.

In New Zealand, in the next general election in 1981, the National Party won a narrow majority.

However in a snap election in 1984, the opposition Labour Party was elected in a landslide victory.

The image of rugby took many years to recover, and has never regained the completely dominant role it once had in New Zealand culture, although it is still regarded as the "national game."

The Tour issue had also brought a focus on race relations in New Zealand.

Although the indigenous Maori people had formal equality with the white (Pakeha) majority, racism had been alive and well in New Zealand.

Race relations, historical injustices, and the economic and cultural interests of Maori, were also debated more widely in the years following the 1981 Springbok Tour.

In South Africa, New Zealand resistance to the 1981 Springbok Tour provided symbolic support to the struggle for democracy.

In 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from imprisonment along with other anti-apartheid leaders, and the ban on the ANC and other anti-apartheid organizations was lifted.

In 1994, in the first non-racial general election held in South Africa, Nelson Mandela was elected as President and the ANC received a majority of votes.

Unions and the Tour

The Waterfront Workers' Union and New Zealand Seafarers' Union were both involved in anti-tour protest action, along with other militant unions.

Former Seafarers' Union President Dave Morgan says the seafarers participated in various demos.

"They resolved to take strike action when they were in port when a match was on." For the last demonstration, the seafarers agreed to reconvene their Wellington stopwork meeting at the Overseas Passenger Terminal on the day of the test. Around 300 seafarers marched from the Terminal to Kent Terrace to join the march, ending up on the motorway occupation. Maritime Union Wellington Branch Assistant Secretary John Whiting was working on the Wellington waterfront in 1981 and was a member of the WWU branch executive.

He says the branch had strongly opposed apartheid throughout the years preceding the tour, with a leadership including Jimmy Milne and George Goddard.

During the Tour, watersiders were active in the Stop the Tour movement.

He says he was at the Molesworth Street demonstration along with many other watersiders and unionists.

The dispute caused difficulties for many members who had strong connections with local rugby clubs.

While active opposing the Tour, it didn't affect his interest in the game.

"The day after the Tour finished I went down to see the provincial match."

ITF Dockers and FPC meeting

13–16 June 2011, Buenos Aires

By Joe Fleetwood
General Secretary

Day 1 Dockers' Section

I attended the Dockers' section as a committee member.

The meeting was opened by chair Paddy Crumlin, who thanked all for taking the time out of their busy schedules to attend and noted the volcanic ash eruptions that had disrupted travel for many.

Paddy is a big promoter of you can only have a say and call upon the International for solidarity and support if you attend and put your issues in front of the International.

He also stressed the need and importance to organise the full transport chain including air, sea, road, and rail sectors. A minute silence was held for fallen comrades, including victims of workplace accidents and natural disasters. Previous reports were read and adopted as true and correct.

Ports of Convenience (POCs)

The meeting then heard from ITF Dockers Secretary Frank Leys who spoke about the world industry then handed over to Assistant Secretary Jessie Fenn on the Ports of Convenience (POC) Campaign and POC mapping project.

The POC work plan included health and safety, trade union rights, job security, casualisation, privatisation and unfair competition.

Global network terminals (GNTs)

Global network terminals (GNTs) are being organized through building regional activities in a global frame work. This requires tools, including continuing research and networking to identify strengths and weaknesses both workers and employers.

The next stage is engagement.

Currently 42% of workers don't have collective agreements in terminals and 34% still unknown CBA's in GNTs.

The GNTs are Hutchinson Ports Holdings (25 countries, 51 Ports), PSA International (16 countries, 28 Ports), DP World (31 countries, 50 Terminals) and APM (34 countries, 54 terminals.)

There have been some successes in the GNT campaign in ports around the world. Isabel Cortes from the ITF communications department spoke about how communications were being improved.

There was a new GNT website <http://www.itfglobal.org/dockers/gnt.cfm> and an updated Docker's Section webpage on the ITF site.

All affiliates were reminded they need to identify a GNT – POC coordinator for their countries and there was a need for funding.

It is very important to organise GNT terminals to protect workers' rights and conditions, and to prevent the privatization of ports and outsourcing and exploitation of labour.

Paddy Crumlin noted the importance of the Dockers' section to the ITF.

New Zealand report

I gave an overview of the situation in New Zealand ports and shipping, and the political issues we face.

These include emergency regulations rammed through under urgency, including the part or full sale of New Zealand assets to pay for natural disasters.

Ports must stay in the people's hands.

I stated the importance of re-electing a Labour-led Government.

This report was supplemented by RMTU National President Aubrey Wilkinson.

New Zealand Unions look forward to the challenges that lie ahead for us. We will stand up and fight back because it is the right thing to do.

"If not us who, if not now, when."

International reports

Some other reports included the struggle in Latin American ports against privatization and violence against dockers, and a Canadian report that noted the threat of the "Dubai model" where temporary workers were brought into a country with no rights, exploited, and used to drive down wages and conditions.

Health and safety

Health and safety is the unifying theme for the POC and GNT campaigns.

Frank Leys led the discussion on ideas to improve health and safety in ports, including implementing ILO standards, free protective gear, health and safety committees and reporting of incidents. Delegates Alvin Sinclair (Jamaica), Wilmer Esteves (Peru) and Veronica Mesatywa (South Africa) spoke on the problems for port workers in less developed countries, and emphasized that accidents were often the result of casualization of the workforce.

Training in the ports sector

Frank Leys updated delegates on the ITF's work to develop better International Labour Organization (ILO) guidelines for training in the port sector.

Container Safety

The weight, packing and securing of containers was being discussed by the ILO and International Maritime Organization (IMO) with union input. There was a plan to make the weighing of containers compulsory for safety reasons.

Port security

The IMO had released a new maritime security manual which would be monitored to ensure there were no negative effects on workers.

Day 2 Dockers' Section

Aegon pension campaign

FNV Secretary Nik Stam representing the Dutch dockers reported on the Aegon campaign his union has been running for a few years now.

Nik reported they have successfully recovered 500 million euro from Aegon for members.

Multinational corporation Aegon bought their pension plan and stole 770 million euro of members' pension funds.

FNV are still campaigning for the return of the 270 million euro of members' money.

Cargo handling

Dockers are still confronted with seafarers doing dockers' work. This was noted as being a serious ongoing issue.

Ray Familathe of the ILWU said this had to remain a high priority for the Flag of Convenience campaign.

The relationship between Flag of Convenience crews and their unions was part of the issue that had to be resolved.

Natural disasters

The rest of the day was dominated by discussion of the natural disasters that have hit many countries and ITF affiliates. We saw some of the terrible devastation from the Japanese tsunami and nuclear explosions in a presentation that included live footage.

You could have heard a pin drop in the hall, and all watching were affected by the suffering of the people of Japan in these events.



ILWU International President Robert McEllrath is arrested and manhandled by local police on 7 September 2011 while leading US dockers in their struggle to defend jobs in the Port of Longview, on the west coast state of Washington, USA. Maritime Union of New Zealand General Secretary Joe Fleetwood wrote to the ILWU saying MUNZ was appalled at the actions of police acting in collusion with multinational corporation EGT in the disgraceful attack on the ILWU protest. Congratulations to all ILWU brothers and sisters for the active defence of decent jobs against predatory global corporates – international solidarity is the key to defeating these attacks. For more information, see <http://www.ilwu.org>

Day 1 Joint Fair Practices Committee

The FPC is the joint meeting of both Seafarers and Dockers, and is the governing body for our sections. ITF President and joint chair Paddy Crumlin opened the meeting and made special mention of the lives lost in the Japanese earthquake and tsunami. He also praised the release of Iranian union leader Osanloo Mansur. Paddy Crumlin introduced the idea of a Maritime Round Table group to make ITF work in this sector more effective and active. Nik Stam suggested new technology and training in the port sector as two topics for discussion under this new system. A number of motions were discussed and endorsed. The campaign to support the Japanese dockworkers at the Port of Mishima-Kawano, Japan, who were under threat from deregulation and port rationalization. Dockworkers in Peru had regained the right to collective bargaining after 22 years of struggle including the deaths of trade union leaders. The attacks upon unions and officials in Guatemala were discussed, never forgetting Comrade Pedro Zamora killed in the struggle.

Support from the ITF for comrades in Peru and Guatemala would be continued. A resolution about Piraeus Container Terminal secured by Cosco Pacific Non Union operated.

Other topics discussed were the Faroe Islands International ship register (FAS), the declaration of Turkish International ship register as FOC, Piracy and the repercussions on Seafarers and the ILO Minimum wage for an Able Seafarer.

Women's Committee

ITF women's officer Alison McGarry spoke on the women's committee which worked within the ITF to build union density and power. There had been a good increase in attendance at ITF women's committee meetings, with three main priorities being mapping the effects of the global financial crisis on women workers, strategic organizing and developing a women's leadership programme.

Youth organizing

Dockers' youth delegate Ommond Stokka (Norway) said the main priorities for youth were safety, training and permanent jobs.

He said there needed to be more attention paid to youth and proposed that affiliates elect youth committees, and include youth delegates to conferences and meetings.

ITF structure

Stephen Cotton gave an in-depth review of ITF financials, then a very lengthy debate was had on the new structure of the ITF for the future. Seafarers' and Dockers' section reports were delivered and endorsed. The IBF (International Bargaining Forum) was debated and high priority was given to piracy on the high seas. Chair of the Asia Pacific Offshore Task Force Group (OTFG) Mick Doleman of the MUA delivered a full and in-depth report and overview of all the work the OTFG has been conducting round the world on behalf of Chair, Norrie McVicar. As there was no more business to be conducted the Chair summed up the last 5 days, then thanked all for their attendance and wished a safe trip home.

Contributions welcome.

All members are welcome to send in contributions and suggestions to **The Maritimes**. We need photos, letters, articles, comments and anything else you can think of.

If there is something you'd like to see in **The Maritimes**, tell us!

Mail
PO Box 27004,
Wellington,
New Zealand

Email
victor.billot@munz.org.nz

Fax (09) 9251125

ITF Seafarers' and FPC meeting 13–16 June 2011, Buenos Aires

By Garry Parsloe
National President

I attended the ITF's FPC and associated meetings in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in June 2011.

On the first day Monday 13 June I attended the first of the Seafarers' Sector meetings.

The host country Argentina welcomed everyone to the week of meetings.

The first agenda item was piracy and armed robbery.

The period that Seafarers are detained for has increased and the level of violence directed at captured Seafarers has increased.

Attacks directed at ships running the gauntlet have been significantly increased, as has the violence which is being directed at them to try and get the ship to stop. Some Seafarers are being systematically tortured as part of the negotiating process and some are being savagely punished by the pirates.

The pirates have extended their area of operation through the use of pirated ships (mother ships) and the crews are used as human shields.

This has enabled them to continue their operations during the Southern Monsoon. In three cases that have been reported there were 50, 61 and 100 pirates on the hijacked mother ship.

A number of Seafarers have been murdered in cold blood.

Hostages have been killed and reports say that the pirates will kill them all if they are attacked.

In a recent case, following a ransom payment, the Panamanian Flagged ship "Asphalt Venture" was released and despite the owners concluding dialogue with the pirates for the full release of 15 crew members and the vessel, the Master reported that 6 officers were taken ashore with the pirates.

A growing number of vessels are now carrying private armed security guards. The International Bargaining Forum (IBF) has agreed an extended risk zone in addition to the previous IBF high risk area in the new agreement.

For some ships, this requires the provision of protective measures over and above the Industry best management practice (BMP). The agreement does give Seafarers an option to leave the vessel for its passage through the internationally recognized transit corridor.

This may need to be reviewed following the "Asphalt Venture" case.

We spent all day on the issue of piracy with a wide discussion from delegates especially around the right of the Seafarer to refuse to go into any area of conflict. The Seafarer's safety must be paramount. Day two Tuesday 14 July opened with an overview of the work of the ITF in the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

The next session was "Climate Change". This session raised a lot of debate especially around Global Shipping emissions.

The next agenda item was "ILO Developments".

The Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) has been ratified by twelve countries and therefore, needs a further eighteen countries to ratify it for it to come into force.

Only Switzerland has to date, ratified the MLC in 2011.

The slow rate of ratification is of great concern.

We had a long discussion on ILO 185 which has been ratified by eighteen countries but there have been no additional ratifications in 2011.

In the afternoon of day two we heard reports and discussed the Maritime Round Table, women Seafarers and young workers.

On Thursday 17 June we had the first day of the Fair Practices' Committee. The Fair Practices' Committee is where the Dockers' section and the Seafarers' section come together and discuss the issues that are agreed from day one and day two from the Dockers' and Seafarers' section meetings.

We had a presentation from Steve Cotton, Seafarers' Secretariat on the financial situation of the ITF, total ITF expenditure and income.

After lunch we had a session on ITF ship inspections, a Flag of Convenience campaign update, an update from the Seafarers' section meeting, an update from the Dockers' section meeting, an Off Shore Task Force Group report and a Cruise Ship Task Force report.

All of the above issues were discussed at length and the motions contained within the reports carried by the committee. Once again the ITF Maritime meetings were positive and productive.



Water and wages

**ITF Inspectorate Report by Grahame McLaren
New Zealand ITF inspector**

Cap Pasado

This is a classic case of there are always two sides to every story.

I received a phone call from the port of Tauranga from a crew member who informed me that the crew were being limited to 1 litre of drinking water per day. I called ITF Contact Richard Rankin who kindly agreed to visit the vessel and look into the situation.

The Captain was uncooperative and would not provide any documentation other than a crew list. When asked about the drinking water limit, he told Richard that this was totally false and that there was not a 1 litre per day limit, but in fact the limit was 1.5 litres per day.

He could see nothing wrong with this and stated that 1.5 litres of water a day was enough for anyone.

Richard told him that this was totally unacceptable, the Captain then told him that he was too busy to talk further as there were several surveys underway on board. I contacted the agent and told him of our concerns, he agreed that the situation was unacceptable and promised to talk to the Captain and get back to me.

I told him to tell the Captain that if the matter was not resolved ASAP the vessel would be going nowhere.

The agent called back a short while later and told me there was no problem, and that the crew could have as much water as they wanted.

He explained that the complaint was over bottled water and not the ship's water which he assured me was totally fit for drinking, and that there was 240 ton on board.

He also mentioned that as the company was under no obligation to provide bottled water, the Captain thought he was being generous by providing the litre and a half per day.

Southern Pasifika

A situation arose at the port of Auckland with this vessel after it was arrested by drydock contractors Babcocks over non payment of monies owed for a recent drydocking.

The vessel is covered by an ITF agreement. Receivers were appointed by the high court to sell the vessel.

The crew were owed wages, so I lodged a back pay claim with the German owners for the US\$65,076.98 that was owed up to 6 May. Despite the claim being submitted several times no reply ever came from the owners.

I was also contacted by the agents and receivers who both informed that the men had no money for incidentals or anything else for that matter.

Things looked unlikely to improve without legal representation able to petition the courts on the crews behalf and to lodge their back pay claim against the eventual sale of the vessel in court.

With this in mind I contacted ITF London to request that we retain Auckland based maritime lawyer Pauline Barratt who had previously done a good job for us with another arrested vessel (the Annapurna) in 2009.

This was approved and Pauline's first successful task was obtaining the crew an advance of US\$320 against wage entitlements.

To cut a long story short, the vessel was eventually sold and all wages owing paid, the final total being US\$106,856.

The crew have now been repatriated and the vessel underwent a name change from Southern Pasifika to Jule around 1 August 2011.

Branch and local contacts

Whangarei

Mobile: 021 855121
Fax: 09 459 4972
Address: PO Box 397, Whangarei
Email: ben.hathaway@munz.org.nz

Auckland Local 13

Phone: 09 3034 652
Fax: 09 3096 851
Mobile: 021 326 261 (President Garry Parsloe)
021 760 886 (Secretary Russell Mayn)
021 670002 (Walking Delegate D. Phillips)
Address: PO Box 1840, Shortland Street,
Auckland 1140
Email: garry.parsloe@munz.org.nz
russell.mayn@munz.org.nz
dave.phillips@munz.org.nz

Mount Maunganui

Phone: 07 5755 668
Fax: 07 5759 043
Mobile: 0274 782308
Address: PO Box 5121, Mt. Maunganui
Email: selwyn.russell@munz.org.nz

Gisborne Local 38

Mobile: 025 6499697
Address: 5 Murphy Road, Gisborne
Email: dein.ferris@munz.org.nz

New Plymouth

Mobile: 021 233 8193
Address: PO Box 6084, New Plymouth
Email: mark.larkin@munz.org.nz

Napier

Phone/Fax: 06 8358 622
Mobile: 027 6175441
Address: PO Box 70, Napier
Email: bill.connelly@munz.org.nz

Wellington

Phone: 04 3859 288 (Secretary Mike Clark)
04 8017 619 (Asst. Secretary John Whiting)
Fax: 04 3848 766
Mobile: 0274 538222 (Secretary Mike Clark)
021 606379 (Asst. Secretary John Whiting)
Address: PO Box 27004, Wellington
Email: mike.clark@munz.org.nz
john.whiting@munz.org.nz

Wellington Stores and Warehouse Local 21

Phone: 04 3859 520
Fax: 04 3848 766
Address: PO Box 27004, Wellington

Nelson

Fax: 03 5472104
Mobile: 027 6222691
Address: PO Box 5016, Nelson
Email: ken.knox@munz.org.nz

Lyttelton Local 43

Phone: 03 3288 306
Fax: 03 3288 798
Mobile: 0274 329620
Address: PO Box 29, Lyttelton
Email: les.wells@munz.org.nz

Timaru

Phone/Fax: 03 6843 364
Mobile: 021 2991091
Address: PO Box 813, Timaru
Email: tony.townshend@munz.org.nz

Port Chalmers Dunedin Local 10

Phone: 03 4728 052
Fax: 03 4727 492
Mobile: 0274 377601
Address: PO Box 44, Port Chalmers
Email: phil.adams@munz.org.nz

Bluff

Phone/Fax: 03 2128 189
Mobile: 027 4475317
Address: PO Box 5, Bluff
Email: ray.fife@munz.org.nz

New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Biennial Conference

Wellington 18–19 August 2011



Maritime Union of New Zealand representatives at the CTU conference, August 2011, from left Wellington Branch Assistant Secretary John Whiting, National President Garry Parsloe and Wellington Branch Secretary Mike Clark

by Garry Parsloe National President

On the 18-19 August 2011, I attended the CTU conference held at the Mercure Hotel, Wellington, together with Wellington Branch Secretary Mike Clark and Wellington Branch Assistant Secretary John Whiting.

The opening address was from CTU President Helen Kelly who spoke on the struggles that the working class faces in the current environment.

The rich are getting richer and the poor poorer, and the ruling class is of course not going to release the current system that allows this imbalance to continue.

Helen went on to address the Pike River Disaster, Union membership, Union density, Collective Agreements, political campaigns, organising workers, unemployment and the return of a Labour led Government.

The next speaker was CTU Secretary Peter Conway. Peter gave a conference outline and then expanded on procedural matters. We had a report on the elections of officers, the financial report, a video on Fairness@ Work and Workers' Rights, and the Biennial report.

After morning smoko on day one Green Party Co-leader Metiria Turei addressed the conference.

Metiria stressed the importance of how workers vote in the General Elections. Metiria stated that the Green Party will work alongside and with the Trade Union movement as it has in the past. Metiria conclude by addressing all the good work that the Green Party has done for workers and gave a commitment to continue into the future.

After lunch on day one we had a presentation from the President of the Australian Council of Trade Unions Ged Kearney.

Ged addressed some of the pressures that workers are under from their employers. Ged stated that the Australian Labour Industrial Relations legislation allows these attacks on Australian workers. Ged went on to talk about problems in Fiji and how Australia and New Zealand must work together to help workers and Unions in Fiji who are under constant attack. She concluded by stating that the Union movement must work hard to elect a Labour led Government and then hold that Government to account.

Neville Donaldson from the SFWU gave a report on the fishing industry and all the problems contained within that industry. Paul Goulter from the NZEI gave a report on National Standards in the education sector.

The last session on day one was headed "Unions and the Media".

The panel was made up with Jon Johansson, Bomber Bradbury, Sean Plunket and Helen Kelly.

The speakers spoke on how best Unions should promote themselves.

There is a need for Unions and the Trade Union movement to change the way that they sell the benefits of being in a Union. We do not need to change our principles or our values, just how we plan our campaigns and how we apply our strategies.

The second day Friday 18 August opened with an address from Ross Wilson on UnionAid.

Ross talked about all the good work that UnionAid is doing in Burma and other countries that need this type of assistance. James Ritchie from the Dairy Workers' Union spoke on Global Union Federations (GUF). GUFs negotiate with Trans National Companies to deliver decent jobs as opposed to precarious work.

CTU economist Bill Rosenberg spoke on the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPPA). Bill expanded on why most Tariffs will be gone. Australia is most disappointed in its Free Trade Agreements.

Leader of the Labour Party Phil Goff addressed the conference. Phil opened his speech by talking about all the damage that the present Government is doing to workers, their Unions and to every working class family in New Zealand. Phil went on to expand on the proposed Capital Gains Tax, the minimum wage, creating jobs, safety before profits, the 90 day bill and industrial relations legislation. Phil stated that if Labour is elected they will immediately remove the 90 day bill. After morning smoko on day two there was a presentation from CTU Vice President Richard Wagstaff on the remits around "The Workplace", "Support for Public Services" and "The Challenges We Face".

Richard concluded by stating that there is a real need to create jobs now so as to secure a balanced economy for New Zealand into the future.

During the day we dealt with remits to conference, had panel discussions, a conference feedback session and conclusions from Helen Kelly. As you can see there was a packed agenda and delegates worked hard to deliver on a most productive conference.



United Steelworkers promote global solidarity

By Joe Fleetwood
General Secretary

3,000 United Steelworkers (USW) delegates from across North America met with their leadership at an International Convention 15 August to 18 August 2011 in Las Vegas, USA.

I attended on behalf of MUNZ. We were invited as we are part of the Maritime and Mining Initiative which brings together some of the world's most effective and active unions.

This was first time MUNZ has been represented at a USW conference. The USW represents 850,000 members in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and Aruba, and has a large veterans section as well.

It is the largest private sector union in North America, involved in diverse industries including metals, mining, rubber, paper and forestry, oil refining, service and municipal workers.

“Stand up, fight back”

The theme of the USW convention was “Stand Up, Fight Back.”

On the opening day, USW International President Leo Gerard said that American workers were under attack, and USW members must stand up and fight for good jobs, decent wages, workers rights to organize and strike without fear of scabs taking their jobs.

The convention passed a resolution to “stand up and fight back” for social and economic justice, support for families, pro-worker legislation, economic stimulus programs, properly funded Government services, regulation of the financial and corporate sector, and “fair trade” that ensured the rights of the workers and the protection of the environment.

House of Representatives Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of the Democratic Party addressed the Conference that afternoon following a video greeting from U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid.

This first day also included international updates of the USW's work.

The USW's are working with Los Mineros, the major Mexican mining union, who are under attack from the Mexican State.

The USW has signed a new alliance agreement with Los Mineros that brings them one step closer to a united union throughout North America.

Future direction of Union

Day two was about delegates determining the policies and future direction of the Union. Delegates rejected resolutions to reduce dues as this would reduce the Union's ability to serve its members. There was support for international solidarity and the investment of worker capital to give worker security.

Former USW President Lynn Williams spoke. He is active in the large USW veterans organization who are called SOAR (Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.)

International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF) General Secretary Jyrki Raina from Finland spoke on international solidarity.

Unite UK General Secretary Len McCluskey, a former Liverpool docker, spoke about the recently formed a transatlantic Union alliance with the USW called “Workers Uniting” to confront global capital.

Unite is Britain and Ireland's biggest union with 1.5 million members.

The president of CUT, Brazil's largest trade union federation, Artur Henrique dos Santos, was another international speaker. Brazil has a massive and growing economy, and has elected pro-worker left Governments.

Wednesday morning featured a speech from AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. The AFL-CIO is one of the two big union federations in the USA.

Ken Georgetti, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, also spoke.

U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent, is the only socialist in the Senate and said high unemployment was the most serious issue facing the USA.

‘Class war’ against working people

Speakers noted how working Americans had to defend themselves against a “class war” by big business against the working class, and how America was not broke, it was being made broke by the mega rich avoiding taxes and an out of control finance sector.

President Barack Obama addressed the convention by video on Wednesday afternoon and thanked steelworkers for “fighting the good fight for working families.”

A video, featuring Jack Layton leader of Canada's centre left New Democratic Party was shown. Sadly Jack Layton, who was ill with cancer, died recently.

The convention closed on Thursday 18 August, with presentation of the USW's annual Wellstone Award to actor and social activist Danny Glover and broadcast commentator Ed Schultz.

The USW convention was a great experience.

Despite being unions of very different sizes, the USW and MUNZ work together as part of the Mining and Maritime Initiative.

We extend our thanks to the USW for their invitation to attend to see how their union operates and also the opportunity to renew our friendship with this heavy hitting union.

It was interesting to see how the struggles of American and Canadian workers, and workers from all around the world, are so similar.

The big theme of this conference relevant to MUNZ was how unions have to work globally to combat global capitalism. Unity is strength.

More information at www.usw.org

Auckland Local 13

by **Russell Mayn**

The port and the World Cup

The Auckland Waterfront is a busy place normally but with the start of the Rugby World Cup, cargo operations have taken a back stage as Party Central kicks in. The air of festivity is welcomed and enjoyable and there was an expectation that the opening night would be one to remember, although for some people it will be remembered for all the wrong reasons.

While there are many people that wish the Waterfront was solely there for this type of event and for hotels, apartments and restaurants, the beauty of this event is that it is being celebrated in the middle of a vibrant working port where visitors can watch cargo vessels plying their trade and hear the day to day noises associated with a working port.

The Auckland Waterfront is not a sterile manicured show pony, but a living and breathing industrial hub that supplies the life blood to industry through the wharves and the men and women who work them – 24/7, 52 weeks a year, every day except Christmas Day.

We should also spare a thought for our members who work on the Ferries.

This will be a very demanding time for them as they work the late hours required to move the thousands of fans to and from the matches.

Collective agreements

Whilst all this is going on in the background, we are working away at settling a number of Collective Agreements. It seems that as soon as we knock off one, another pops up.

The difficulty is that everyone is aware of the CPI and the increase costs that workers face, apart from some employers who always plead poverty.

I don't know how many times I have heard "if we have to agree a wage increase this will mean redundancies, we are not making any money, it is really tough out there."

The interesting point is that we took one of these employers to task and said "OK, we believe you, we will not seek an increase until the end of the financial year, if as you say the Company is just breaking even the end of year result will show this.



Labour MP Carol Beaumont, MUNZ Local 13 Secretary Russell Mayn, MUNZ National President Garry Parsloe and Labour MP Sue Moroney at the Labour Party Race Day at the Ellerslie Race Course

If the Company posts a profit then our members your employees want a share by way of backdating a fair and reasonable increase based on the profit posted."

You guessed it, the answer was no.

This leaves you with more than a suspicion that perhaps all is not as it sounds.

We can only suppose that our members and the Union are not hearing the full facts.

As yet this Collective has not been settled, but there is a lot of water to flow under the bridge. We will keep you updated.

On the other side of the ledger there are a number of employers who are willing to settle their agreements reasonably.

Unfortunately they are not the majority, and extensive debate is still required to reach settlement.

Drug and alcohol policy

What has become evident through the latest rounds of negotiations is the drive from employers to modify or introduce Drug and Alcohol testing policies.

The push now seems to be for random testing based on urine testing.

Let's make it clear. The Maritime Union of New Zealand has a "Not at Work Mate Policy" that we support.

We want our members to work in a safe environment.

What we support is a fair testing system that is based on impairment, not on a test that works off historical data and works quite differently from other tests within a policy.

By this I refer to the difference between breathalyzers for alcohol compared to urine testing for cannabis.

Saliva testing for cannabis I believe is a far fairer test, and if companies are willing to engage with us using this test we can work constructively to ensure a safe workplace for all concerned.

The importance of having a robust assistance programme in place to assist anyone who may have a problem should not play second fiddle to the testing regime.

The positives for all concerned are well worth the time. The object has to be rehabilitation as the first port of call.

Personally I do not agree with ability of the employer to introduce these testing regimes by way of company policy or values.

These policies should become part of the Collective Agreement, and be agreed by both parties, not forced by way of company policy.

Again, there are employers who are willing to engage and seek an agreed policy that not only works for the company but works for our membership, and then there seems to be the companies who totally buy into the spin from the drug collection agencies who are plying for business.

If you were to be cynical and take an extended view of Health & Safety, not only in our industry but across New Zealand and tallied up the number of serious injuries, and questioned whether the same amount of effort was placed into prevention that was placed into drug and alcohol testing we may have a different set of statistics.

I don't have the answer to this question but deregulation and competitive pricing have led to shortcuts. As mentioned in previous articles there is no solace in saying I told you so.

"Not at Work Mate" is the message and when backed up with mutually agreed policies and procedures along with a proactive education programme, we may start to make some real progress in this area.

Interport

February next year sees the annual Interport Sports Tournament hosted by the Tauranga Branch in the sunny Bay of Plenty.

I hope to see all the old faces and a number of new ones at what can only be termed as a sporting smorgasboard to rival the World Rugby Cup.

The whisper is that they are considering closing Sulphur Point in order to provide the many players and supporters for a party central that befits the occasion.

General Election

As the General Election looms ever closer remember get on the roll, and if you are a shift worker, vote early.

If we are to elect a Government that will support working class families, all we have to do is turn up on the day, so mobilize your families, friends and neighbours.

"Better Red than Dead"



Maritime Union of New Zealand Local 13 members at their September 2011 stopwork meeting (photo by Dave Phillipps)



Judy Smith, the partner of MUNZ member Garry Glozier, created this intricate mosaic design. Judy has been creating mosaics for three years. The base is made from an old round wooden mirror backing (1000mm diameter) and 30 wall tiles broken with every individual piece hand filed over a ten day period. The mosaic has been donated to Auckland Branch Local 13.



Maritime Union Napier Branch President Bruce Winkley hands a sponsorship cheque to Angela Boyd, with best of wishes of the national and branch membership (photo by Bill Connolly)

Napier

by **Bill Connolly**

Around and about

We are expecting the first tourist vessel to arrive in the port next month and a further seven are listed for the month of October. With the French, Canadian and Japanese teams playing in the World Cup at Napier, this should give a welcome boost to tourist numbers in the city, which will please the local business fraternity in both Napier and Hastings.

C3: Formerly Toll Logistics New Zealand Limited

Negotiations for a new Collective Agreement are almost complete and we are just tidying up a few loose ends.

Hawke's Bay Stevedoring Services Limited

Their Agreement expired on 31 July 2011 and we are at present going through a restructuring process. Matthew Hardgrave left on 14 August 2011 for personal reasons and we wish Matthew all the success in his future endeavours.

Kelcold Limited

This agreement has now been settled after a long period of negotiations, including two days in mediation.

Angela Boyd

This young lady is a daughter of one of our long standing members, Doug Boyd. She is off to Malaysia in October to represent New Zealand in a six member invitational outdoor bowls team.

The team had to find the cost for their own air fares, so some sponsorship was required.

Angela approached the National Union for sponsorship and was given a \$1000 donation.

The Napier Branch chipped in a further \$500, which almost covered her air fare. Angela will play in both the singles and mixed pairs events.

The Napier Branch wishes Angela all the best in Malaysia and hope she performs well.

Both Angela and her younger sister Mandy are New Zealand representatives, a very talented family, and one of which her father is very proud.

Delayed Xmas Function

On 25 August the Branch held a belated function at the Napier Cosmopolitan Club for the current and past members. We had approximately eighty in attendance and some were the worse for wear by the end of the function, but all were ferried home safely.

Go the All Blacks!

Veterans

By **Terry Ryan**

The Veterans' Section sends a big shout out "thank you" to the Timaru branch for its much appreciated donation to the Association.

The Veterans' Association Annual General Meeting took place at the Point Chevalier RSA on 12 June 2011 with a pleasing turnout of 43 at the meeting and another 100 attending the after match function. Unfortunately there was a reluctance to actually hold office, even though more activity is the call from members.

The previous office holders were all returned unopposed, they being President – Doug Phillips, Vice President – Eric Dunne, Secretary - Terry Ryan, along with Executive members Denis Carlisle, Bill Cunningham, Dave Mora, Ray Munce and Barry Prescott.

The committee is seeking new blood and has been given power to add and fill vacancies by the AGM. So don't be shy - hold your hand up. With six new signings from the Waterfront Reunion, two from Timaru and one from Great Barrier Island, the Veterans' membership now stands at 396.

Veterans are no different to any other group of people. They sometimes shift addresses and/or change phone numbers. Guess what? Sometimes they forget to tell people or associations!

It is of vital importance that you notify us of any changes to addresses or phone numbers. It is not hard. Just ring Local 13 on (09) 303 4652 and Fay will update your details on the register.

Likewise, sickness and accidents. Welfare officer Eric Dunne says we cannot visit or assist in any way if we are unaware of the situation. Please ring or have someone else advise of your situation to the same number as alterations to details.

20th Auckland Waterfront Reunion

The 20th Waterfront Reunion on 12 June 2011 at the Pt. Chevalier RSA was another outstanding day of old memories, along with the bonding of both past and present members working on the ships and wharves around the country.

I believe Labour MP Darien Fenton summed the day up best when she posted on her Facebook that attendance was "good for the soul".

Among those attending were two ladies who have assisted the organising and catering for each and every one of the 20 years - Evonne O'Brian, wife of former RSA President Roy, and Kay Ingley, QSM, now Vice President of the RSA and daughter of former watersider, Bunny Watson.

There was the promise of another loyalty card being given to the union to be treasured in our archives.

Zillah De Silva was able to show her Waterfront Industry Commission identity photo card we were all issued with, which became victims of time making the surviving ones precious.

John Dagg produced the N.Z.W.W.U. badge that nobody could identify until he got to Reg Dunne who recognised it as the badge of the old union.

The Veterans used the occasion to hold their 4th AGM at 1 pm where the current officials were all re-elected unopposed. Six new Veteran members were signed up and all members were urged to spread the word. If you know someone who is not a member, get us their name and address and Fay will send membership forms to them.

Although figures for older members were slightly down, the numbers for current day members were up.

All in all a great afternoon - don't miss the 21st reunion in June 2012.

It will be a special celebration. Well done, Bob Hicks and Kay Ingley, the organisers of the function.



A new ship unloader arrives in Bluff in August 2011 for the Tiwai aluminium smelter. The unloader will replace the previous one which discharges at 230 tonnes – the replacement is capable of 1000 tonnes (photo by Harry Holland)

Bluff

By Ray Fife

World economy

The debt laden developed economies, particularly Europe and now the United States are now causing problems throughout the world.

The dramas that have taken place on the financial markets are really just the sound of investors waking up to fundamental problems in the global economy. It is now dawning on the world's biggest fund managers that there is too much debt weighing on households and governments in the developed world.

They realise there will not be enough economic growth and income to repay those debts over the next 10-20 years. Growth will be much slower and longer than expected. There is a dawning realisation that something is broken at the heart of the global economy. Manufacturing jobs have been exported to lower-paid factories in China and technological innovation replaced workers with machines.

The extra profits made because of these labour costs were shuffled up to those on higher incomes and increasingly to an ageing group of capital owners. Increasingly, wealth and income is being concentrated in the hands of those who can't or won't spend it.

In New Zealand, the share of income going to the top 1 per cent also more than doubled after the mid-1980's to nearly 14 per cent of income by the early 2000's. Last year's tax cuts will have worsened that. The trickle-down theory will not be enough to save capitalism. Even the biggest capitalists are realising that now.

Port update

It's been a long winter down here in the deep south.

We have had a number of severe cold fronts pass over the province, which have disrupted shipping in the port and the movement of freight around the province. Container movements have slowed down, along with fertiliser and log shipments but we are hopeful that these will pick up in spring.

Fuel giant Shell has bought into the search for oil and gas in the Great South Basin by Australian Company OMV.

OMV was looking for another party with deepwater exploration experience. A three dimensional seismic survey will step up the search for fuel and will begin later this year.

The programme will be carried out by the ship Polarcus Alima and is expected to cover about 3000 square kilometres. Exploring a new frontier area is very much a long-term process and there are no guarantees that drilling will take place but hopefully the seismic survey will yield positive results.

Election

A reminder to all members, it is important for everyone to vote in the upcoming General Election.

A vote for a union friendly party is vital and so is a vote to retain MMP.



Snow blankets the Port Otago terminal during the big winter storms of August 2011 (photo by Phil Adams)

Port Chalmers Dunedin

by Phil Adams and Ben George

Snow

Greetings from the South. We recently had two days of snow which brought the port to a standstill for one day. On the Sunday night the Port Company had attempted to work a vessel in the atrocious conditions. After reports of dangerous conditions from driven and shipboard members, the Union advised the company it was stopping and did not start working the vessel again until 1500 hours the following day.

Terminal

The terminal is going through the usual reasonably quiet time but we have been buoyed by the arrival of a new French shipping company CMA/CNG, which is calling with a fortnightly service which will become a weekly service to South East Asia.

We have found the ships very good to work.

During the quiet time extensive training for members is taking place under the guidance of Alan Middleditch and Ben George.

In the terminal we are currently having our marine services going through a review. We have put remits to the company which unfortunately have been treated with contempt by the management. It would be good if they could witness what they do so as to gain an understanding. The good point about the marine services' lads is they are a resilient lot and we will continue to push for a result from their remits.

Port Chalmers Cargo Services

Port Chalmers Cargo Services has been extremely busy servicing log ships and fertilizer vessels and the odd fish boat, which is all good for these lads and should take the mind off one of them who thinks who knows a lot about rugby (a True Southern Man.)

New executive

Our new executive for 2011/2012 is President Ben George, Vice President Stu Crawford, Secretary/Treasurer Phil Adams, Executive members Nick Abernethy, Paul Napier, Kevin O'Brien, Tim Camp and Mark Middleditch. I have found them enthusiastic and available to meet at any time. Ben is finding his feet as President and I am sure he will do a good job. I believe he is a future leader of our Union together with Stu as Vice President who is also starting to show through. As some of us are getting near the end of our working life it is good to see the calibre of those starting to show through. At our last meeting Ben George was nominated onto our national executive, replacing former President Ian Quarrell. Ian still keeps an interest in the branch and like most ex officials still plays his part in situations where he is needed.

Retired members

Recently retired life member Davey Dick approached the branch about forming a retired members' executive to help the branch and also keep those who have retired still involved in MUNZ and this should be encouraged. Davey intends to have a meeting at the retired members' shout and try and form an executive.

Looking at the names of the retired it would be a formidable lineup. Ex President Ray Sinclair, Laurence Forgie, Doug Hannah, Davey Dick, Ex National President Bruce Malcolm, former Vice President Clive Giles – what a lineup. Great to see this happening.

Harbour Cold

Recently we have had staff at Harbour Cold join our branch. Harbour Cold is half owned each by Sealord and Port Otago. After having met with them and listened to their concerns we intend initiating bargaining as soon as possible as their current terms and conditions are less than favorable.

Their delegate Hamish Bannister is doing an excellent job and attended our last stop work meeting.

South Freight – Icon merger

All our members at Southfreight in Dunedin have taken part in a merger with Icon and will take all their current wages and conditions across to the new company – and these are far superior to those of the drivers in the company they have merged with.

Holcim

Recently we have negotiated and settled a two year agreement with our members at the Holcim Cement Depot in Dunedin. Although their numbers are small they are a great bunch and it is a pleasure to represent these members.

Social Committee

Recently the branch held a mid year social which to all reports was a successful night. They are now gearing up to hold the Christmas Social at a venue yet to be confirmed.

If anyone is interested in being on the social committee, talk to Mike Lysaght. In addition in the next week a darts competition for members is to be held at a local hotel and good numbers have entered.

Interport sports tourney

Next year the Interport will be held in Tauranga. Raffles and fund raising activities are taking place and we hope members will support these.

Sheds

Recently our officials have attended meetings at the Sheds as the company is seeking manning changes, along with other issues. Our delegate at the sheds, John Stack, is doing a fine job and a meeting between management and the branch should go a long way to sorting out the issues there.

Deaths

Since the last issue of the Maritimes, the last surviving member from the 1951 lockout has passed away. Gordon (Buck) Forgie who passed away recently was a grand worker and a good member. Although he was the last surviving member from 1951, our branch will not forget what they went through. The reason we are respected today is because of these members. Trevor McFarlane, another retired member, also passed away recently.

Hillside

Our branch has supported recent actions to defend Hillside railway workshops where workers are losing their jobs. This is because rolling stock contracts were given to Chinese firms by KiwiRail management, rather than their own workshops at Hillside and Woburn. Although the public rally and letter writing campaign to the Government may have had some impact, I believe if this dispute had been with our Union we would have had more impact. Unions need to make a stand for members. Union members throughout the country need a militant union to perform and earn respect, otherwise people will question why they are in a Union. MUNZ is prepared to fight and always strives to protect our members wages, jobs and conditions.

Vice President

At our April meeting I was asked to stand for National Vice President. After thinking about it a couple of days I decided I still had something to offer at a national level. I was pleased to know I received the most votes in the first round. However it went to a second round due to the union rules. I wish to thank all those who have rung or emailed to congratulate me on the first victory and the calls have come from seamen and wharfies from north to south. I firmly believe that being an official in our Union you need to be part of our history as tactics learned from them are vitally important and will be for as long as our union lasts. Once again, thank you to all who voted.

Meetings

Our meetings are held every two months and are attended usually by around 50 members. It is a good chance to debate the issues and we hope every other port in the country still have their meetings as it is the backbone to why we are and who we are.



Maritime Union Port Chalmers Dunedin Branch members supporting the rally for jobs at Dunedin's Hillside workshops in the Octagon, Dunedin, 9 July 2011. From left (partly obscured) Keith Adams, holding the banner from left Roy Brown and Richard Jephson.

Drug and alcohol policy

The port company has indicated they will be introducing random testing for drugs and alcohol from 1 November. We have told them we will only be part of it if our national policy changes. They state that it is going ahead and we reply so is our national policy. Saliva testing versus urine testing is a contentious issue.

We have all the proof that saliva is more than adequate but the company insists on urine testing.

That does not take away from the fact we will be adhering to our national policy come 1 November.

We also want the company to be serious about addressing fatigue issues as this is something they do not seem to be taking seriously.

Well, we are.

Holiday unit

Anyone wishing to rent our Queenstown Holiday unit please contact Alan Middleditch (03)4729726 or Steve Smith (021)1804980 for available dates and info, or to request dates for renting.

National elections

26 November is the General Election and our branch members need to start looking at who they will be voting for. It is more than obvious if the "Smiling Assassin" gets back in, the workers will feel the effects.

Remember their 2008 election ad "Time for a change."

I have no doubt that a lot of people voted National and they certainly did get a change, now they don't have a job.

Make sure you are registered to vote and vote for a worker friendly party. That's about it from Port Chalmers. As we look to the future, our local leadership is strong but always remember that shipping is a volatile industry and casualization an ever present threat. Support your officials, attend meetings and, as always if you have a problem on the job, work through your Union.

Gisborne

by Dein Ferris

The Port from our company's view is in our quiet period although I must say the Nissho Iwai vessels (plywood) seem to be picking up a little.

The Gisborne Herald reported on 24 August how our port is making good returns to the local community.

Much of this growth is from log ships, unfortunately worked by non-union ISO. The port is owned by Eastland Group Limited, which in turn is owned by the Eastland Community Trust.

A revaluation of Eastland Port put its value up to \$75.1 million, nearly a three fold increase from \$27.5 million the previous year.

Wellington

by Mike Clark and John Whiting



Wellington Branch Secretary Mike Clark

Elections

The coming weeks are going to see a flurry of political activity as the major parties get down to the nitty gritty and try to secure votes for the November Election.

New Zealand's system of Government is democratic. MPs are chosen in free and fair elections and eligible citizens and permanent residents over 18 years are required to enrol to vote, although actual voting is not compulsory.

Our Union's advice is to enrol if you haven't already done so and to make sure you vote on polling day, Saturday 26 November.

On polling day there is a referendum taking place on the voting system. The first question will ask whether you want to keep MMP or change to another system, the second question asks which of four other voting systems you would choose if New Zealand decides to change from MMP (mixed member proportional). MMP was introduced in 1993 after a similar referendum to this years one. It came about after criticism from the 1978 and 1981 general elections where, on each occasion, the Labour opposition secured more votes than National but National won more seats and remained in power. This in turn led to the setting up of the Royal Commission on the electoral system in early 1985.

This report was completed in December 1986 where it recommended New Zealand adopt the German style MMP system in which each elector would get two votes, one for an electorate MP and one for a party.

The writer would suggest MMP is the fairer of all the options available to voters. Also we need a return to a worker friendly Government committed to reducing unemployment, introducing a minimum wage of \$15 dollars per hour, and retaining state owned assets for future generations.

Fishing industry

On the local scene on the 4 August 2011 Mike Clark attended a Select Committee hearing on the fishing industry. MUNZ General Secretary Joe Fleetwood spoke on the exploitation of foreign workers in the industry.

Maori owned companies were just as likely to employ foreigners and take the work offshore as others.

On Tuesday 23 August Minister of Fisheries Phil Heatley and Labour Minister Kate Wilkinson announced a ministerial inquiry.

The inquiry will examine whether the alleged human rights abuse of foreign crews are damaging New Zealand's international reputation and threatening trading relationship.

It will also look at the application of labour, immigration, maritime safety and fisheries laws.

After the inquiry was announced MUNZ General Secretary Joe Fleetwood said, "Enforceable rules and regulations for labour standards, and the need for New Zealand to benefit from our own resources, including jobs, are the main issues."

Interislander

The Aratere was refloated on 30 July 2011, some 33 metres longer than when it left New Zealand.

A new 3 metre bow section and a 30 metre mid section were inserted during the \$40 million makeover, thus making it the longest in the fleet.

Once completely fitted out, the vessel will boast 600 seats up from 360, rail capacity will increase by 27% and vehicle capacity by 30%.

The new bow will help the Aratere perform more efficiently and reduce wake by up to 25% in the Marlborough Sounds. All three Interisland ferries Aratere, Kaitaki and Arahura are expected to sail around the clock during the World Cup. The company has increased the catering crew by three and the deck and E/R are a work in progress.

The anticipated return of Aratere has been delayed and as I write it is expected about 11 September 2011.

Strait Shipping

The ships Collective Agreement and also the Picton terminal agreement are under negotiation at the present time. We will hopefully have the talks concluded by the end of the month.

While the Aratere has been away, the two Strait vessels have had increased cargoes according to the vessels crew.

The good ship "Monte Stello" which is currently leased to Interislander will finish its lease agreement at the end of September 2011. It will lay up until a buyer is found.

NIWA

Because of the financial restraints that the Government has imposed on them, NIWA is finding it hard to come up with the finances to give our members on their vessel any significant increases in the Collective.

The negotiations have now been in progress for a number of months.

Offshore

As was mentioned in the last issue of Maritimes there has been limited movement on both sides of the Tasman with work for our members.

According to a couple of the Offshore operators there will be some work happening in New Zealand over the summer.

New Zealand Oil & Gas (NZOG) are pressing ahead with exploratory wells in the Taranaki offshore.

OMV along with Shell New Zealand will survey 3000 square kilometers south of Dunedin between December and March using a new 89-metre hydrographic vessel the "Polarus Alimawhich".

The full name for OMV is Osterreichische mineralolver waltung which translates as Austrian mineral oil authority. Quite a mouthful.

New rules for ocean oil exploration

The Government has announced from 25 August 2011 environmental impact assessments for oil and gas drilling in New Zealand's ocean territory will have to be submitted to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA).

It has been reported that operators will also need to comply with the latest drilling safety rules developed in the United States following the inquiries into the Gulf of Mexico disaster.

The rules were interim measures until new legislation is enacted. The full story is reported elsewhere in the Maritimes.

Centreport Collective Agreement

This agreement was ratified by the members and the new rates of pay and backdating have been applied.

The improvements include wage increases of 3% for the 1st year and 3.25% for the 2nd year, an increase in the night rate payment, and a new progression clause providing criteria for the employment of new P24 (permanent part-time) workers from the Company's casual workforce pool.

We believe this clause provides a good mechanism for our casual members to move through to permanency.

The new collective agreement runs to 8 March 2013.

Centreport drug and alcohol testing

Centreport intends to implement random drug and alcohol testing from 1 November 2011.

The random drug test will be done via saliva sampling and will be applied to all Company personnel from the Board of directors to the Company cat! Selection for testing will be through a personal number system implemented by testing provider O K Health.

We have been unsuccessful in amending the testing regimes for post-accident/incident tests and obvious impairment tests. These will remain as per the current drug and alcohol policy (urine testing). What has not helped us during these discussions has been the fact that four post-accident positive drug tests over 11 months has hardened up the Company's stance on the whole matter.

We believe that it is critical that our members employed at Centreport give serious thought as to how recreational drug use can impact on their long term employment and income security.

Centreport Replacements

Further movements under the agreed retirement and replacement process have seen Nick Androustos and Jason Penny move from P24 to P40 permanents and Mike Keepa, Guy Kellog, and Jason Tuau progressing from casual to P24 permanent part-time positions.

Strait Shipping, Picton Terminal Collective Agreement Renewal

Negotiations commenced in Picton during July seeking acceptable wage increases and other improvements for this group of our members who occupy key roles at Strait Shipping dealing with the travelling public and working demanding hours necessitated by the Cook Strait ferry schedules.

Local delegates Donna Collins and Malcolm Barclay strongly articulated the position on behalf of their fellow workers. We are looking to progress this agreement towards settlement arising from the parallel negotiation of the Strait Shipping vessels' collective agreement.

SGS Collective Agreement

This group of members are recent arrivals with us, having transferred across from the National Distribution Union by agreement. Their work roles are key ones connected with discharge of tankers at several berths around Wellington Harbour and also work associated with the bunkering of ships including the Cook Strait ferries. Negotiations with SGS have taken place and a wage offer has been secured with back dating, however other outstanding matters require further talks. The company have advised their availability to get back round the table in the last week of August.



Maritime Union Wellington Branch members supporting the campaign to keep rail manufacturing jobs in New Zealand, Parliament Buildings, Wellington. From left, Bradley Clifford, Wellington Branch Assistant Secretary John Whiting, Peter Torrance and Paul Johannson (photo by Grahame MacLaren)

RMTU campaign

A group of MUNZ Wellington members attended a rally at Parliament in August in support for RMTU petition to Parliament to retain New Zealand jobs and manufacture for rolling stock recently to give support to the RMTU fight to retain New Zealand jobs.

A day for Nelson's Merchant Navy veterans

Nelson seafarers young and old gathered at Nelson's Anzac Park in September to pay their respects to those who had gone before them.

The first of what is planned to be an annual commemoration parade saw a guard of honour consisting of Sea Scouts and Sea Cadets, the raising of the New Zealand Red Ensign, the laying of wreaths, prayers, speeches, a piper and the Last Post and Reveille played.

Merchant Navy Association Nelson Branch President Tom Rowling said the day was about paying homage to the men and women who risked their lives in keeping the trade routes open.

"We will always hold them in the very highest respect and always remember them," Mr Rowling said.

Sea cadet Gabrielle Fisk, 16, said she and her fellow cadets were honored to be part of the ceremony.

"We're showing our respect towards them and saying we respect what they did and all the lives they have lost," Gabrielle said. Squad leader Milo Coldren agreed.

"It is quite an honor to support these fellows who have paved the way to live the life that we live now, and to pass their story on to the next generation."

Merchant Navy member Robbie Williams said he was attending the day in remembrance of his father who served during both world wars.

(Reprinted from Nelson Mail, thanks to Barry Jackson for sending this story in)



Interport Sports Tournament

**13–18 February 2012
Mount Maunganui,
New Zealand**

Come down and enjoy a week of fishing, or golf, or indoor sports.

Wives and partners welcome.

Players can enjoy all this for \$250 (fishing) or \$150 (golf and indoor sports.) Lots of fun, meet MUNZ members from other ports – let's keep this great maritime tradition going!

Registrations and payment must be in by end of October 2011.

**More info contact Tony Brown on (07) 5755939 or mobile 021395187
Email brwnie@vodafone.co.nz
Mail 7 Claridge Place, Mount Maunganui 3116**

Mount Maunganui Tauranga

by **Selwyn Russell**

As I write it is three months since I started as the secretary of the branch, and I must admit, although challenging, I am enjoying it immensely. There are a number of things to report on that we have achieved since the last edition of the Maritimes.

Wilson's Parking

Starting with the ratification of Wilson's Parking agreement, where the six members are happy with their pay rise.

C3

We finally completed the signing of the agreement with C3 in September and members received their back pay.

Ballance

We have ratified the Ballance agreement and will soon finalize and sign off.

Gourmet Food

I would just like to welcome the new members at Gourmet and look forward to representing them in new upcoming talks with their management.

Comvita

We are in talks with Comvita as well. It is very concerning that the removal of the nightshift, plus loss of that allowance, added to the increases in the cost of living, will have a harsh impact on our members. No wage increase at this stage promotes a sense of workers' dissatisfaction. This leaves the perceived value from a company that always promotes employees' welfare and happiness as a top priority very questionable.

NZL

The NZL document has been signed off and is with them now, but since the out of court settlement with Port of Tauranga there seems to be some reluctance to return it as they would like to take the return to stevedoring operations out of it. We are awaiting further info at this stage as to why they are so hesitant.

Te Manu Toroa

We have started negotiations with Te Manu Toroa, a Maori-based health provider, hoping to improve our members' conditions there.

Interport 2012

A gentle reminder that the Interport Sports 2012 will be held here in Mount Maunganui from 13-18 February 2012. Any questions ring Tony Brown (07) 5755939, or get in touch with the branch and we will put you on the right track.

Merchant Navy Day

It is with great respect that our branch will be amongst the many people remembering Merchant Navy Day at the memorial at Sulphur Point on 3 September.

Personal thanks

I would just like to thank all the many comrades who gave Melissa Tahau and me condolences on hearing of the loss of our daughter, Jacinta. We sincerely thank you.

Why Auckland cannot afford to lose its port

Any plan to inject new life into Auckland's downtown waterfront needs to acknowledge the continued economic importance of the city's port, says Professor Laurence Murphy of the University of Auckland's Business School. Professor Murphy says the public debate over the Rugby World Cup's "Party Central" on Queens Wharf exposed some of the tensions confronting the new Auckland Council and its Council-Controlled Organisations (CCOs). "For some, the port represents a barrier to the sea and is viewed as an impediment to developing a truly world-class waterfront destination to rival Sydney Harbour. Unlike Sydney, Auckland doesn't have a Port Botany to shift its container activities to, he says. Since the 1970s, cities worldwide have increasingly competed for inward investment, tourism dollars and global

media attention, Murphy says, and following the success of Baltimore and London Docklands, cities with a waterfront are viewed as being strategically positioned to benefit from their prime real estate assets. But in contrast to these cities, Auckland is home to the country's largest port. In 2010, Ports of Auckland (POAL) handled cargo valued at \$24 billion – equivalent to 13 percent of GDP, and accounted for 37 percent of New Zealand's container trade. POAL employs more than 500 full-time-equivalent staff, attracts some 60 cruise ship visits a year and processes more than 165,000 passengers and crew. In the five years to 2010, it paid more than \$430 million in dividends to the former Auckland Regional Holdings and continues to contribute to the new Auckland Council.

Waterfront Auckland is the new CCO charged with being the "placemaker" for the waterfront area. As a non-regulatory agency, it is a significant land owner, responsible for producing a comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of the waterfront area not controlled by POAL. "In refashioning Auckland's waterfront, Auckland Council needs to manage the creative tensions inherent in developing a waterfront precinct characterised by high-quality urban design, accessible and interesting public spaces and a working port," says Murphy. "The recipe for success needs a careful balancing of global models and local ingredients to be truly effective. In turning to the sea, the city cannot abandon its port." Full article at <http://tinyurl.com/3qku5bs>

The facts on asset sales

- NZ stripped of assets in the fire sales of 1980s and 90s
- \$19 billion for hundreds of assets
- Huge profits for private companies, higher costs for NZ taxpayers
- National-led government planning to sell 49% of publicly owned power companies
- No guarantee that shares will stay with NZ 'mum and dad' investors

National wants to sell 49% of our publicly owned power companies: Genesis, Meridian, Mighty River Power and Solid Energy. It also wants to reduce how much the government owns of Air New Zealand from 75% to 51%. New Zealand has very few state-owned assets left, after most of them were sold in the 1980s and 90s. Airports, the Bank of New Zealand, forests, ports and New Zealand Rail were part of a huge fire sale that saw hundreds of assets sold for just \$19 billion. The Government Printing Office was sold for only \$20 million. More asset sales are a bad idea for many reasons. For a start, it doesn't make sense financially. The state-owned companies pay the government more in annual dividends than the government will save by not paying interest on the debt paid off by asset sales. The dividends from those companies are so high that, if they are sold, the government will lose up to \$9.7 billion over the next 15 years, according to Labour.

In addition, most of the shares will end up being owned by large overseas investors. (International trade agreements mean the government can't favour New Zealand investors over foreign ones.) That's what's happened with Contact Energy: two thirds of its dividends – an amount worth over \$1 billion – has gone overseas since National sold it in 1999. And if the shares are owned overseas, the asset sales won't do anything to reduce our foreign debt. Asset sales will also mean that private companies make huge windfalls from assets built up by New Zealanders over generations. One example of this is Telecom, which was bought by a private consortium for \$4.25 billion in 1990, when it had shareholder funds (the value of shareholders' investments in the company) of \$2.5 billion. When the consortium sold out in 1997, they made a \$7.2 billion profit on their shares, having already taken more than half of the \$4.2 billion in dividends paid out during that time. In short, they made around \$10 billion in just a few years. In the meantime, shareholder funds had dropped to \$1.1 billion. Asset sales will probably lead to higher prices as well. Since New Zealand's energy companies were sold, electricity prices have soared, rising over 70% even under the last Labour government. Private companies have also made excessive profits. Reprinted from www.keepnzworking.co.nz

Maritime Union
online
www.munz.org.nz

Seaman's interesting life and times



George Porter, 2011

By Victor Billot

Retired New Zealand seaman George Porter, of Auckland, got in touch earlier in 2011 after seeing a picture of his father published in the Maritimes magazine 1951 waterfront lockout 60th anniversary commemoration.

George's father, whom he shares his name with, is the waterside worker standing on the far right of the group photo of locked out Auckland watersiders digging potatoes in Pukekohe.

The photo has since become one of the better known images of the 1951 dispute, and is held in the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington.

George still has his father's 1951 waterfront lockout loyalty certificate.

His father had been a fireman at sea and then come ashore to work as a watersider, and his uncle was a seaman too.

Talking to George, I found out that he had many maritime connections, and has led a remarkable and eventful life.

Born in Auckland in 1936, George served as a deck boy after going to sea in 1951 and was a member of the New Zealand Seaman's Union.

He worked on coastal shipping and the trans Tasman run until 1954, then went to the UK and joined British ships sailing out of Liverpool as an Ordinary Seaman.

The 'Tresillian' disaster

Shortly after arriving in the UK, he was aboard the P & O freighter *Tresillian* when it capsized after cargo shifted in heavy seas off Ireland on 30 November 1954. He was the only New Zealand crew member, and his actions during the sinking of the vessel in assisting fellow crew members were recounted in a NZPA – Reuters newspaper report of the time. "Describing his ordeal after the sinking of the freighter *Tresillian*, the 19 year old New Zealander, Ordinary Seaman George N. Porter of Kupe Street, Orakei, Auckland said today he gave his lifebelt to Ordinary Seaman Charlie Harrison because he was in a weaker condition.

Mr Porter, now at the Merchant Navy Hotel, London, said: 'I had on a life jacket. I could feel the suction of the sinking ship and tried to swim to a lifeboat, but mountainous seas beat me back. I struck out for a lifebelt tossing in the waves. Once a lifeboat passed close by, but failed to see me. I tried to reach some floating wreckage and eventually clung on to a door.' He said he then gave up his lifebelt to Ordinary Seaman Harrison, and supported himself with others on the door.

'It was icy and we were numbed with cold. We sang songs to keep up our spirits. Once or twice I felt ready to give up, thinking I would never be rescued, but thoughts of my mother made me determined to hold on to the end,' he added."

Mr Porter was eventually picked up by a lifeboat, and then rescued by the British tanker *Liparus*.

Sadly, his shipmate Charlie Harrison died after being picked up. 29 crew members died in the disaster.

Jumping ship

George worked his way back out with the goal of seeing his New Zealand family in 1957 on the *Delphic*, and jumped ship with an Irish crewmate.

However after being apprehended as a ship jumper, he ended up being imprisoned for a month in Wanganui, then transferred to Mt Eden Prison for a month. After getting out on bail for several months he went to court and an unsympathetic Judge deported him back to the UK, insisting that he had to pay his own trip back to New Zealand.

Thus George became one of the few New Zealanders deported out of his own country. He went back to the UK on the *Ceramic*, as a "DBS" (distressed British seaman).

After returning to the UK, George worked on shore gangs in London and eventually managed to get back into the seaman's "pool".

During this time, he went through the 1961 "unofficial" strike and still has the certificate from the National Seaman's Reform Movement.

He continued on as an Able Seaman on British ships until 1974, when he returned to New Zealand and rejoined the New Zealand Seaman's Union.

Serious injury

George suffered a serious injury and lost his hand in an accident aboard the *Kurov* in Sydney Harbour in 1974.

He was hospitalized many times over the next few years, and lost most of his left leg as a result of gangrene and osteomyelitis. In the 1980s and 1990s he worked as a taxi driver and a carpark attendant at the University of Auckland.

He has recently been working as rest home driver up until a month ago – but is currently engaged in a dispute with his employer, with the backing of his current Union the NDU.

Sports stalwart and volunteer

Outside of work, George has done some remarkable work as a rugby league coach and an athlete, despite his previous injuries.

Earlier in his life, George was a former Auckland lightweight boxing champion. He was a keen rugby league player, as a halfback and fullback for Auckland, and later on for English side Huyton, until the age of 36.

Following the loss of his limbs, he began coaching.

He coached a number of youth grades to championship wins at Otahuhu, as well as coaching Auckland representative teams. Following success with the Otahuhu Leopards under 12s to 15s, he trained the Auckland under 9s, 10s and 12s and selected the under 15s.

He is currently Coaching Director for Ellerslie. He passed Level One and Level Two coaching certificates under Wayne Bennett and Graham Lowe.

His no-nonsense philosophy was explained to a reporter.

"I demand the best from my boys, on and off the field. I won't tolerate dirty boots, uniforms or language."

George says that he no longer coaches, and the job of coach has become harder.

Often parents of young players are both working in order to make ends meet, so it's tougher work for coaches without the parents' support

[continued on next page]

A National Con Job

by Hector Thorpe MUNZ 3111

The consequence

Working conditions and financial security are often a consequence of political theories and reforms enacted by government.

It does not matter whether these experiments are economic or industrial in nature. Once government determines their preferred balance between the interest of business and that of workers, the outcome normally results in an advantage to one. Historically the weight of fortune has favoured business which often leaves workers carrying the burden of subsequent failures.

Think Big

An example of experimental theory and business gone wrong was the Think Big projects. These high cost projects driven by Sir Bill Birch lost \$7.4 billion. Birch also spearheaded the National Party privatisation programme of assets sales, following on the heels of the free market theories and experiments introduced by Sir Roger Douglas for the Labour Party. The common theme is a perceived mandate for extreme experiments, dismissing concerns from unions while taking comfort in the strong support from the business community and offshore investors.

Massive loss

These privatizations raised \$19.1 billion by selling 100 per cent shareholdings in many of our state assets, most to a small group of mainly offshore investors.

However, their inexperience and bungling of these sales were exposed when the assets increased in value to \$35.7 billion,

\$16.6 billion above their sale price. Overseas investors captured \$13.1 billion of that, a greater loss to our economy than the \$7.4 billion lost on the Think Big projects.

Bitter-sweet

Workers can take comfort in the fact that it is generally agreed, lessons have been learnt from those sales. However, we now shudder at the thought National are determined to continue with that failed model and plan another sell off.

Sell, sell, sell

The National Party's economic theory is now "Partial sales" of our state-owned enterprises. After the previous 40 sales, our energy generators are set for the chopping block at a time when they're all reporting annual operating revenue increase earnings to June 2011. Solid Energy \$829 million of earnings before interest, tax depreciation, amortisation and financial instruments (ebitdaf). Meridian Energy \$659.9 million ebitdaf. Mighty River Power \$443.1 million ebitdaf, and Genesis Energy \$293 million ebitdaf.

Clear differences

There are clear differences this time between the left and right parties. However, to stop their slide in the polls Labour must motivate the non-enrolled, win the undecided vote and redirect the issues to exposing Nationals political con job.

References

Brian Gaynor
www.coalnz.co.nz
www.meridianenergy.co.nz
www.mightyriverpower.co.nz
www.genesisenergy.co.nz

"It was damn hard."
 George has been referred to as "unstoppable" and the "bionic coach" in some previous newspaper stories. He is a proud member of the Maritime Union of New Zealand's veterans' association. He says he believes he was at sea during the "best era" and has good memories of his time in Liverpool.
 "The Union company had 73 ships on the New Zealand coast. It was a great experience on both the UK and New Zealand coast, but it was better paid on the New Zealand coast."

Letters

Norway tragedy

(Editors note – The Maritime Union received the following thank you letter after General Secretary Joe Fleetwood wrote to Norwegian unions expressing our condolences and solidarity on the tragic news of the events of 22 July 2011 in Norway. On this day, bombings and gun attacks by a right-wing extremist led to the deaths of many Norwegian people, sadly including many young people attending a camp of the Norwegian Labour Party's youth wing.)

I want to thank you for all the kindness you have shown us in a very difficult time. It has been long and hard days, and we have even more to come. But in all the grief we find comfort, hope and strength in unity - both in and outside Norway. It is more important than ever that the labor movement are united in the struggle for peace, solidarity and justice. Thanks again for all the sympathy you have given us

Roger Hansen
 President of Norwegian Transport Workers' Union

EPMU Secretary writes

Dear Editor of the Maritimes,
 I write to commend you on the high quality of your union magazine, The Maritimes. I have recently been elected National Secretary of my union, the EPMU, and in my new lofty role I receive complimentary copies. Your edition on the 1951 waterfront lock-out was excellent and I really liked the old photos. The editorial of your latest edition kindly mentions the Pike River 29 and the content on abuse of overseas crews and flag of convenience are important issue for all working Kiwis. My father Harry Newson (The Horse) was a seaman's union activist and Uncle Johnny was an Auckland wharfie. Dad and Johnny have 'crossed the bar', but I bet my old mate Roddy McDonald is still at sea and keeping the party going. I hope this letter gets me a free badge and a ringbolt to Aussie one day. Solidarity to all your members.

Bill Newson
 National Secretary
 Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union

(Editor's note – Bill has probably got himself a MUNZ badge with this letter.)

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George has had other health issues, but he has done more with his time than many people without any health problems. In 1989 he was diagnosed with a tumor in his head, but after several operations the cancer went into remission. In 1999, he possibly topped all his previous achievements by completing the 26-mile, 385-yard New York Marathon for the New Zealand Disabled Team, sponsored by the Mad Butcher. He finished in 9 hours, 53 minutes and 30 seconds.

